

# ***One Bad Day***

The state of the Australian animal  
slaughter industry 2023-2024.



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# Executive summary

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Across 2023 and 2024, Farm Transparency Project covertly investigated over 10% of Australia's slaughterhouses, installing hidden cameras at 30 facilities in five states. Their findings, drawn from careful review of hundreds of hours of footage, show routine, systemic violence and animal abuse as well as frequent violations of state and federal legislation.

The severity and frequency of instances of extreme violence, pain and suffering call into question, a) the compatibility of Australian slaughterhouses with changing attitudes towards animal consciousness and welfare, b) the systemic culture of violence evident in Australian slaughterhouses, and c) whether the minimal existing animal welfare legislation can realistically be applied or enforced.

## Table of contents

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Table of contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Australian slaughterhouse regulation</b>	<b>4</b>
National regulation	4
State regulations	11
<b>Overview of investigations</b>	<b>12</b>
Victoria and NSW, 2023	12
South Australia, 2023	13
Tasmania, 2023	13
Victoria, 2024	14
QLD, 2024	15
NSW, 2024	16
<b>Findings</b>	<b>16</b>
Overall findings	18
Findings by State	20
Victoria	20
New South Wales	22
South Australia	24
Tasmania	25
Queensland	26
Findings by slaughterhouse type	28
Comparison between single and multi-species slaughterhouses	30
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>34</b>

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**Appendices**

Appendix 1	36
Appendix 2	36
Appendix 3	37

**36**

36

36

37

# Introduction

Over 2023 and 2024, animal protection organisation [Farm Transparency Project](#) (FTP) investigated 30 Australian slaughterhouses across five states, in Australia's largest-ever investigation into animal slaughter facilities. They installed dozens of hidden cameras, capturing hundreds of hours of footage of the slaughter of pigs, goats, cows, calves, sheep, rabbits, ducks, chickens, deer, buffalo and camels.

At every facility, FTP found evidence of illegal activity and breaches of state and federal regulations. Each slaughterhouse was reported to the relevant licensing body and published publicly on the organisation's [website](#) and social media.

From week-old calves being killed without stunning to pigs screaming in agony inside gas chambers, the footage was brutal and confronting, leading to public concern and condemnation from both animal welfare experts and state governments. Yet, few slaughterhouses were prosecuted for any recorded breaches of regulations, even in cases with clear evidence of suffering and abuse including animals being killed without stunning or remaining conscious for minutes after their throats were slit.

Australia has approximately 240 active [animal slaughterhouses](#), meaning that these investigations represent over 12% of all commercial animal slaughter in the country. This report will do what the government never did, providing a comprehensive overview of the findings of each investigation, and analysing the frequency of illegal activity and animal abuse in Australian slaughterhouses.

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Abuse and suffering in Australian slaughterhouses is not just rife, it is inherent. Behind the closed doors of these facilities, animals are being beaten, tortured and brutally killed. It is our responsibility as a society to witness their suffering and decide for ourselves whether what we see is in line with our values.

- [Harley McDonald-Eckersall, Farm Transparency Project](#)

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# Background

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Farm Transparency Project (FTP) is a non-profit [animal protection charity](#), dedicated to ending the abuse and exploitation of animals in farms, slaughterhouses and other commercial settings. Through comprehensive investigations, documentary films, and the creation of innovative tools and resources, FTP seeks to force industry transparency and educate consumers by shining a light on the brutal reality endured by animals in the name of profit.

Established under the name Aussie Farms in 2014, with the release of [world-first footage of the carbon dioxide gas chambers](#) used in pig slaughterhouses, the organisation grew from separate campaigns that had been run under various Animal Liberation groups including [NSW](#), [ACT](#) and [QLD](#). These campaigns began with [Aussie Pigs](#), and expanded to [Aussie Turkeys](#), [Aussie Ducks](#), [Aussie Eggs](#), [Aussie Chickens](#), [Aussie Rabbits](#) and [Aussie Abattoirs](#). Together these websites formed the Aussie Farms network, aimed at countering the myth that animal abuse doesn't happen in Australia or that when it does happen, it's an isolated incident.

In the first 8 years that Aussie Farms/Farm Transparency Project operated, they captured footage of the slaughter of pigs in gas chambers, factory farmed turkeys, chickens, ducks and crocodiles having their throats slit, the brutal shooting of former racehorses, the death by bolt gun of unwanted male goats and the routine slaughter of sheep, goats, cows, calves and pigs in slaughterhouses across the country. Their investigation of 30 Australian slaughterhouses over two years is the largest and most comprehensive of its kind, documenting the commercial slaughter of animals sold for food.

## Australian slaughterhouse regulation

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### National regulation

***The Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption (AS4696:2007/2023)***

The Federal [Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry](#) (DAFF) sets the licensing conditions for export abattoirs, which require abattoirs to comply with relevant Australian standards and guidelines. The *Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption* ([AS4696:2007/2023](#)) is one such standard.

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Section 7 of the AS4696 (Appendix 1) contains guidelines for the handling and killing of animals at licensed slaughterhouses with the required outcome of “[t]he minimisation of the risk of injury, pain and suffering and the least practical disturbance to animals.”

Specific provisions of **Section 7** relevantly provide that:

- 7.1** Equipment is used in a way that minimises risk of injury, pain and suffering to animals and causes them the least practicable disturbance.
- 7.2** Animals are handled in a way that minimises risk of injury, pain and suffering to animals and causes them the least practicable disturbance.
- 7.9** Animals are slaughtered in a way that prevents unnecessary injury, pain and suffering to them and causes them the least practicable disturbance.
- 7.10** Before sticking commences, animals are stunned in a way that ensures the animals are unconscious and insensible to pain before sticking occurs and do not regain consciousness or sensibility before dying.
- 7.11** Before stunning commences, animals are restrained in a way that ensures stunning is effective.

### ***Animal Welfare Standards for Livestock Processing Establishments***

Further, the Industry [Animal Welfare Standards for Livestock Processing Establishments](#) (AMIC Standards) **support** the existing standards and guidelines relating to practices in the livestock processing industry, which includes AS4696.

Relevantly, the AMIC Standards provide that:

- 5.2.1(a)** Infrastructure and equipment shall not cause injury, pain, suffering or distress to the animal.
- 6.2.1(a)** Livestock handling shall be undertaken in a manner that uses low stress livestock handling techniques taking into account the animal’s natural behaviour
- 6.2.1(d)** Livestock handling shall be undertaken in a manner that involves the appropriate use of handling tools.
- 7.1.1(a)** Livestock shall be restrained for stunning using a method that is designed and operated effectively for the species and type of livestock processed.
- 7.1.1(c)** Livestock shall be restrained for stunning using a method that does not involve the use of unacceptable practices and procedures... which includes forcing livestock to walk over the top of others.

The AMIC Standards represent a widely adopted, yet optional, set of basic animal welfare standards relating to practices in abattoirs.

## State regulations

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## Victoria

Domestic slaughterhouses in Victoria are licensed by [PrimeSafe](#), a government body which “regulates the safe production and transportation of meat, poultry and seafood products, including pet food.” Licence conditions set and enforced by PrimeSafe require abattoirs to comply with relevant Australian and Victorian standards and guidelines, including the AS4696 (see national regulation).

### ***Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (Vic) (POCTA)***

[POCTA](#) sets out offences of animal cruelty which would make much commercial farming and slaughter of animals illegal, if it weren’t for relevant exemptions which allow acts of cruelty if they are contained within an industry code of practice, or are separately allowed through legislation. PrimeSafe is aware that exemptions and defences from the cruelty provisions in POCTA are only made out if the conduct is done in accordance with a prescribed Act or Code.

Relevantly, POCTA does not apply to the slaughter of animals performed in accordance with the [Meat Industry Act 1993](#) (Vic) or any Commonwealth Act (section 6(1)(a)). The AS4696 is adopted under the *Meat Industry Regulations 2015*. That is, it takes its ‘legal force’ from these Regulations. Compliance with these Regulations (and the Meat Industry Act 1993) are a condition of the abattoir’s licence, thereby making compliance with the AS4696, mandatory.

In the case of noncompliance with the AS4696, it follows that the cruelty provisions of POCTA are activated. In particular:

#### **9. Cruelty**

- (1) A person who—
  - (a) wounds, mutilates, tortures, overrides, overdrives, overworks, abuses, beats, worries, torments or terrifies an animal; or
  - (b) loads, crowds or confines an animal where the loading, crowding or confinement of the animal causes, or is likely to cause, unreasonable pain or suffering to the animal; or
  - (c) does or omits to do an act with the result that unreasonable pain or suffering is caused, or is likely to be caused, to an animal;
  - (d) drives, conveys, carries or packs an animal in a manner or position or in circumstances which subjects or subject, or is likely to subject, it to unnecessary pain or suffering;

#### **10. Aggravated cruelty**

- (1) A person who commits an act or acts of cruelty on any animal, which result in the death or serious disablement of the animal, commits aggravated cruelty on that animal and is guilty of an offence and is liable to a penalty of not more than, in the case of a natural person, 500 penalty units or imprisonment for 2 years or, in the case of a body corporate, 1200 penalty units.

## New South Wales

### ***Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1929 (NSW)***

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The NSW Department of Primary Industries specifies that it is the responsibility of animal slaughter facilities to ensure that *“when animals are intended to be slaughtered, the individuals must ensure that the animal is not caused unnecessary pain, suffering or injury through use of properly approved stunning and slaughtering methods.”*

“If an animal is not slaughtered humanely, (they) may also be prosecuted under the [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1929](#) (POCTA).

Relevant sections of **POCTA** state that:

**5.1** A person shall not commit an act of cruelty upon an animal.

**5.3** A person in charge of an animal shall not fail at any time—

- a)** to exercise reasonable care, control or supervision of an animal to prevent the commission of an act of cruelty upon the animal
- b)** where pain is being inflicted upon the animal, to take such reasonable steps as are necessary to alleviate the pain

The AS4696 is also mandatory in NSW [domestic abattoirs](#), meaning that noncompliance with this standard can also lead to prosecution under POCTA.

## Poultry

### (AS 4465:2006)

All Poultry slaughterhouses must meet the requirements set out in the *Australian Standard for construction of premises and hygienic production of poultry meat for human consumption* ([AS 4465:2006](#)).

Relevant sections of the AS4465 state that:

- 6.2** An efficient and humane method of restraint shall be provided to prevent the escape of poultry during shackling.
- 15.24** All poultry shall be humanely killed.
- 16.2** The operator of a processing premises shall have in place a system that ensures:
  - a)** live poultry are treated humanely...

## Model Code

Further, the [Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Livestock at Slaughtering Establishments](#) sets out specific requirements for the welfare of animals killed for human consumption, which are drawn from the AS4465.

