

Submission
No 138

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

Name: Ms Julie Parker
Date Received: 27 September 2019

Partially
Confidential

Date: 27.9.19
Name: Julie Parker
Address:
Phone number:

**SUBMISSION:
PROVISIONS OF THE RIGHT TO FARM BILL 2019**

I believe that The Right To Farm Bill is an over the top, aggressive attempt to gag anyone speaking out about the agriculture industry. It is out of line with community expectations for animal welfare. This Bill will impact on civil liberties, including the right to peaceful protest and the ability of whistleblowers to report animal cruelty.

- Without the ability for witnesses to report on what goes on behind the scenes in farmed agriculture, we will have stepped back in time. We care about animal welfare now while some farmers still don't!
 - The punishment proposed is outrageously high: The Bill will make aggravated trespass punishable by up to \$13,200 and 12 months imprisonment. At the moment, the maximum punishment is \$5,500 and no jail time. This is more than doubling the existing penalty.
 - The Bill will make an individual accused of aggravated trespass face up to a \$22,000 fine and up to 3 years imprisonment if they are in the company of two or more people.
 - There is no evidence that there is a need to increase punishment for farm trespass, or that this increase will deter trespassers. Previous attempts by the government to stifle whistleblowers only led to more community concern regarding animal welfare.
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- *If you care to look at these videos you will see what has been uncovered by people daring to film what happens behind the scenes, scenes that would not become public otherwise:*
 - The Bill will stop consumers from having access to information they want and need about what goes on behind closed doors in the animal agribusiness industry. It affects every member of the community. Already the law is weighted against animal advocates: I know personally of a recent case where a group of people tried to save starving hens in a battery farm but were charged with trespassing. Later the owner of the farm was charged with animal cruelty – would this have come to light without those advocates?
 - While the Bill focusses on the trespass threat posed by animal advocates, this is inconsistent with a statement by NSW Police last month that “the majority of trespass on rural properties was due to illegal hunting not animal activism.”
 - We live in a first world country where we can afford to give consideration to animal welfare as well as economics. We need to support the people who care about animals which are sentient beings who feel pain and loss. This bill is the antithesis of my position.