

**Submission
No 371**

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

Name: Dr Richard Lauder

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Dear Legislative Council Select Committee on the Use of Battery Cages for Hens in the Egg Production Industry,

I thank you for considering this submission.

Myself and my partner are the lucky guardians of 20 lovely little hens. Each of them is a unique sentient being that exhibits a full range of emotions from love and affection to fear, jealousy and anxiety. The eldest of our flock are now almost 5-years old and with appropriate vet care will have many healthy years ahead of them still. Just today I watched some of them as they sunbathed and enjoyed a dirt-bath, purring with contentment as they did so. For hens this is how they would choose to live.

The fact that millions of hens, just like our girls, are kept in cages for the farmed production of eggs is something that deeply saddens me. The hens kept in these conditions have the same wants and needs as our flock and should be allowed the basic necessities of sunlight, open space and the possibility to just be a chicken. The reality of intensive battery cage farming fails to meet my expectations and fails to meet the NSW community's expectations. This farming practice should end in NSW.

The Australian Senate recommended the prohibition of battery cages in 1999. This action is now long overdue. In NSW, poultry welfare standards should reflect modern management practices which take proper and genuine account of welfare in a transparent fashion, free from bias.

There are many examples globally for keeping hens for egg production that are successful, profitable practices that place animal welfare as a priority. An example of a modern management system that should guide the aspirations of NSW policy lies in the Netherlands as can be seen here: <http://www.rondeeleieren.nl/en/> You will notice that this egg farm has web cam access allowing the purchasing public to observe the conditions in which the hens are kept. If this can be done in the Netherlands, why can it not be done in NSW?

Australia is lagging comparable nations regarding commitment to animal welfare. The Animal Protection Index, a comprehensive assessment of animal welfare for 50 nations rates Australia as a 'C', while New Zealand and the UK, both rated an 'A'. It is our duty to rectify this failing and to put in action plans that will see Australia rated equally to countries like the UK and New Zealand. One such plan would be the removal of battery cages for hens in the egg production industry in NSW and I strongly recommend that this is what we should do.