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Open letter to Prime Minister, signed by senator and state MPs, calls for independent regulation of animal slaughter

- **Senator Mehreen Faruqi, Cassy O'Connor and Abigail Boyd join state MPs to call for independent oversight of Australian slaughterhouses**
- **Farm Transparency Project, who wrote the letter, says that the government has failed to appropriately investigate hundreds of cases of alleged animal cruelty.**
- **The organisation is accusing the government department of corruption, claiming that their actions have raised doubts about their integrity and suitability to monitor and regulate animal welfare.**

Read the open letter

View photos and footage

An open letter, signed by a senator, several state MPs and animal protection organisations, is calling on the Prime Minister's office to initiate and support the development of an independent office of animal welfare, which would replace the federal Department of Agriculture as the national regulator for Australia's export abattoirs.

The letter was written by animal protection organisation Farm Transparency Project, and references what they refer to as a lack of accountability and an "unsuitability of the Department of Agriculture to act as the national animal welfare authority."

Farm Transparency Project has covertly investigated and reported breaches of animal welfare standards at 19 Australian slaughterhouses since January last year. The organisation has released footage from all of these facilities on their website.

Seven of these have been export accredited, meaning that they are licensed and regulated by the federal Department of Agriculture. The organisation claims that all facilities they have investigated have been in breach of the law and that the government's response to reports and complaints has been inadequate and, at times, deeply concerning and blatantly corrupt.

Senator Mehreen Faruqi signed the letter on behalf of the Australian Greens party and made the following statement.

"Animals are sentient beings yet they are made to suffer for corporate profits whether it's the gambling and racing industry or factory farming. Cruelty cannot be allowed to remain part of the cost of doing business. The Greens have long called for the government to establish strong national animal welfare laws and an independent office of animal welfare. It's way past time to make this happen."

Cassy O'Connor MLC, who signed the open letter on behalf of the Tasmanian Greens Party, said that "what's happening in slaughterhouses - out of public sight and mind, and often beyond the regulator's reach – is obscene cruelty."

"With governments failing to strengthen animal welfare standards in these places, the work of the Farm Transparency Project is vital. Now Tasmanians, for example, have a much clearer understanding of the brutal methods used by many on-island abattoir operators, and they are horrified."

"Voiceless animals deserve humane treatment, and the community expects a much higher welfare standard. Independent oversight, monitoring and enforcement are urgently needed."

Abigail Boyd, Greens NSW MP and Spokesperson for Animal Welfare, said regarding the letter that:

"In the absence of a robust independent body to oversee animals and their welfare, Big Ag has been left to carry out horrific practices of animal cruelty and exploitation away from the public's eye. Farm Transparency Project's work has been critical in exposing the reality of commercial animal farming and slaughter practices. They have consistently called out government failure to act, and the Greens are proud to support their calls. Championing an independent office of animal welfare has been core Greens policy for over a decade, and we have long advocated to mandate independently accessible CCTV surveillance in all abattoirs, knackeries and slaughterhouses."

Farm Transparency Project spokesperson and the author of the letter, Harley McDonald-Eckersall, says that they decided something urgent needed to change after the Department was revealed to have tipped off a slaughterhouse about an animal welfare complaint, before launching a formal investigation.

"It is deeply troubling to us that, when presented with evidence of significant animal suffering at the Game Meats Company slaughterhouse - including animals being killed while fully conscious and workers striking live animals with hands and objects - email records show that, the government's first priority was to warn the slaughterhouse about a formal complaint and the resulting media interest.This allowed the Game Meats Company to take legal action against us, forcing us to remove footage

captured at the facility while we await the judgement of a lengthy trial. It also sent a strong message to media organisations who wished to cover the cruelty and were threatened with lawsuits if they were to use any footage captured of animals being killed."

Facilities related to this media release:
JBS Pork Australia (formerly Diamond Valley Pork), Laverton North VIC
Corowa Slaughterhouse, Redlands NSW
Tasmanian Quality Meats (TQM), Cressy TAS
Ralphs Meat Co, Seymour VIC
Game Meats Company Slaughterhouse, Eurobin VIC
MD Foods Australia, Echuca VIC
Cedar Meats, Brooklyn VIC

Campaigns related to this media release:
Right to Know: the Game Meats Cruelty Case
End Dairy Slaughter
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.