



Shane Rattenbury MLA

Member for Kurrajong

Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability

Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety

Minister for Corrections

Minister for Mental Health

Animal Welfare Standards Public Consultation

C/O Ms Kathleen Plowman

Chief Executive Officer

Animal Health Australia

PO Box 5116

BRADDON ACT 2612

Dear Ms Plowman,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Poultry*. The ACT Government actively promotes high standards for animal welfare as well as opportunities for informed consumer choice.

In the ACT, there are significant protections in place for animal welfare. The *Animal Welfare Act 1992* was amended in 2014 to improve and protect animal welfare in the ACT by outlawing factory farming practices, namely battery cages for egg production. These amendments have provided greater protections for animals. Applying strict liability offences to the legislation supporting these areas has given the regulator power to ensure animals are kept and managed in a safe and healthy manner.

Since the commencement of this legislation, there have been no reports received by ACT Government or RSPCA ACT of businesses breaching the farming practices. Similarly, a flow on effect from these legislative amendments has been a better understanding in the community of the methods of egg production. This empowers the community to make informed choices when purchasing eggs.

We note that the introduction of the proposed guidelines will have implications for the *Eggs (Labelling and Sale) Act 2001* (ACT) (the Act). The Act sets out requirements about how eggs are displayed for sale and requires mandatory signage on the packaging and in supermarket displays which identifies how the laying hens are housed. Eggs from caged hens, barn hens and free range hens must be clearly labelled and separated from other types of eggs for sale.

The identified production methods are defined in accordance with the current *Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Domestic Poultry*. The mandatory signage supports ACT consumers to make informed choices which reflect community expectations about the egg industry.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia
Phone +61 2 6205 0005

GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia
Email rattenbury@act.gov.au



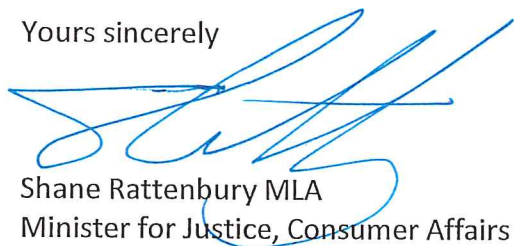
@ShaneRattenbury



shanerattenburymla

The proposed guidelines no longer make reference to criteria evidencing free-range conditions for laying hens and instead introduces generalised guidelines for caged and non-caged birds. We note that this change is inconsistent with the ACT's Egg Labelling Act and the proposed *Australian Consumer Law (Free Range Egg Labelling) Information Standard 2017* under the Australian Consumer Law. Both the Act and proposed information standard call for the clear labelling of free-range eggs to inform consumer choices. We are concerned that the guideline only addresses caged and non-caged egg production and this has implications for the ability of consumers to make fully informed choices when purchasing eggs.

Yours sincerely



Shane Rattenbury MLA
Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety



Meegan Fitzharris MLA
Minister for Transport Canberra and City Services

26 FEB 2018