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From: Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture
[REDACTED]
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Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture

MS Jennifer Gamble

T: [REDACTED]
E: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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There have been countless investigations and charges against animal processing facilities (including farms and abattoirs) across Australia because of the work of members of the public who have gathered evidence of animals being starved, abused, left without medical attention. Where breach of duty of care has been so extreme as to make the public rise up and demand change.

Until such time as animals are no longer harmed through starvation, beaten, kicked, stabbed, exposure to the elements and the industry ceases to fail to successfully self-regulate, there will be a place for those who have the capacity to highlight and bring to light failures within the system to stop Australia's farmers and animal agriculture industry bringing the industry into disrepute.

The terms of reference for this inquiry state to consider: "potential impacts of animal activist activity on Victorian farms, to Victoria's economy and international reputation". Australia is already considered a hypocrite by many in the international community because of the culling and unregulated slaughter of our immediately recognisable national emblem - the kangaroo. Unregulated - yes. Who is out there, supervising and ensuring that this is carried out humanely? Where is the regulation?

The farming and animal agriculture sector (transport, slaughter etc) has proven already that it is unable to self-regulate and ensure adequate adherence to animal welfare standards. Our international reputation is harmed every time an animal is harmed. The international community hears constantly that Australia holds itself to the highest levels of animal welfare standards. However, when we fail to live up to these standards, we should expect to have our reputation soiled. And it is not soiled by the work of any "animal activist". It is soiled by those who breach regulations and do not maintain the standards set - farmers, transport and processing facilities shoulder the entire responsibility.

As the terms of reference state: "the type and prevalence of unauthorised activity on Victorian farms and related industries, and the application of existing legislation" must be considered. What have the "type and prevalence unauthorised activity" generally consisted of? We have had photographic and video evidence of extreme animal cruelty which has led in some occasions to charges in relation to those engaging in the acts of abuse/neglect. It has led to changes to practice.

The puppy farming legislation is one of the most prominent examples of this. The public were made aware of abuses so extreme that much of the footage cannot be shown to the public. Legislative changes were

made. Charges have been laid against many who perpetuated the abuse. In what context were animals harmed by the gathering of the evidence? What biosecurity crisis was noted to have occurred as a result? Indeed, given that the dogs were cannibalising each other and their puppies, living in pools of their own excrement, it would be hard to know how this could have possibly led to any more illness.

On the rare occasions that concerned citizens have felt compelled to act, they have done so often when the legal methodologies have failed them. Calls to the overworked, under-resourced RSPCA have gone without response due to lack of resources, Vic Police have also been unable to act due to questions about their capacity to act and lack of resources.

There is no evidence that I am aware of where members of the public engaging in the gathering of evidence to try and stimulate legal avenues to help animals of distress have at any time harmed an animal, caused a disease outbreak, caused significant loss of income to anyone engaged in animal agriculture.

This inquiry is little more than an attack on compassionate citizens who are concerned that animals are not being well enough cared for, and have nowhere to turn when the authorities are under resourced and have limited capacity to act due to the constraints of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (1986) which needs to be urgently reviewed.

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File1:

File2:

File3: