

Submission
No 291

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Submission to the Right to Farm Bill 2019

I am lodging this submission to voice my concerns about the real intent of this Bill which appears designed to stop Australian citizens from protecting the places, the people and the animals we love. The Bill is an abhorrence to our democracy and is clearly designed to stop peaceful activism and silence dissent.

I live in a rural community. I come from a family of farmers in South Australia. My partner of 25 years was a shearer for more than 30 years. Both of us are responsible citizens concerned for the viability of rural Australia and we also believe in the utmost transparency in the animal agribusiness.

My partner has seen first hand the abuse of animals in the shearing industry. Not all farmers and shearers 'love and care for their animals' as is widely portrayed by the National Party and associated entities.

Growing up on a mixed farm in SA, I was not aware of animal cruelty and remained oblivious for most of my life until I saw the expose of the Live Export Trade on the ABC in 2011. Since then I have become increasingly aware of industrial farming practices and the inherent cruelty that is involved in this type of 'farming'. More and more people around the world are becoming aware and are changing their consumption patterns because of health and animal welfare concerns. Veganism, which is a hated word by those advocating this Bill, is now the highest food movement in the Western world.

In 2016, I was actively involved in the campaign to stop a pig 'farm' in the Harden area. This campaign also involved many family farms in the area who were concerned about the adverse environmental and heritage aspects of the development. Thousands of people supported the campaign and sent objections and signed the petition to the local Council. These included farmers, ex workers and people who had worked on similar piggery sites. These workers gave graphic evidence of the animal cruelty involved at the piggeries, some included comments on the petition site.

I believe this Bill will increase the rural/city divide and will only lead to increased community concern regarding animal welfare. An oft heard phrase, 'if you have nothing to hide, what is the problem with increasing transparency'. Paul McCartney has said 'if abattoirs had glass walls no-one would eat meat'. Supermarkets are responding to consumer demand and are now promoting products such as sow-stall free pork and free range eggs with vigour. More and more corporations are proposing the phasing out of food involving intensive farm practices which is intrinsically linked with animal cruelty.

My local National MP, Stephanie Cooke, has recently sent an email to her constituents and amongst other things has said "Make no mistake activists don't care about animals, their only desire is to crush our farmers into oblivion". This is highly offensive to a great number of people like me who advocate for the humane treatment of our farm animals. And such a lie does not help the farming cause. The NSW Nationals seem intent on demonizing all animal advocates and the draconian measures contained in the Bill are excessive considered in the context of a statement by NSW Police that "the majority of trespass on rural properties was due to illegal hunting not animal activism". And it is also excessive when compared to the punishments for the proponent of this Bill, Adam Marshall, who has incurred 17 speeding offences since 2002, had his license suspended on 3 occasions between 2003-2022 and convicted of drink driving in 2014 all possibly endangering lives. Most fines were around \$200, the maximum \$2,000.

This Bill will also affect other activities involving any peaceful activism in a confined space.

This is an affront to our democracy and our right to protest.

This Bill does not fit with community and consumer expectations regarding the protection of animals in the agribusiness industry. Consumers have a right to know where their food is coming from and how animals are treated. We do not want to eat meat produced from animals who live their lives in misery.