

# TRANSCRIPT

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

### Inquiry into Pig Welfare in Victoria

Melbourne – Wednesday 13 March 2024

#### MEMBERS

Georgie Purcell – Chair

David Davis – Deputy Chair

John Berger

Katherine Copsy

Bev McArthur

Tom McIntosh

Evan Mulholland

Sonja Terpstra

#### PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Gaelle Broad

Georgie Crozier

David Ettershank

Michael Galea

Renee Heath

Sarah Mansfield

Rachel Payne

**WITNESSES**

David Wright, and

Tim Kingma.

**The CHAIR:** I declare open the Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee's public hearing for the Inquiry into Pig Welfare in Victoria. Please ensure that mobile phones have been switched to silent and that background noise is minimised.

I would like to begin this hearing by respectfully acknowledging the Aboriginal peoples, the traditional custodians of the various lands we are gathered on today, and pay my respects to their ancestors, elders and families. I particularly welcome any elders or community members who are here today to impart their knowledge of this issue to the committee or who are watching the broadcast of these proceedings. I also welcome many members of the public watching via the live broadcast or in the public gallery today.

To begin we will get committee members to introduce themselves to you, starting with Mrs Broad.

**Gaëlle BROAD:** Hi, I am Gaëlle Broad, Member for Northern Victoria.

**Bev McARTHUR:** Bev McArthur, Western Victoria Region.

**Renee HEATH:** Renee Heath, Eastern Victoria Region.

**The CHAIR:** Georgie Purcell, Northern Victoria Region.

**Katherine COPSEY:** Katherine Copsey, Southern Metropolitan Region.

**The CHAIR:** Thanks very much for making the time to appear today.

All evidence taken is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the *Constitution Act 1975* and further subject to the provisions of the Legislative Council standing orders. Therefore the information you provide during this hearing is protected by law. You are protected against any action for what you say during this hearing, but if you go elsewhere and repeat the same things, those comments may not be protected by this privilege. Any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the committee may be considered a contempt of the Parliament.

All evidence is being recorded today and you will be provided with a proof version of the transcript following this hearing, and then transcripts will ultimately be made public and posted on the committee's website. For the Hansard record could you please state your full names and the organisation you are appearing on behalf of, if any.

**Tim KINGMA:** Tim Kingma. I am a pig farmer in north-central Victoria.

**David WRIGHT:** David Wright, pig farmer in Victoria.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. We now welcome your opening comments, but I ask that they are kept to a maximum of around 10 to 15 minutes between you to ensure there is plenty of time for questions and discussion, and feel free to do it whatever way works best for you, if you want to go individually or together.

**David WRIGHT:** Honourable members of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee, I am proud to represent farmers who put affordable and high-quality products on the table for Australian families. Our industry significantly contributes to the Victorian economy and provides livelihoods to countless individuals across regional Victoria. Our industry is about food security; it is about putting safe, affordable, nutritious food on the table for Australians at a time when many of us are feeling the bite from a rising cost of living.

The Victorian pork industry has a collective commitment to pig welfare. Our members adhere to industry best practices and continually invest in research, technology and training to improve animal care standards. We follow the rules and laws set by federal, state and local governments, and these are strictly enforced. We adhere to the model code of practice for welfare of animals, which is independently audited on farms through the

Australian pork industry quality assurance program, or APIQ. Australian pork is not only the second most consumed protein in Australia but is a low-emission, sustainable and environmentally friendly food source.

It is essential that the committee grasps the human element behind our industry. Every pork product has farmers with their families' aspirations in connection to agriculture. Our industry is the backbone of many regional communities, providing an environment for producers and their employees to raise their families and be part of their communities, yet Victorian farmers and pig producers constantly face the unnecessary burden of illegal trespass and harassment from illegal activists. This jeopardises the mental health of our producers, their families, their staff and our greater community. It causes repeated anguish while endangering the welfare of our pigs' biosecurity every time these people illegally enter our properties with no knowledge or care or responsibility for the damage they cause to the health and wellbeing of our pigs and our people. We understand that everyone has a right to protest and express their views, but these trespassers are not about pig welfare – they are about ending animal farming altogether. These are not forms of protest – these are illegal break-ins that are organised and premeditated. Yesterday we heard activists state under parliamentary privilege that they have broken into more than 50 farms across the state. They have proudly stated that they are breaking the law and will continue to do so, so can you imagine the anxiety this creates for farmers and their staff? The government has done a fantastic and great job introducing new, tough biosecurity legislation, but we need the judicial system to back it up and halt the organised farm terrorism. It must stop. Clearly the penalties for these actions are not adequate and need to be strengthened.

We are committed to working collaboratively with government, reputable animal welfare organisations and other stakeholders to develop effective evidence-based policies that safeguard pig welfare while recognising the significant contribution our industry makes to Victoria. We hope you will consider our commitment to pig care and urge the committee to approach this inquiry with a fair and unbiased perspective. We ask for your support, allowing us to get on with providing affordable, high-quality pork produced with animal care at the core and allowing farmers to farm.

