

**Submission
No 434**

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

Name: Ms Julie Power

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My experience with hens arises from my experience in receiving hens who have lived in battery cages to spend the remainder of their life, post approximately 12 months of age, in my backyard. The lucky ones. They arrive scarcely able to walk and their bodies missing most of their feathers. With time they thrive in a natural environment, able to forage, have dust baths, scratch, run, chase, chatter with each other, lie in the sun, lay their eggs where they feel safe, enjoy each others company. All natural behaviours with a positive impact on their natural environment.

Some of those hens have lived for more than two years, but generally their early deprivations have meant they have not survived for a year after their release from cages, the toll of laying eggs daily being too severe on their body, and tumours developing that have resulted in veterinary advice that the most humane thing is to euthanise them.

It horrifies me to think of them deprived of natural light, without room to move, squashed into a cage, unable even to drink deeply, living in a metal cage.

It is cruel and unnatural and must be banned.

My first exposure to how battery hens live was from seeing an image on a poster 30 years ago and I have always purchased free range eggs and insisted my friends and family do the same. I don't know anybody who purchases cage eggs, regardless of that Parliament should show leadership and outlaw this cruel practice against these lively creatures. I would argue the use of battery cages goes against community standards.

I would argue that any farming of eggs should allow them to practice their natural behaviours. I would argue egg farming should be transparent and that consumers should see exactly the conditions the hens live in who produce their eggs.

I think standards must be legislated and no less and penalties applied for not complying that reflect animal cruelty where it exists.

Thank you for your consideration of my submission.