

MEDIA RELEASE

Shane Rattenbury MLA, ACT Greens Member for Molonglo

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ACT Greens put an end to cage egg production after almost 20 years

After 18 years and seven bills, the ACT Greens have finally won the battle to ban cage egg production and sow stalls in the ACT, said ACT Greens Member for Molonglo, Shane Rattenbury.

“In 1996, the ACT Greens presented their first bill in the ACT Legislative Assembly to outlaw the production and sale of battery cage eggs. I am so proud that today, our 7th bill presented to the Assembly on these important issues has passed and will outlaw these inhumane and outdated farming practices,” said Mr Rattenbury.

“The *Animal Welfare (Factory Farming) Bill* will ban battery cages for egg production and the use of sow stalls and gestation crates for pigs, introducing a maximum penalty on conviction of 50 units (\$7,000 for an individual or \$35,000 for a corporation).

“Battery cage farming places laying hens in horrific conditions. It is widely recognised that hens kept in battery cage systems suffer chronically, unable to exhibit usual chicken behaviour such as flapping their wings or dust bathing.

“The Bill also prohibits the removal or trimming of hens’ beaks, a common practice in the factory farming industry where the hen’s beak is removed with a hot blade or laser. Not only is this process painful and inhumane, but it can also lead to other health complications which make it painful for the bird to eat.

“A growing number of public campaigns and a high level of recent media attention have exposed the inhumane practices of factory farming. It is clear that community awareness is increasing and public expectations are growing for higher standards of food production.

“This bill represents a growing movement in the community, as consumers are better informed and able to make more humane choices when purchasing animal produce. This is reflected even in our supermarket chains, with a number now stocking free range meats and phasing out the sale of battery cage eggs.

Animals Australia Campaign Director, Lyn White, expressed her support on the bill “Animals Australia applauds the ACT Government’s landmark move to prohibit some of the cruellest farming practices which see millions of animals around Australia severely confined and denied any quality of life, purely for

commercial reasons. This legislation reflects community expectations for the treatment of animals and sets a significant precedent for other states to follow.”

Local produce farmer, Martyn Noakes from Bredbo Valley View Farm also welcomed the bill. “Prohibiting sow stalls within the ACT will have far reaching beneficial effects on the welfare of pigs beyond the ACTs borders; there is no need for sow stalls, caged birds or feed lots. This legislation is a step forward in changing the way we all think about the way all our food is produced.”

“In 2010 the ACT Greens introduced egg labelling legislation to force supermarkets to clearly identify which eggs were free range, barn and battery caged. This was a progressive step to assist consumers in making more informed choices when purchasing eggs,” said Mr Rattenbury.

“This legislation not only sets a higher standard for food production, but also aims to help producers and consumers think more broadly about food production,” said Mr Rattenbury.

Statement ends

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