

Submission
No 360

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

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

The Right To Farm Bill is a reactionary attempt to stop exposure of animal cruelty that is out of line with community expectations. I am seriously concerned that this Bill will impact on civil liberties, including the right to peaceful protest and the ability of whistleblowers to report animal cruelty.

- If animals are being abused or treated cruelly I want to know about it. If the animal agriculture business were open and transparent there would be no need for any 'trespass' to rescue abused and mistreated animals.
- If what is going on is so dreadful that animal lovers are forced to act then the government should be intervening first under the Protection of Cruelty to Animals legislation.
- Why is the gaol time equivalent to a paedophile conviction, where one is an egregious crime against a child and the other is an animal lover trying to stop animal cruelty. Which is the worse crime? Not much debate there in the community but you have made them the same. The disparity and hypocrisy is glaring.
- What if animals are dying of thirst hunger or other neglect. Why is it heroic to rescue a starving dog, but not a starving chicken? As in the case of the
- What size farm does this relate to? Is a hobby farm also included?
- There has been NO case where animal lovers entered a private residence. They are not interested in harming farmers or their children or other property, they are there simply to intervene to stop cruelty.
- Even the police concede that hunters trespassing on farms are more of a problem than animal lovers but there is no provision for them. Why not?
- 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.
- The Bill also changes the definition of aggravated trespass to include "wilfully or negligently" releasing livestock. What if the animals are starving or being wilfully tortured or beaten?
- There is no evidence that there is a need to increase punishment for farm trespass, or that this increase will deter trespassers. Attempt by the government to stifle whistleblowers only led to more community concern regarding animal welfare.
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- Before you vote I implore you to look at these videos. This is the cruelty these businesses are trying to cover up.

- It is my understanding at the moment under common law that a property owner gives tacit consent to enter their property. Changing this will also have ramifications for neighbours wishing to talk to neighbours, door knock appeals, tradesmen, electricity meter readers, emergency responders, council inspectors and others currently granted access rights.
- The Bill seeks to provide protection for farmers against nuisance lawsuits, at the expense of the rights of individual property owners.
- 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.
- People I talk to are almost universally horrified by animal cruelty. This Bill does not do anything to address these concerns, in fact it exacerbates it by hiding it. It certainly does not reflect the values of our society. If these practices are going on in our name it is totally unacceptable. It is traumatising for the public and certainly for the workers in these industries, who suffer higher rates of suicide PTSD and substance abuse. We want no part of this.
- What of issues including noise, odour, chemical spray drift and the use of pest control (including 1080 baits)? Under the Bill, individuals will have serious difficulty taking legal action against farmers who create these 'nuisances'.
- If access to farms was allowed in cases of suspected animal cruelty there would be no need for this bill. Trying to hide only exacerbates the problem, as it is perceived as definitely having something to hide. Transparency and allowing access is a solution.
- There is an urgent need for an independent body for Animal Welfare. The RSPCA is totally compromised by accepting payment for their approval. And Police are more interested in arresting animal advocates than prosecuting animal cruelty under the POCTA Act.