



Councillor Clare Le Serve
Mayor of Bass Coast
Bass Coast Shire Council

26 June 2024

Dear Ms Mayor:

I hope this finds you well. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) with a recommendation to amplify the council's commitment to saving Phillip Island's little penguin population: **ban all chicken and egg products from council menus, buildings, and events.**

I'm sure you'll agree that it's hypocritical for the council to continue to serve products that perpetuate avian flu outbreaks while claiming to support community efforts to protect penguins from the dangerous disease. Chickens raised for their flesh and eggs are typically [crammed into confined spaces strewn with waste](#) and the corpses of birds who have died. Such crowding incubates pathogens that can "jump" to humans in what are known as conversion events. More of these events have occurred here in Australia than in China, where COVID-19 is believed to have originated.

If keeping birds in such grotesque conditions weren't bad enough, hundreds of thousands of them are currently being killed in mass culls in an attempt to stem the spread of disease. For a community to come together to save penguins while its leaders consume chicken flesh is an example of [speciesism](#), a prejudice based on species that's as nonsensical as racism and in which some individuals are valued more than others.

In all the ways that matter, chickens are no different from penguins – to whom they are related. Both species are intelligent and curious individuals who feel pain and emotions, such as fear and joy. Chickens can distinguish between the faces of more than 100 fellow flockmates, and they form strong friendships. They communicate via some 24 vocalisations, see in full colour, and even experience rapid eye movement (REM) while dreaming, just like humans do.

Avian flu isn't some mystery illness we're powerless against. It's driven by the appetite for bird flesh. Every time you reach for chicken nuggets, breasts, burgers, or eggs instead of the plethora of readily available plant-based upgrades, you fund the confinement of animals in filthy conditions and, inevitably, the incubation of deadly pathogens.

If Bass Coast Shire Council truly wants to lead on this issue and make a meaningful commitment to saving penguins, removing chicken flesh and eggs from council menus, buildings, and events is the first logical step.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Mimi Bekhechi
Campaigns Advisor
PETA

PEOPLE FOR
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