

## **Submission: The Australian government inquiry into animal welfare and agriculture.**

As a concerned member of the Community, I call for an independent and transparent animal welfare body to be established immediately.

- **Non-human animals are sentient beings.**

This body should be based on the philosophies of Professor Peter Singer and animal science; it should advocate against speciesism and hence promote respect and equal consideration for all sentient animals, regardless of species.

- **Where animals are classified as ‘property’ they are deprived of rights.**

Farmed animals are denied their right to freedom to express normal behaviour; freedom from fear and distress. Animal agriculture is the number one cause of animal cruelty in the world today. Any industry that involves treating animals as if they were *machines* designed only to produce, and values *production and profit* over all other aspects, is inherently cruel. The lived experience or quality of life of farmed animals is deemed to be of no consequence due to their measure of worth being in what they can produce: meat, milk or eggs. Cruel mutilations—such as debeaking, dehorning, and castration without painkillers—are standard for animals on conventional farms. Cattle, for example, generally have their horns cut off and their testicles cut out of their scrotums, and many are branded with searing-hot irons. Pigs on farms often have their teeth pulled out, tails cut off and their ears notched, and some have rings forced into their sensitive noses in order to prevent them from rooting in the grass and dirt, which is a natural behaviour. All this is endured without pain relief. They are electrocuted (often anally) with a probe to ensure compliance before they are lowered into gas chambers. Here they are gassed alive with levels- approved by industry- proven to cause extreme distress; hence they kick, thrash and scream before they miserably die. Chickens have their sensitive beaks cut off, which causes them both acute and chronic pain; male chicks are ground alive; many chickens are still able to feel pain when they're submerged in the scalding-hot water of the defeathering tanks. Cows may be conscious as their bodies are hacked apart. Dairy cows endure a continual cycle of cruelty whereby females are forcibly impregnated by artificial insemination to induce lactation. If a dairy cow gives birth to a boy then he is shipped off to be slaughtered for veal. It is legal in Australia for a one day old baby boy dairy cow to be hammered to death; bobby calves are deemed of no worth to the dairy industry. If his skull is not crushed or he is not shot, the newborn- crying for his mother- is shipped off in veal crates to the slaughterhouse where he is- again legally- denied food and water for days before slaughter. If a dairy cow gives birth to a girl, her calf is also exposed to painful procedures such as disbudding or dehorning. These operations, or 'animal modifications', are required to be carried out with a 'minimisation of suffering to the animal' — but the reality is that *surgery without anaesthetic* is not illegal, even in organic farming. After this, the female calf is initiated into a lifetime cycle of grief too. When she is old enough to give birth and has boys, when he is taken away she will bellow for her lost calf for days. At the end of this torture, she is slaughtered when her body has stopped coping. Over a million dairy calves are slaughtered every year in Australia. At abattoirs, all animals are hung upside down and their throats are cut, often while they're still conscious and struggling to escape.

- **Global impact.**

Animal Agriculture is highly dependent on large quantities of limited resources such as grain-based feed, water, energy and medication. This type of food production is therefore unsustainable because of its negative impacts on animals, people and the planet. The redirection of food used to feed the 70 billion animals raised globally per year for slaughter for human consumption could solve global poverty.

- **Animal Agriculture responsible for Climate Change.**

Increasing percentages of the general population are becoming educated regarding the devastating impact of animal agriculture on the environment. As found by the United Nations, animal agriculture is one of the biggest cause of Climate Change; therefore, it's morally reprehensible for a Government to continue inaction to phase out this outdated, draconian Industry founded in flawed, inherited belief systems.

- **New industries are inevitable.**

Taxpayers' money must be re-directed to invest in plant protein growth research and the establishment of new, smarter, sustainable industries, for example: meat grown in laboratories. The Government should be moving towards transitioning to this future-proof plan. Bruce Friedrich is the executive director of the Good Food Institute and managing trustee of New Crop Capital, which both promote restructuring the meat industry away from animal slaughter. The meat his company grows is "clean, safe & transparent". He advises that this "eliminates the public health risks associated with contaminated meat". Further, he mentions that this alternative is "cheaper than beef, due to its efficiency." Whilst stocks in animal agriculture fall, those in alternative food industries such as 'lab food' grow. Eric Schmidt, CEO of google parent company Alphabet, has predicted the next biggest revolution coming is using plants to replace meat. He cites similar reasons as mentioned previously such as: replacing livestock with growing and harvesting plants could reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fight climate change; the inefficiency and high costs associated with animal meat compared to plant protein which is significantly cheaper.

- **Health risks of eating animals.**

A recent Harvard paper published advised of the associated higher mortality rates associated with higher consumption of red meat. This is just one of the many articles in the Harvard Public School of Health advocating a switch to plant protein due to its superior health benefits and the risks of meat consumption. The World Health Organisation has advised processed meat is carcinogenic; obesity, heart disease and other disease related to nutrition at endemic levels the writing for animal agriculture is on the wall. It's just a matter of when not if. Science has proved over and over that humans don't need- and indeed, shouldn't- consume animal products.

- **Next emancipation movement.**

Marienne Thieme, the leader of the Dutch Party for the Animals, has stated that the liberation of animals is the next emancipation movement. As a representative Government in a first world economy it should follow the lead of countries such as The Netherlands and others in Europe and work to phase out this Industry. As more members of the Australian Community are made aware of the reality of Animal Agriculture and its exploitation of animals and legalised cruelty combined with the health risks of eating non-human animals and the devastation to the Environment, they will support the transition.

- **The main objective should be to end animal agriculture in Australia.**

In sum, animal agriculture should be phased out and completely abolished by 2026 for the health of humans, non-human animals and the planet. Australia has an opportunity to lead the way into a better future for all. Indeed, our only choice is to change.