

Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries
GPO Box 46
Brisbane, Qld 4001

Dear Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries

The current *Australian Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Domestic Poultry*, parts of which are regulated under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*, does not afford the same protection for chickens as they do for other animals. Consequently, every year more than 470 million chickens endure inhumane living conditions, transport and slaughter.

As a representative of concerned members of the community and as a consumer, I write this letter in the hope and expectation that the current *Australian Standards and Codes of Practice* be reviewed to better reflect community expectations and protect the welfare of broiler chickens.

Chickens are sentient beings capable of feeling pain and suffering. Each year in Australia, 470 million meat or “broiler” chickens are raised, contributing to a \$3.5 billion industry. Approximately 96 per cent of these chickens are raised in intensive conventional farming systems.

In conventional farms, up to 60,000 chickens genetically selected to gain weight are housed in barren sheds with poor air quality and dim lighting. The current *codes* not only fail to adequately protect meat chickens, they actually allow inhumane practices to happen.

At a minimum, we would like to see: decreased stocking densities; decreased genetic strain for rapid growth; enrichment; increased rest and sleep time; gas stunning prior to transport; mandatory certification for handlers, catchers and slaughterhouse staff and better reporting.

As more and more consumers learn about the suffering of chickens in conventional farms, more choose to purchase certified free-range or organic chicken as opposed to conventionally farmed.

We urge decision makers to respond to community expectations and to have chickens’ basic welfare requirements meet. Today consumers are voting at the checkout; tomorrow they will be voting at the poles.

In anticipation of your consideration, we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely

Mark Townend
Chief Executive Officer
RSPCA Queensland