

Vegans' extreme 40-year plan to stop you eating meat

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6-8 minutes

Vegan activists trespassing on WA farms and harassing Perth restaurant diners are being told they are following in the footsteps of Martin Luther King Jr and that “activism, not veganism” is the only way to give animals “autonomy over their own bodies”.

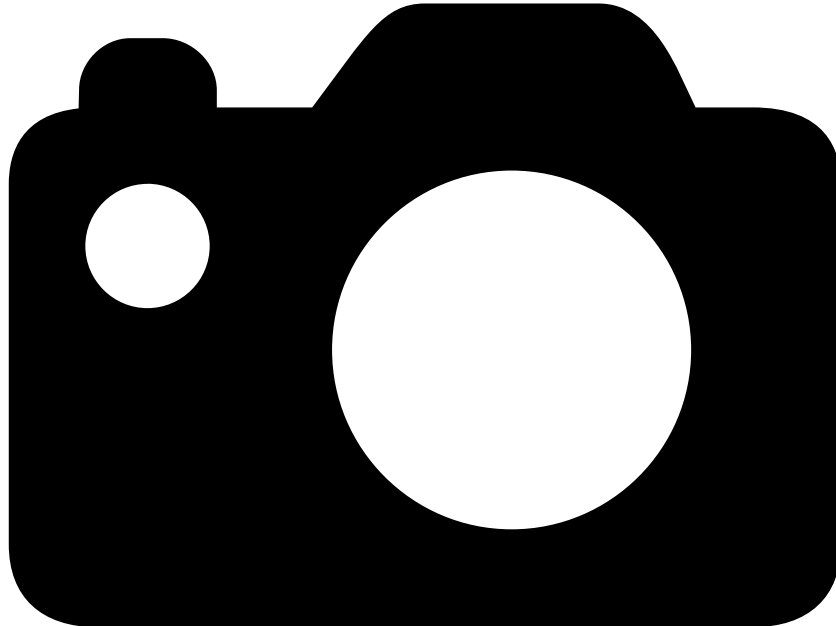
The West Australian has obtained a how-to guide drawn up by animal liberation group Direct Action Everywhere that tells members they should “openly enter farms” at night, “document the conditions” and “rescue animals”.

The global movement call the tactic “open rescue”, but what they are describing is the illegal trespass on private property and theft of livestock.

“We do not hide our identities because we are proud of what we are doing and know that we are taking morally just action,” the handbook states.

“Being a public face to an investigation breaks down the stereotypes of animal activists as criminals, vandals and terrorists.”





The West Australian obtained a how-to guide drawn up by animal liberation group Direct Action Everywhere that tells members they should “openly enter farms” at night, “document the conditions” and “rescue animals”. Picture: Facebook / Direct Action Everywhere

Their goals are to stop “speciesism” that they say enables the “killing of non-human animals”, as well as to amplify “animals’ personhood and dignity” and “create a world where every animal is safe, happy and free”.

Their 40-year “roadmap to animal liberation” document sets future goals in the US, including:

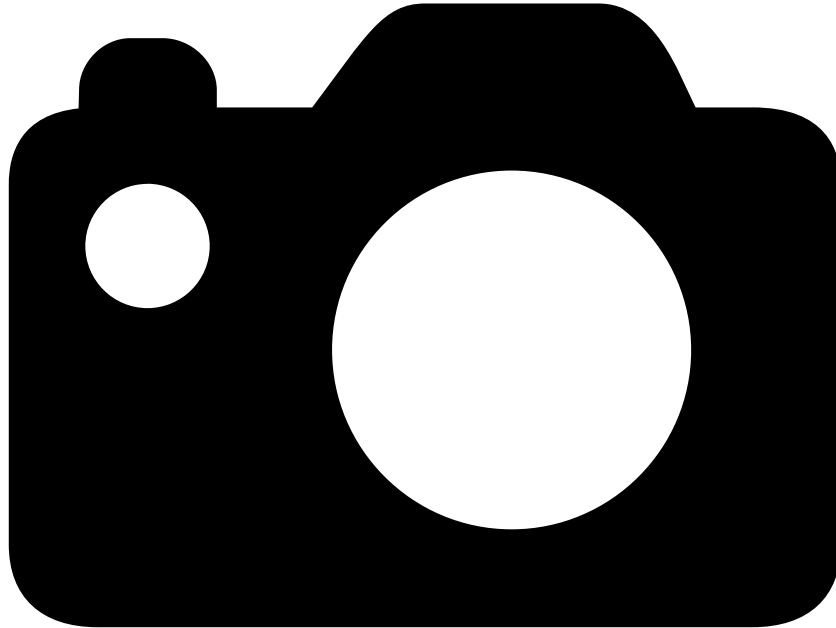
The sale of animal flesh is banned in some areas by 2035.

