

**Submission
No 375**

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

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Draft personal submission to Committee of Inquiry into battery cages

Submission to the Legislative Council Select Committee on the Use of Battery Cages for Hens
in the Egg Production Industry:

Inquiry into the Use of Battery Cages for Hens in the Egg Production Industry

I am entirely opposed to production of eggs via battery and object to any system of production that does not allow hens to express natural behaviour and have access to sunlight, outdoors and safe shelter. Systems should also be transparent and clear as to their conditions and slaughter should be regulated and humane.

Overseas countries that we would want to compare ourselves to, such as Canada and NZ and the countries of the EU have recognised how inhumane traditional caged egg production is and instead have acted to phase it out or ban it.

Public sentiment in Australia is against caging of hens for egg production as demonstrated by major increase in offer of 'free range eggs' in supermarkets, notwithstanding that the current regulation and standards for this labelling are inadequate.

Australia's action to date has been a weak and often ineffectual response to negative public reaction against the egg industry. Those producers who do seek to provide true free range conditions are at a disadvantage when many others promote themselves as 'free range' but in actuality, still operate highly intense systems where hens are subject to horrific conditions that lead to skin lesions and burnt eyes and feet, broken bones, and no opportunity to scratch in the soil or display nesting and social behaviours. This situation clearly undermines the economics of ethical animal production and operates to place ethical producers at a disadvantage.

This is not good enough and any outcome needs to give clear direction to achieve true free range conditions that are monitored and transparent, with regulation and enforcement of humane slaughter.

The current codes of practice act to legitimise cruelty in order to provide for the continuance of factory farming that gives no consideration to the capacity of hens to suffer. The attempts by the industry to cite science as a basis for continuing to use battery cages in egg production are at best outdated and more likely calculated to be misleading. The views of society are changing and regulation of the industry needs to change to give hens used in egg production a reasonable life, however short that life may be.