

**Submission
No 264**

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

Name: Mrs Meg Nielsen and Peter Nielsen

Date Received: 28 September 2019

Please accept our Submission: Right to Farm Bill 2019

We ask is this an unintended consequence of the Right to Farm Bill which is currently before the NSW Parliament?

Or is this a covert attempt to deliberately criminalise *PEACEFUL* protest to protect forests?

What is the purpose of heavily penalising and gaoling law abiding citizens who heed the science and understand the need to protect our public native forests from excessive logging practices?

The Bill includes forestry as an agricultural activity, making any activity that hinders, or attempts or intends to hinder it an 'aggravated offence' liable to a \$22,000 fine or imprisonment for 3 years.

In our various roles of radio presenters, farmers, members of car clubs and the arts community on the north coast, we connect with many people from all walks of life who are concerned about the drastic changes from the days of selective forestry operations. Far from farm forestry, they see that logging on this industrial scale causes severe damage to forests, critical habitat of koalas and the many other threatened species, at a time when protecting forests is recognised worldwide as a critical measure to slow and prevent further damage to our climate?

The many letters and submissions to government having failed to result in necessary protections, citizens are left with no alternative but to resort to peaceful protest. Please do not turn democratic process into criminalising citizens.

This Bill is not in the public interest.

The recommendations from many august scientific bodies, not least the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, make very clear the importance of retaining and restoring forests for carbon capture as a priority, assisting us in our efforts to avert further climate disruption & the resultant social and economic chaos which awaits us, if we fail to recognise and take advantage of the opportunities we have at hand.

Until government makes the decision to focus on the scientific advice rather than that of the timber industry, we have no choice but to assume that role of protecting our forests from logging done on the industrialised scale which is now permitted in the current North Coast IFOAs. It is not farming the forests, nor harvesting, it is plunder. It provides neither sufficient protection of habitat, feed trees nor buffers of our stream headwaters, only vastly increased timber quotas.

These forest habitats are the public estate, our common wealth, which cries out for protection from a government able to see the bigger picture and willing to act in the best interest of the people .

Economic returns from logging native forests are debatable but what is certain are the alternative opportunities for tourism showcasing our unique forests and wildlife, jobs in forest restoration and maintenance and carbon capture, providing a far more sustainable economic benefit.

We ask that you protect the peoples' democratic right to peacefully protest in State Forests; whether fenced or not, this is public land.

Yours Sincerely,

Meg & Peter Nielsen