“Legal personhood to all animals” is granted by 2045.

“Species equality” goes before the US Supreme Court by 2045.

A “constitutional bill of animal rights” is passed by 2055 to transition “all remaining animals in captivity to lifetime sanctuary” and “rehabilitating all wild animals harmed by human activity”.





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Jackson Flindell / The West Australian

WAFarmers chief executive Trevor Whittington said the activism was “un-Australian”.

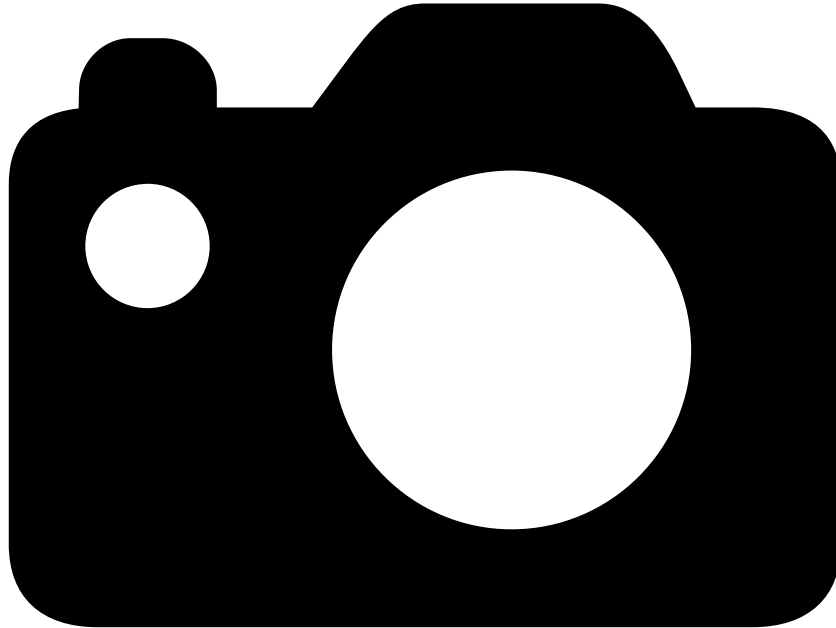
“They’re publicly outlining this manifesto and encouraging people to break the law, to follow extreme views, at the cost of people’s property and safety,” he said.

“If this is acceptable, then what’s the next step? An extremist terrorist organisation?”

Mr Whittington said there were plenty of appropriate animal welfare organisations people could get involved in, such as the RSPCA, as well as pursuing lawful means of change.

“We have a parliamentary democracy, we have the rule of law and that’s the mechanism we all use to pursue our personal views,” he said.





WAFarmers chief executive Trevor Whittington said the activism was “un-Australian”. Picture: Mogens Johansen / The West Australian

Mr Whittington said the farming community’s reaction was initially one of outrage, then annoyance and now disappointment that activists had not “woken up”.

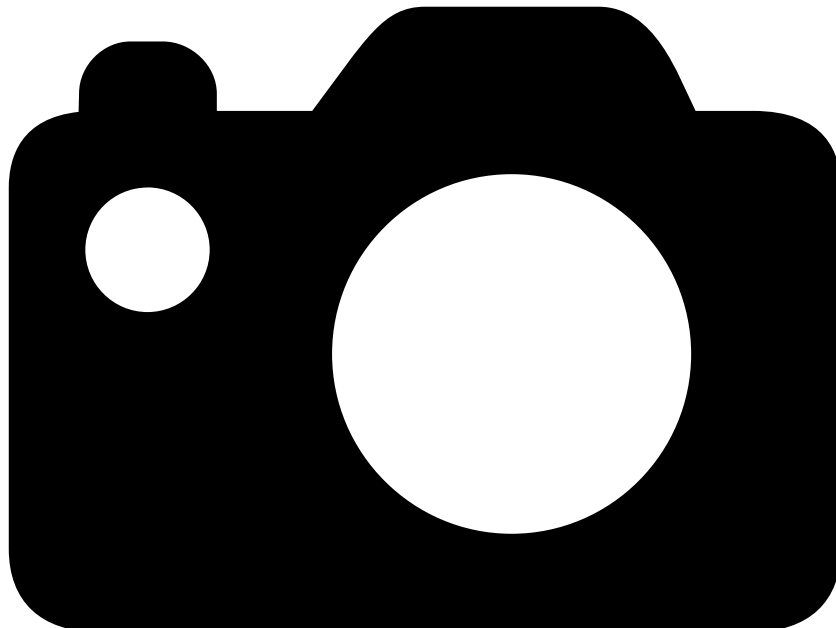
The handbook admits that “while protests are not popular, they work” and says “rescues” are initially kept confidential but “information is eventually released along with the identities of the activists involved”.