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Relevantly, the Model code provides that:

- 3.1.1.1** ... Any birds that escape during unloading should be caught as soon as practically possible.
- 4.3.2** Facilities and operations should enable birds to be caught and shackled or placed in a bleeding cone humanely. Where bleeding cones or a shackle line are used to restrain birds they should be used in a manner that prevents injuries or bruising and minimise stress to birds.
- 3.4.6** Before stunning, birds should be suspended head downwards from shackle lines for a short time(preferably for a minimum of 30 seconds and no longer than three minutes for domestic fowl).
- 3.4.7** Shackle lines should keep birds clear of obstructions.
- 3.4.8** The shackling area should be designed in such a way that birds that have escaped can be collected without being injured or stressed.
- 3.5.1** ... Stunning should produce immediate insensibility of the bird to pain and suffering. In using the method of stunning which involves immersion of the head and neck in electrified water baths, care should be taken to ensure the wings do not touch the water first.
- 3.5.2** Approved stunning procedures must be in place to ensure that a satisfactory level and duration of anaesthesia is achieved consistently.
- 3.5.3** Where electrical stunning is carried out the current must be sufficient to cause the bird to be rendered unconscious immediately and to remain unconscious until it has been killed by bleeding.
- 3.5.4** Any deficiencies in the level of anaesthesia must be addressed without delay.
- 3.5.5** In standard commercial practice where broiler chickens or culled hens are stunned in groups in a water bath a voltage sufficient to produce consistent and effective level of stunning for each bird must be maintained. The duration of contact with the current must be sufficient to render each bird unconscious.
- 3.5.12** Management should ensure that adequate immersion of every bird in the water bath occurs.
- 3.5.13** Stunning equipment should be monitored regularly to ensure that it is delivering adequate current and voltage and that birds are either stunned effectively or killed.
- 3.6.3** Live birds should never reach the scald.

The Code of practice represents the minimum (baseline) animal welfare standards relating to practices in poultry abattoirs.

## South Australia

Like in other states, South Australia has its own animal welfare legislation, which are set out in the [Animal Welfare Act 1985](#) (the Act) and the [Animal Welfare Regulations 2012](#). The *Animal Welfare Act* sets out a range of prohibited activities and specifies that it is unlawful to “kill(s) the animal in a manner that causes the animal unnecessary pain.” Both documents contain a number of exemptions to allow acts, including the use of electroimmobilisers on certain classes of animals. The *Animal Welfare Act* makes it clear that “nothing in this Act renders unlawful anything done in accordance with a prescribed code of practice relating to animals,” voiding many of the protections granted to domestic animals in cases of animal agriculture.

### Model Code

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The “*Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—Livestock at slaughtering establishments*,” establishes exemptions for specific types of cruelty conducted in the course of a livestock slaughtering business’s operations.

In the case of failure to comply with this model code, it can no longer be used to exempt acts of cruelty. Compliance with this code is **mandatory** in South Australia and noncompliance with the code allows for prosecution under the *Animal Welfare Act*.

Specific provisions of the model code relevantly provide that:

**2.5.1.1** Sufficient yards should be provided where possible to avoid mixing individual truck loads of stock with other strange animals.

**2.5.5.1** The Movement of Animals from Holding Pens to the Slaughter Floor) should be as free of stress as possible. Visual and auditory stimuli should be minimised.

**2.5.5.2** Races should be curved, and have sheeted (solid) walls, shall be free of projections and have non-slip floors.

**2.5.5.3** The use of electric prodders, goads, dogs, etc., should be minimal, as described in the general section on unloading.

**2.6.1.1** The use of ‘V’ shaped conveyors of suitable design for complete restraint should be encouraged for cattle, sheep, goats and pigs.

**2.6.1.4** Animals should not enter the knocking box unless they are to be stunned immediately. Animals approaching slaughter should be prevented from viewing dead animals ahead of them for as long as possible. The sight of the actual slaughter process should be prevented, if at all possible.

**2.6.1.7** To stun animals effectively using a hand-held stunning device, the animal should be suitably restrained with minimal room to move. Animals should not be stunned in pens where restraint is inadequate.

**2.6.1.8** Knocking boxes that contain more than one animal for stunning should not be used.

**2.6.2.1** An animal has been stunned effectively when it is unconscious and insensible to pain. It should not regain consciousness or sensibility before dying.

**2.6.2.4** Captive-bolt stunning is preferred for calves. With electrical stunning, lethal head to body stunning is required, except that head only stunning of calves is acceptable if accompanied by a Thoracic stick.

**2.6.2.6** Sheep and goats should be stunned using a penetrating captive-bolt or electrically stunned (sheep and goats, 400 volts, 1.0 amps for 2 seconds; lambs, 400 volts, 0.6 amps for 2 seconds). Head-only stunning is acceptable for sheep and goats but stun-to-stick intervals must be monitored and not allowed to exceed 15 seconds.

**2.6.3.2** All animals which are not irreversibly stunned should be stuck and bled out immediately after stunning to ensure animals do not regain consciousness.

In South Australia, the Department of Primary Industries and Regions is responsible for licensing and enforcing animal welfare standards at slaughterhouses. All meat processing and handling businesses in South Australia must comply with food safety arrangements in the *Primary Produce (Food Safety Schemes) (Meat) Regulations 2017*, also referred to as the *Meat Scheme*. The *Meat Scheme* establishes the provision that all licensed slaughterhouses must abide by relevant codes of practice, including the AS4696.

## Tasmania

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## **Animal Welfare Act**

All animals in Tasmania, including “livestock” animals, are covered by the [Animal Care and Protection Act 1993](#), which is administered by [Biosecurity Tasmania](#).

In the Act, illegal cruelty to animals is set out as follows:

### **8. Cruelty to animals**

1. A person must not do any act, or omit to do any duty, which causes or is likely to cause unreasonable and unjustifiable pain or suffering to an animal.
2. Without limiting the generality of subsection (1) , a person is guilty of an offence under that subsection if the person –
  - a. wounds, mutilates, tortures, overrides, overdrives, overworks, abuses, beats, torments or terrifies an animal; or
  - b. overloads or overcrowds an animal; or
  - c. drives, conveys, carries or packs an animal in a manner or position or in circumstances that subjects or may subject it to unreasonable and unjustifiable pain or suffering; or
  - d. works, rides, drives or uses an animal when it is unfit for the purpose; or
  - e. has possession or custody of an animal that is confined, constrained or otherwise unable to provide for itself and fails to provide the animal with appropriate and sufficient food, drink, shelter or exercise; or
  - f. abandons an animal of a species usually kept in a state of confinement or for domestic purposes; or
  - g. has possession or custody of a sick or injured animal and fails to provide veterinary or other appropriate treatment for the animal;

### **9. Aggravated cruelty**

1. A person must not do any act, or omit to do any duty, referred to in section 8 , if the person knows that, or is reckless as to whether, the act or omission will, or is reasonably likely to, result in –
  - a. the death, deformity or serious disablement of an animal; or
  - b. harm to an animal that endangers the life of the animal; or
  - c. an injury to an animal that, either alone or in combination with the health of the animal at the time of the injury, results in a significant and longstanding injury to the animal.

Animal slaughter is largely incompatible with the *Animal Welfare Act* (AWA), however, the Act sets out that the governor of Tasmania may make regulations regarding “the keeping, treatment, handling, transportation, sale, injuring, killing, taking, care, use, husbandry or management of any animal or class or kind of animal,” which legalise certain practices (*Animal Welfare Act*, 50). Regulations are set out in the [Meat and Poultry Safety Scheme](#).

## **Meat and Poultry Scheme**

The commercial production of meat and poultry meat in Tasmania is regulated under the *Meat and Poultry Food Safety Scheme* (*Meat and Poultry Scheme*), which is established by the [Primary Produce Safety \(Meat and Poultry\) Regulations 2014](#). Licence conditions set and

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enforced by Biosecurity Tasmania require abattoirs to comply with relevant Australian and state standards, and guidelines, including the AS4696.

In cases of noncompliance with the AS4696, provisions of the AWA are activated.

## Queensland

### ***Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 (ACPA)***

All animals in Queensland, including “livestock” animals, are covered by the [Animal Care and Protection Act 2001](#), which is administered by the QLD [Department of Primary Industries](#).

Section 18 of the Act sets out animal cruelty which is prohibited:

1. A person must not be cruel to an animal.
2. Without limiting subsection (1), a person is taken to be cruel to an animal if the person does any of the following to the animal-
  - a. causes it pain that, in the circumstances, is unjustifiable, unnecessary or unreasonable;
  - b. beats it so as to cause the animal pain;
  - c. abuses, terrifies, torments or worries it;
  - d. overdrives, overrides or overworks it;
  - e. uses on the animal an electrical device prescribed under a regulation
  - ...
  - g. kills it in a way that –
    - i. is inhumane; or
    - ii. causes it to not die quickly; or
    - iii. causes it to die in unreasonable pain;
  - h. unjustifiably, unnecessarily or unreasonably –
    - i. injures or wounds it; or
    - ii. overcrowds or overloads it.

### ***Model Code***

The killing of animals at slaughterhouses is, largely, at odds with section 18 and would likely constitute an offence, if not for the relevant voluntary code of practice being complied with. That code of practice is the [Model code of practice for the welfare of animals—Livestock at slaughtering establishments](#), as per schedule 9 of the [Animal Care and Protection Regulation 2023](#). The purpose of this code is to establish exemptions for specific types of cruelty conducted in the course of a livestock slaughtering business’s operations.

In the case of failure to comply with this model code, it can no longer be used to exempt acts of cruelty. In cases like this where no mandatory code exists, animal welfare inspectors refer to these national, voluntary codes when assessing whether people are meeting their duty of care obligations. Noncompliance with the code allows for prosecution under Section 18 of the Act.

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Please see the above section on South Australia for relevant provisions in the Model Code.

Businesses that slaughter animals to sell or supply into the food chain require an accreditation with [Safe Food Queensland](#), which itself requires compliance with the AS4696.

# Overview of investigations

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## Victoria and NSW, 2023

In early 2023, investigators from the animal protection organisation Farm Transparency Project (FTP) conducted covert investigations into Victoria's [three largest pig slaughterhouses](#): CA Sinclair in Benalla, Diamond Valley Pork (DVP) in Laverton and Australian Food Group (AFG), also in Laverton. Over two months, FTP installed hidden cameras inside the gas chambers used to paralyse pigs prior to slaughter. At Australian Food Group, veteran investigator and Executive Director of FTP, Chris Delforce, [hid inside the gas chamber for over 9 hours](#), secretly filming as hundreds of pigs were gassed to death.

The footage showed pigs screaming and gasping for air inside the chambers at all three slaughterhouses. Most took minutes to slowly suffocate and some suffered horrific injuries before slaughter, including one whose testicles were ripped off as they became stuck between the descending gondola and the wall of the chamber.

Independent [assessment](#) by legal experts from Australia's leading animal protection organisation Animals Australia, found that the footage showed multiple breaches of both Victorian and national animal welfare standards. Subsequent investigations by Victoria's slaughterhouse regulator PrimeSafe led to charges being laid against AFG and additional licensing requirements being placed on AFG and CA Sinclair. Rather than complying with these additional requirements, AFG made the decision to [shut down](#). The federal Department of Agriculture, which regulates and licenses export slaughterhouses such as DVP, chose not to press charges.

The team also released footage from [Corowa pig slaughterhouse](#) in NSW which showed pigs being painfully gassed to death. This footage was captured at the same time as the Victorian pig slaughter footage but held back by the group, due to NSW's restrictive laws regarding publishing footage of animal farming and slaughter. It was published in July, 2023.

The footage that FTP investigators captured led to public outrage following a story on ABC's 7.30 program. However, the Australian Pork industry's lobby group Australian Pork Limited [denied any wrongdoing](#), publicly backing the controversial use of carbon dioxide gas to kill pigs.

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In response, Animals Australia, launched a [legal challenge](#) in the Supreme Court of Victoria, arguing that the use of carbon dioxide gas chambers to slaughter pigs was inconsistent with the AS4696. This case remains ongoing and has so-far seen Victorian slaughterhouse regulator PrimeSafe, [admit](#) that no regulatory body has the responsibility to ensure the welfare of animals in slaughterhouses, and that the slaughter of animals was “antithetical to animal welfare.”

