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**From:** Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture  
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Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture

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**SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Plant based diet is a growing commercial industry in Australia and it will continue to become more powerful as it becomes more financially influential.

In Australia, we have seen the government mismanagement of current large scale farms and farming practices despite the erosion of animal welfare protections and the attempted climb towards increased profit. However, this practice, whilst not only unethical, is also unsustainable and the dairy industry is in decline, so that soon it will be non existent. Other large scale factory farming business are unable to compete and are shutting their doors, or they are unable to receive council permits for construction or expansion of their facilities.

Targeting animal activists will not save animal agriculture. The problems are inherit with an existing poorly managed industry, one which profits from the harm and suffering to others and which does not maturely confront the future. As a result, the farmers and their families themselves are also suffering, suicides, mental health issues, family break downs, poverty and despair are all stories we see on a regular basis on main stream tv. With the added impact of climate change and a government unwilling to acknowledge this, animal agriculture in Australia is inherently doomed for failure. Tougher penalties on animal activists will not save the farmer who has shot dead all their stock due to droughts, then flood then being unable to repay their mortgage.

**DANGER? WHAT DANGER?**

There is no substantiated record of animal activists inflicting injury or harm towards farmers. However, the number one cause of death to women in AUSTRALIA is family violence. Why would the Australian government initiate tougher legislation towards a group of people who have no record of inflicting harm towards another group of people, yet not initiate similar tough legislative penalties to those with a history of committing family violence and making threats to commit more?

Animal activists receive no personal gain from highlighting the deficiencies in Australian animal protection

legislation, they only serve to highlight these deficiencies. There is no danger towards farmers, it is not in the animal activist's interest, further animal activists groups routinely and publicly promote non-violence. There is no evidence to support farmers are in any danger from animal activists, it is unsubstantiated propaganda from a carefully constructed vested interest lobby group to the government.

#### BIOSECURITY THREAT. NONE.

The priority of all animal activists is the health of the animals they seek to protect, animal activists do not breach bio security principles, this is a fallacy created by vested interest groups to create and spread misplaced anger towards activists.

Animal activists take seriously bio security threats which is why they wear jumpsuits and suitable protection for the animals when they seek to highlight the failure in existing animal protection legislation.

#### LEGISLATION CHANGES

If farmers complied with legislation for the prevention of cruelty towards animals, then there would be no need for activists to fulfill a function which the government has repeatedly failed to carry out.

Activists across all spectrums act in the public interest by highlighting injustice towards the voiceless, by increasing draconian and censorship laws, the government will in turn create a larger movement of activists as more people will be attracted to fight against government misuse of power.

As George Orwell said – Absolute power corrupts absolutely. He said this in his novel Animal Farm. Ironic isn't it? Animals highlighting the abuse of a human construct. Power and its abuse.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Transparency, accountability, working with ALL stakeholders. Animal welfare will always be a big issue as people love animals. People who care about animals will continue to support and promote animal welfare issues for free and despite the legal risk as ethics are a higher standard. Government censorship will NEVER silence the masses.

By targeting animal activists, you do not save animal agriculture in Australia. As Margaret Thatcher famously said – You don't make the poor rich by making the rich poor. The same applies to animal activism. You won't improve animal agriculture by targeting animal activists.

The way forward is to LISTEN to animal activists. Embrace what they have to say, find a middle ground, a negotiated agreement as a starting point with regular meetings to discuss progress.

Animal activist want an end to all animal agriculture.

Animal agriculture want an end to animal activism.

Neither stance will be achieved in the immediate future, however, conflict and loss will undoubtedly ensue if the status quo remains.

#### Recommendation ONE – A transition into non animal agriculture

I personally support an end to animal agriculture, however, I personally would like to see an up-skilling of farmers to become financially viable in other areas of farming. I think this is a reasonable transition option and one which both parties could immediately agree upon.

Growing hemp, wind farms, solar farms, eco-tourism, all these are sensible suggestions to support farmers with a transition out of animal agriculture and into a financially viable long term sustainable alternative.

#### Recommendation TWO – An Independent Office of Animal Welfare

The Minister for Agriculture, both Federally and State, oversees both issues, the promotion of the animal agricultural industry as well as the implementation of animal welfare standards and practices. This is a conflict of interest. Furthermore, the RSPCA (a charity!!) is the body tasked with enforcing this legislation, the RSPCA is seriously under funded and routinely proved incapable of carrying out their duty in the prevention of cruelty towards animals.

An Independent Office of Animal Welfare was the recommendation made by the Australian Productivity Commission (2016) and one which the Australian government MUST follow. (see attachment)

## FAILURE OF CURRENT LEGISLATION TO MEASURE ANIMAL WELFARE

(credit: Lawyers for Animals) Section 6(1) of Victoria's Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 states that the Act does not apply to: "Any act or practice with respect to the farming, transport, sale or killing of any farm animal which is carried out in accordance with a Code of Practice." Nor does the Act apply to: "... the keeping, treatment, handling, transportation, sale, killing, hunting, shooting, catching, trapping, netting, marking, care, use, husbandry or management of any animal or class of animals ... which is carried out in accordance with a Code of Practice"... This means that millions of farm animals daily endure housing conditions and acts of cruelty that would be illegal for a cat or dog. The codes of practice are policy documents endorsed by a Minister, and are not subject to a democratic vote within Parliament, unless a motion is put for their disallowance..

Factory farmed animals are not represented in the RSPCA statistics on animal cruelty, because Victoria allows inhumane treatment of animals as long as it is for commercial purposes. So the many thousands of animals who are locked up, unable to move, living in darkness, force fed, denied socialization, denied vet care, suffering boredom and to have parts of their body mutilated all for the name of maximizing financial gain for businesses, are not included in animal cruelty statistics, because technically, it is not illegal.

Nor are the animals who are subjected to cruel and inhumane medical experiments on them included in the RSPCA statistics on animal cruelty. The thousands of animals kept in cages, tested on, have cruel medical experiments conducted on them, living in pain, fear and suffering, all of which would be illegal if done to a domestic cat or dog.

## CONCLUSION

Activism is a pursuit of justice, and as long as injustice continues, activism will grow. Acting according to one's ethical values is a higher standard than an increase in draconian and unjust laws.

The government has an opportunity to LISTEN to the voters and to acknowledge the suffering of those involved and work towards a country which looks after ALL sentient creatures it is legislated to protect.

Be the world leader.

Be the visionary.

Be inspired.

Be inspirational.

Submitted 5th July 2019

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File1: [5d1eaaaab2bcd-PC agriculture-overview 2016.pdf](#)

File2:

File3: