

**Submission
No 157**

**INQUIRY INTO USE OF BATTERY CAGES FOR HENS IN
THE EGG PRODUCTION INDUSTRY**

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I am putting forward this submission requesting the government legislate to phase out battery cages for hens and improve conditions for hens moving towards all hens having access to free ranging outdoors

In the first instance I would like to see a program to begin phasing out battery cages for hens.

When we go to the shops to buy our foods we are separated from the source of these foods and therefore ignorant of the conditions the animals face in being the source of our foods. Yet when we witness the way animals are treated in order to produce the food we need what we see can be appalling. In particular in this submission I would like to bring Parliament's attention to the conditions that laying hens must experience in so called battery cages and also in confined barns where they never see the light of day. Right now millions of hens are permanently confined in barren cages where they have about the same amount of room as an iPad. They live on hard wire flooring and can't even stretch their wings.

Laying hens are living beings. Their bodies have been specifically bred by human beings to produce two eggs per day in order to meet our demands for food. The eggs the chicken's produce for us are nutritious and we rely upon these chickens to provide this source of food they we use for our breakfasts and in a wide range of food products. The least we can do in return is provide these hens with a good quality of life in return. I believe this is only fair.

There is no need for chickens to be kept in so called battery cages. My family purchase only free range eggs. Hens need enough space to be able to go outdoors in the sunlight and scratch the earth and engage in their normal behaviours.

On a recent trip to Stroud NSW I witnessed hundred of chickens out in the sunshine on one of the free range egg laying farms. This is how it should be.

My family have chosen to give back to chickens by providing a home for rescue chickens. We have at least 3 hens at any one time. Our present batch of hens came to us through Hen Rescue NSW. They are now in "retirement" and we are happy to provide them with a forever home. They get to enjoy free run of our entire back yard, dirt bathing, scratching through the soil and resting in the shade of the trees.

I believe people want to do what they can to look after animals to ensure they have the best quality of life possible, and to minimise their suffering.

I make this submission to request the phasing out of battery cages in particular and barn raised eggs where chickens have no access to the outdoors. From what I have observed chickens confined to barns all the time face some terrible conditions as well. The place that the hens live in needs to be clean and they must have space to walk, scratch, stretch, forage and experience fresh air and sunshine and a clean safe place to reside at night and during adverse weather.

The re-homing of chickens at the ending of their productive life should also be encouraged. In this way we can give back to chickens who give humanity so much of themselves.