

Submission for the Inquiry into Animal Activism in Victoria.

Introduction

My name is Cara and I'm an animal rights advocate. I became an advocate for animals when I was made aware of the hidden side to the animal agriculture industry. I have been involved in undercover footage, rescues, outreach and direct action. Since doing activism I have seen the most unimaginable suffering, torture and exploitation of innocent sentient beings.

Intentions of Animal Advocates

Activists have good intentions when entering properties and are non-violent. The only reason activists enter properties is to expose the hidden truth of the animal agriculture industry.

Actions of activist are justified in terms of showing the public what happens to the animals in the agriculture industry. If the farmers and the animal agriculture industry were transparent animal advocates wouldn't need to do these forms of activism.

Animal Agriculture Victoria has acknowledged animals as sentient. Anyone able to perceive or feel things should no endure what under cover footage has exposed. There has been alarming amount of cruelty and this is only what has been caught on camera. If the industry cares about the welfare of animals, then CCTV cameras should be mandatory in all facilities.



The 'crime' of trespass vs the crime of animal cruelty

“Animal welfare – it's your duty to care”. “Duty of Care' is an obligation for people to take reasonable measures to protect the welfare of any animals that their activities may impact upon”. Quoted on Agriculture Victoria’s website. <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/animal-health-and-welfare/animal-welfare>. “#animalwelfarematters” if this is true then anyone exposing animal cruelty should be praised not punished. The real crime is people being cruel to animals.

Biosecurity

Farmers and the agriculture industry often pick and choose when biosecurity is a concern. As soon as an activist enters a property this is apparently an issue but when farmers breach biosecurity regulations it is often dismissed.

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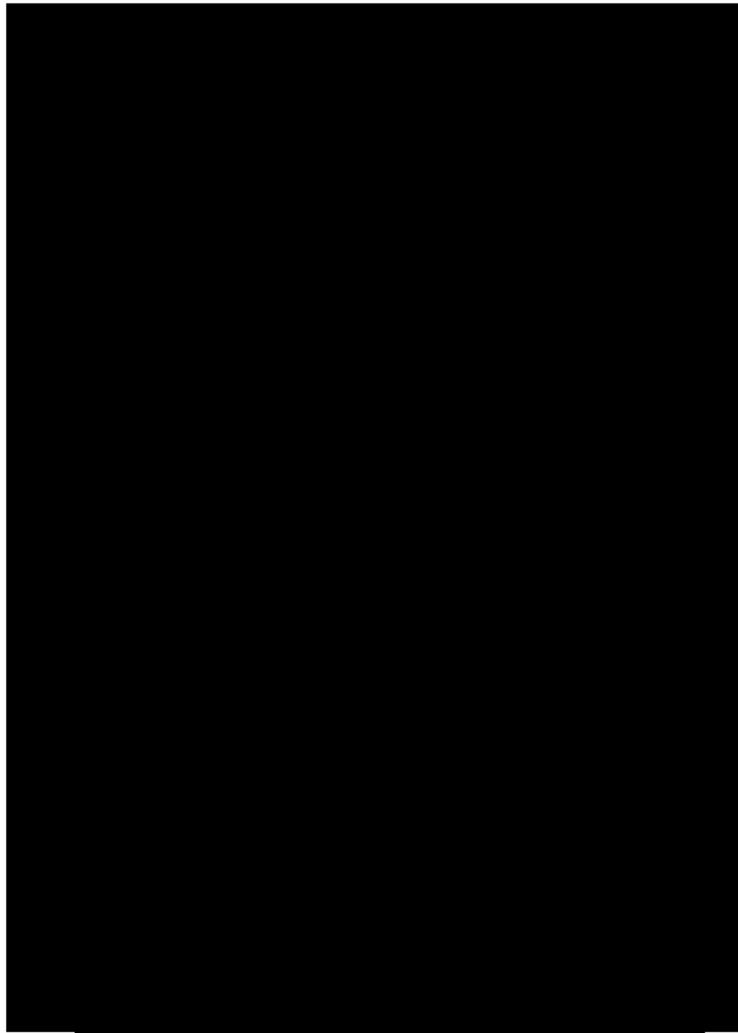
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Harassment

