

**Submission
No 365**

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

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Committee Members

It is beyond belief that in the year 2019 in a “modern, forward thinking” nation such as Australia, hens can be made to live out their shortened lives in Battery Cages that give them a living space smaller than the area of an A4 sheet of paper.

Countless scientific studies both here and abroad have shown the very social nature of hens. They are remarkably intelligent and can identify up to 30 of their kind, they form complex social groups and, as humans, have deep emotions including fear, anxiety, boredom, frustration, discomfort and distress.

It is indisputable that Battery Cage egg production falls hopelessly short of any acceptable standard for the welfare of these sentient creatures. It is also an indisputable fact that all Battery Cage eggs are produced in circumstances where hens struggle for personal space, are forced to live on bare wire flooring, seldom see sunlight, and are denied all of their natural needs to roost, nest, dust bathe, socialise and nurture their young.

According to newspaper reports over past years, there have been cases where members of the Australian Battery Cage egg industry have been and fined for various offences in the marketing of their product. Feel good terms such as ‘cage free’ barn raised’ and ‘free range’ sometimes mean nothing, could be used to confuse the consumer, and may have zero positive welfare outcomes for Battery Cage hens. This is an industry that should not be trusted and one that appears to show very little interest in upholding ethical welfare standards for hens. Debeaking without pain relief with its horrific long term consequences, forced moulting, maceration, killing of male chicks and other similar practices appear to be the order of the day. Producer-led industry reform has proved to be a dismal failure.

An industry system that makes its living on the abject misery of millions of sentient beings has no place in any modern society.

There are, of course, egg producers who cannot be categorised wholly in this way and who try to do the right thing, but regrettably they appear to be in the minority.

Positive steps have already been taken to ban or phase out Battery Cages in many countries around the world including New Zealand, Switzerland, Sweden, and Austria, at least four States of the USA and most other nations of the EU.

Similarly, many international companies have already or are planning to remove Cage Eggs from their businesses, although some large Australian companies are painfully slow to act positively.

Independent scientific research and widespread community expectations demand that these abhorrent inhumane Battery Cages be consigned to the scrap heap.

My view is that Australian Governments, both Federal and State, have been too slow to act, but it is now it is time for New South Wales to show the way and commence the immediate phase out of the use of these barren Battery Cages and relieve the suffering of millions of Battery Hens.

Thank you for your positive action.

Rod Tetlow

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