## **South Australia, 2023**

In May 2023, FTP continued their investigations, traveling to South Australia where they installed cameras at [BMK Foods](#) pig slaughterhouse in Murray Bridge, [Menzel's Meats](#) in Kapunda and [Snowtown Meats](#). Once again, the team found evidence of illegal activity and extreme suffering. At Snowtown Meats, goats and sheep had their throats slit [without stunning](#), despite regulations stating that animals killed during religious slaughter (Halal or Kosher) should be stunned prior to having their throats slit or immediately after, and must be completely unconscious when they are shackled.

At Menzel's Meats, sows were shot multiple times with a rifle and whipped with chains by a worker, while goats and sheep displayed signs of consciousness after stunning and sticking. BMK Foods used a small, single-gondola gas chamber to suffocate pigs. Like in Victoria, the pigs screamed, thrashed and gasped for air for minutes. Some were shown to struggle to breathe for up to 20 minutes at the top of the chamber where the gas was less concentrated, before being lowered deeper into the gas and losing consciousness.

The South Australian government took over a year to investigate the footage, eventually laying charges against BMK for unlawful use of an electric prodding device. Despite privately expressing concern over the behaviour recorded at Snowtown Meats, a department investigator [told FTP](#) that he was not willing to lay charges due to a belief that illegally obtained footage would not be admitted in court.

## **Tasmania, 2023**

In August and September 2023, Farm Transparency Project entered and installed cameras at [five Tasmanian slaughterhouses](#) over one month. The investigations captured footage at the state's largest pig slaughterhouse, [Scottsdale Pork](#), [Wal's Bulk Meats](#) in Stowport, The [Local Meat Co](#) in Claude Road, [Gretna Meatworks](#) and the state's largest sheep and calf slaughterhouse, [Tasmanian Quality Meats](#), in Cressy.

At Tasmanian Quality Meats, dozens of calves were killed without stunning, with one drowning in blood after being dropped onto the floor while still conscious. At all other facilities, animals

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were filmed being shot multiple times, hit, kicked and jumped on by workers to force them into the kill room, with some being killed while clearly conscious, or without stunning at all.

The footage led to an [immediate response](#) from the Tasmanian government and the implementation of a taskforce. Tasmanian Quality Meats also had their license to process bobby calves temporarily suspended until they invested in new equipment.

In 2024, the taskforce introduced legislation to make [CCTV mandatory](#) in Tasmanian slaughterhouses, which has now been implemented. The footage was also instrumental in two Liberal MPs leaving the party, precipitating an [early election](#).

## **Victoria, 2024**

Over the first half of 2024, the team focused on their home state of Victoria, installing cameras inside six Victorian slaughterhouses as well as one NSW rabbit slaughterhouse, [Summerland Poultry](#) in Kellyville. In May 2024, footage from this facility was released alongside footage of rabbit slaughter at [Gippsland Meats](#) in Bairnsdale, which together was the first public exposé of [commercial rabbit slaughter](#) in Australia.

The team also documented the bodies of pigs being used as punching bags and the ineffective stunning of sheep, goats, pigs and cows at [Gathercole's slaughterhouse](#) in Wangaratta, the slaughter of ex-dairy cows and 'beef' cattle at [Ralph's Meats](#), which showed many cows displaying signs of consciousness after their throats had been slit, and the brutal killing of sheep and goats at [MD Foods](#) in Echuca, where sheep and goats were seen being dragged onto the kill floor and killed while still conscious.

In May, the team released footage of the stunning and slaughter of hundreds of goats at [The Game Meats Company](#) in Eurobin. Animals in the footage were seen escaping into the kill room where other goats are having their throats slit, and several goats showed clear signs of consciousness, including blinking, lifting their heads and crying out, even while their throats were being slit and their heads and hooves removed.

Also captured was the slaughter of newborn goats, who were electrocuted after being left in a plastic bucket for hours. One baby goat was captured crying out in pain for over two hours after an unsuccessful stunning attempt left them partially paralysed.

The footage was provided to the federal Department of Agriculture two weeks before being released publicly. Rather than launching a formal investigation, the Department quietly forwarded the complaint to management at the slaughterhouse, warning them of likely media coverage and giving them time to secretly obtain a temporary injunction in the Federal Court, forcing FTP to take down the footage shortly after publication. A permanent injunction was [denied](#) after a [trial in August 2024](#), however the Game Meats Company appealed this decision

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in February 2025, meaning that the footage is still unable to be published. The appeal will be heard on August 1st, 2025.

In June 2024, investigators from Farm Transparency Project installed hidden cameras at [Cedar Meats](#) in Brooklyn, capturing the handling and slaughter of thousands of animals, including newborn lambs and kids born in the holding pens of the slaughterhouse. The footage showed workers writing and drawing on the bodies of sheep and goats with blood, animals appearing to have their throats slit while fully conscious, goats and sheep struggling while soaked in the blood of others and even one mother goat giving birth in the stunning restraint, seconds before her throat was slit.

Later in the year, footage captured at [DJ & CA Meek Slaughterhouse](#) in Edenhope, Victoria showed ineffective stunning and at least one animal killed while fully conscious. Workers were also filmed kicking pigs in the face and slapping and punching cows in the knockbox.

## **QLD, 2024**

Across a six week period in August and September 2024, FTP investigated [seven Queensland slaughterhouses](#).

The slaughterhouses investigated included [Steve's Country Kills](#) in Chinchilla, which in 2023 was awarded Processor of the Year by the Australian Meat Industry Council and the Queensland Country Meat Processors Association. Also investigated were [Millmerran Meats](#) in Millmerran and [Carey Bros](#) in Yangan, both of which were awarded state government grants in 2020 to upgrade their facilities. [Brisbane Valley Meats](#) in Esk; roadside butcher and slaughterhouse, [Maclagan Meats](#); [Crows Nest slaughterhouse](#); and major export-accredited cattle slaughterhouse, [Greenmountain Food Processing](#), were also investigated.

At [all seven of the facilities](#) investigated, evidence of animal suffering, cruel and illegal practices was captured, as well as the terror, distress and fear of thousands of animals. At the Carey Bros facility, animals were kicked and thrown in the holding pens, a live, conscious sheep was seen being stabbed twice and then decapitated by a frustrated worker, conscious pigs were seen drowning in a tank of scalding water, conscious cows were dragged by their necks into the knockbox, and ineffective stunning resulted in numerous animals exhibiting signs of consciousness when their throats were cut. Similarly at the Crows Nest facility, many animals were clearly conscious and susceptible to pain at the point of slaughter, including young bobby calves, likely discarded from the state's dairy industry.

Footage from Brisbane Valley Meats showed workers stunning multiple sheep and goats in quick succession, allowing many to start to regain consciousness as they were dragged into the kill room. One pig escaped into the kill room while conscious and had their throat slit

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without stunning. At Maclagan Meats, Greenmountain and Millmerran Meats, there was extensive evidence of ineffective stunning and animals being killed while still conscious. At Greenmountain, excessive use of electric prodders in the ‘race’ was documented, including on animals’ faces and genitals.

## NSW, 2024

In November 2024, the team completed the final investigations of the 30, installing cameras at [Tinder Creek Duck slaughterhouse](#) in Tennyson, [ET Chicken Processing](#) in Llandilo and [Cowra Meat Processors](#).

At Tinder Creek, ducks were seen being placed on the shackle line and having their throats slit without stunning, while others were observed lifting their heads and avoiding the electrical stun bath, meaning that they remained conscious while their throats were slit. One duck was filmed as they fell into the stun bath and was left there until the end of the kill day.

At ET Processing, chickens would frequently escape into the kill room, displaying fear and distress as they were chased and recaptured. Some would remain in the kill room into the night and following days. Birds were also seen suspended on the shackle line for over 30 minutes at a time and displaying signs of consciousness after stunning and sticking, including one chicken who was too small to reach the stun bath.

Cowra Meat Processing has three separate kill rooms. The facility uses a gas chamber to suffocate pigs, a knockbox to immobilise cows before their throats are slit and a V restraint to prevent sheep and goats from escaping while they are paralysed using an electrical stunning device and their throats are slit. Pigs were seen being tipped out of the gas chamber and lowered into the scalding tank while still conscious. Cows, sheep and goats were observed thrashing and struggling after stunning and sticking. Animals were also observed having their throat slit without stunning.

# Findings

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In order to effectively understand the footage they captured at each of the 30 facilities, Farm Transparency Project developed a set of ‘tracking criteria’ which they used to evaluate each slaughterhouse. The criteria are largely drawn from the *Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption* (AS 4696:2007) as well as other codes and standards relating to the handling and slaughter of animals for consumption (see section on Australian slaughterhouse regulation).

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Recognising the limitations of these standards, the investigators also added their own criteria which expanded on AS 4696 7.2 - *Animals are handled at meat premises in a way that **minimises risk of injury, pain and suffering** and causes the **least practicable disturbance** to them and to other animals at the premises (emphasis added).*

The following information was noted for each slaughterhouse:

**Table 1**

<b>State</b>
<b>Species killed</b>
<b>Stunning method used</b>
<b>Licensing type (domestic/export)</b>
<b>CCTV in race</b>
<b>CCTV in kill room</b>

Each slaughterhouse investigated was then evaluated by the following criteria using a simple 'yes,' 'no' or 'not applicable' format. Each facility was evaluated according to this criteria as soon as possible after the footage had been reviewed by someone directly involved in the reviewing of the raw footage.

A data code has been created for each criteria to make reviewing the findings simpler.

**Table 2**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Data code</b>
Workers kicking or striking animals (with hands other body parts or objects)	C1
Animals being significantly maimed or injured during lairage, pre-stunning or stunning (beyond what is expected from the stunning method)	C2
Workers throwing animals	C3
Electric prodders used on face or genitals	C4
Animals escaping from pre-slaughter confinement, including during lairage and stunning.	C5
Animals dragged or carried due to an inability or unwillingness to walk	C6
Stunning devices used two or more times before causing unconsciousness	C7
Stunning taking 1 minute or longer	C8
Animals showing signs of distress during stunning or sticking (including increased vocalisation, attempting to escape)	C9

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Animals displaying signs of consciousness after stunning	C10
Animals displaying signs of consciousness after sticking	C11
Animals 'stuck' while still conscious (without stunning)	C12
Animals trampling on each other due to overcrowding in holding pens and stun pens (including knockboxes and gondolas in gas chambers)	C13
Animals slaughtered in front of each other (able to see or hear other animals slaughtered before them)	C14
Animals displaying signs of consciousness during further processing (including shackling and scalding)	C15
Broken or ineffective machinery	C16

*Note: Not applicable refers to places where the relevant area was not recorded on cameras or where the practice referred to is not relevant to the species in question (e.g. electric prods in poultry slaughterhouses).*

*See Appendix 2 for the full table.*

## Overall findings

Over the two years, the Farm Transparency Project team investigated a minimum of **10%** of slaughterhouses in each of the five states that they visited (*Table 3*). In Victoria and Tasmania, they exceeded this, with the Victorian investigations making up 16% of the state's total slaughterhouses, and those in Tasmania accounting for over one quarter of animal killing facilities currently operating.

Overall, the team investigated 30 of Australia's almost [250 operating slaughterhouses](#), making up just over 12% of all known facilities which kill land animals for human consumption.