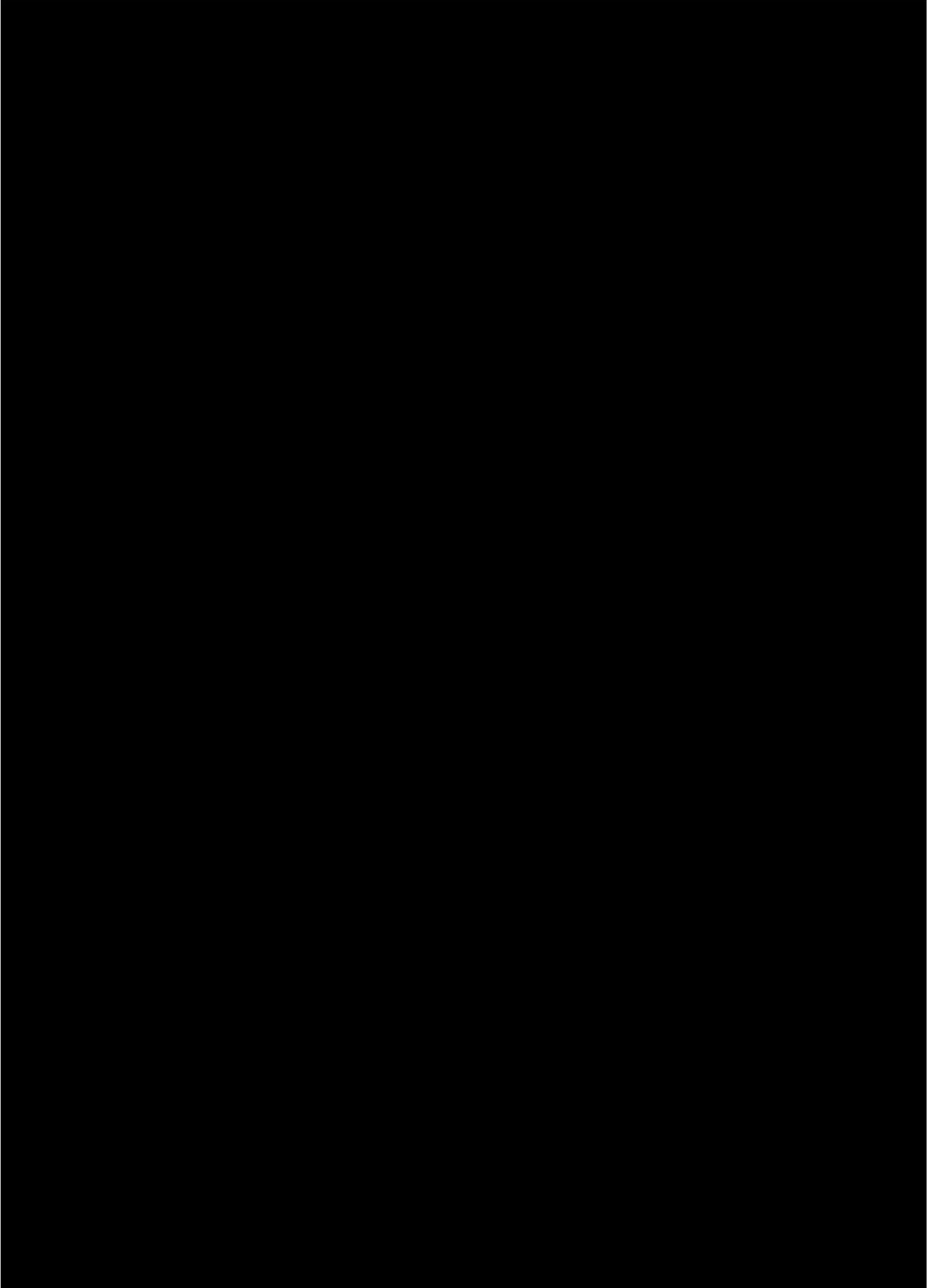
Farmers and animal agriculture representatives say activists are threatening and that they fear for their safety. Activists have never entered private homes of farmers. The opposite is true. Farmers and their followers are threatening. I had to move homes because I was doxed, and my address was posted all over social media with people threatening to harm me and my animals.

