

## 'Speciesism' as important as racism and sexism: Vegan

*Sarah Ison*

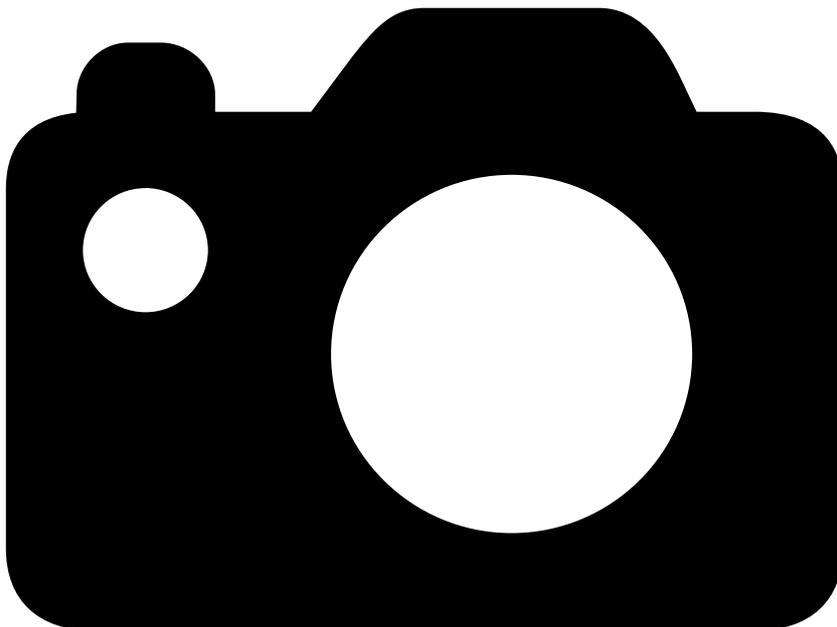
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For James Warden, vegan cupcakes and tofu burgers “just weren't making the cut”.

The leader of Perth's infamous vegan activist group Direct Action Everywhere believes fighting against “speciesism” is as important as protests against “racism and sexism”. It is a philosophy that this week resulted in Attorney-General John Quigley labelling him and his group “mushy-headed” while announcing tough, new farm-trespass laws.

Mr Warden is accused of stealing a calf. He is fighting the allegation despite photographic evidence that this newspaper uncovered and splashed across its front page.



James Warden was photographed holding a calf around his shoulders. Picture: James Warden/DxE

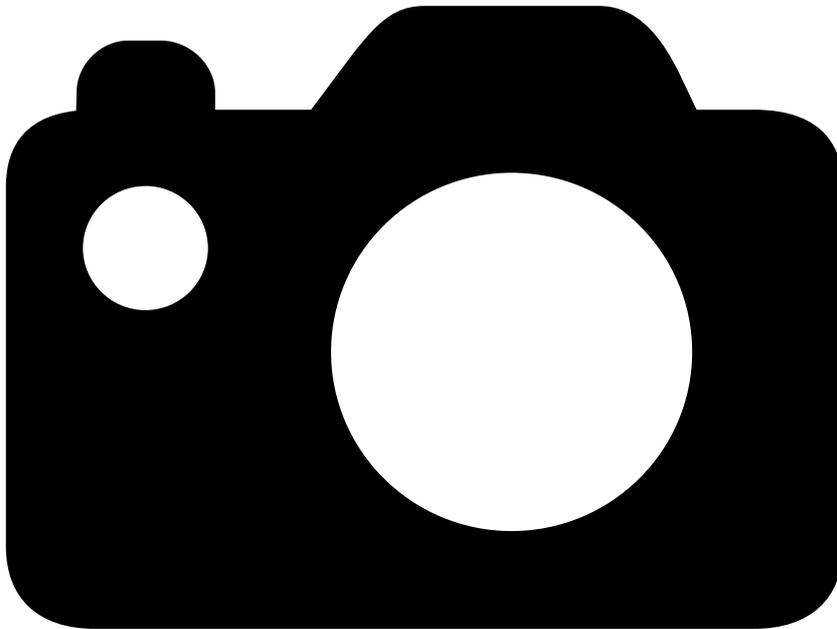
When asked if he would repeat such radical behaviour, Mr Warden said he would “continue to act with the utmost urgency to help any animal or any human that was in need”.

In a wide-ranging interview, he said yesterday that he became a full-time activist after “being asked to leave” his job as a systems engineer because of his activism.

Originally from Wollongong in NSW, the 25-year-old attended Kiama High School before completing a diploma in network engineering and moving to Perth to follow his then-girlfriend two years ago.

He found animal activism in Perth too “passive”.

“I found there was a massive gap in assertive action,” he said. “Vegan cupcakes and tofu burgers just weren’t making the cut.”



Mr Warden says he has no intention of stopping his protests. Picture: Nic Ellis

“I decided to create a chapter of (US-based) Direct Action Everywhere after seeing multiple campaigns in Berkeley, California and San Francisco and Los Angeles.

“Just as racism and sexism are socially inexcusable so, too, is speciesism.”

Mr Warden said his protests had grown from about seven supporters to about 40. Since August, the group has organised dozens of protests on streets, in restaurants and on cattle saleyards, while Mr Warden has even taken to trespassing on private property to document the conditions of animals.

Despite being unemployed and having in the past faced fines of up to \$7000, Mr Warden claimed hundreds of people had offered to support him with monthly donations.

While admitting his activism took “a personal toll”, Mr Warden maintained he was winning the fight.

“First they ignore us, then they laugh at us, then they fight us, then we win,” he said.

“We’re in the fighting phase now.”