

# Interview with Nicholas Pendergrast of Australia's ARA, Inc. and Vegan Perth



Corey Wrenn, Roanoke Vegan Examiner  
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Nick Pendergrast (center) with other ARA activists at the Occupy Perth protests  
Credits: Nick Pendergrast

In celebration of [World Vegan Month](#), I will be hosting a collection of interviews with vegan abolitionists from across the globe. I'm excited to have this opportunity to showcase vegan activists and give a face to our beautiful movement. Be sure to check back for regular installments throughout the month of November.

Today's featured vegan abolitionist is Nicholas Pendergrast, Ph.D. candidate in Sociology with Curtin University in Perth, Australia and activist with ARA, Inc. and Vegan Perth.

### Nick, tell us a little about yourself...

I became a vegetarian after visiting an [Animal Rights Advocates](#) (ARA) stall that was promoting veganism at my university. This stall made me question my food choices and their message of justice for other animals made sense to me, as it seemed like a natural extension of the human rights and environmental causes I already supported. I was thinking of becoming vegan right away, but once I left the fruit and vegetable section of the supermarket, all the products seemed to contain egg and particularly dairy products. So I settled for vegetarianism.

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After many years as a vegetarian, I read about non-human animals being killed for [dairy](#) and [eggs](#), as well as for meat – so vegetarianism no longer made any sense to me. About six years ago I became a vegan, avoiding non-human animal products not just for food, but also for clothing, household products and so on.

I am now involved with ARA where I live in Perth, Western Australia. I promote veganism and non-human animal rights in a number of different ways, including giving [public talks](#) and speaking in other public forums such as on the [radio](#) or on [panels](#), organising [festivals](#), holding information stalls at universities and public events, and promoting veganism [online](#).

### **What do you think should be the focus of the non-human animal rights movement?**

I think the focus of the movement should be on promoting veganism. ARA focuses on promoting veganism, and occasionally we are asked why we are privileging the non-human animals used for food, when other animals are also exploited for entertainment and experimentation and so on. This is a fair criticism if groups are promoting veganism just as a diet, but we promote veganism as a more extensive lifestyle and philosophy that considers [all of the non-human animals that are used by people](#). For us, veganism means avoiding non-human animal products in our diet, but also avoiding other forms of exploitation, such as circuses involving non-human animals, household products that are tested on other animals or contain non-human animal ingredients, clothing made of non-human animal products, and so on.

We don't promote veganism because we care about non-human animals used for food more than others. Rather, we promote ethical veganism because we care about all animals. The promotion of ethical veganism for all uses of non-human animals is a way that combines a number of individual campaigns and does not focus on a particular use of non-human animals. It is the way to oppose the exploitation of all non-human animals.

### **What are some of the biggest obstacles to reaching our goals?**

I think that the reasons for becoming vegan are very clear. I promote veganism to stand up for the rights of other animals, while also pointing out the [health](#), [environmental](#) and [human](#) benefits that result. I believe that it is important to continue to promote the reasons why people should become vegan, but I also think that we need to put more energy into showing people *how* they can live easily and healthily as a vegan.

At least with vegetarianism, people [tend](#) to give it up for reasons such as health and hassle – perhaps the same is true with veganism. With ARA, while continuing to explain the reasons *why* become should become vegan, we have also made more of an effort to show people *how* to be vegan, by providing health information and other information that makes



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## Corey Wrenn's Preferred Links

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it easier for people to put the vegan philosophy into practise in their daily lives. Examples of this include our [vegan mentor program](#) and new website [www.veganperth.org.au](http://www.veganperth.org.au), both of which I have helped to create. This vegan perth website has just been launched and we want to add a lot more information to it as time goes by.

### How is your activism impacted by where you live?

It is very easy to be vegan in Perth, however, there are not as many vegan-friendly restaurants here as in bigger cities in Australia like Melbourne and Sydney. This means that it is particularly important that we help people out with issues such as where they can eat out as a vegan.

With the growing importance of online activism, location is becoming less important. For example, one thing I occasionally do is promote veganism on the [Citizen Radio forums](#). [Citizen Radio](#) is an American podcast that promotes veganism and other progressive causes. Many listeners of the show from all around the world have decided to become vegan and use the forums to get help from me and many others on how to live vegan.

### What other activities are impacted by your activism?

I am currently [studying](#) my PhD on the non-human animal advocacy movement and I have also given lectures about this movement and human/non-human relations. I attempt to combine my research and teaching with activism as much as possible. I use some of the information from my research and lectures to form [non-academic articles](#), flyers, content for the ARA website and public talks. I have also recently drawn on [Corey's work](#) to create a flyer on vegan activism. I gave [three talks](#) at ARA's recent Cruelty Free Festival that were filmed and will be available on the [ARA website](#) soon. I also hope to start up a podcast promoting veganism and other social justice causes sometime in the near future.

*Sign in photo refers to Occupy Wall Street's first official statement on why people feel wronged by the corporate forces of the world (made on the October 1, 2011), which [included](#), amongst other reasons: "They [corporations] have profited off of the torture, confinement, and cruel treatment of countless nonhuman animals, and actively hide these practices."*

#### Suggested by the author:

- › [It's World Vegan Day...so where are the vegans?](#)
- › [Interview with Colin Donoghue, abolitionist activist](#)
- › [Interview with Trish Roberts of LiveVegan](#)
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By **Corey Wrenn**  
Roanoke Vegan Examiner

Corey Wrenn is a doctoral candidate in sociology currently researching the vegan movement. She is an abolitionist vegan and is adviser to a...

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