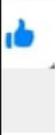
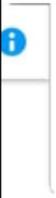
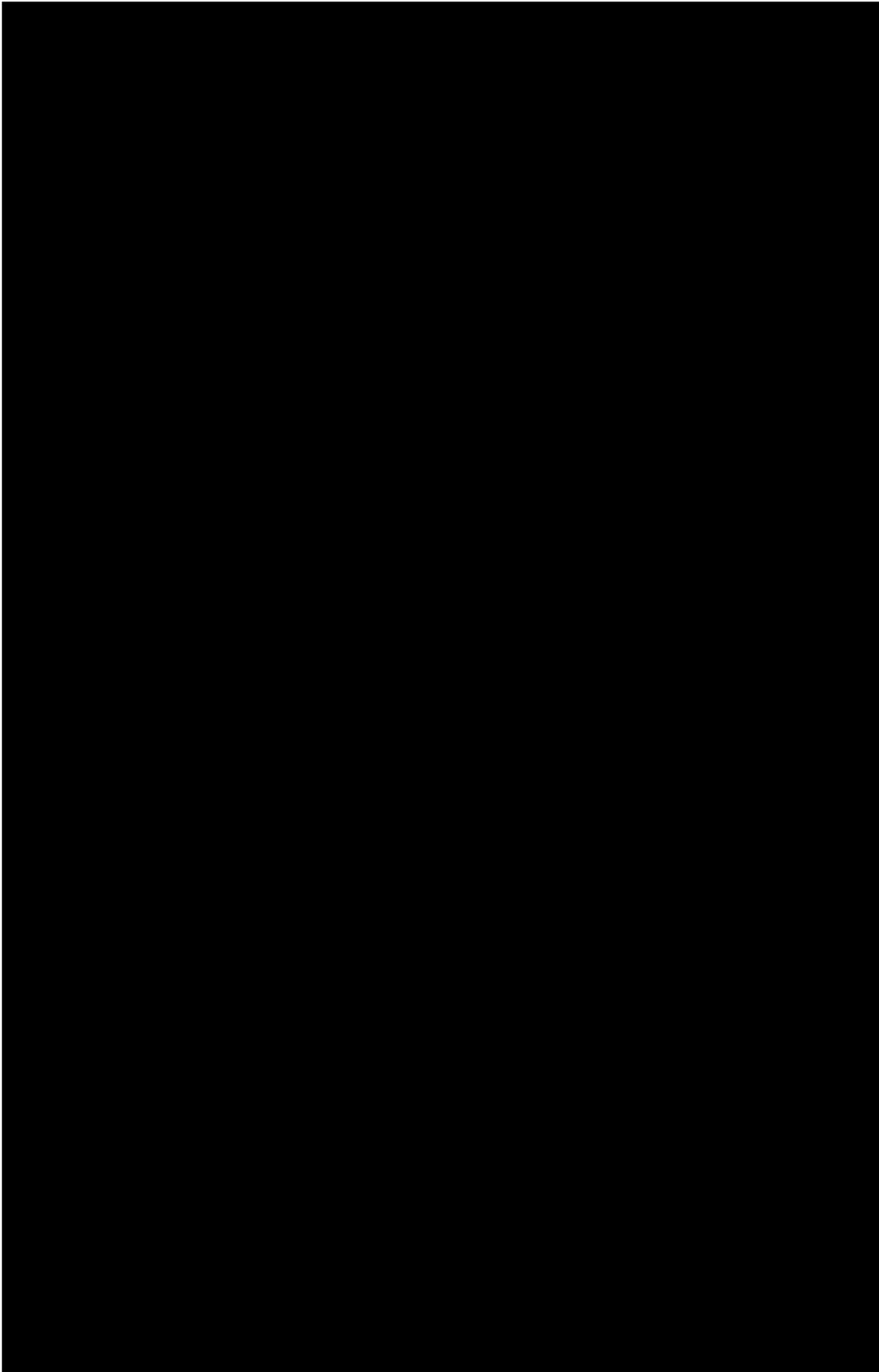
Victoria police breached my privacy and asked a farmer from Gippy Goat Café to meet them at my house. The police arrested me and put me in the back of a police car to take me to the police station. I was uncomfortable knowing at least four police officers remained at my home while I was being taken away. On the way out I noticed the farmer and told the police who were driving to stop the car and take me back. The police officer in charge refused to let the police I was with stop the car and continued to drive off. This was completely unacceptable to let an unauthorised person who was not on the warrant to enter my home without my permission. He as requested by police entered my private home where I lived alone. I was at the police station for hours before they released me. I was extremely distressed as I didn't know what would happen to the animals in my care and all my personal belongings, they would go through without me there. Coincidentally after the farmer had come to my house my address that was private had been posted all over social media with countless threats. I had multiple people send me print screens with their location to mine letting me know they would soon be at mine to kill me. I had to remain at the house for months (as on the bail conditions). I had daily panic attacks, I didn't feel safe anywhere, I couldn't sleep, I had to take a lot of time off work, install CCTV cameras, have people over to stay with me when I couldn't cope and so much more. This is triggering for me to recap so I can only be very brief. I have all the threats that I can send in. I am aware of others including Andy Meddick have mentioned and posted some which I appreciate. If you request seeing them I will send you the file.

