

**Submission
No 172**

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

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I am writing to voice my concern over the continued use of battery cages for the housing of layer hens. These cages in no way provide these animals with any of the basic necessities for a comfortable and healthy existence.

The RSPCA has endorsed the 5 freedoms being:-

Freedom from hunger and thirst: by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.

Freedom from discomfort: by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.

Freedom from pain, injury or disease: by prevention through rapid diagnosis and treatment.

Freedom to express normal behaviour: by providing sufficient space proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.

Freedom from fear and distress: by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

Whilst the battery caging system provides access to food and water and maintains a somewhat clean environment it is in no way comfortable. There is no resting area, no way to express normal behaviours such as dust bathing or even spreading of the wings. The birds are so stressed that in order to prevent the birds from injuring each other so called "routine husbandry" practices such as debeaking are considered normal in this industry. These animals have their feed (amount, quantity and rations adjusted), light cycles adjusted in order to optimise egg production at the expense of their health and welfare. I fail to understand how an apparently progressive society can condemn hundreds of thousands of animals to a life of abject suffering decades after this system was first recognised as being an inhumane approach to animal housing. It is time that animal welfare and common sense takes precedence over economic gain. It is shameful for all Australians that this practice is allowed to continue.