**Tim KINGMA:** Honourable members of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee, my name is Tim Kingma. As I said, I am a proud pork producer from north-central Victoria. Before I begin talking about how we should celebrate this Victorian pig industry I would like to comment on the timing of this inquiry and the ideology of animal activists. As farmers, we have attended daily to the welfare of animals we care for. During the Christmas period we need to balance the need to care for animals, deal with extreme summer conditions, deal with harvest pressures and deal with purchasing feed for our pigs and the need to balance work and life for our staff. To add the burden of an inquiry shows a lack of understanding of the pressures that our sector faces at this time of the year. Cynically, I believe that the timing has been designed to limit the responses and influence the outcome of the inquiry to the detriment of the farmers, the welfare of the animals and the welfare of people working in our industry.

I would also like to mention some of the comments from the presentations yesterday. The majority of presenters made it clear they supported an ideology that animals should not be farmed, not eaten, and they supported animal activists trespassing on farms. I, like around 95 per cent of Australians, enjoy eating meat. I respect the right of animal activists to have an opinion that is different, but I object that they want to force their ideology on us while doing it illegally. Today I will be celebrating our industry, and I hope that the majority of this committee will join with me. I am here to shed light on the essential role that pork producers play in animal welfare and our communities, the dedication we bring to our work and the positive impact we have on lives in Victoria.

Rural communities are the backbone of Victoria. Pork producers are an integral part of that fabric. Our farms are not just a place of business. They are our homes. Our neighbours are our family. We contribute significantly to the economy of Victoria, creating jobs, supporting businesses and fostering a sense of pride. In my case I am proud of the role I play in my community. I am following in my parents' footsteps, who built the business from scratch. I employ around 30 local people directly, with investments that have grown our family business from 400 sows to 2000 in the last 20 years. This has also included building a feed mill that supplies other pig farms, producing around 1000 tonne a week. I play sport, I contribute locally, I am a lieutenant in the CFA. I roll up my sleeves for my community. I continually donate to the local hospital, schools, sports clubs, and in October 2022 and December 2023 when the floods hit our community we all banded together immediately to help each other. I am heavily involved in the flood relief effort for not only farmers and community members but our

town. I am passionate about rural and regional Victoria, and our agriculture and piggery industry are vital to that.

It is important to understand what pig farmers look like. Having farmed animals since childhood, the first consideration we have is for the health and welfare of our animals. Without caring for animals you cannot be successful. We understand social licence to the extent that the industry agreed to self-regulate the phasing-out of gestation stalls. On our existing farms it meant refurbishing existing sheds to eliminate the gestation stalls. The cost of doing this was completely absorbed by us, as there was no government assistance or price incentive to do so. Here is an opportunity for this inquiry to applaud and celebrate the steps taken by the pig industry to improve animal welfare outcomes. We understand the need for farming standards that are tested. Our farms have been early adopters of the APIQ program, which includes an annual audit by an independent auditor to verify the standards of care within the farm. Once again, this inquiry should use this as an opportunity to applaud and celebrate the industry for developing the APIQ program. I am proud that we continually invest to improve the welfare of our pigs. Our sheds and our climate controls for the pigs are leaving a protected environment from the elements in the temperatures they prefer. I want to reaffirm the dedication of pork producers in Victoria to the wellbeing of our animals, our communities and the people we proudly serve. I hope this committee can celebrate the pork industry and have the courage to back our industry.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much for your opening remarks. We will commence with Dr Heath.

**Renee HEATH:** Thank you so much for your submission and also your presentation today. How do pork producers work with APIQ to ensure good animal welfare outcomes in the pig industry?

**Tim KINGMA:** APIQ – how I work with it on my farm is we do continuous staff training. Our system – we have monthly training, so if there is ever a change in APIQ we will talk about it at staff level. Then for me it is around having our standard operating procedures or SOPs for all the different procedures we do on our farm. The staff are trained in that, and we are continually upgrading and improving. Then we do an internal audit as a business, and I choose to bring in a third party for that actual internal audit, because I think that is beneficial to the staff and our business. Then we have our annual audit that is third party, which I pay for, and it gets done.

**David WRIGHT:** It is the same procedure on our farm, exactly. We have a third-party internal audit, and then we have a third-party external audit every year. We do it a little bit differently to Tim. We have our toolbox meeting every week, so if we have got training it is usually in that. We usually do some form of small revisiting or training every week and discuss stuff, and staff bring stuff up as we go through. We go through our records on a weekly basis with that sort of stuff.

