

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALSGil Beckwith
CEO, Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras

Dear Ms. Beckwith:

Greetings from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). In celebration of the aspirational 2025 Mardi Gras Parade theme, *Free to Be*, we urge you to please ensure birds are free to be the wonderful individuals *they* are— by banning real feathers at your event.

Contrary to myth, ostriches don't 'drop' their feathers for fashion. Rather, these clever animals are factory-farmed in cramped feedlots before being trucked to the slaughterhouse at just a year old. [One eyewitness investigation](#) released by PETA showed workers at the world's largest ostrich farms striking birds in the face. The birds are then forcibly restrained, electrically stunned, and have their throats slit before their feathers are torn from their still-warm bodies and they're skinned and dismembered. Others are victims of live plucking.

Aside from the cruelty, ostrich farming is also highly polluting. South Africa's ostrich industry emits as many as 62,134 tonnes of carbon equivalent emissions annually. Each of the 325,000 ostriches hatched there can emit five kilograms of the atmosphere-warming greenhouse gas methane each year.

Turkeys and chickens also suffer for so-called "marabou" feathers. They're subjected to short lives inside filthy sheds, deprived of sunlight, and slaughtered while they're still babies. One photojournalist also released photos of peacocks exploited for feathers, which showed the [birds wrapped in plastic](#) for export.

Unsurprisingly, feathers are falling out of favour, much like fur before them. Last year, Victoria's Secret staged its first show featuring stunning designs made exclusively from faux feathers; celebrity designer Stella McCartney launched a [Feather-Free Pledge](#) with PETA UK, and the Fashion Weeks of Melbourne, Berlin, Helsinki and Copenhagen have all banned wild feathers from runways.

The Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade celebrates equity, compassion, progress, and joy— all values at odds with the oppression, cruelty, and misery that feathers represent. **Please enact a ban on bird feathers to help everyone— regardless of species— become *free to be*.**

Sincerely,

Mimi Bekhechi
Senior Campaigns Advisor
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)

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Entities

- PETA US
- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)