**Table 3**

State	No. s/h investigated	Total number of slaughterhouses in state*	% of state's total s/h investigated**
<b>Vic</b>	10	64	16%
<b>NSW</b>	5	50	10%
<b>SA</b>	3	31	10%
<b>TAS</b>	5	19	26%
<b>QLD</b>	7	63	11%
<b>Total (Australia)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>12%</b>

wide)

\* As of January 2023

\*\* Rounded to the nearest whole number

Across the board, the team found significant evidence of savage and illegal treatment towards animals by workers, as well as pain, prolonged suffering and distress displayed by animals during handling and slaughter. The below table (table four) summarises the frequency of the tracking criteria in each state.

**Table 4**

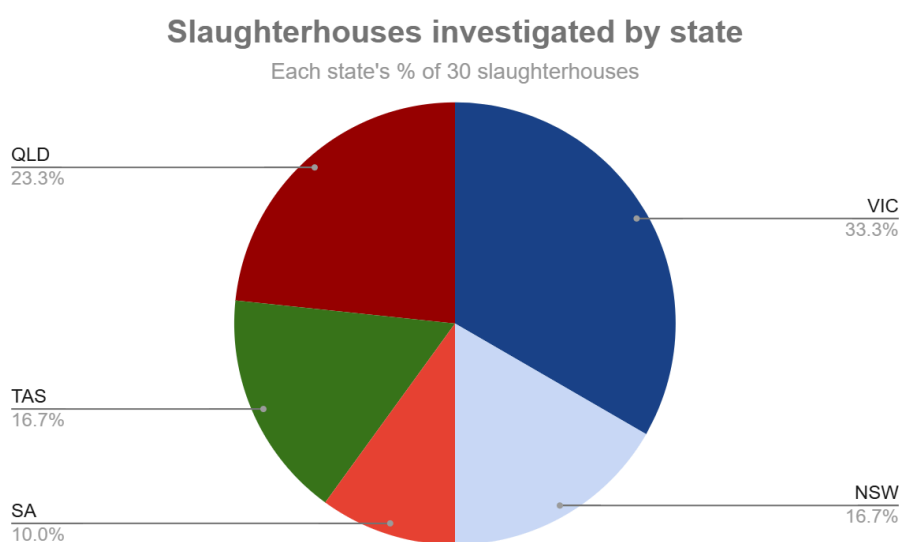
Code	Frequency of tracking criteria	VIC	NSW	SA	TAS	QLD
C1	Workers kicking or striking animals (with hands other body parts or objects)	80%	80%	66%	100%	100%
C2	Animals being significantly maimed or injured during lairage, pre-stunning or stunning (beyond what is expected from the stunning method)	30%	60%	66%	60%	14%
C3	Workers throwing animals	50%	40%	66%	60%	43%
C4	Electric prodders used on face or genitals	40%	40%	33%	60%	71%
C5	Animals escaping from pre-slaughter confinement, including during lairage and stunning.	60%	80%	66%	100%	86%
C6	Animals dragged or carried due to an inability or unwillingness to walk	40%	20%	33%	40%	43%
C7	Stunning devices used two or more times before causing unconsciousness	70%	40%	33%	100%	100%
C8	Stunning taking 1 minute or longer	60%	80%	66%	100%	100%
C9	Animals showing signs of distress during stunning or sticking (including increased vocalisation, attempting to escape)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
C10	Animals displaying signs of consciousness after stunning	80%	80%	66%	60%	100%
C11	Animals displaying signs of consciousness after sticking	60%	60%	33%	60%	100%
C12	Animals 'stuck' while still conscious (without stunning)	20%	60%	33%	40%	28%
C13	Animals trampling on each other due to overcrowding in holding pens and stun pens (including knockboxes and gondolas in gas chambers)	90%	100%	100%	60%	57%
C14	Animals slaughtered in front of each other (able to see or hear other animals slaughtered before them)	100%	100%	100%	100%	71%
C15	Animals displaying signs of consciousness during further processing (including shackling and scalding)	60%	40%	33%	60%	86%
C16	Broken or ineffective machinery	70%	40%	33%	60%	14%

Across all states, instances of workers kicking or striking animals (C1) was worryingly high, peaking in Tasmania and Queensland but occurring at more than 85% of all facilities investigated. Also of significant concern was the high number of facilities where animals showed signs of consciousness after stunning and sticking (C10 & C11), with only South

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Australia falling below 60% in the last category. Instances of overcrowding in holding pens and killing areas (C13) and animals being slaughtered in front of each other (C14) were also high across all states.

While overall, each state had a roughly comparable percent of facilities investigated in proportion to the overall number of slaughterhouses in the state, of the 30 slaughterhouses investigated by the team, over 30% were in Victoria. 23% were Queensland slaughterhouses, followed by NSW and Tasmania with just over 16%. South Australia had the lowest number of slaughterhouses investigated at 10%.



## Findings by State

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### Victoria

- Gathercole's, Wangaratta VIC
  - Ralph's Meats, Seymour VIC
  - The Game Meats Company, Eurobin VIC
  - CA Sinclair, Benalla VIC
  - Australian Food Group, Laverton VIC
  - Diamond Valley Pork, Laverton VIC
  - Gippsland Meats, Bairnsdale VIC
  - MD Foods, Echuca VIC
  - Cedar Meats, Brooklyn VIC
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- DJ & CA Meek, Edenhope VIC

Victoria accounted for the most investigations of any state, with 10 slaughterhouses being exposed as part of the campaign. The facilities were split equally between suppliers to the domestic market (e.g. Gathercole's Wangaratta, Gippsland Meats and CA Sinclair in Benalla) and export-licensed facilities (including Diamond Valley Pork in Laverton and Ralph's Meats in Seymour).

60% of the slaughterhouses were multi-species, while of the single species facilities, three out of four were Victoria's largest pig slaughterhouses. 50% of slaughterhouses investigated killed pigs, while 50% killed sheep, 50% killed goats and 30% killed cows. One slaughterhouse killed bobby calves and one killed rabbits while also killing sheep and processing the bodies of kangaroos. The latter two species were not captured on camera at that facility.

Of the five slaughterhouses that killed pigs, three used carbon dioxide gas chambers as a stunning method, while the other two smaller slaughterhouses used electric stunning and bolt gun/rifle stunning for larger pigs. Sheep and goats were stunned via electrocution and cows were killed using either a handheld or mechanical bolt gun or a rifle.

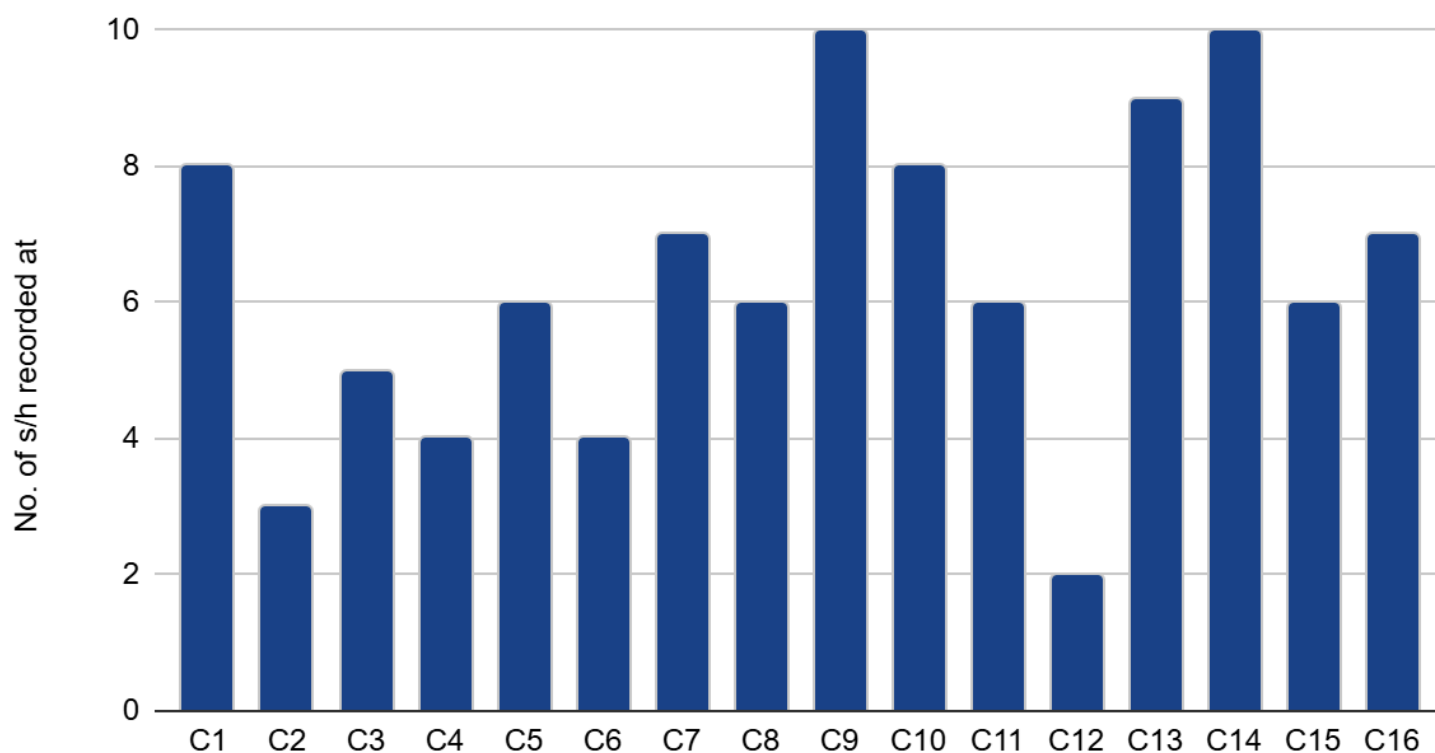
Two of the facilities investigated were found to frequently have newborn goats (and occasionally lambs) born in the holding pens who were killed by workers using either a pair of electrical tongs (The Game Meats Company) or a bolt gun (Cedar Meats).

Victoria showed high instances of distress from animals as well as worker violence, with 80% of slaughterhouses having workers who kicked or struck animals while they were still alive (C1). Ineffective stunning was also common across Victorian slaughterhouses with 80% of facilities investigated having animals showing signs of consciousness (including blinking, attempting to sit or stand and vocalisation) after stunning (C10).

At 20% of slaughterhouses animals had their throat slit while fully conscious (without stunning) (C12), and 60% had animals showing signs of consciousness during further processing (C15), once again pointing to ineffective stunning methods.

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## Victorian Slaughterhouses



Disturbing behaviour was also noted at several Victorian slaughterhouses, particularly Gathercole's in Wangaratta - where workers were observed using the bodies of pigs as punching bags, and Cedar Meats in Brooklyn, where workers were filmed using blood to write their names on the bodies of sheep and appeared to eat parts of the bodies of animals.

Victoria also had the highest record of broken or ineffective machinery, which included malfunctions, equipment not working or having to be replaced. 70% of slaughterhouses were observed struggling with their equipment or experiencing malfunction (C16).

### New South Wales

- JBS/Rivalea, Corowa NSW
- ET Chicken Processing, Llandilo NSW
- Tinder Creek Ducks, Tennyson NSW
- Summerland Poultry, North Kellyville NSW
- Cowra Meat Processors, Cowra NSW

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Five NSW slaughterhouses were investigated including the only two facilities that killed birds of the entire 30. There are an estimated [50 slaughterhouses](#) in NSW, meaning that the investigation covered 10% of the industry.

