

## **Major loss for press freedom: Federal Court grants injunction to block slaughterhouse cruelty footage**

- **The Full Court of the Federal Court has allowed an appeal from the Game Meats Company slaughterhouse, ordering a permanent restraint on the publication of footage depicting animal cruelty and illegal activity at the company's facility in Eurobin, Victoria, which was illegally obtained by animal protection organisation Farm Transparency Project last year.**
- **The court granted copyright of the footage to the slaughterhouse, setting a new legal precedent likely to have wide-reaching ramifications for press freedom and political discourse over public interest matters. Farm Transparency Project has been ordered to destroy all copies of the footage.**
- **The appeal was launched by the slaughterhouse after the primary decision, delivered in December, elected not to grant a permanent injunction to block the footage.**



A permanent injunction has been granted in a landmark case which has implications for the future of public interest reporting in Australia.

The Full Court of the Federal Court of Australia delivered its judgement today in the Game Meats Company v. Farm Transparency Project case, choosing to allow an appeal which would permanently restrain Farm Transparency Project from publishing footage obtained using covert cameras, installed at the Game Meats Company Slaughterhouse last year. The footage, which depicted the slaughter of goats at the facility and which revealed numerous and daily breaches of animal welfare, has been ordered to be destroyed within 7 days.

The court upheld the Game Meats Company's argument that it should be granted copyright over the footage, setting a new legal precedent affecting footage obtained of commercial activities on private land.

A permanent injunction was initially rejected by the Federal Court, leading to this appeal launched by the slaughterhouse.

Farm Transparency Project's directors, Chris Delforce and Harley McDonald-Eckersall, who both gave evidence in the original trial as to their role in capturing the shocking footage, say that their team have serious concerns about what this judgment will mean for the future of transparency in Australia.

"On matters of law, we respect the court's expertise. But this case has always gone beyond that. The fact that the Game Meats Company has pushed this case through a six day trial and an appeal in one of the highest courts of Australia, simply to prevent footage from being published which shows their normal business operations, is absolutely condemnable. Now their cowardly actions have led to a wide-reaching legal precedent which will affect press freedoms and the rights of whistleblowers across the country."

"This trial has always been about the public's right to know what happens to the animals who are bred and killed for food. Today it was confirmed that, in the eyes of the law, the transparency the animal slaughter industry loves to brag about in their marketing campaigns is nothing but a smokescreen, designed to hide their real actions from the public."

"We're currently exploring options to appeal this decision to the High Court, however, no matter the judgment today or in the future, we will continue to expose the reality of what happens to animals behind closed doors, regardless of the industry's fears - expressed quite unambiguously by GMC in this case - about how damaging such footage might be for their reputation."

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