**Renee HEATH:** Amazing. And, Mr Kingma, you employ 30 people, which is incredible. Do you mind if I ask how many –

**David WRIGHT:** Yes, we have seven employees.

**Renee HEATH:** Wow, 70.

**David WRIGHT:** Seven.

**Renee HEATH:** Wow. Amazing. Great. So have farmers embraced these codes?

**Tim KINGMA:** Yes. Listening to APL earlier I think they are sitting at over 90 per cent of pigs under APIQ. I do not know how it compares to other industries, but I have to imagine 90 per cent has got to be very strong, because in school terms you are a high distinction. To me, it is continually evolving too, and I think that is the real positive about it. I do get involved in our industry obviously – I am passionate – and I think we continually are trying to update it. We are continually striving to improve it. I guess because it is independently audited, we also have another arm that probably does not know the industry, but they are bringing in changes as well, which we then as an industry adapt to.

**David WRIGHT:** And we see through the different committees that we both sit on at times with other livestock industries and the comments that come to them how far ahead of them we are with our standards and our quality assurance programs. For most of the livestock industry in Australia, we are well above where they are.

**Renee HEATH:** Wonderful. And I can tell that you are passionate from your tie. What changes have the industry made to ensure the best animal welfare?

**Tim KINGMA:** I have been working on our family farm for 20 years. I think the relationships we have are some of the biggest changes. You know, with your farm vet, you are not seeing them once a year, which happened 20 years ago, you are talking to them weekly. Your key staff will ring straight directly to the farm vet. I would imagine as farms get bigger they employ their own veterinarians as well. We are only a family farm, so we are not that big. So it is those relationships, but then it is relationships in all other aspects as well of the business. For me, my parents bought the farm in the 90s, which was actually a bankrupt piggery, from the bank, and we just continually invest in new technologies. We see what is going on in the rest of the world and try and adapt it back here. We have climate control. I have just come off four days of virtually high 30s every day, and the sows in our farrowing sheds sat at 28. I think 28.7 degrees was the hottest they got to. That is why I say for what we are doing animal welfare is number one, and we invest and keep reinvesting, knowing animal welfare is our number one, because if you do not do it, you are not successful.

**Renee HEATH:** Yes, that is good.

**David WRIGHT:** The only addition I would put to that, and I think APL touched on it earlier, is as an industry I think we have put \$23 million-plus into research into our industry. We continue to put our own money up continually to make our industry better and improve as we go forward with that research, and that research goes beyond our shores.

**Renee HEATH:** One of the things that has been spoken about in the media, particularly in the last few days, is there was obviously some pretty disgusting imagery of somebody in a pig farm performing a sexual act with a pig. If that was to happen in your farm, what would your response be to that?

**David WRIGHT:** I will speak from my point of view. We would obviously bring in the appropriate authorities and go down the path that we need to. We would make sure the person –

**Renee HEATH:** Police, for instance?

**David WRIGHT:** Well, absolutely it would be the police. We would then make sure that the person involved was getting the help they needed as well, and dismissal would be somewhere down the line once we worked through the process with the relevant authorities, because nobody can condone that style of behaviour at all.

**Renee HEATH:** Thank you.

**Tim KINGMA:** I would start with how Dave ended. I could not condone it. I do not know of it. I have never heard of it happening, and it is not something I had ever thought –

**Renee HEATH:** It is not something you ever thought – like you could not imagine that happening.

**Tim KINGMA:** Yes, that is right. You would think that in any workplace. It is one of those ones. So I do 100 per cent agree with Dave that it is a police matter – deal with it. I do not know when the footage was taken, but how ironic that it got delivered on the night before this inquiry. If I saw it happen, I would deal with it right then and there.

**The CHAIR:** It was reported the next day.

**Tim KINGMA:** All right, that is fine. It just did not come across that way. But it is good to know.

**Bev McARTHUR:** How many days ago, Georgie?

**The CHAIR:** The day after it happened. It said that in the report.

**Bev McARTHUR:** Well, how long ago was that?

**The CHAIR:** I can talk about it in my time. I do not want to take up Dr Heath's.

**Renee HEATH:** You are eating into my time, so I would like another 20 seconds added.

**Tim KINGMA:** Sorry.

**David WRIGHT:** Sorry.

**Renee HEATH:** No, no – not to you guys, to my colleagues. How important is certainty of regulation when making decisions to invest in new animal housing?

**Tim KINGMA:** Certainty around what, sorry?

**Renee HEATH:** Regulation.

**Tim KINGMA:** Sorry, yes. For me, I have just actually completed – it was during COVID, so it was quite awkward building a new farm – an expansion. At the end of the day, I built it fully intensive, but it is fully climate controlled, state of the art. I have gone around the world, got the best technologies – understanding individual animal feeding, understanding individual weight of animals. The sheds are quite amazing, the way they operate. I can get on my phone now and look at exact temperatures – maximums, minimums – water flows, everything.

**Renee HEATH:** Okay. Wonderful.

**David WRIGHT:** And Tim has been able to do that because there has been certainty around that. He had to fight for some of that process, but there was certainty around where those regulations were so he could do that, developing employment in our district and growing it.