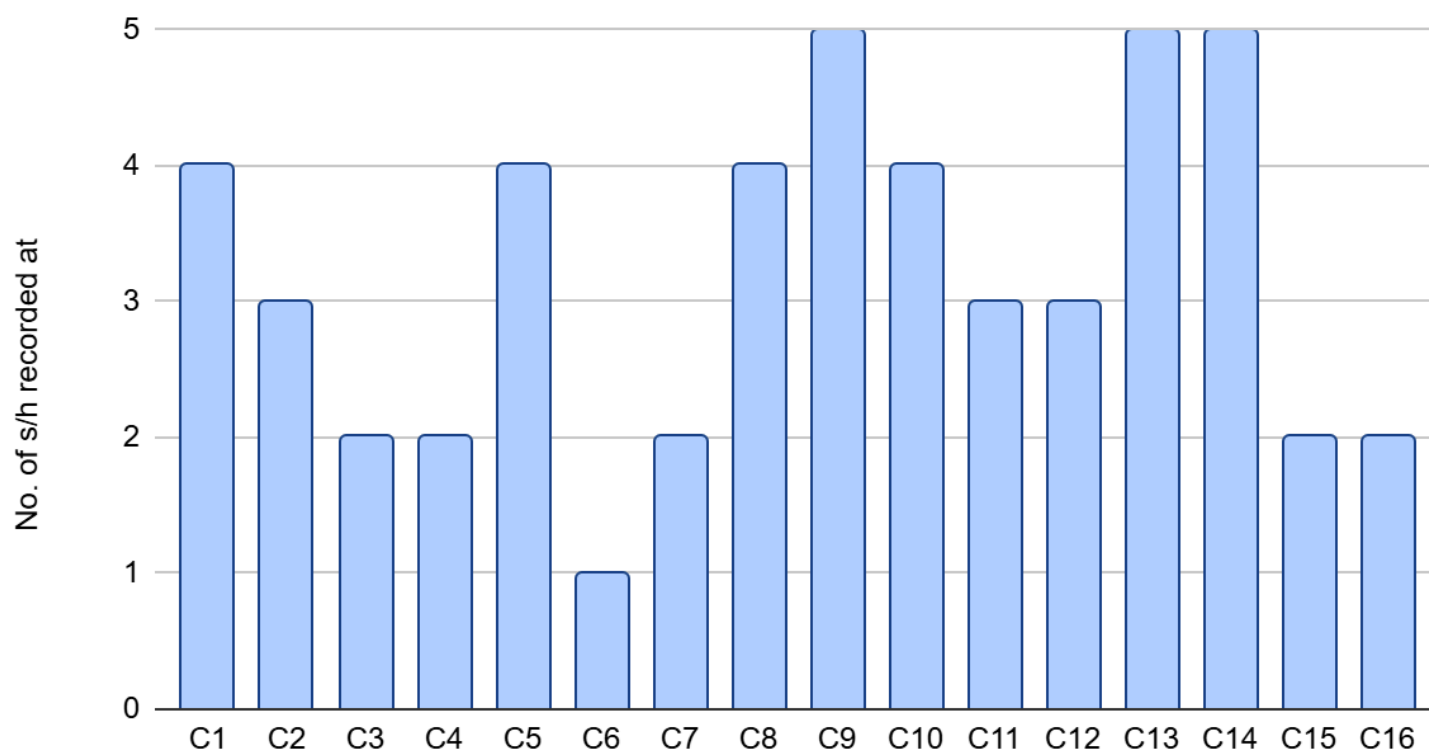
Unlike states such as QLD and Tasmania, the majority of the facilities investigated in NSW killed a single species or animal type. Only one facility, Cowra Meat Processors, operated as a multi-species facility, killing sheep, goats, cows, pigs and calves.

Summerland Poultry was also known to kill chickens as well as the rabbits filmed by hidden cameras, however since this was not recorded it has been included as a single species facility.

Both slaughterhouses that killed pigs in NSW used a carbon dioxide gas chamber, although large pigs at Cowra Meat Processors were killed with a bolt gun in the same knockbox used for cows. Cowra was the only facility investigated of the 30 where a gas chamber was used in a multi-species slaughterhouse.

ET Chicken Processing, Tinder Creek Ducks and Summerland Poultry all used an electrified stun bath to paralyse and cause unconsciousness in ducks, chickens or rabbits. Their throats were then cut.

## NSW Slaughterhouses



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80% of NSW slaughterhouses had workers kicking or striking animals (C1) and animals displaying signs of consciousness after stunning (C10), while animals were conscious after sticking at 60% of facilities (C11). 60% of facilities investigated also had instances where animals were killed while fully conscious, without stunning (C12). This included ducks at Tinder Creek slaughterhouse who were knowingly hung on the shackle line at a point after the stun bath, before having their throat slit. Sheep and goats who escaped from the stunning restraint at Cowra would also have their throats slit, even though they had not been stunned.

Overcrowding was evident at all facilities (C13), as was animals being killed in front of each other where they were able to see and hear the deaths of those before them (C14).

## South Australia

- Snowtown Meats, Snowtown SA
- BMK Foods, Murray Bridge SA
- Menzel's Meats, Kapunda SA

Of all the states investigated, the least number of slaughterhouses came from South Australia, with only three visited by the team. Nonetheless, the findings provide useful insight into one of Australia's least populated states. With only [31 slaughterhouses](#) known to be operating in South Australia, the information gathered could also be seen to be representative.

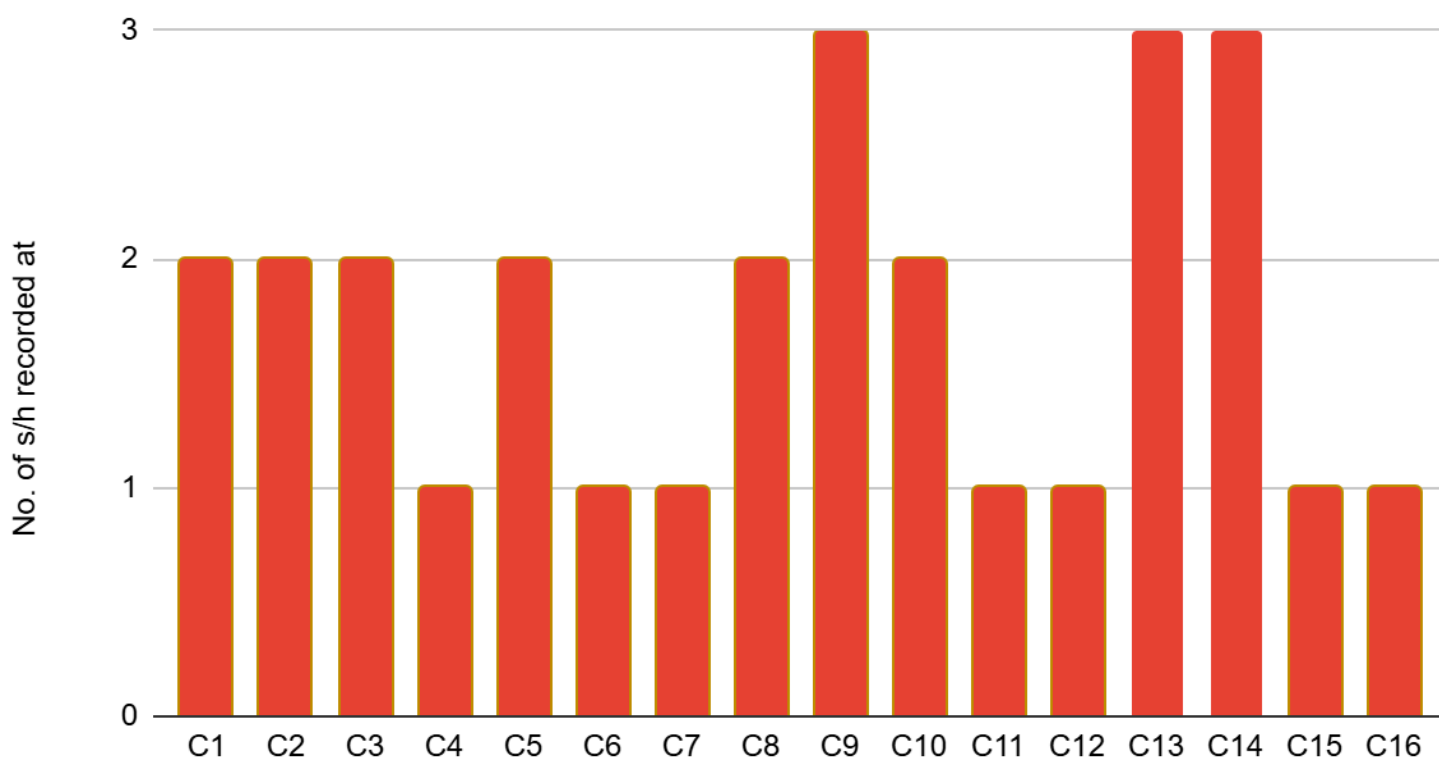
Two out of the three SA slaughterhouses investigated were multi-species, while the other (BMK Foods) killed only pigs. Menzel's Meats in Kapunda and Snowtown Meats both killed cows, sheep and goats, however Menzel's also killed pigs. All facilities were licensed domestically.

Snowtown Meats is the only slaughterhouse of all 30 investigated across the country **not** to use any form of stunning on sheep or goats. While this allows them to certify the meat as halal, many other slaughterhouses investigated (including MD Foods in Victoria) are certified as halal yet use reversible stunning methods, such as electric stunning or non-penetrative captive bolt guns. A bolt gun was used at Snowtown to stun cows prior to slaughter.

According to South Australian guidelines for religious slaughter, if not stunned prior to having their throats slit, animals must be stunned immediately following, and must be unconscious when shackled. This was not the case at Snowtown, however the Department of Primary Industries in South Australia refused to attempt a prosecution.

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## South Australian Slaughterhouses



At all three facilities, animals were slaughtered in front of each other (C14) and would show signs of distress during slaughter (C9). Workers were seen to strike, kick and throw animals at two of the slaughterhouses (C1), and animals were seen to continue to display signs of consciousness after 'stunning' at two as well (C10).

Animals at Menzel's Meats were observed being stunned multiple times before falling unconscious and workers were seen displaying aggression towards pigs, sheep and goats. The lack of stunning at Snowtown meant animals were extremely distressed, and some were likely still alive as their heads were removed.

