

Submission
No 363

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

Inquiry: Right to Farm Bill 2019

Submission to the Inquiry

My Background:

I am both an organisational and counselling psychologist, have written numerous books on human behavior and regularly advise organisations on ethical leadership and social change. I was awarded Fellowship of the Australian Human Resources Institute and advise on policy and practice in the Australian workplace.

Having practiced for over 25 years and previously held an academic position in a British university, I am well informed of the relationship between how we treat animals and how we treat each other. I am also clear on the empirical evidence that psychopaths and dysfunctional adults who enact violence on others have often begun their cruel acts on animals.

which champions corporate and SME organisations that are profitable and successful, without abusing people, the environment or animals.

My Professional Concern

I am deeply concerned about the possibility of the Right to Farm Bill 2019 being enacted. Any government that champions such a bill is closing the door on exposing the industrialised cruelty of animals that recent “exposes” reveal require serious review. Having watched footage from the documentary Dominion, much of which is current, legal, standard practice, the suffering routinely imposed on farm animals is frankly horrific. If it was acceptable to the average Australian, why is the government be so quick to act to protect industries and avoid the public seeing such practices?

As a country, we must ask why we are penalising people who expose such cruelty and label them as ‘green collar criminals?’ Why would these individuals put their liberty at risk if practices they expose would be considered humane and acceptable to the average Australian? Why aren’t the industries willing to put CCTV into these establishments, monitored independently to show the public that people who enter onto agricultural land to expose current practices, are unnecessary and therefore a nuisance?

It is my opinion that the average Australian would be horrified at what is legally enacted on farm animals and few would be willing or able to see documentaries like Dominion in their entirety. Animals are not the only victims of the agricultural industry with evidence that PTSD, substance abuse, anxiety and self-harm is the highest amongst slaughterhouse workers. Closing the door on exposing animal cruelty is therefore also detrimental to people because of the link between animal cruelty (whether legal or not) and perpetration of violence upon humans.

For a government to pass such draconian laws, would reflect a leadership that only indicates deeply unethical principles that say it is ok to pursue profit at any cost. It would say that whistle blowers who bring to light cruel acts behind closed doors are not valued in our society.

Such a solution avoiding animal advocates entering industrial establishments would be unnecessary were CCTV installed in all animal production facilities. However, such CCTV would have to be independently monitored by a body not allied to the industry being monitored. We have seen that industry self-regulation does not work when profit is the only benchmark of performance.

Such legislation would also have far reaching consequences for Australia and other areas in which we rely on whistle blowers to bring to light unethical and unchecked exploitation of vulnerable people or animals. If whistle blowing/obtaining of photographic or video footage was made a criminal offence because it interfered with pursuit of profit in any commercial industry, consider the deleterious effects it could have.

Example 1:

Imagine an old people's home where someone believes residents are being abused, tortured, starved, terrorised. Under such an Act, it would be illegal for anyone to raise the issue if the old people's home was a commercial venture. After all, to whistle blow or expose their unethical practices would lead to potential loss of their income.

Example 2:

Imagine someone finds out that children in an orphanage are being physically or sexually abused. However, the orphanage is run by a commercial venture. Such an Act would make the whistleblowing, entering the orphanage or taking of video or photographic footage, a criminal act.

Overall

It is my professional opinion that the Right to Farm Bill 2019 is leading Australia in the direction of moral decline and if accepted, would be tantamount to sanctioning a regime similar to that seen in places such as Nazi Germany. Such a bill, if added to the statute books, would reflect the total lack of moral integrity of this nation and Australia would be further down the line of a country without any conscience or decency.