**Renee HEATH:** Thanks so much. That is my time up.

**The CHAIR:** Thanks, Dr Heath. I will pick up there. Just to give some context, that illegal act was actually reported the very next day after it appeared –

**David WRIGHT:** That is good for us, because we do not have that context, so thank you.

**The CHAIR:** Obviously as someone, I guess, outside of the debate, we would take deep offence that we would time severe acts of horrific cruelty to a pig around an inquiry. That was not part of the consideration. But on that note, how does it make you feel that we would be unaware that that happened and would likely be continuing to happen and has probably happened well into the past if it was not for the work of those activists who you oppose, who are only doing this to get more transparency from the industry?

**Tim KINGMA:** I am going to answer it. In the real world it would not matter what industry it is, as soon as you find out, you deal with it. I feel if it was on my farm, I would find out and then I would deal with it straightaway. That is just not our industry. That is something that no-one can condone. Let us talk about our industry and how great it is and what we are doing.

**The CHAIR:** I am certainly not implying that it is common practice, but I guess there are ongoing concerns around overall transparency, for the public to be made aware about what is going on in farms.

**David WRIGHT:** But based on that, Georgie, do we need it in every workplace? Because we have rape allegations, we have sexual harassment in other places happen. Does that mean every workplace then? It is a different incident to having transparency that you are talking about.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, I completely agree with that. But my question is: what can the industry do to restore the public's confidence, who have lost faith in it, and perhaps what specific things have you two done as participants in the industry?

**Tim KINGMA:** Yes, I would rephrase some of the language. I think the community has great faith and trust in us as farmers and our industry. What I would say in terms of transparency: I do not think I could be much more transparent. In the last, I will say 18 months, but it is probably 12 months, I have invited RSPCA on farm, and they have toured my farm with me. I have had politicians. I have had AgVic. I have had EPA and numerous other industry people. I am always happy to talk to people that are like-minded, that understand that we need agriculture, because as I said, I think it is around 95 per cent of people who eat meat. I want to celebrate how we are producing a great quality product for Victorians to eat.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. As pork producers, how did you feel when you saw those images and the footage of CO<sub>2</sub> stunning in Victorian abattoirs, and does it make you feel comfortable that that is where the animals that you are raising are ending their lives?

**David WRIGHT:** I watched those images. I have been through the abattoir. I have seen that process. So for me it was not as confronting as it might be for somebody that has not seen it. But it is world's best practice: our abattoirs are meeting the standard, doing what they have to do. They are regulated; they tick the boxes with the regulations. End of life at any point, it does not matter what it is, at some point is not pretty.

**The CHAIR:** Can I just have some more understanding to this, because as I know it touring these facilities you cannot actually see into the gondola. Could you see in real life the pigs going in, or did you just get to tour the facility?

**Tim KINGMA:** Yes. I do tour where my pigs are as part of my process of following the whole animal. Yes, I have watched them go in the gondola and go down. I would reiterate what Tim from AMIC said earlier, that his experience has not been what was shown there. To be honest I have had my kids come along. When you go in there, it is so quiet. When I have had people come on the farm the things they say are, 'Oh, I expected this to be loud.' I say, 'No, they're actually relaxed.' We are treating them in the way they are meant to be treated. It is the same in the abattoir. It is not nearly as loud as it is portrayed when I walk through.

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, I am not trying to have an argument, but it is my understanding that it is because the animals go so deep under that the noise cannot actually be heard unless you are standing on top of the gondola. Did you stand on top of the gondola and look down?

**Tim KINGMA:** Where I have stood it is watching it go around and around as we can picture with a gondola. I would have thought that if it was that loud, I would have heard something. I am just going off my experience of standing next to it.

**The CHAIR:** You spoke before about the uptake of people in the industry of something that essentially you need to volunteer to do. We know that many farming industries operate under a self-regulation model, and in my opinion that allows pork producers who believe they are doing the right thing, like the two of you here today – and we appreciate you coming. When poor behaviour goes on, it impacts the whole industry, and that is why I believe we are here today. Would you support mandatory rules around welfare and compliance under the same laws for animal welfare that many other animal industries have to comply with?

**Tim KINGMA:** Well, I would say we are one of the most regulated industries already. We have so many rules and regulations that we are abiding by and are audited on.

**The CHAIR:** Just in my limited time, you spoke before about how 90 per cent have taken that up, which goes to show that it is optional. My question is: would you support mandatory rules for your industry?

**David WRIGHT:** I think we would look at what was put before us. Our track record of sitting with government, meeting with government and working with government is above most industries. We come to the table, we support government, we work with government. Both our farms are sentinel farms for JEV. When there are exotic animal disease outbreaks, we work with government. We actually come to the table. We have gone to the government; we are sitting with government now talking about those things. We work through it. When they come to us, we take that and evaluate it at the time and go back with what we think. We go to-and-fro. So yes, we do work towards those things.

