

Confronting campaign puts animal cruelty case

Jonathan Swan
February 20, 2012

[Read later](#)



The Voiceless advertising campaign

PIGS and chickens raised on Australian factory farms are held in worse conditions than European animals and a new campaign aims to change that using confronting imagery.

Australia lags the European Union, which over the past decade has passed the world's toughest animal cruelty laws. They include banning the most cramped battery cages for hens and making it more difficult for farmers to tie up, castrate and slice the tails off pigs.

Guidelines for factory farming in Australia allow a hen to be kept in an area smaller than a sheet of A4 paper.

"If I treated a dog the way pigs and chickens are treated on these farms, I'd likely be prosecuted," Weaving says.

The advertisements feature squealing pigs crammed into dirty stalls and a dead chicken being given an autopsy.

Their strategy is to make the public "emotional" about the plight of factory-farmed animals and direct that emotion towards politicians, Dana Campbell, chief executive of Voiceless, said.



Cooped up ... an image from a Voiceless street poster



"We all know how politics works; it's not going to go anywhere unless politicians know there are votes behind those opinions," Ms Campbell said.

Channels Nine and Seven have promised Voiceless free TV ad spots, and Ms Campbell is talking to GetUp! about continuing the campaign over the coming months.

She said that Australian animal law has been hamstrung because the people charged with enforcing it are the same people whose job is to protect the profits of food producers.



Actor Hugo Weaving fronts the campaign by animal lobby Voiceless. It will be launched today and aims to show the hidden lives of the animals we eat.

Graeme McEwen, one of Australia's most respected animal law experts, agreed.

"Animal welfare ... is administered by the departments of primary industries," said Mr McEwen, chair of the Barristers Animal Welfare Panel, a group of more than 100 barristers from across Australia.

"It's like putting the minister for resources and mineral development in charge of climate change.

"These departments view themselves as the friend of industry. Nothing wrong with that; but they should not be in charge of animal welfare," Mr McEwen said.



Follow Environment on Twitter