

**Submission  
No 448**

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

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To the committee,

As a small business owner and person living in regional Australia I understand that disruption of any industry can come with added costs and disruptions. As a veterinarian I have extensive experience in a wide range of intensive and extensive animal industries covering poultry, pork, beef, dairy, horse racing, and sheep wool and meat production.

The two priorities of economic forces, and animal welfare are often put against each other, and the example of battery laying for hens is a classic one. The arguments for battery farming are at their core economic.

Whenever we use animals, we have a responsibility to become custodians for their welfare. Battery hen farming is detrimental to animal welfare in nearly every way. The birds are unable to express normal behaviour, they are pushed to the edges of the physiologic capabilities, and their social interactions are limited and stunted.

There are flaws with barn raised hens - their welfare has issues, and similarly with free-range hens - the standards on farm are lax and enforcement has challenges. These are not reasons to promote battery hens - these are reasons to improve those better options (free-range). There is no argument that battery hens have poor welfare.

In considering options, the committee would have come across the concept of the five freedoms. These freedoms are offered to horses in a paddock, free range hens, sheep, beef, dairy cows, and many other farming enterprises. Cage hens in a country such as ours with our abundant space is not necessary. We do not need to sacrifice animal welfare for egg production, so why are we still doing it?

In short, I am opposed to battery hens and meat production, and would like to see them phased out.