**The CHAIR:** And just very briefly, do either of you participate in blunt force trauma, tail docking or teeth clipping without anaesthetic?

**Tim KINGMA:** I do some of them, yes.

**David WRIGHT:** And I do some of them as well.

**The CHAIR:** And do you think that that is world's best practice given that it is illegal to do it to cats, dogs and other animals?

**Tim KINGMA:** In terms of the first one you said, I think it was blunt force trauma, it is an approved way of euthanising a piglet. I would slightly turn it around – it is actually animal welfare, and it is actually showing that we care. It is instantaneous, and it is after we have given these piglets – we have tried. If I compare it to the wild, and let us say we let them all go, a sow in the wild would barely have, I do not know, but I will say five piglets survive. I am trying to have 11 survive. We are actually doing these practices that are around keeping them, and we will give it its best chance. We train our staff in how to treat them and look after them. But sometimes there is death, and that is never pleasant for people and especially people that do not believe in eating meat. I believe it is a tool that is very efficient, very quick, and it is over straightaway – immediately.

**David WRIGHT:** It is not something you take lightly. To take a life is not something that you just do on a whim. As Tim said – and he has said it very well – we go through all of those processes before we make that decision. It is welfare tool that we use for the betterment of our industry.

**The CHAIR:** Would you support anaesthetic for those procedures for welfare, though, like we do for cats and dogs?

**David WRIGHT:** If science says it and that is where we end up, then that is where we end up.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. That is definitely my time. We will go to Ms Broad.

**Gaëlle BROAD:** Thank you very much for coming and speaking with us today. I am just interested in the impact of trespassing. You know, you work in the industry – what experience have you heard from other people, and what would you like to see, because you talked about penalties not being adequate? Could you talk to the impact first and then the penalties?

**David WRIGHT:** The mental burden and anguish on producers – until you eat, sleep and breathe it, you cannot fathom it yourself. It is like someone coming into your home, opening your fridge, grabbing a beer, sitting down and watching the TV, videoing themselves, doing whatever in the house and then leaving, then you ringing the police and asking for something to be done, and nothing happening. Then you do not know if that is going to happen again tomorrow, the day after, the day after or the day after. That is the simplest way to try and explain it. But to live with that anguish continually is not a pleasant thing. From self-experience, I know the anxiety I live through and I know the anxiety that I am medicated for. Part of that burden is from what we live with. Both Tim and I have been on a phone call with a producer whose wife rang us because he was suicidal, because he had had activists on his farm. Like, we sat there and talked to the guy for an hour and a half to 2 hours because of where he was mentally. So that is the real-life burden of what these people are doing. That is not even discussing the biosecurity issues and the welfare of the animal that they are jeopardising when they are doing it. Then we see it go to court or we see businesses like APL raided and CA Sinclair raided – their whole production line shut for two or three days, people arrested, they go before the courts and nothing happens. We saw Gippy Goat, where they got fined a dollar to give back to their own organisation. We are not seeing the judicial system back up the laws that the government has done a great job to bring and put into place.

**Gaëlle BROAD:** Okay. Do you have anything to add?

**Tim KINGMA:** I probably cannot add to it. That was well said, Dave.

**Gaëlle BROAD:** Yes. What would you like to see in future?

**David WRIGHT:** The judicial system back up the rules that are there – the judicial system support what people are doing in government, putting great stuff in, and the police on the ground doing the work to get the charges laid, support the business and give farmers peace of mind. Because at the moment farmers' mental welfare is second – it is not first place. We already know that rural communities suffer with services. We know suicide in rural communities is higher than anywhere else. All that stuff – if we can help by taking one burden out by stopping some of this farm trespass, that would help. It would go a long way to giving farmers peace of mind to sleep at night. When my staff go back at 10 o'clock at night to do a check or they start at 4 o'clock to do a check, there is the anxiety of not knowing what they are going to come across. Many times I have had my guys ringing me and going, 'Oh, there's headlights down near the front gate. What do I do?' That anxiety in their voices – like, that is not fair, you know. The average Australian would empathise with us – that works at Coles or in the petrol station or wherever – because they do not go through that on a daily basis or a weekly



basis. So it has got to change – it absolutely has to change – and you guys have the power to actually recommend some of that change.

**Gaelle BROAD:** Yes. You talked about animal welfare. I guess you have made some refurbishment. Can you talk to that? I guess the role of a farmer being a 24/7 experience – what that is like for you. What sort of changes have you made?

**Tim KINGMA:** Yes. For me, there is always reinvestment, and that is what you do. To me it is about reinvesting in newer technologies. I also think of our staff – I talk about having 30. Gone are the days 20 years ago where you spent the first 2 hours of the morning just pushing a trolley around feeding animals. Now it is about automation – it is about making it easier for the animals and the staff and considering both, not only animal welfare but human welfare. Things are always changing, and I think where our industry is great is that we are continually doing it. I do not want to say what other industries are doing but I am proud that ours does do that – continually improves and continually reinvests.

