



22 JULY 2019

Statement in Response to Proposed NSW Biosecurity Laws Targeting Activists

The NSW Government has today announced proposed amendments to the Biosecurity Act (2015), introducing on-the-spot fines of up to \$220,000 for individuals, or \$400,000 for organisations, who trespass inside factory farms and slaughterhouses to gather footage or to protest.

Once again, the issue of biosecurity is being used as an excuse to attempt to limit consumer awareness of the systemic cruelty occurring in farms and slaughterhouses across the country.

There has not been a single incident of a biosecurity hazard caused by activists, despite hundreds of investigations into farms and slaughterhouses by activists over the last 40 years.

Those investigations have revealed countless atrocities that would otherwise still be an industry secret:

- Live-baiting in the greyhound racing industry
- The maceration (blending) of live male chicks in the egg industry, because they won't ever be able to lay eggs
- The slaughter of five-day-old male calves in the dairy industry because they won't ever be able to produce milk, and female calves who are in excess of the farm's needs
- The use of excruciating carbon dioxide gas chambers in all major pig slaughterhouses, previously touted by the industry as 'humane', and also for the killing of 'unviable' chicks in the broiler (meat) chicken industry, and 'spent' hens in the egg industry whose egg-laying has slowed
- Repeated failure of stunning methods at numerous slaughterhouses
- Routine mutilation of young piglets, lambs, goats, calves and chicks, without anaesthetic

Furthermore, factory farms are not biosecure environments. They are in almost all cases, plagued by rats, mice, birds, cats, mosquitoes, cockroaches, and all manner of disease-carrying animals, who freely come and go. An outbreak of avian influenza at a Young free range egg farm in 2013, believed to be contracted from wild ducks, spread to a nearby caged facility and led to the culling of over 400,000 farmed hens. It then also spread to a second caged egg farm.

With farms containing hundreds of thousands, sometimes millions, of animals, living in their own excrement, conditions are rife for the rapid spread of disease; it is impossible with only a handful of workers to provide individual vet care or to identify and then isolate/quarantine those affected. This is a problem inherent to intensive farming. To use it as an excuse to prevent these operations being filmed and seen by the Australian public is absurd.

It is important to note also that the Biosecurity Act, which came into effect in 2017, [is already extremely aggressive](#):

- Imposes fines of up to \$1.2mil, or imprisonment for 3 years, for individuals who trespass on farms or slaughterhouses to gather footage or protest
- Requires organisations who have footage or photographs inside farms or slaughterhouses, or even knowledge of those materials' existence, to immediately notify authorities,



preventing longer investigations or campaigns that would demonstrate the systemic nature of the issues

- Removes individuals' right to silence when being questioned over the gathering of footage or photographs inside farms and slaughterhouses

While these amendments have been proposed in the context of recent protest actions inside factory farms and slaughterhouses across Australia, there have only been two of these incidents in NSW in recent years. One of these occurred as a result of the RSPCA refusing to assist 4000 suffering hens at a free range egg farm, who had been withheld food and water in a 'forced moult' to increase laying frequency, a common industry practice. The other protest incident was at a slaughterhouse, where the excuse of 'preventing animals being killed by disease' is surely not applicable to those who are seconds from having their throats cut.

Clearly, these protest actions are being used as a smokescreen to stem the tide of footage and photographs which have been, for many years, a source of great embarrassment and reputation damage for industries that engage in commercialised animal cruelty. Were these industries transparent and honest about what happens inside these facilities, there'd be no need for anyone to take it upon themselves to capture evidence of it.

Chris Delforce
Executive Director, Aussie Farms Inc



BACKGROUND – AUSSIE FARMS

Aussie Farms is an animal rights charity, dedicating to ending commercialised animal abuse and exploitation in Australian animal agriculture facilities by increasing industry transparency and educating the public about modern farming and slaughtering practices.

Established in 2014 with the release of [world-first footage of the carbon dioxide gas chambers](#) used in pig slaughterhouses.

In January 2019, Aussie farms published a map of thousands of factory farms, slaughterhouses, and other animal exploitation facilities, available at map.aussiefarms.org.au, with extensive footage and photographs of those facilities available at www.aussiefarms.org.au and www.dominionmovement.com.

BACKGROUND – CHRIS DELFORCE

Founder of Aussie Farms, Chris has written and directed two award-winning documentaries relating to the ways animals are used in the Australian economy. [Lucent \(2014\)](#) comprehensively explored Australia's pig farming industry, while [Dominion \(2018\)](#) gave the same treatment to the broader animal agriculture, clothing, and entertainment industries, using drones, hidden and handheld cameras to expose their dark underbelly, with narration by Joaquin Phoenix, Rooney Mara, Sia, Kat Von D and Sadie Sink.

Following the release of Lucent, Chris's home was raided by police, leading to Australia's first-ever "ag-gag" charges for the publication of the gas chamber footage and related footage from several NSW pig farms. The charges were ultimately dismissed at trial in August 2017.