

**Submission  
No 30**

**PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AMENDMENT (VIRTUAL STOCK  
FENCING) BILL 2024**

**Name:** Mr Mark Houlahan

**Date Received:** 12 May 2024

I have recently relocated to the Clarence Valley with the intention of operating a relatively intensive cattle fattening enterprise. I have purchased adjoining farms totalling approximately 125 ha and intending to acquire additional land in the vicinity as it becomes available.

My current property has a 2 km frontage to the Coldstream River and 4 kms of internal natural and man-made waterways and drains. None are fenced to prevent livestock entering. I have no intention of using conventional permanent fencing as the initial capital cost to erect to protect a relatively small part of my property and the ongoing cost of repair and replacement after flooding events makes it prohibitive. About three quarters of my property is under water in a major flood which different long-term locals have advised occurs on average every 3-5 years.

I have already undertaken pasture improvement and constructed stockyards, laneways, watering points and other infrastructure to facilitate and increase the carry capacity of my property and I am only part way through my intended development. Central to the development and the use of my property for livestock fattening is the intended use of Virtual Fencing (VF) once legal. Because of its “no brainer” benefits I am confident its legalisation is imminent -hopefully sometime next year

I have been a passionate proponent of VF technology for many years and monitor its development and growing interest and use (particularly in Tasmania, NZ and the USA where already legal) on the internet daily. I have communicated regularly over the years with Members of the NSW Parliament and the Animal Welfare Task Group which promotes national consistency of farm animal welfare regulations.

With no fear of exaggeration, VF once legal in NSW will quickly be a “game changer“ for many in the cattle industry and over time will benefit most. Although the technology is improving rapidly, in its current form it still offers so much compared to other permanent and temporary fencing and to the extent it will not replace them it will be a very valuable addition.

In my particular circumstances, the main but by no means only advantages will be:

1. More efficient and timely movement of livestock resulting in more efficient and best use of pasture;
2. The exclusion for animal welfare and environmental reasons from grazing of certain areas either permanently or temporarily. For example:
  - a) Riparian and other environmentally sensitive areas;
  - b) Areas where vegetation toxic to livestock (eg red flowering lantana) is prevalent and difficult to control;
  - c) Areas where livestock traffic and/or intensive rainfall particularly on sloping land commences to show signs of erosion and soil degradation.
3. As a one-man operation, I will be able to remotely monitor and manage livestock movement in a more timely and safer manner such as gradually moving cattle to higher ground during periods of extended wet weather which may lead to flooding.
4. The ability to locate straying livestock particularly after a flood event when permanent boundary fencing may be damaged and no longer stock proof.

I welcome further contact to clarify or elaborate on my submission in support of the legalisation in New South Wales of VF Technology.