

**Submission
No 123**

**INQUIRY INTO PROVISIONS OF THE RIGHT TO FARM
BILL 2019**

Organisation: Animal Justice Party Sydney South Regional Group

Date Received: 30 September 2019

I'm making this submission on behalf of the Animal Justice Party Sydney South Regional Group, as we are deeply disturbed by the proposed punishments and intended consequences of the Right To Farm Bill. Our question is - what of the right to protest? Or the right to freedom of information? Or the right to know exactly what types of horrors you're contributing to when you purchase animal products? This bill actively seeks to deny these rights and many more, in favour of protecting the rights of one group of people — those with vested financial interests in animal “farming” and “processing”.

If agribusiness, and indeed, the government, had it their way, the horrors of animal agriculture would be hidden from public view and we'd all be none the wiser as to what goes on behind the closed doors of farms and slaughterhouses. They know all too well that if it weren't for whistleblowers, their industry would be able to keep churning out animal products, unhindered, to an uninformed buying public. They also know that humans are naturally compassionate and empathetic and are/would be horrified by the stomach-turning displays of cruelty that are so often caught on camera by whistleblowers and activists.

The sole purpose of the proposed bill is to protect agribusiness, keep the general public in the dark as to the animal abuse and neglect that takes place, and discourage activists from obtaining damning footage of illegal animal cruelty that threatens these businesses' bottom line and opens the eyes of consumers to the inherent cruelty of animal products. A change in attitude as a result of seeing disturbing footage that leads to a change in purchasing patterns (e.g someone who hitherto purchased animal products making the change to a vegetarian or vegan diet, or even just taking a flexitarian approach) is the scenario this bill is trying to prevent. For these types of industries, the less the public know, the better.

When it comes to activists entering farms and slaughterhouses to obtain footage of grotesque cruelty or illegal practises, the encounters are peaceful and non-violent — as these tend to be the tenets by which vegans live. These crimes are victimless — which makes this bill's proposed punishments unconscionable — and the real crimes of animal cruelty go unchecked and unpunished even when they are exposed. The hypocrisy is flagrant and shameless, and the purpose is clear — protect the abusers and punish the abused. It's also worth noting that most surveillance undertaken by animal advocates is the result of a complaint being made to the organisation by a concerned whistleblower as to neglect or abuse occurring at the facility in question. Oftentimes these concerns have been raised with government authorities and insufficient action has been taken to address the issue. It is often then that animal rights groups are contacted to take up the mantle.

The proposed punishments put forth in this bill are completely disproportionate to the so-called crimes being committed, and are entirely intended to discourage and dissuade activists and whistleblowers from undertaking their important work that exposes the unimaginable cruelty inflicted upon millions of animals all across the country, every minute of every day. Instead, the bill seeks to protect those committing these atrocities in the name of profit. Such a callous bill, with greed and inhumanity at its heart should never be brought to bear — let alone passed — and we hope that the members of parliament involved in this inquiry will listen to their hearts. Heed the call of compassion and kindness, and reject the never ending ruthlessness of capitalism and ‘profits at any cost’. Do it for the animals that are born to die, but that are no different to the dogs and cats you share your home and heart with.