### Tasmania

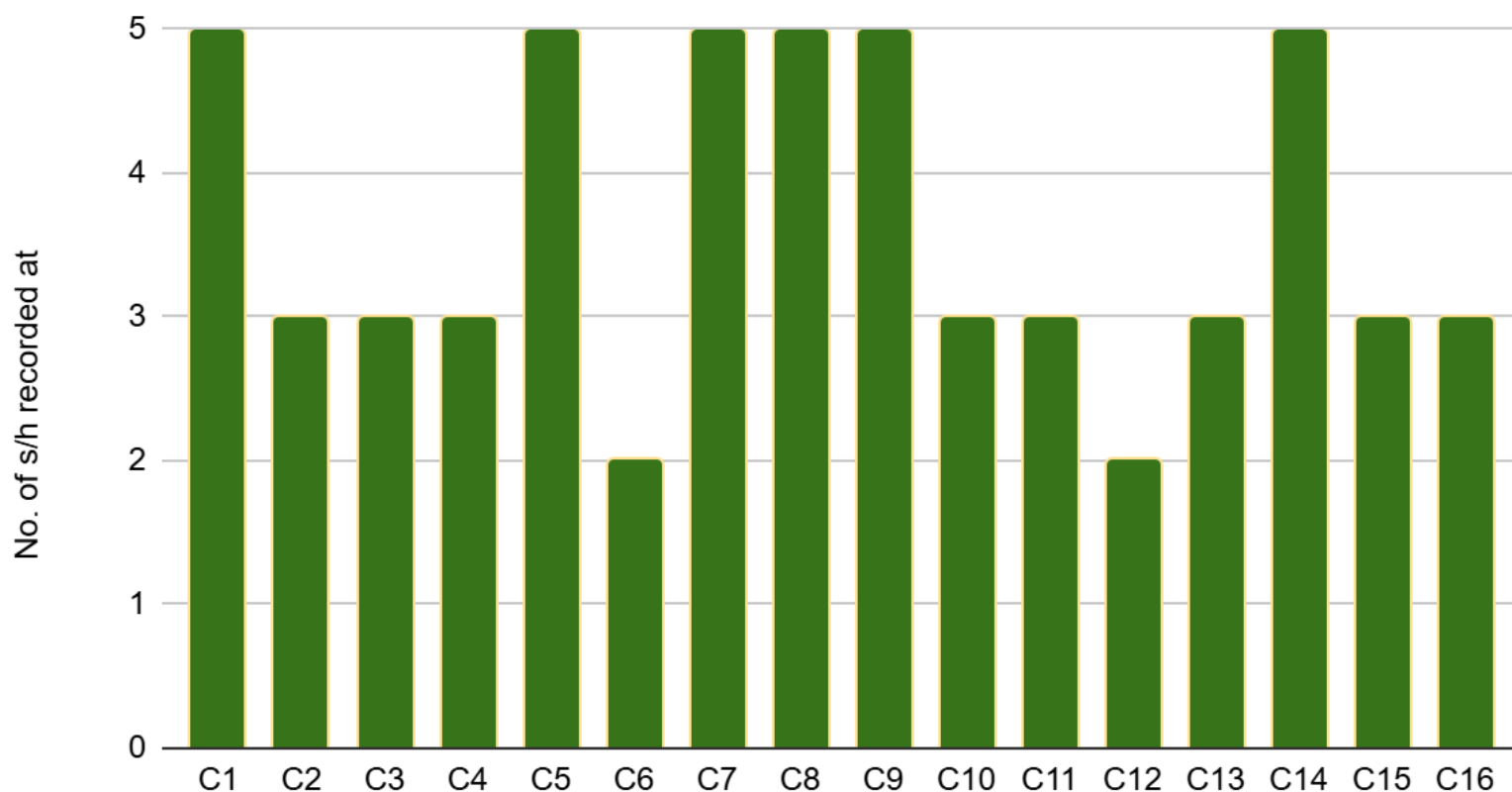
- Tasmanian Quality Meats, Cressy TAS
- Local Meat Co, Claude Road TAS
- Scottsdale Pork, Springfield TAS
- Wal's Bulk Meats, Stowport TAS
- Gretna Quality Meats, Rosegarland TAS

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Five slaughterhouses were investigated in Tasmania, accounting for [over one quarter](#) of the state's industry. Four of these were multi-species, including three private kill facilities and Tasmania's largest sheep and bobby calf slaughterhouse. The fifth facility was Tasmania's largest pig slaughterhouse, which used electrical stunning instead of gassing.

Sheep, pigs and goats were immobilised using an electric stunner (Local Meat, Wal's, TQM) or a handheld bolt gun (Gretna). Large pigs, including sows, and cows were stunned with a rifle at all three facilities investigated which slaughtered cows. Bobby calves were stunned by electrocution at TQM. Four of the five facilities were domestic, with only TQM being licensed to export their products.

## Tasmanian Slaughterhouses



Violence and worker brutality were common across Tasmanian slaughterhouses. Workers were observed kicking or striking animals at 100% of facilities investigated (C1), throwing animals at 60% (C3) and using electric prodders on the face or genitals of animals at 60% (C4). At 100% of facilities, stunning devices were used two or more times before causing unconsciousness (C7),

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with stunning often a long and painful process involving multiple shots to the head or electric shocks.

At two of the five slaughterhouses investigated (40%), animals were killed without any form of stunning (C12). This was observed with multiple bobby calves at TQM and with a sheep who escaped onto the kill floor at Wal's Bulk Meats.

60% of slaughterhouses investigated had multiple instances where animals displayed signs of consciousness after stunning (C10), after sticking (C11) and during further processing (C15). 60% also had instances of broken or ineffective machinery, including rifles being used as a stunning device on sheep at Wal's Bulk Meats after the electrical stunner stopped working (C16).

## Queensland

- Greenmountain Food Processing, Coominya QLD
- Millmerran Meats, Millmerran QLD
- Maclagan Meats, Maclagan QLD
- Carey Bros, Yangan QLD
- Steve's Country Kills, Chinchilla QLD
- Brisbane Valley Meats, Esk QLD
- Crows Nest Meatworks, Crows Nest QLD

After Victoria, QLD accounted for the second highest number of slaughterhouses investigated, with seven facilities visited across six weeks in August and September 2024.

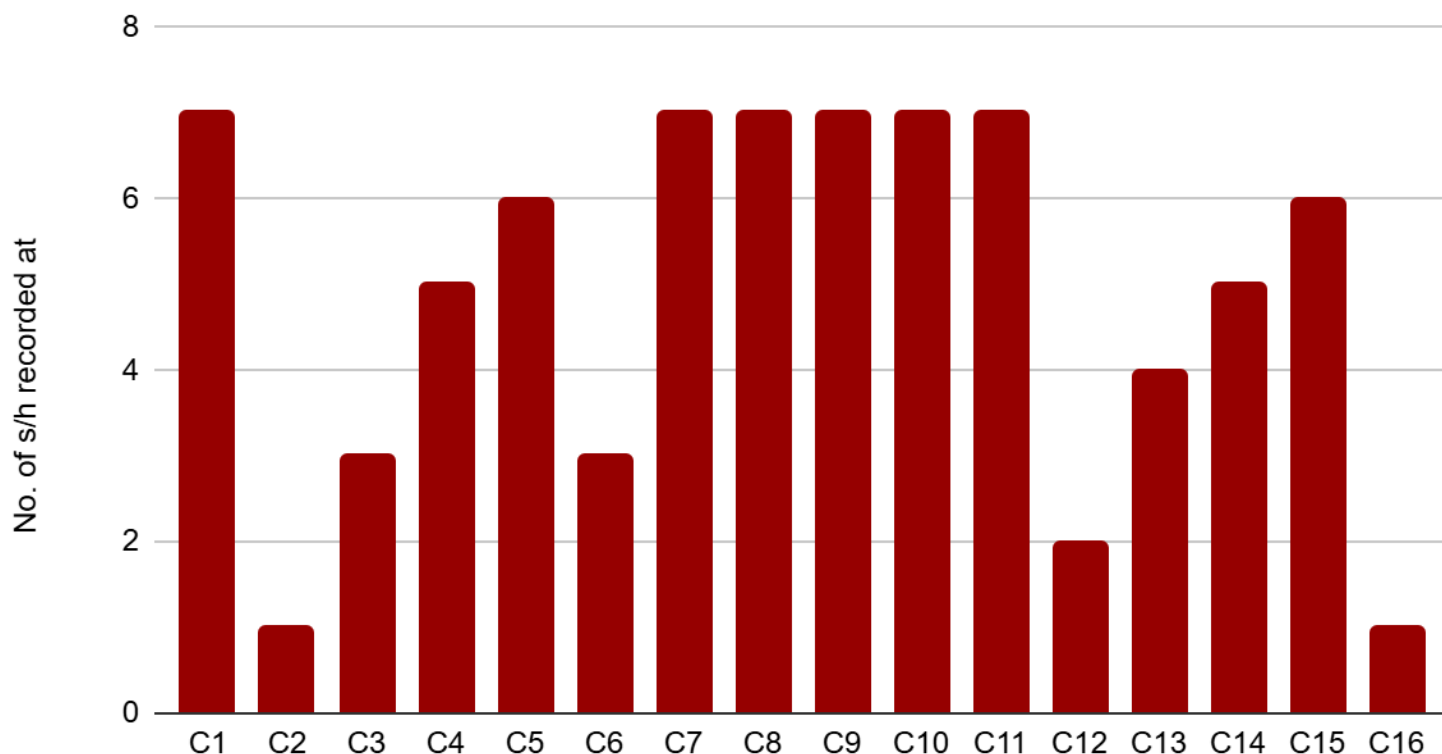
Similarly to Tasmania, most facilities supplied domestically, with only Greenmountain Foods licensed to export. Six of the seven were multi-species, private slaughterhouses, killing animals for the local market and often selling through an onsite butcher shop. These facilities killed a mix of sheep, goats, cows, pigs.

One facility (Crows Nest) was found to kill young dairy calves, while another (Brisbane Valley Meats) killed camels and buffalo as well as sheep, goats, cows and pigs. Greenmountain was the only single-species slaughterhouse investigated. They exclusively kill cows and are suppliers to Woolworths and McDonald's.

At all facilities, cows, camels and large pigs were stunned using either a handheld or mechanical bolt gun or a rifle, while sheep, small pigs, goats, calves and buffalo were stunned via electrocution.

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## Queensland



Queensland could be said to be the state with the least effective stunning. 100% of facilities had instances where stunning devices had to be used more than once (C7), stunning took one minute or longer (C8) and animals displayed signs of consciousness after stunning (C10) and sticking (C11). Two of the seven facilities (28%) also had instances where animals were killed while fully conscious (C12). At Carey Bros Slaughterhouse, a sheep was repeatedly stabbed and decapitated without stunning, while at BVM a pig had their throat slit while fully conscious. Like at other slaughterhouses, this was often preceded by animals escaping from the holding pens, race or restraint.

At 85% of slaughterhouses, animals were seen to display signs of consciousness during further processing (C15), including pigs at Carey Brothers who were filmed thrashing as they were lowered into a tank of scalding water and ultimately drowning. As with all states, evidence of distress (C9) was clear at all facilities and animals were often overcrowded (C13) and brutally killed in front of each other (C14).