“While we believe that open rescue is a form of activism anyone can undertake, it is critical that people are trained correctly as open rescue can pose serious health and legal risks,” it states.

The activists are also encouraged to disrupt events or places by staging creative street theatre, singing or chanting — thereby “forcing” the public to pay attention.

Direct Action Everywhere, known as DxE, was formed in 2013 in the US. It says the handbook provides “inspiration” for activists to “build communities”.

Members are given access to training about direct action, from camera work to messaging materials, in person or online.



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One page of the manual is titled "the secret to dramatic photo editing" and gives activists tips on how to take more powerful images for use in their campaigns. For prospective activists, the handbook emphasises "all you need is two people, a sign and a smartphone to do your first action".

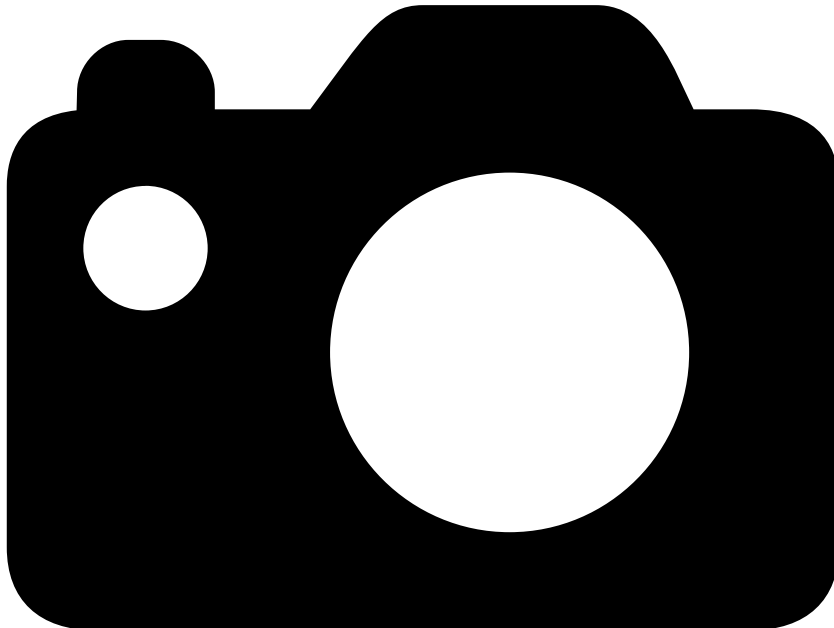
Organisers are added to a Facebook group, mailing list and invited to monthly strategy calls. It is understood local activists in Perth follow the handbook's instructions.

DxE likens itself to the LGBTQ movement and says it is "heavily influenced" by civil rights movement leader Martin Luther King Jr for his non-violent campaigning.

Since its inception, an undisclosed number of branches have risen in cities around the globe, including Perth.

DxE Perth, led by 25-year-old James Warden, has grabbed headlines for a series of attention-seeking stunts including protesting inside restaurants, confronting diners with TV screens depicting graphic scenes, live streaming inside farms and allegedly stealing livestock.

Mr Warden has faced a string of trespass charges, one of which related to entering a Pinjarra piggery and broadcasting conditions inside, for which he was found guilty and fined \$7000.



Vegan activist James Warden leads a silent vegan protest through the streets of Perth. Picture: Jackson Flindell / The West Australian

After his arrest, DxE posted on its Facebook page that Mr Warden was “arrested for exposing the truth of WA farming practices inside a piggery” and raised \$US1200 in donations within hours.

Another member, 24-year-old Katrina Sobianina, was charged for trespass over the same incident, resulting in a \$3000 fine and a spent conviction. Ms Sobianina and Mr Warden were also charged over the theft of livestock. They pleaded guilty to trespass but are fighting aggravated burglary charges.

During a “silent protest” through Northbridge on Friday night, Mr Warden — who is originally from country NSW — told The West Australian such tactics had been used by social justice movements the world over for hundreds of years.

“People are quick to jump down your throats and say, ‘This is disgusting what you’ve been doing’, as opposed to saying, ‘This is what you should be doing, this is a virtue, this is how we should be acting

towards and for animals when they're silenced and don't have a voice, when we have to be their voice,'" he said.