

Submission
No 164

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

Name: Miss Rosina Rayns
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Partially
Confidential

The Right To Farm Bill is not only an incredibly flawed bill clearly rushed through by a government who has undertaken little consultation and has no regard for the fact, but it is an aggressive agricultural gagging attempt that is out of line with community expectations for animal welfare.

Having read this Bill, it is clear to me that it will heavily impact on civil liberties, including the right to peaceful protest and the ability of whistleblowers to report animal cruelty, and irreparably damage our democracy and the public's right to know what goes on in the animal agriculture industry.

There is absolutely 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. It is abundantly clear that the government should be investing in increasing transparency in the animal agriculture industry to decrease the incentive to trespass. Yet this approach is continually overlooked in favour of more oppressive measures.

Footage of animal abuse from numerous farms that is in the public interest, and the interest of law enforcement agencies, would not have come to light without whistleblowers and activists. Cruelty at farms

would never have been exposed if it weren't for these few people putting themselves on the line to expose the truth.

It is important to note that this legislation does not only target whistleblowers and activists, but it diminishes the rights of individual property owners to bring nuisance lawsuits against negligent farmers. This does not only include issues of noise and odour, but also chemical spray drift and the use of pest control (including 1080 baits). We already know that neighbours of industrial farms experience serious issues with regard to poisons and pest control, yet this bill seeks to make their lives even harder by reducing their avenues for legal action.

I would reiterate again that this bill is poorly thought out and clearly rushed through by a government attempting to appease big agriculture. It is of little use to farmers who are experiencing drought, and it diminishes the civil liberties of individuals and communities across the spectrum.

This bill cannot be allowed to go ahead. It is a threat to our democracy and falls far short of the NSW community's expectations on how our government addresses animal welfare concerns.