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PETA video prompts two-year shearing ban, six workers charged in Victoria

Victorian authorities have successfully prosecuted the first of six shearers they allege were depicted abusing sheep in [a video released by animal welfare activists](#) in 2014.

A 60-year-old Lucindale shearer, from south east South Australia, pleaded guilty in Horsham Magistrates Court to four animal cruelty charges dating back to 2013, when he was working in a Neuarpuur wool shed.

Footage of the man's offending was captured and released by American members of the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), who returned to Australia to assist prosecutors.



PHOTO: An image from a PETA video showing alleged abuse of sheep in Australian shearing sheds.
(PETA website)

The offender was sentenced, without conviction, to a good behaviour bond and disqualified from shearing, or managing any farm animals, for two years.

Agriculture Victoria senior veterinarian Robert Suter said he was confident another five shearers, allegedly depicted in the same video montage released by PETA in July 2014, would be brought to justice.

"There were something in the order of 30 or 40 persons of interest [in Victoria alone] that were associated with that footage," Dr Suter said.

"We've sent a number of warning letters and we've sent a number of advisory letters, so it's more than just the prosecutions – there are a number of other persons that have been put on notice."

PETA's 2014 campaign was also a driver behind a [national wool industry taskforce](#), working to tackle drug and alcohol abuse in sheds across Australia.

PETA claims its montage depicts about 70 workers, from 19 sheds across Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.

Dr Suter said interstate authorities had also instigated investigations, but could not confirm whether any SA or NSW court cases were pending.

Should any of the five accused be found guilty, Dr Suter said they would be named and shamed.



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The prosecution of the Lucindale shearer is a first for Victoria.

"We're now in the 21st century where video cameras, mobile phone cameras are everywhere and the farming community is becoming more aware that capturing footage – which is only really the starting point for this prosecution – is easily done nowadays," Dr Suter said.

"It's a significant warning."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-12-13/peta-shearing-sheep-wool-abuse-animal-welfare-courts/8114668>