

**Submission
No 300**

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

Name: Ms Georgina Hedges

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Parliament of New South Wales

Dear miss Tina Higgins,

I am a seventeen-year-old animal rights activist from Sydney, Australia.

Animals are beings I have always loved and respected, having many myself and growing up around them. Through what I have learned about animal agriculture over the past few months to a year as an activist, I have had to come to terms with the harsh truth that there is constant animal abuse re-occurring on a daily basis in our own backyards. Educating others on what they can do to help, prevent, and spread awareness of such an issue in our country are only some of the things I strive to do to help these poor animals, not only on a weekly but daily basis.

Something I have come to learn about the egg industry in Australia is that the battery hens are not at all living in acceptable conditions. Chickens are supposed to be able to live outdoors, to breathe fresh air, to be able to spread their wings when and where they want, to not be debeaked at one to two days old in a painful manner, or be debeaked at all for that matter. Even in free range egg factories, the male chicks are thrown into meat grinders and gas chambers on their very first day of life simply because they were born male and cannot produce eggs as female chickens can.

The cages of which the battery hens spend their lives are nothing less than barbaric and cruel. Hens in battery cages spend their lives in artificially lit surroundings designed to maximize laying activity. Each hen has anywhere between 3 and 20 cage mates. Each hen can be allocated space less than that of an A4 sized piece of paper. This is insufficient room to act on natural instincts and behaviors like wing flapping, grooming, preening, stretching, foraging and dust bathing. This has a drastic impact on their psychological and physical abilities. Due to being confined for so long in such small areas, the hens' muscles grow weak to the point where they cannot even bring themselves to stand up. This is absolutely wrong and it is a violation of these sentient beings' rights.

The term 'free-range eggs' or 'free range living' gives off the illusion that the chickens are living outdoors having the opportunity to scratch, walk and sit wherever they like, perhaps in the grass or in some hay/straw. However, the truth is that free range eggs are a myth. It's an idea based off lies to give people comfort whilst they unknowingly purchase products that are a result of these beings' suffering, torture, and confinement. By slapping "free range" on the egg carton label, consumers never realize how the eggs came to be in the box. Free-range sheds contain up to nine birds per square meter, which would be the same as 14 adults living in a one-room flat.

As a fellow female, I am kindly and desperately pleading you to reconsider the conditions these female beings are living in. They have their basic rights stripped from them simply because of the body they have been born into and because they can produce a product which is of mass demand. We speak so much in today's society of female rights and to stop females continuously being oppressed and treated as they are less than something special - and I firmly believe that we should extend those beliefs to other both female and male sentient beings, regardless of species.

This is a topic I am extremely motivated and dedicated to spreading awareness about and will continue to do so until it is fixed and these animals have their rights.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

With peace and love,

Georgina Hedges