To [restaurant owner] / [Restaurant name/ team],

I have recently been made aware that your [establishment/restaurant/venue] serves domestic rabbit meat sourced from intensive farms in Australia. I am writing to you, as a customer, to request your outlet cease serving rabbit meat due to the cruel nature of rabbit farming and slaughter. I am appealing to you to pro-actively embrace public expectations about the treatment of animals and place compassion ahead of profits.

Sadly, in spite of many domestic rabbits being included in Australian families as much loved companions, there is no enforceable welfare laws for raising rabbits or slaughtering them.

All domestic rabbits in Australia come from intensive rabbit farms and the rabbit meat industry is self-regulated. Self-regulation leads to a conflicted approach to animal welfare and offers minimal, often negligible protections for these intensively farmed rabbits. As such, there is no way to guarantee that the meat sourced and served for human consumption has come from farms that adhere to the Code of Practice.

In these intensive agribusinesses, the rabbits must legally be confined in cages to prevent them from escaping. The cages have wire flooring, no enrichment, and are very overcrowded. According to the standards, growing rabbits are given just 0.07m2 of space - roughly the size of an A4 paper. In these cages, rabbits cannot be rabbits. They don't have the ability to participate in any natural behaviours, such as digging, exploring, foraging, or hopping. As rabbits are prey animals, the lack of cover on their cages also causes them significant stress.

Despite being highly social animals, bucks (males) and does (females) are kept in solitary confinement. For the bucks, their only chance to socialise is when they are forcibly placed inside a doe’s cage for breeding. They are then removed shortly after and continue a lonely, isolated and frustrating existence.

The latest investigation exposed by Animal Liberation, Australia's leading animal rights organisation, found a very large number of these intensively bred rabbits suffering from a range of issues. Rabbits were found with severe paw injuries, footpad wounds, broken legs, splayed legs, weeping and infected eyes, respiratory illnesses (nasal discharge/coughing/ sneezing), ear infections/mites, injuries from cannibalism and infections (missing ears, nose, toes), tumours, mastitis, infected wounds, severe head tilt (neurological disorders from captivity and illness) and overgrown teeth. As you can imagine, this means that many rabbits don't survive long enough to be slaughtered, and their few short weeks of life include extreme suffering and misery.

Those that do survive, are crammed into crates, killed on-site or are taken to a slaughterhouse after only 12 weeks of life. While in full view of other rabbits, they have their throats slit or necks broken by workers swinging them against a metal post.

Rabbits are just like dogs and cats. They know their names, come when they’re called, play with toys, sit on the sofas, beg for treats, and love to be petted. Being the third most common companion pet in Australia, I was shocked to see that you are serving the meat of these loving animals as meals for your customers.

I strongly urge you to please reconsider serving rabbit meat in your restaurant.

If you would like to know more, please visit: <http://www.al.org.au/rabbits/>

Sincerely,