**Gaelle BROAD:** You mentioned that you had watched proceedings a bit yesterday. Was there any misinformation or any issues that were raised that you would like to redress, just to give you time?

**David WRIGHT:** You go first.

**Tim KINGMA:** There were many. I think one person made a comment: ‘You just put as many pigs in a pen as you want’ or a shed. We have rules and regs when we do it. That is just not factual.

**David WRIGHT:** There are checks. Sorry, TK. Those rules and regs are checked. The QA auditors come in – they measure pens, they count pigs. Those things have actually got checks and balances against them.

**Tim KINGMA:** That is right. What probably shocked me was that some of the questions that the committee asked were, ‘If you did A, B and C, would you stop trespass?’ One of the end answers was, ‘No, we’ll do it until the industry is gone.’ We have to walk away knowing that that is the case, and that is not fair – to know that that is what they are planning. At the end of the day, we have talked – Dave has talked about his anxiety and mine as well, like now, are we number one targets? Like, who is on our farm tonight? And that is what I have got to drive home thinking about. I have got to think about my kids when they go back to living on the farm. I have got to think about my staff. It is crazy that no other this industry has to deal with this.

**David WRIGHT:** Yes, my son is home on the farm now.

**Tim KINGMA:** No businesses should deal with this, ever.

**David WRIGHT:** That is something Tim and I talked about at length when we talked about appearing today – the fact that we are now on a radar, we have now put our heads up. My son is at home looking after a farm right now. Last night, he was back at 10 o’clock; he was back checking because we are just not sure what is going on. We just do not know what is coming at us, and that has got to stop. That has got to stop.

**Gaelle BROAD:** Yes. No, we do thank you and appreciate your perspective, I guess, sharing it with us today, because it is very difficult. I guess I am just wanting to understand too – many pig farms are located in regional areas, and we heard from a number of witnesses yesterday that do want to see an end of all meat production. What kind of impact do you think that that would have? Victoria, I think, supplies over 20 per cent of the industry. What impact would that have on Victoria and particularly regional areas?

**Tim KINGMA:** For me, intensive farming is one of the great tools that we can use to continue to feed this great state, this great country and great world that we live in, because you can use country. We build our farms where you cannot grow crops. We build our farms in areas where there are not as many people around because it is ideal for it. And it is an industry that I look at where we have this product at the end where we have awesome meat, and we then have effluent that, you know, organic farmers are always ringing pig farmers for; they want to use our effluent because it is such a great fertiliser. It is just such an unbelievable whole farm of using everything. To me, like I have said in my opening statement, we should be celebrating all the great things we are doing and the great products we have to offer because without having us there, there is just no way we will produce the pork this country keeps eating.

**David WRIGHT:** And we have seen large-scale agricultural enterprises or smaller family units get taken over and get bigger and bigger and so push the workforce out. Whereas in intensive industry, as we grow, we still need the workforce, we still continually employ. We have a one-off footprint that we do it on, and we continually create a beautiful product.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Thanks, Ms Broad. We will go to Ms Copsey now.

**Katherine COPSEY:** Thank you. Thanks for being with us today. I want to understand a bit more about accreditation if I could. You have both got APIQ-certified operations. Can you tell me what standard? We heard earlier that there is an option A and an option B for accreditation: which are your farms?

**Tim KINGMA:** Yes. I just have option A. I have got just APIQ accreditation.

**David WRIGHT:** I am the same.

**Katherine COPSEY:** Apologies if I mix up your contributions because I am online, but I think it was you, Tim, that said you would do not have sow stalls on your property anymore.

**Tim KINGMA:** No.

**Katherine COPSEY:** And David, is it the same for you?

**David WRIGHT:** Yes.

**Katherine COPSEY:** So, yes, you do not have them?

**David WRIGHT:** No, I do not have sow stalls.

**Katherine COPSEY:** So neither of you have sow stalls on your property, and you are both option A accredited under APIQ.

**Tim KINGMA:** That is correct.

**David WRIGHT:** Yes.

**Katherine COPSEY:** Thank you. Do you still have other confinement types on your farms, such as farrowing crates?

**Tim KINGMA:** Yes. I am a very big believer in farrowing crates. Yes.

**David WRIGHT:** Yes, and we still have farrowing crates.

**Katherine COPSEY:** How long does a sow typically spend in a farrowing crate per breeding cycle?

**Tim KINGMA:** I work on around 25 days on my farm.

**David WRIGHT:** We are very similar.

**Katherine COPSEY:** Thank you. What are the dimensions of a farrowing crate?

**David WRIGHT:** You have got one more recently, mate. I will let you take that because off the top of my head I would not know.

**Tim KINGMA:** Yes. I will have to take that on notice. It is not on the top of my head. I employ people that design everything to the codes and get them fabricated, and then we get them installed. I am happy to come back with to you with the dimensions.

