

Major Tasmanian abattoir suspended and four more under investigation after animal advocacy group reveals “systemic animal abuse and regulatory breaches”

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- Animal advocacy group Farm Transparency Project has released hidden camera footage from five Tasmanian slaughterhouses, in what they're calling a comprehensive and damning indictment of the state's animal welfare regulators.
- The footage shows the slaughter of sheep, cows, deer, pigs and week-old 'bobby calves' from the dairy industry. Many animals are revealed to be killed while fully conscious, including dozens of bobby calves who are captured dying slowly over minutes as they bleed out.
- Farm Transparency Project is working with Australia's foremost animal protection group, Animals Australia, to launch a formal inquiry into animal slaughter in Tasmania, and are pushing for the closure of all five facilities.

New hidden camera footage released by Farm Transparency Project shows widespread animal cruelty and regulatory breaches across five Tasmanian slaughterhouses, accounting for over a quarter of the state's industry.

The footage, which includes the slaughter of pigs, cows, sheep, deer and week-old 'bobby calves' shows animals being killed while fully conscious, or regaining consciousness after their throat had been slit. At one facility, Tasmanian Quality Meats, dozens of calves are killed without stunning, with one drowning in blood after being dropped onto the floor while still conscious. At other facilities, animals are shot multiple times, hit, kicked and jumped on by workers to force them into the kill room. Two of the five slaughterhouses were previously reported to authorities in 2016, after a similar investigation showed violence, abuse and cruelty towards animals.

Chris Delforce, Executive Director of Farm Transparency Project says that this investigation shows “systemic animal abuse in Tasmanian slaughterhouses and a total failure of government regulators to enforce already-pitiful animal welfare standards.”

“Seven years ago, an investigation revealed horrific abuse occurring in Tasmanian abattoirs. Yet, despite formal complaints being made to authorities, no improvements have been made. In some cases, things are actually worse than ever. How are Tasmanian citizens supposed to have faith in a regulatory system which has shown such an absolute failure to protect the welfare of the animals it's intended to safeguard from cruelty?”

Delforce says that the abuse is particularly concerning as much of it occurred within view of CCTV cameras installed at the facilities, indicating a failure from regulators to monitor and enforce adherence to animal welfare standards.

“In Australia, animals are slaughtered with little to no oversight. What legal requirements do exist, go unenforced due a failure of the government and regulators to monitor what happens behind slaughterhouse walls. This secrecy is what allows slaughter industries, such as meat, dairy and eggs, to use misleading labels such as ‘humane,’ ‘world leading’ and ‘high welfare’ when referring to their practices, phrases which fall apart as soon as footage of these same practices is made available.”

Farm Transparency Project captured the footage across August and September 2023, when investigators illegally entered and installed cameras at some of Tasmania's largest slaughterhouses, including the state's largest sheep and calf slaughterhouse, Tasmanian Quality Meats, and the biggest pig slaughterhouse on the island, Scottsdale Pork. Other slaughterhouses were The Local Meat Co (formerly Kentish Quality Meats), Wal's Bulk Foods and Gretna Meatworks, all multi-species abattoirs which provide killing services for private kills and local butchers.

The group is calling on the Tasmanian government to immediately suspend the operating license of all the facilities where illegal activity has been uncovered, as well as to call a Tasmanian parliamentary inquiry into the systemic failures of slaughterhouse regulators. They are also calling for an independent review of Tasmanian slaughter methods.