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## Findings by slaughterhouse type

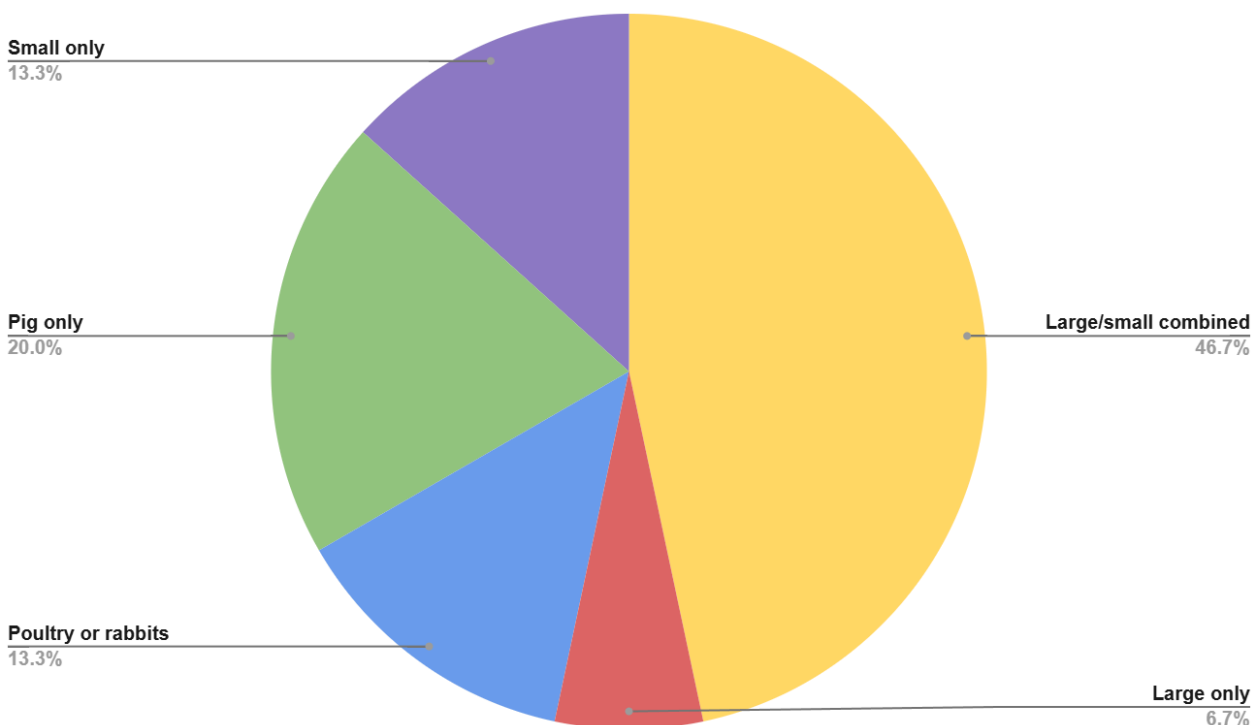
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*See Appendix 3 for a list of slaughterhouses by type*

Of the 30 slaughterhouses investigated, almost 50% were multi-species facilities that killed a combination of large animals (primarily cattle) and small animals (sheep, pigs, goats and calves). This type of operation is typical of smaller, local businesses, however can also be found on a larger scale, such as Gathercole's in Wangaratta.

20% of slaughterhouses investigated killed only pigs, by far the largest number of single-species facilities investigated by the team. This represents the campaign's early focus on gas chambers, as five of the six pig-only slaughterhouses used this method.

For the sake of reviewing the data, slaughterhouses where species were known to be killed but were not captured on camera would be categorised only according to the species whose slaughter had been observed by the investigators. This means that, although Gippsland Meats is known to kill sheep and potentially other animals alongside rabbits, as this was not documented, it is counted amongst the four slaughterhouses which killed only rabbits or poultry. Similarly, the Game Meats Company is known to kill deer and to have previously slaughtered emus and ostriches, however as only the killing of goats was documented, it is included as a small-animal-only slaughterhouse and a single-species facility.

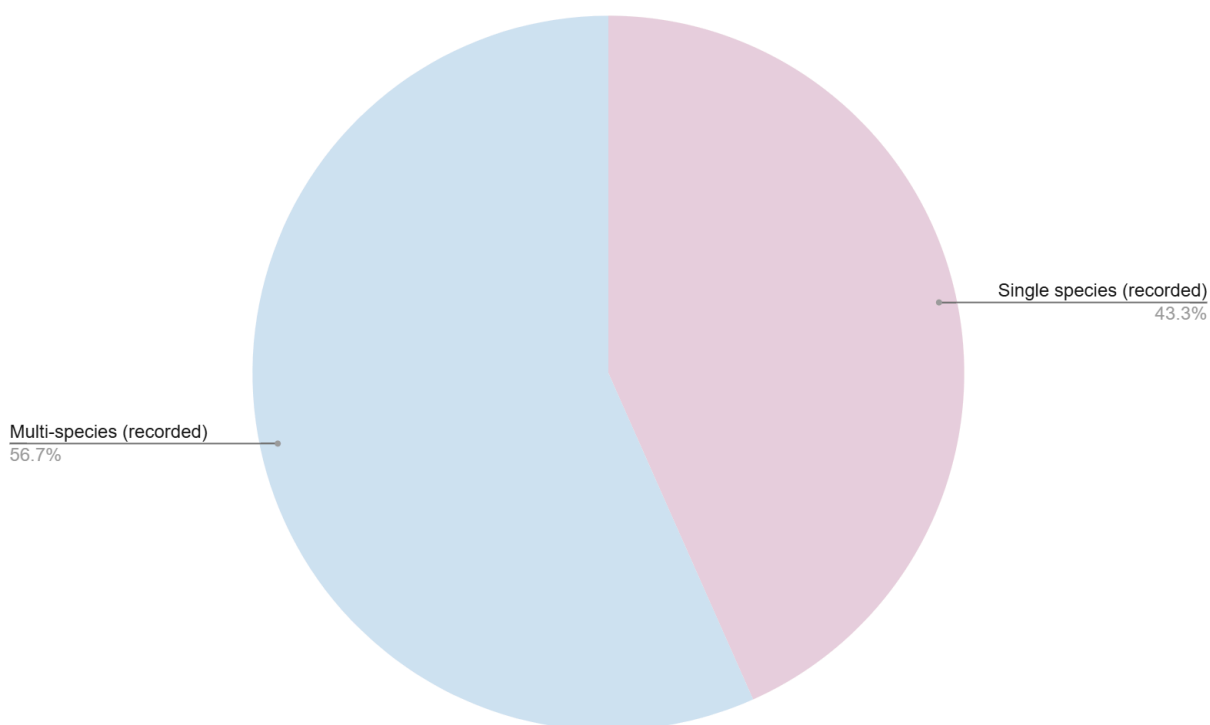


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Given that the majority of facilities fall into the category of large/small animals combined, little attempt has been made to draw conclusions by comparing the frequency of criteria across slaughterhouse types.

However, it is possible to analyse the data based on whether facilities slaughtered multiple species or only one species or animal type (e.g. birds). This is relevant as multi-species slaughterhouses often involve workers moving more frequently between different areas of the slaughterhouse and handling different kinds of animals. Workers at multi-species facilities are also frequently switching between stunning and killing techniques involving different equipment.

17 of the slaughterhouses investigated were multi-species, while 13 killed only a single species or type of animal.



## Comparison between single and multi-species slaughterhouses

From comparing the frequency of recorded incidents at single-species vs. multi-species slaughterhouses, a few points of interest emerge. Table five contains a comparison of the frequency of each criteria and the percentage of slaughterhouses investigated it occurred in. Particular areas of divergence are displayed in bold text.

In some cases, there are clear distinctions between the two types of slaughterhouses, yet these can be explained by the differing types of animals killed at each. The single-species slaughterhouses investigated included facilities which handled rabbits, ducks, chickens, pigs, cows and goats. Therefore, some criteria were less likely to apply and were often not applicable.

For instance, there is a clear difference between instances of workers throwing animals (C3) between the types of slaughterhouses, with this occurring in 76% of multi-species slaughterhouses and only 15% of single-species facilities. However, this can partially be explained by recognising that, due to their weight and size, pigs and cows are far less likely to be thrown than sheep or goats, meaning that the data is skewed in this instance.

Similarly, only 15% of single-species slaughterhouses had instances of animals being dragged due to an inability or unwillingness to walk (C6), compared to 53% of multi-species facilities. Again, this can be explained as chickens, ducks and rabbits are small animals who can easily be picked up, meaning that dragging is less likely to be applicable in all cases. Some species of animals are more likely to escape, particularly goats and smaller animals, meaning that this figure is also far higher for multi-species slaughterhouses.

**Table 5**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Single species (recorded)</b>	<b>Single species (recorded) %</b>	<b>Multi-species (recorded)</b>	<b>Multi-species (recorded) %</b>
C1	10	77%	16	94%
C2	5	38%	7	41%
C3	2	15%	13	76%
C4	6	46%	9	53%
C5	6	46%	17	100%
C6	2	15%	9	53%
<b>C7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>94%</b>
C8	10	77%	14	82%
C9	13	100%	17	100%
C10	10	77%	14	82%

<b>C11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>C12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>47%</b>
C13	13	92%	12	70%
C14	13	92%	16	94%
<b>C15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>82%</b>
C16	6	46%	8	47%

In some cases however, it is possible to compare across single and multi-species slaughterhouses, and some worrying trends emerge. In single-species slaughterhouses, only 46% of facilities had instances where stunning devices had to be used more than once before causing unconsciousness (C7) and where animals displayed signs of consciousness after sticking (C11). In multi-species slaughterhouses, this number was much higher, 94% and 82% respectively. This could indicate that multi-species slaughterhouses use less reliable methods of stunning, e.g. bolt guns or electric clamps rather than gas stunning for pigs. However, it is worth noting that Cowra MeatProcessors was the only multi-species slaughterhouse to use a gas chamber for pigs and it was also the only slaughterhouses investigated where pigs displayed clear signs of consciousness after gas stunning and subsequent sticking.

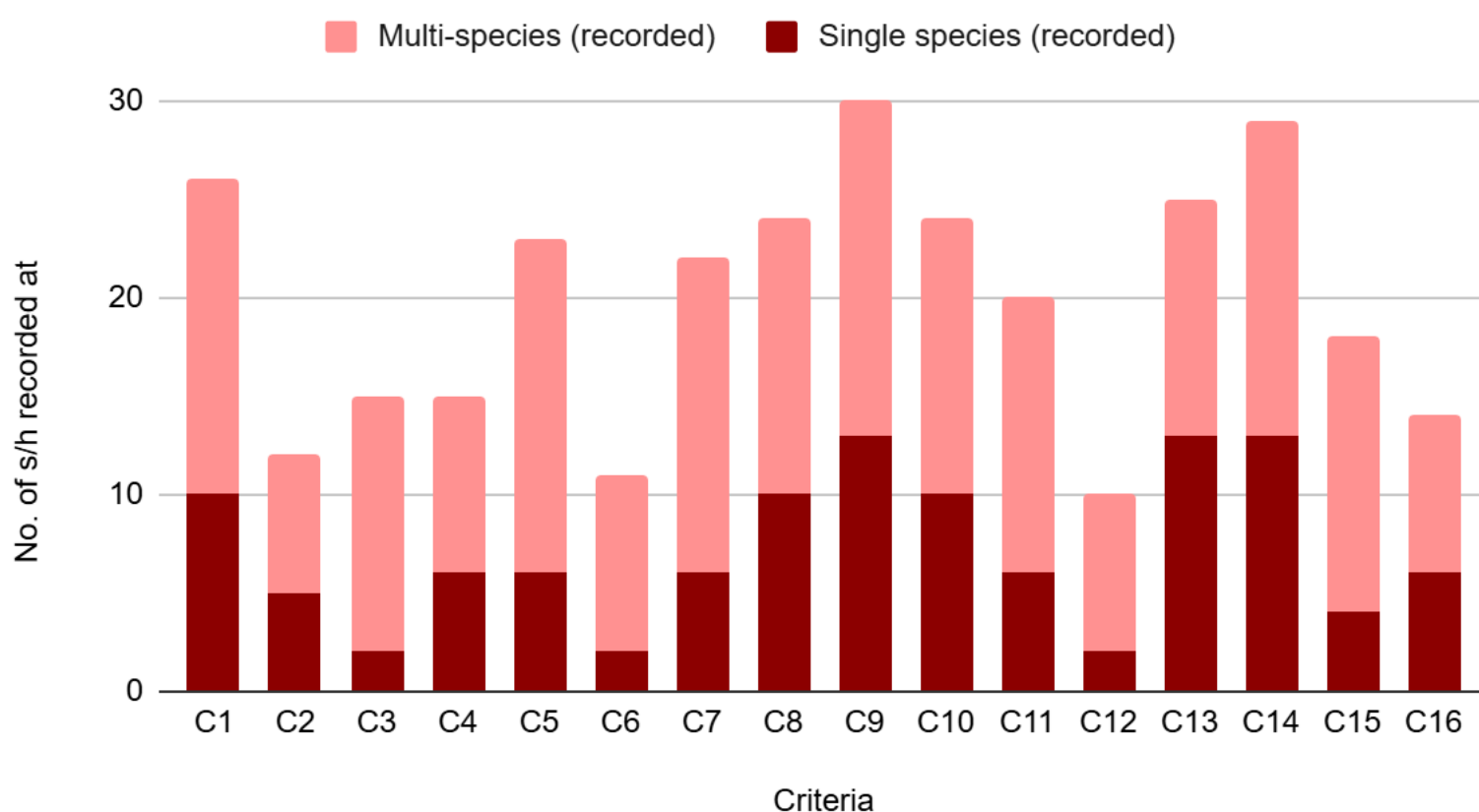
Another explanation could be that multi-species slaughterhouses require workers to operate far more types of machinery and handle multiple species of animals, which may lead to higher levels of carelessness and increased animal suffering. Workers are often observed switching between areas of the slaughterhouse throughout the day, whereas workers at single-species slaughterhouses will generally do the same task for much of the work day.