**Katherine COPSEY:** Thank you. I appreciate that. I think we saw a demonstration, like replica sow stall, yesterday. Is a farrowing crate similar to the dimensions of what was a sow stall?

**Tim KINGMA:** I do not know.

**David WRIGHT:** We will take that on notice because we do not have the answer for that.

**Tim KINGMA:** Because we do not have the sow stall anymore, it is not something I look at.

**Katherine COPSEY:** Yes, I understand. Are there other times when a sow would be confined?

**Tim KINGMA:** On my farm we do artificial insemination, or AI, so when we do that, we confine them for that.

**David WRIGHT:** We are the same.

**Katherine COPSEY:** And how long does that typically take?

**Tim KINGMA:** On my farm it is a bit over 48 hours.

**David WRIGHT:** On my farm it is five to seven days.

**Katherine COPSEY:** Thank you. Absolutely no judgement on this: I noticed some similarity between your submissions, which is very common in committee proceedings. We often get submissions that have come on a template and been individualised. Can you share with us – did an organisation provide the template for your –

**Tim KINGMA:** Yes, so we obviously asked APL to help us set up a template, and like I said in my opening statement, at that time of year, for me to put the time and effort in, to be honest, I had more pressing issues dealing with the welfare of my pigs, so I used the template. But I made it clear I wanted to come here and present.

**David WRIGHT:** Same for me. At the time of year it was we were actually on flood watch through part of that where we are. We had other stuff going on. We were working with industry around this as well, so we used the template, knowing that hopefully we would be able to speak today.

**Katherine COPSEY:** Thank you. You mentioned auditors that come to your properties to perform internal and external audits. Are those auditors Aus-Meat-certified auditors, or complying with that process?

**Tim KINGMA:** Yes, that is who does ours.

**David WRIGHT:** For us, we have an internal audit that is done by our vet and then we have a yearly third-party audit done by Aus-Meat.

**Katherine COPSEY:** Thank you. And just going to the footage and transparency measures, do you currently employ CCTV on your farms?

**Tim KINGMA:** I have cameras on mine, yes.

**David WRIGHT:** I have some cameras on my farm.

**Katherine COPSEY:** Following the 7.30 report, there have been some announcements from industry around complying with that. Given you already do it, would you have any issue with that being a mandatory requirement?

**Tim KINGMA:** I would have issues with just that general statement, because I probably just do not know the background of who is wanting to look at it. There are a lot of privacy issues around filming people and all that sort of thing. I do not know all the laws there.

**David WRIGHT:** I think once we sat down with the regulators and worked through why, what, where and how, we would come to determine what we were going to do and make the commercial decision once we know what it is.

**Katherine COPSEY:** Thank you. And would you have an issue with the footage that you currently collect being made available to the regulator without it being, you know, vetted or that sort of thing? Do you currently provide footage to the regulators, and how do you choose what to provide?

**Tim KINGMA:** I do not currently, and to be honest my cameras are positioned so that I can actually see the controllers of our sheds, so for me it is around wanting to know that my pigs are in the environment they want to be in. We have alarm systems all through, so if I get an alarm come on my phone to say, 'This particular shed is running at 30 degrees, not 28,' I can then scroll in and have a look – is there a fan not working – and those things. So it is a tool for us to actually use to help show how passionate we are about animal welfare, so there is nothing to hide there. All the regulator is going to see is all of my components, hopefully, working well every day, which is what I expect.

**David WRIGHT:** Yes, I am exactly the same as Tim. We have just got to remember that it is a one-off tool in a whole welfare toolbox of animal care.

**Katherine COPSEY:** Just so I understand, you use the cameras to monitor your systems, not –

**Tim KINGMA:** Sorry, what was the last bit?

**Katherine COPSEY:** Just so I understand, you use the cameras on your farms mainly to monitor the operation of your systems, not the animals themselves and their welfare.

**Tim KINGMA:** No, it is for the systems of the majority of the time for mine, because at the end of the day my staff have been with me for many years; they are well trained, they are continually trained and they are there, in my opinion, to be really focused on the animals. It is more the after-hours. I believe Australia has very, very high standards in wages and all those sorts of things, so we do not have people there 24/7. The cameras enable me to, at the end of the day, have my eyes on my farm to be making sure the animals are well cared for at all hours of the day.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, Ms Copsey. We will end with Mrs McArthur.

**Bev McARTHUR:** Thank you. Thank you, gentlemen, for coming. I appreciate how traumatic this is. You are right: you have put your heads on the chopping block to be here today. I hope that nobody thinks it is a good idea to go and trespass on your farms tomorrow or in the future, and if they do, they should be fiercely held to account, because this is not acceptable. Trespassing on farms and collecting illegal material cannot be justified, as it was yesterday, so I appreciate the bravery you have demonstrated by being here today: thank you. I just wonder if you know of any people whose lives have been ruined by extremists who have come onto your farms.

