



Protesters lay case

By KATE EMERY

GROUPS of volunteers spent time in Perth last week squashed in small metal cages to reflect a day in the life of the country's estimated 10.5 million battery hens.

The Human Battery Cage Installation artwork was at various sites, including the Murray Street Mall and the Perth Cultural Centre in Northbridge, on the latest leg of a six-month national tour.

Project co-ordinator Shane Dalgleish said the stunt was intended to educate consumers about where the eggs they ate came from.

"Around 80 per cent of all eggs bought come from hens kept in tiny cages on factory farms," she said.

"Each of these 10 million hens has a space smaller than the size of an A4 sheet of paper and never gets the chance to stretch its wings or to see the light of day."

The RSPCA has long opposed the use of battery cages, saying they cause intense suffering for the hens, which cannot stand, groom themselves or stretch their wings.

According to the Australian Egg Corporation, which represents about 400 commercial egg producers, cage hens have better disease control, are protected from predators and have lower mortality rates.



Kristen Allen, Heather Blyth, Drew Fryer and Jodie Barnett in one of the protest installations in Perth. Picture: Will Russell

281947

Some countries, including Switzerland, Sweden and Austria, have banned the cages.

Ms Dalgleish said she hoped the installations would get people thinking about how the eggs they bought were produced.

"We're here to raise awareness of this issue in a novel way that we hope the public can easily relate to and empathise with," she said.

See www.humanbattery cage.com for details.