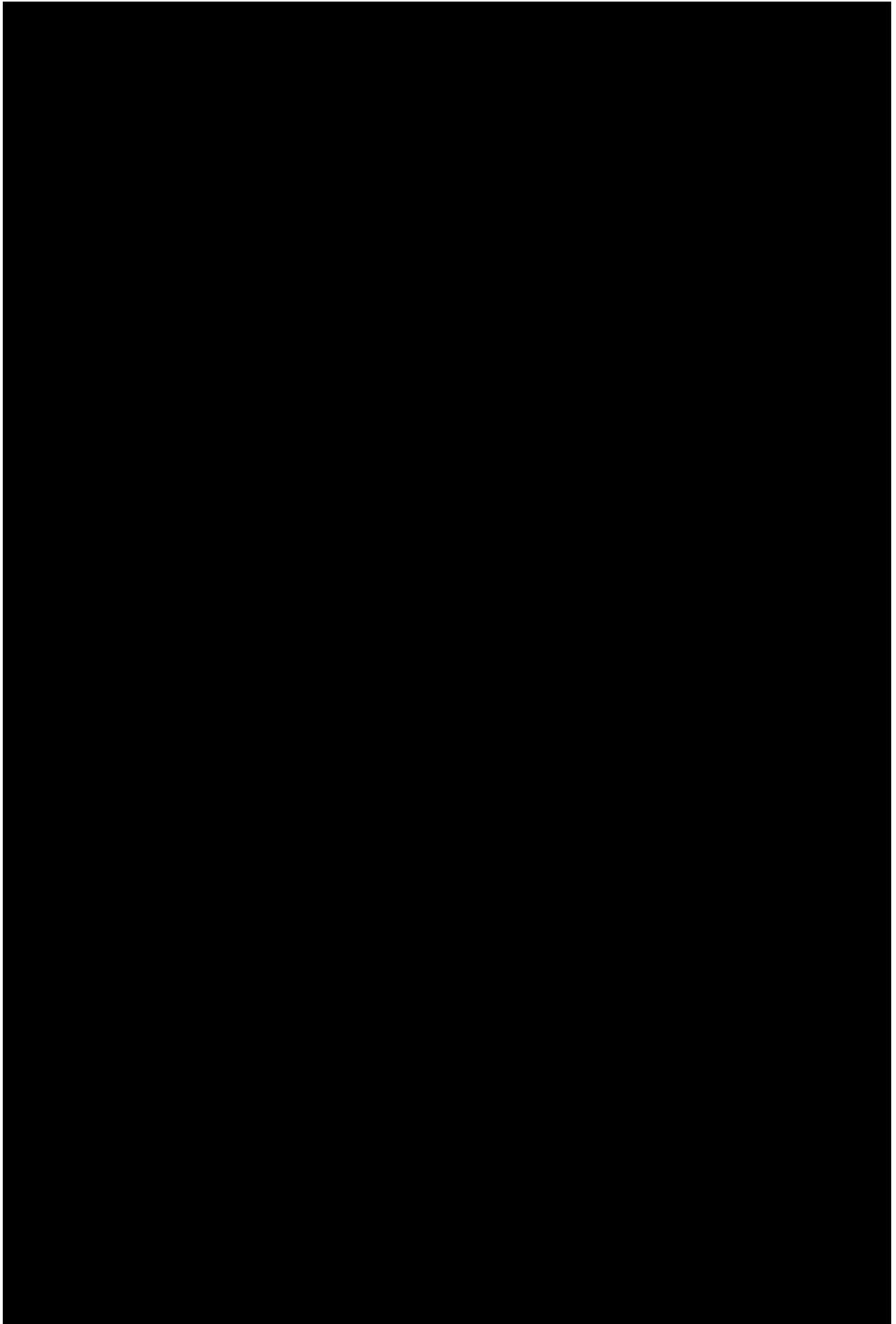


Threats

- My home address being shared
- My parents address was shared
- My car registration was shared
- People waiting out the front of my home and encouraging others to do the same
- People following me and encouraging others to do the same
- People threatening to rape me, harm me and kill me
- Facebook threats and abuse
- Instagram threats and abuse
- Weekly Times and Herald Sun publishing false information about me
- Had 300 motorcyclists ride past my house together in support of famers
- Received threatening mail
- People telling me what I had for dinner
- Threading the animals in my care







Conclusion

A few to consider

- Toucher penalties for animal abuses
- Mandatory CCTV cameras
- Don't make harsher penalties for people exposing the truth
- Stricter welfare regulations
- Phase out intensive and factory farming

Undercover footage links from activist

- <https://www.dominionmovement.com/watch>
- <https://www.leaked.com.au/previous>
- <https://www.alv.org.au/pig-truth/watch-pig-truth/>
- <https://vimeo.com/174954377>
- <https://www.alv.org.au/cow-truth/watch-cow-truth/>

I had been asked to speak at the inquiry and wanted to, but I had to decline because of mine and my animal's safety. If there are any questions you have or anything you would like to see, please let me know.

Thankyou for the opportunity to read my submission.

Kind regards,

Cara Garrett