

**Submission  
No 486**

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

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Dear Committee members,

For many years, while living on acreage, we would buy hens from a local battery farm during its annual cull. Visiting this place was depressing. To see these intelligent animals whose behaviour involves constant movement, foraging and nesting confined to a shared cage, surrounded by faeces and unable to even stretch their wings, was confronting to say the least. The smell appalling. For us, there was no greater joy than releasing the hens on our property and watching them adapt. Without exception, their first act was to take a dust bath. This was over 30 years ago. That this practice is still allowed in 2019 despite community opposition is unbelievable. Consider the rise of people prepared to pay a premium for free range eggs.

The suffering of hens is not limited to their inability to perform their normal behaviour, but as science as shown, suffer from debilitating diseases: brittle bones, bone fractures and non infectious diseases.

If we are going to use animals then we have a duty of care to their welfare. This is the community's expectations, which is why we have laws setting out acceptable animal welfare standards. To quote the RSPCA:

The abundance of scientific literature on this topic has led the European Union Scientific Veterinary Commission, the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee of New Zealand, and the National Farm Animal Care Council of Canada to conclude that battery cages cannot meet the welfare needs of hens and must be phased out.

Battery cages have now been phased out of all 28 nations of the European Union, several US states including the largest egg-producing state of California, and are in the process of being phased out in New Zealand and Canada.

International food businesses including major Australian and international brands are also moving ahead. Arnott's, McDonalds, Hungry Jacks, Subway, Nando's, Oporto, Coles, Woolworths, Aldi, Harris Farm Markets, Ikea, Kellogg's, Compass Group, Mars, Nestle, PepsiCo and Unilever, have all committed to putting battery cage-free eggs on their shelves and in their products.

Battery farming can and must be phased out. Australia prides itself on its clean, green image in farming, an image used in its search for export markets. Battery cages do not fit this image. There is also a rising global awareness about the treatment of farm animals and the environmental effects of factory farming, which has seen people boycott businesses which fail to meet basic animal welfare standards.

It's time to open the cages.

With thanks

best wishes

Delfina Manor