



Hon Julie Bishop

14 May 2024

Dear Ms Bishop:

Greetings from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals – PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters worldwide. We were disappointed to see you wearing a feather dress at Australian Fashion Week and wanted to share with you some information about the way feathers are obtained, in the hope that you'll never make such a fashion misstep again.

Feathers are every bit as cruel as fur, a fact that led Melbourne Fashion Week to ban the feathers of wild birds from its catwalks. Ostriches don't moult, so their feathers are either ripped out while they're still alive or removed after slaughter. [A PETA US investigation into ostrich farms and abattoirs in South Africa, home to "the ostrich capital of the world"](#), exposed workers forcibly restraining ostriches as young as a year old and striking birds in the head on the way to slaughter. At abattoirs, these clever birds are electrically stunned and then their throats are slit. Moments later, the feathers are torn from their still-warm bodies and they're skinned and dismembered.

Of course, all animal farming is also terrible for the planet. Making room for farms and feedlots drives land clearing, and South Africa's ostrich industry alone emits more than 62,000 tonnes of carbon-equivalent emissions each year. Feathers are also typically dyed and processed with toxic heavy metals such as formaldehyde and chromium.

As a global citizen, you'll also be concerned to know that the farming of animals heightens the risk of another devastating pandemic of zoonotic origins. The filthy, cramped conditions observed on ostrich farms – like on all factory farms – increase the risk of disease emergence and transmission, including that of avian influenza, which has been described as "a major concern for public health" by the World Organisation for Animal Health and is monitored very closely by the World Health Organization.

It's great that you champion Australian fashion, but feathers are a faux pas. As the ever-lovely [Pamela Anderson proved on the Met Gala red carpet](#), natural pampas grass is a glamorous upgrade to the feathers of cruelly slaughtered birds. We urge you, as a leader and a role model, to showcase only sustainable, cruelty-free brands and look forward to seeing you step out in vegan looks in the future.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,

Emily Rice
Senior Communications Advisor to PETA Australia

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

Australia

PO Box 20308
World Square
Sydney NSW 2002

08 8556 5828
Info@peta.org.au
PETA.org.au

Entities

- PETA US
- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)