**David WRIGHT:** I can only comment on what we said earlier about the suicide phone call we had, because that was real. That guy was lucky enough that his wife cared and his staff were fantastic and they got him help. It was a process. It did not just happen overnight that he went back. It took time for him to get back onto his farm and work through that. There are plenty of people out there that live and breathe that every day. I talk to producers regularly; I talk to guys like Colin Sinclair at the abattoir and know the burden that he has gone through. I know the burden that the guy on the 7.30 report has gone through because I speak to those people as real people, hear their stories and get the context of what is happening and what they are living and breathing.

**Bev McARTHUR:** I am sure we would not accept that somebody could install CCTV cameras in our electorate offices to see what we are doing on a daily basis and then use it illegally, so I can understand how just absolutely terrible it is. Can you tell me why tail docking is undertaken?

**Tim KINGMA:** Yes. On our farm we tail dock, and what I think we do very well is we consult with our veterinarians. It is a practice that helps the pig later on. We do it in the first 24 hours, and talking about it over time, we now use an antiseptic spray that also helps with infection and helps with numbing and all that. So we have evolved that process over time, and no doubt if I sit here and talk to you in 10 years it will have changed again. But we are still going to have to dock the tails because the impact if you do not, later on, on an animal is very severe. It is animal welfare; we do it for that reason, like many other industries do.

**Bev McARTHUR:** What happens if the tail is not docked?

**Tim KINGMA:** They call it tail bite. Pigs are very inquisitive and once they start, you might just get an animal that eats the tail back. All industries deal with some side effects, and with the systems we use and with consultation with a vet, we dock the tail very quickly.

**Bev McARTHUR:** Can you tell us: are there any anaesthetic options for pigs that you know of other than what is currently in use?

**Tim KINGMA:** I probably do not know a lot about that. I would probably need to refer to more scientists and veterinarians around that. But what I would say is our industry is always changing what we use, and if there are products that are out there that are possible to use, we will continue to adapt them for our businesses.

**David WRIGHT:** That is the great thing about our industry: our vets are pig vets, so they also invest in research and work for us to find better ways. If there is new, improved stuff overseas they will bring it into our farms to trial, so our vets actually work with us to work through those things and get the best procedures and the best results.

**Bev McARTHUR:** If we took on board what we heard from some of the witness presentations yesterday, we would have to come to the conclusion that you are all cruel, you do not like your animals, you do not care for them and you are just out to make money. That is the impression you would get from some of the presentations that we heard. How would you refute that?

**David WRIGHT:** For me personally, I was very offended by those statements. Those people do not know me. They do not know the person I am. They do not know what I have put into my community. They do not know what care and passion I have in my heart. They do not know me as a person, and they are making a judgement call on that.

I started in Melbourne. I lived not far from here as a kid. I worked on farms as a kid growing up. I had a passion for animals. I loved animals. I got a job pressure washing crates when I came back from travelling around Australia with my partner at the time, now my wife, on a farm. I took to pig farming and loved it and was lucky enough to evolve. I moved into a community that took me into the community. I worked in that community, then I bought a business in that community and have helped support that community through input. I am in a job that I love that found me; I did not find it. So when people say things like that, I get very offended and I get very upset because they do not know me and they do not know the passion I have.

**Bev McARTHUR:** I can also hear from you that you are great community members. Tell us about the sorts of ways you contribute to the local community and what would happen if, like what we learned yesterday, you were shut down? What would happen to the involvement that you have in that community?

**Tim KINGMA:** Right now I am in training to do a team relay event, a 600-kilometre bike ride from the Murray River down to Warrnambool, Murray to Moyne, through our hospital. You donate pigs to that. I have raffled off an auction, whether it is a local school, whether it is our sporting clubs, and I think that is what rural communities do very well together. They support each other, and it is just part of it, whether it is the children's hospital appeal every year you donate to or you see one and just go, 'Here's 100 bucks for some tickets' and you do not even bother writing your name down. I think community areas just have this ability – it is probably Australian actually, let us be honest. I think we are one of the best countries in the world. We are passionate about it. Dave touched on it earlier – a lot of agriculture has got a lot less farms. So where I see a dairy farm that had four dairy farms 20 years ago, now there is only one. Whereas with a piggery, I have got four times bigger and have four times as many staff. It is a very different industry and is very supportive of rural and regional communities. Like I said in my opening statement, I am extremely passionate about rural and regional Australia and Victoria.

**David WRIGHT:** We saw in our town – we were predominantly a dairy district, and piggeries were built and grew around that – our dairy factory go and get closed down. We saw house prices plummet, we saw population disappear, we saw businesses fold after fold after fold. So if that is an indicator of shutting down an industry down in a rural community, I think it would be devastating for our communities.

**Bev McARTHUR:** Well, we thank you for everything you do.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much for coming along today and speaking with us. There might be some questions on notice from other committee members, but we will try to limit them given that you are not here on behalf of an organisation. That concludes the public hearing.

**Witnesses withdrew.**