



APA MAIN ISSUES AND ARGUMENTS

Issue One

The government's purpose in bringing the Bill can only be to prevent the exposure of cruel farming practices to the Australian public.

Our Arguments against the Bill are:

- The Bill would inflict absurdly severe punishments on good people whose sole motivation is ending cruelty to animals, through either rescue or public exposure.
- The only farmers the Bill would protect - since they are the only farmers targeted by private citizens seeking to expose animal cruelty - are those farmers who routinely subject animals to cruel treatment.
- Most of the time this cruel treatment of animals is **lawful** but only because it is exempted from the very animal protection legislation which the general public expects to prohibit such cruel treatment in the first place.
- Sometimes the cruelty being inflicted by farmers is **unlawful** even according to Australia's abysmally weak animal welfare regulations and codes of practice. It occurs because those charged with enforcing the law are either unwilling (in the case of the police and government inspectorates) or disempowered (in the case of the RSPCA) to enforce those standards.

Issue Two

The Bill is contrary to the principle of equality before the law.

Our Arguments

- The Bill would treat offences against farmers more harshly than exactly the same offences committed against everyone else in the Australian community.
- This implies that farmers have an innately higher status than everyone else in Australia.
- Furthermore the Bill aims to treat people who break laws in order right terrible wrongs more harshly than people who commit the same offences for reasons of malice or personal gain.
- Farmed animals are almost always wholly exempt from animal welfare legislation. Practices like permanent confinement castration and mulling without anaesthetics and gassing to death are all examples of conduct that would be criminal if done to dogs or cats.



Issue Three

The Bill will do the farmers themselves no favours.

Our Argument

If the government were genuinely concerned about the welfare of animal farmers, it would do everything possible to assist their transition to other land uses before all animal production is shut down by climate change and collapsing ecosystems. It would not try to protect the worst of them from facing the public consequences of their cruelty.

Issue Four

The Bill is contrary to public opinion.

Our Arguments

- The Australian public have, by and large, applauded and rewarded the work of good, brave people who have trespassed on private property and brought forth evidence of horrific cruelty.
- The public understand that every change in attitude to the treatment of farm animals (battery cages, sow stalls, cattle feedlots, live animal exports) that has occurred in Australia in the last 40 years would not have been possible without the evidence brought out of these places by ordinary citizens who have put themselves in harm's way to do the right thing.