

Meet the man driving this week's vegan protests against farmers

By **REMY VARGA**, REPORTER and **SASCHA O'SULLIVAN** REPORTER
12:00AM APRIL 10, 2019 •  458 COMMENTS

Chris Delforce, director of the film *Dominion* which drove the wave of vegan trespassers this week, says his activism was compelled by an understanding of his own privilege.

“As a white male in a middle-class upbringing, a lot in life is pretty much handed to me,” Delforce told *The Australian*.

“As a person who has it pretty easy in life, I think it's my responsibility to do as much as I can to use my opportunities.”

Dominion used hidden cameras and drone footage to investigate farming practices in Australia.

The protests were co-ordinated to coincide with the one-year anniversary of the release of the documentary, which is narrated by celebrities including actors Joaquin Phoenix and Rooney Mara as well as pop star Sia.

Originally from Canberra, Delforce now lives in Melbourne.

The web developer has been a vegan and an activist for nine years and ran as a candidate for the Animal Justice Party in the Northern Metropolitan Region in last year's Victorian election.

Before becoming an animal-rights activist, Delforce was interested in human rights issues and travelled to Indonesia and Zanzibar. After disenchantment with the slow progress for human rights, Delforce turned his attention to animal rights.

“When it comes to animal rights, it's more about showing people what's happening,” he said.

“I find most people are opposed to animal cruelty when they see it.”

Delforce is also one of three directors of Aussie Farms, the website that sparked controversy after posting a map and personal details of farms across the country. A lot of the footage on the site was taken by Delforce.

Victoria Police have charged 40 people, including two 17-year-olds and one 15-year-old, with a total of 122 offences.

MORE: [PM says vegan radicals face year in jail](#)

MORE: [Vegan terrorists farming fear](#)

MORE: [Goat farmers left shaken after protest](#)

Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews, the son of a beef farmer, criticised the protesters but said it was not worth pursuing them for the policing costs of the rally.

In NSW, nine people were charged after they chained themselves to a conveyor at an abattoir in Goulburn. There were no charges in Queensland after 20 activists chained themselves to machinery at Carey Bros Abattoir in Yangan. The activists left with three lambs after two hours of peaceful negotiations with the abattoir owners.

Mo Orr, one of the Queensland activists, said she accepted she could be charged.

“But if we don’t expose this, who will? Do we just ignore it?”

She said Monday’s day of action was about getting more Australians to watch *Dominion*.

Isy Veira, a 40-year-old teacher’s aid and founder of Sydney- based animal activist group Legion, is facing criminal charges of trespass and theft after she attempted an “open rescue” of hens at a farm in NSW. Ms Veira was at the protests in Sydney on Monday and said she hoped in the future she could pull the same numbers Melbourne’s group secured.

She said it had been difficult dealing with the criminal charges, but said her actions were justified.

“Legal doesn’t necessarily mean moral, and we need to challenge the laws we currently we have,” Ms Veira said. She said the Aussie Farms map was not about encouraging trespass, but “a good way of forcing transparency”.

Film producer Ryland Pearce-McManus has been following the rise of animal activism in Australia, creating a documentary called *Voicless Crime Silence*, after spending the better part of a year gaining the trust of the activists who he said went to great lengths to stay anonymous.

“They’ve very secretive and private about who they are,” Mr Pearce-McManus said, “They’re all anonymous figures and they’re anonymous to the media unless they want to become public.”

More stories on this topic

- [Double-edged derivative](#)
- [Wellard CEO’s role ‘ceased’](#)
- [Fonterra reviews dairy’s ‘new norm’](#)

Topics

[Agriculture](#)