



MEDIA RELEASE – 29 AUGUST 2019
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

‘Horrific but legal’ undercover footage from Sydney slaughterhouse released as NSW & Federal Govt seek to criminalise whistleblowing

Animal rights organisations Aussie Farms and Animals Within have released new footage captured by a hidden body-worn camera at the Picton Meatworx (formerly Wollondilly Abattoir), a multi-species slaughterhouse south of Sydney, amid efforts by the NSW and Federal Governments to severely increase penalties for activists who expose animal cruelty.

View the footage:

8 minute summary edit: <https://www.aussiefarms.org.au/videos?id=yq7rtdnf07>

25 minute full edit: <https://www.aussiefarms.org.au/videos?id=pneynwbwc9>

The footage includes: the use of excruciating carbon dioxide gas chambers on pigs, goats and sheep; repeated failure of captive bolt stunning, with one pig shot eight times while screaming in pain; twisting and breaking of cows’ tails to force them to walk into the knockbox; animals regularly witnessing those before them being killed and consequently trying to escape. It was recorded by a university student undertaking a placement at the facility as part of their animal science degree.

Chris Delforce, Executive Director of Aussie Farms and director of *Dominion*: “This is some of the most damning Australian footage I’ve ever seen, and yet, it’s completely legal. There are very minimal laws in place to protect animals in facilities like these, which is the complete opposite to what most consumers are led to believe; while there’s a general offence for animal cruelty in the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (POCTA) NSW*, farms and slaughterhouses are exempt from this if they follow basic codes of practice which effectively legalise cruelty that regular citizens wouldn’t be able to get away with.”

“The code of practice relating to slaughterhouses is only a model code, intended as non-enforceable guidelines for states and territories to develop their own legislation, but 18 years later none have done so. Even if a company was found to be engaging in cruelty not permitted under the codes of practice, the maximum penalty under POCTA is \$27,500. Meanwhile, the NSW government has introduced fines of up to \$220,000 for individuals who trespass onto farms or slaughterhouses to expose cruelty, and are now seeking to add jail terms of up to 3 years. It’s almost beyond comprehension that the act of jumping a fence to merely *film* animal abuse is somehow considered worse than committing it.”

“However, this new footage was obtained not by trespass, and not in breach of any biosecurity protocols – so would not be covered by these new laws. If John Barilaro, Adam Marshall and their federal and interstate counterparts want to bring in ag-gag laws on behalf of the industry to stifle exposure of animal agriculture facilities, they’re going to have to start being honest about it and stop hiding behind these smokescreens, otherwise activists will continue to find ways to show the public the reality of what they’re being told is ‘humane’ and ‘ethical’.”

Contacts

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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.

The map of factory farms, slaughterhouses, and other animal exploitation facilities is 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.