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Next Tuesday: High Court to hear slaughterhouse cruelty / press freedom case

The final hearing in the two-year battle between an animal protection organisation and the Victorian slaughterhouse it caught illegally abusing goats, will take place in the High Court in Canberra **next week, Tuesday 5 May**.

Footage captured covertly by Farm Transparency Project (FTP) over approximately ten days in early 2024, revealing daily breaches of animal welfare legislation at the Game Meats Company slaughterhouse in Eurobin, Victoria, was reported to the federal Department of Agriculture on 3 May 2024. Rather than investigating the complaint, the department tipped off the slaughterhouse management, leading to a court-ordered injunction blocking publication of the footage. Hours-worth of videos published by FTP shortly before being served with the court order were forced to be removed.

While a permanent injunction was denied at trial, an appeal to the full Federal Court resulted in the unprecedented order that copyright over the video evidence be assigned to the perpetrator, and all copies deleted. A special leave application filed by FTP for the matter to be heard by the High Court was granted in December 2025.

The Human Rights Legal Centre (HRLC) and the Alliance for Journalists Freedom (AJF) have been accepted by the court as *amicus curiae*.

Chris Delforce, Executive Director, Farm Transparency Project, said:

"The Federal Court ruling prioritises private commercial interests above the public interest. It allows for any company found to be engaged in wrongdoing or illegal activity to shield itself from any consequences, if the evidence was the result of someone jumping a fence (or in this case, crawling under one) to film it. This would grind all animal cruelty investigations in Australia to a halt, because of course, no business that profits from animal cruelty would ever willingly allow their practices to be filmed and published; almost every animal cruelty scandal in recent decades in Australia has come about in similar circumstances."

"More broadly, journalists often rely on material sourced in a way that courts might consider to be wrongdoing, whether that's trespass or otherwise, and already face an environment where the slightest hint or risk of litigation is enough for editors and legal teams to shut down important stories. This ruling makes it even more difficult for the public to hear about what happens behind closed doors, not just of farms and slaughterhouses, but any business dependent on secrecy."

"The public has a right to know what kind of horrific cruelty they're paying for when they buy animal products."

Facilities related to this media release:
Game Meats Company Slaughterhouse, Eurobin VIC

Campaigns related to this media release:
Right to Know: the Game Meats Cruelty Case
Shut down slaughterhouses

Farm Transparency Project (FTP) is a non-profit animal protection charity, dedicated to ending the abuse and exploitation of animals in farms, slaughterhouses and other commercial settings. Through comprehensive investigations, documentary films, and the creation of innovative tools and resources, FTP seeks to force industry transparency and educate consumers by shining a light on the brutal reality endured by animals in the name of profit.