Even more concerningly, multi-species slaughterhouses were over three times more likely to have instances of animals being killed without stunning (C12) than single-species slaughterhouses. In only one case was unstunned killing part of the normal operating procedure of a facility. In all other instances, it occurred because of carelessness or deliberate malice on the part of slaughterhouse workers and management.

The frequency of animals reaching the further processing area of the slaughterhouse while still displaying signs of consciousness (C15) also increased significantly in multi-species facilities. 82% of those investigated saw animals likely remaining conscious during dismemberment or scalding, compared to 31% of single-species slaughterhouses. This could once again indicate increased carelessness at multi-species slaughterhouses, as well as poorly operated equipment.

Regardless of slaughterhouse type, 100% of facilities showed animals displaying high levels of distress during handling and slaughter (C9). A significant proportion of facilities of both types also showed animals displaying signs of consciousness after stunning (C10), with this occurring in 77% of single-species slaughterhouses and 82% of multi-species. Animals were killed in front of each other (C14) at over 90% of both types of facilities.

## Comparison between single-species & multi-species slaughterhouses



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# Recommendations

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The findings from these investigations paint a grim picture of an industry that has remained unregulated and unquestioned for far too long. From when animals are loaded onto the trucks to take them on their long final journey, to when they draw their last breath, almost everything that is done to animals bred for food in Australia is incompatible with animal welfare legislation and public expectations of ‘humane’ animal treatment.

These investigations have also demonstrated that there is little difference between small, “local” killing operations and large industrial ones, with violence and cruelty being built into the standard operating procedure across the board.

Based on the findings detailed in this report, Farm Transparency Project puts forward the following recommendations to Australia’s federal and state governments.

1. Immediately commence the phase-out of commercial animal slaughter facilities.
2. Invest in developing affordable, commercially viable alternatives to slaughter-based food production, including cultured meat and plant-based substitutes.
3. Increase transparency regarding the welfare of animals at killing facilities through public information campaigns and mandatory transparency in marketing and packaging.

We also recommend that the following changes be made in the intermediary:

- a) Remove exemptions from animal protection legislation which allows for legalised cruelty on farms and slaughterhouses.
- b) Implement strict licensing requirements reducing the number of animals that can be legally killed per facility per day and restricting slaughterhouses from killing multiple types of animals.
- c) Ban the use of carbon dioxide gas chambers as a stunning method for pigs.
- d) Enforce existing regulations, including the AS4696, and respond to breaches with comprehensive investigations and prosecutions.
- e) Ban the killing of newborn goats and sheep who are born at slaughterhouses.
- f) Implement mandatory, publicly accessible CCTV in all licensed slaughterhouses.

# Conclusion

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From January 2023 to November 2024, a small team of independent investigators undertook the largest and most comprehensive investigation of slaughterhouses ever to occur in

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Australia. While they expected to find violence and suffering, what they uncovered went far beyond the inherent brutality of killing sentient animals for food.

Hidden behind the walls of Australian slaughterhouses is a world of casual cruelty and a callous disregard for the very real fear, pain and suffering of the animals whose lives are taken. No animal goes to their death willingly or calmly and most will experience physical abuse, psychological distress, ineffective stunning and intense pain before their lives come to an end.

The unnecessary slaughter of intelligent, sentient animals for human gain already seems entirely out of step with a society and a nation which claims to prioritise animal welfare. Yet, these investigations show that even the limited protections that do exist to restrict the worst kinds of abuse and suffering, are not being upheld.

Anything less than a complete phase-out of the commercial breeding and killing of animals for food, clothing, entertainment and scientific research will only further entrench the poisonous vein of brutality which runs through our country, from slaughterhouse to slaughterhouse.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### Australian Standard for Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products (Section 7)

Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption

#### 7 ANIMAL WELFARE

##### OUTCOME

The minimisation of the risk of injury, pain and suffering and the least practical disturbance to animals.

##### Handling of animals

- 7.1 Premises and equipment:
- (a) are used in a way; and
  - (b) are maintained in a condition; that minimises risk of injury, pain and suffering to animals and causes them the least practicable disturbance.
- 7.2 Animals are handled at meat premises in a way that minimises the risk of injury, pain and suffering and causes the least practicable disturbance to them and to other animals at the premises.
- 7.3 The separation of animals of different species or different sexes or of animals of the same species is provided to the extent necessary to minimise the risk of injury, pain and suffering to them and causes them the least practicable disturbance.
- 7.4 Animals are provided with feed (where appropriate), water, shade, shelter, space and ventilation that is sufficient to minimise stress to the animals.
- 7.5 If it is necessary to minimise the stress to the animals, water sprays are provided.

##### Young, injured, sick or stress susceptible animals

- 7.6 Special provision is made for the handling and slaughter of:
- (a) animals that are not weaned or are stressed, injured or diseased; and
  - (b) animals of a species that is particularly susceptible to stress.
- 7.7 Injured and sick animals are examined and given appropriate treatment and are segregated from other animals.
- 7.8 Animals identified as requiring emergency slaughter are not moved more than is necessary and are slaughtered or killed humanely as soon as possible after being so identified.
- Note* For the meaning of *emergency slaughter* see clause 1.3.

##### Slaughter

- 7.9 Animals are slaughtered in a way that prevents unnecessary injury, pain and suffering to them and causes them the least practicable disturbance.
- 7.10 Before sticking commences, animals are stunned in a way that ensures the animals are unconscious and insensible to pain before sticking occurs and do not regain consciousness or sensibility before dying.
- Note* For the meaning of *sticking* and *stunning* see clause 1.3.

Australian Standard

- 7.11 Before stunning commences, animals are restrained in a way that ensures stunning is effective.

##### Ritual slaughter

- 7.12 (1) This provision only applies to animals killed under an approved arrangement that provides for their ritual slaughter involving sticking without prior stunning.  
(2) An animal that is stuck without first being stunned and is not rendered unconscious as part of its ritual slaughter is stunned without delay after it is stuck to ensure it is rendered unconscious.
- Note* For the meaning of *ritual slaughter* see clause 1.3.

##### Work animals

- 7.13 Work animals are kept under control and are handled, restrained and accommodated in a way that minimises risk of injury and stress and causes the least practicable disturbance to the animals that are to be slaughtered and to other work animals.
- 7.14 Work animals (other than leader animals) are accommodated separately from slaughter animals.
- 7.15 Dogs used or to be used to facilitate the handling of slaughter animals:
- (a) are effectively muzzled when working; and
  - (b) are restrained when not working.

## Slaughterhouse investigations tracker - full table.

Viewable document - [Slaughterhouse Tracking Table - Complete](#)

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## Appendix 3

### List of slaughterhouses by type.

#### Large & small animal combined

- Cowra Meat Processors, Cowra NSW
- Millmerran Meats, Millmerran QLD
- Macclagan Meats, Macclagan QLD
- Carey Bros, Yangan QLD
- Steve's Country Kills, Chinchilla QLD
- Brisbane Valley Meats, Esk QLD
- Crows Nest Meatworks, Crows Nest QLD
- Snowtown Meats, Snowtown SA
- Menzel's Meats, Kapunda SA
- Local Meat Co, Claude Road TAS
- Wal's Bulk Meats, Stowport TAS
- Gretna Quality Meats, Rosegarland TAS
- Gathercole's, Wangaratta VIC
- DJ & CA Meek, Edenhope VIC

#### Large animal only

- Greenmountain Food Processing, Coominya QLD
- Ralph's Meats, Seymour VIC

#### Pig only

- JBS/Rivalea, Corowa NSW
- BMK Foods, Murray Bridge SA
- Scottsdale Pork, Springfield TAS
- CA Sinclair, Benalla VIC
- Australian Food Group, Laverton VIC
- Diamond Valley Pork, Laverton VIC

#### Poultry or rabbits

- ET Chicken Processing, Llandilo NSW
  - Tinder Creek Ducks, Tennyson NSW
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- Summerland Poultry, North Kellyville NSW
  - Gippsland Meats, Bairnsdale VIC

### **Small animal only**

- Tasmanian Quality Meats, Cressy TAS
- The Game Meats Company, Eurobin VIC
- MD Foods, Echuca VIC
- Cedar Meats, Brooklyn VIC

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### **Single-species slaughterhouses**

1. JBS/Rivalea, Corowa NSW
2. ET Chicken Processing, Llandillo NSW
3. Tinder Creek Ducks, Tennyson NSW
4. Summerland Poultry, North Kellyville NSW
5. Greenmountain Food Processing, Coominya QLD
6. BMK Foods, Murray Bridge SA
7. Scottsdale Pork, Springfield TAS
8. Ralph's Meats, Seymour VIC
9. CA Sinclair, Benalla VIC
10. Australian Food Group, Laverton VIC
11. Diamond Valley Pork, Laverton VIC
12. Gippsland Meats, Bairnsdale VIC
13. The Game Meats Company, Eurobin VIC

### **Multi-species slaughterhouses**

1. Cowra Meat Processors, Cowra NSW
  2. Millmerran Meats, Millmerran QLD
  3. MacLagan Meats, MacLagan QLD
  4. Carey Bros, Yangan QLD
  5. Steve's Country Kills, Chinchilla QLD
  6. Brisbane Valley Meats, Esk QLD
  7. Crows Nest Meatworks, Crows Nest QLD
  8. Snowtown Meats, Snowtown SA
  9. Menzel's Meats, Kapunda SA
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10. Local Meat Co, Claude Road TAS
  11. Wal's Bulk Meats, Stowport TAS
  12. Gretna Quality Meats, Rosegarland TAS
  13. Tasmanian Quality Meats, Cressy TAS
  14. Gathercole's, Wangaratta VIC
  15. DJ & CA Meek, Edenhope VIC
  16. MD Foods, Echuca VIC
  17. Cedar Meats, Brooklyn VIC
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