

**Submission
No 259**

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

Name: Mr Justin Morgan

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Dear committee,

I live in a suburb that has battery egg farms. The surrounding suburbs also contain battery egg farms. The stench of ammonia from their faeces often wafts over the suburbs. The ammonia is poisonous to the hens. I have kept hens in the past. They are foragers that live in a flock. They cleanse themselves with dust baths. Being locked in cages robs them of the right to be the animal they were born to be. They are slaves to a cruel industry.

Please read the following from <https://www.aussieeggs.com/facts/battery-cages>

Battery cages in Australia

Currently in Australia, 11-12 million 'battery' hens are confined to small wire cages in which they are unable to perform most of their natural behaviours, confined row after row in large sheds with thousands, or even hundreds of thousands, of other hens.

The space allocation for each bird is less than the size of a piece of A4 paper and cages are only 40 cm high. Small cages mean hens are unable to stretch out, flap their wings or exercise properly. These birds spend their time continually standing on sloping wire floors designed to facilitate egg collection; many experience chronic pain from the development of lesions and other foot problems.

Scientific studies indicate that battery hens suffer intensely and continuously all the time they are confined in cages. Restricted movement, constant exposure to a wire floor and lack of perches lead to serious bone and muscle weakness.

Hens cannot express normal behaviours such as wing flapping, scratching, dust bathing, perching and foraging.

Caged hens cannot have a normal 'personal space' so they cannot escape aggression from other hens.

Cages have no nesting area — nesting before and during egg laying is a priority for hens and this deficiency really frustrates them.

The egg industry argues that the high laying rates in battery cages indicate healthy, productive hens. However, the overwhelming consensus among animal welfare experts is that the welfare of hens is severely compromised. A detailed European report makes a clear case against battery cages: <http://www.laywel.eu/>.

Please read the following from <https://www.aussieeggs.com/facts/hens>

Facts about layer hens

Egg-laying hens are highly social animals with complex cognitive abilities, who want to live just as much as we do.

Hens can distinguish between more than 100 faces of their own species. In barn-laid and free range egg farming systems, where they are placed with thousands of other birds, this ability is rendered useless.

They form complex social structures known as "pecking orders," and every hen knows her place on the social ladder. Again, barn-laid and free range egg farming systems restrict these social interactions and result in distress and confusion.

Hens have full-colour vision.

Hens love to sun-bathe and dust-bathe. Some free range systems allow for this, but most egg farming in Australia restricts this ability.

Hens experience rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, which means they dream just like we do.

They have pain receptors that give them the ability to feel pain and distress.

Hens defend their young from predators and have more than 30 types of vocalizations to distinguish between threats.

Hens are just like human mothers who talk to their babies in the womb—a mother hen begins to teach calls to her chicks before they even hatch.

Please watch the following film <https://www.dominionmovement.com/watch> for visual evidence of Australia's appalling industry standards. The battery cage section can be viewed from 26 minutes and 22 seconds.

Please legislate to end the cruel practices of the battery cage egg industry.

Yours sincerely,

Justin Morgan