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15 animal activists charged over April slaughterhouse occupation, as pig welfare inquiry looms



- **15 animal activists have been charged with trespass, seven months after they occupied a Benalla slaughterhouse in a protest against the use of gas chambers in pig slaughterhouses.**
- **The protest, which happened on April 13th, was in response to an investigation of three Victorian pig slaughterhouses, which revealed pigs screaming, thrashing and gasping for air inside carbon dioxide gas chambers.**
- **Seven protestors were arrested and charged on the day, while the remaining 15 were allowed to leave voluntarily, after chains and other devices they were using to lock-on were removed by police.**

15 animal rights protestors have been charged with trespass after shutting down operations at a Benalla slaughterhouse in April this year. The protest was in response to footage released by animal protection group Farm Transparency Project, which showed pigs screaming, thrashing and gasping for air inside carbon dioxide gas chambers at Victoria's three largest pig slaughterhouses.

Seven protestors, including the founder of Farm Transparency Project, Chris Delforce, were arrested and charged at the protest and have already faced court. No convictions were recorded for any of the defendants.

Delforce says that the decision to charge the remaining protestors seven months after the shutdown, is a petty move by the slaughterhouse and Benalla police.

"What is happening here is that the police have failed to make a compelling case against any of the seven people who they arrested on the day. While we're aware that we broke the law by entering Benalla slaughterhouse and locking ourselves to the gas chamber used to painfully suffocate pigs, we felt that this was the only option we could take given the severity of the footage and blatant refusals from Australian Pork Limited and the Federal Department of Agriculture to meet with us. In court, the police failed to provide evidence to justify the harsh penalties they were pushing for."

"Since our investigation we've seen the initiation of a Victorian Parliamentary inquiry, which will begin shortly. We've also seen one of the slaughterhouses we exposed voluntarily shut its doors, after Victorian regulator PrimeSafe mandated that it install CCTV cameras inside its gas chamber. Just last week, it was revealed that Benalla slaughterhouse has also been ordered to install more CCTV cameras in areas that were previously unmonitored. This kind of scrutiny is exactly what the Australian pork industry has been avoiding for decades and we're not surprised that they're reacting by coming after the peaceful protestors who knocked over their whole house of cards."

Public submissions for the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry Into Pig Welfare are expected to open soon.

Delforce says that they refuse to be intimidated by heavy-handed policing.

"Ultimately, we know that revealing the reality of what happens inside Australian slaughterhouses is in the best interests of the public. We don't plan to stop any time soon."

More information

Weekly Times - Gas chamber video leads to charges against pig abattoir
www.bangaschambers.org.au

Seven protesters charged with trespass following alleged break-in at Benalla abattoir - ABC News

Facilities related to this media release:
Benalla Abattoir, Benalla VIC
JBS Pork Australia (formerly Diamond Valley Pork), Laverton North VIC
Australian Food Group (AFG) Abattoir, Laverton North VIC

Campaigns related to this media release:
Shut down slaughterhouses
Ban gas chambers
Aussie Abattoirs

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.