

**Submission
No 330**

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

Name: Ms Diane Kastel

Date Received: 5 July 2019

Dear Committee members:

We are submitting our submission to the Senate inquiry! Our family cares about the welfare of egg-laying hens, and, ending the use of cruel battery cages in Australia!

It is important to note that this issue is not just about animal welfare! It is also about trust in Australian agriculture, and, livestock production, more broadly! Cruel, and, archaic, systems like the battery cage taint the reputations of all Australian farmers, and, farming sectors, and, have no place in the future of sustainable agriculture!

Right now, a landmark opportunity is taking place in NSW!

The "NSW Parliament" is holding a special inquiry into how eggs are produced in the State, and, particularly, whether battery cages should still be used?

Soon, NSW (and, every other state, and, territory) will decide whether to proceed with a phase-out of battery cages under new national poultry standards!

So it is more important than ever that the "NSW Government" understands Australians do not support the use of battery cages in egg production!

And, of course, neither does the science!

These intelligent, curious, and, social, layer hens deserve a better life!

Right now, 11 million hens are suffering miserably in cramped, barren, filthy, wire cages across the country!

Will NSW be the first Australian state to bring its egg industry into the 21st century, and, phase out battery cages under the new standards?

Will NSW lead Australia in reflecting the science, and, improving farm animal welfare in line with community expectations?

Or, will they fall behind?

Let us show the "NSW Government" that the future of egg farming is cage-free!

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our views on the use of battery cages in NSW!

Animal welfare is very important to our family! All animals deserve to be treated with kindness, and, respect, especially those we use to produce our food, and, fiber!

It is, therefore, shocking to us that in 2019, we are still allowing hens to be confined to barren battery cages! In these cages, hens have the equivalent of an A4-size sheet of paper in floor space on which to live for the duration of their lives! Not only can they not perform normal behaviors like nesting, foraging, scratching, and dust bathing, they cannot even extend their wings!

This is cruel and abusive, and, the science proves it! Hens in battery cages suffer from:

- * extreme behavioral deprivation!
- * the highest rates of disuse osteoporosis (brittle bones)!

- * the highest rates of bone fractures at depopulation! and,
- * the highest rates of non-infectious diseases such as fatty liver disease!

All of these health, and, welfare, problems are associated with the battery cage system itself! They cannot be addressed through good management!

The abundance of scientific literature on this topic has led the "European Union Scientific Veterinary Commission", the "National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee of New Zealand", and, the "National Farm Animal Care Council of Canada" to conclude that battery cages cannot meet the welfare needs of hens, and, must be phased out!

Battery cages have now been phased out of all 28 nations of the European Union, several U.S. states, including the largest egg-producing state of California, and, are in the process of being phased out in New Zealand, and, Canada!

International food businesses including major Australian, and, international brands are also moving ahead! "Arnott's", "McDonalds", "Hungry Jacks", "Subway", "Nando's", "Oporto", "Coles", "Woolworths", "Aldi", "Harris Farm Markets", "Ikea", "Kellogg's", "Compass Group", "Mars", "Nestle", "PepsiCo" and "Unilever", have all committed to putting battery cage-free eggs on their shelves, and, in their products!

All of these developments show that it is entirely feasible to produce safe, affordable, nutritious, eggs without the cruelty of battery cages! Our family wants to see the "NSW Government" act on the scientific evidence, and, the community's expectations, on animal welfare, and, commence an immediate phase out!

Thank you for considering our submission! We look forward to seeing decisive action from the "NSW Government" on this issue!

Kind regards,
DIANE KASTEL