

Dear Minister for Industrial Relations,

I am writing in response to the proposal to amend the Criminal Code Act 1995 to '...safeguard Australian farmers and primary production businesses from those who incite trespass or other property offences on agricultural land'.

The proposed amendments must not go ahead for a number of significant reasons. First, animal activists should not have harsher penalties for trespass than any other trespasser, neither should they have harsher penalties for stealing property than anyone other person charged with stealing property. Animal activists should face no greater penalty for damaging property than any other person charged with this offence. **The proposed amendments are discriminatory toward animal activists and rooted in prejudice against environmental and ethical activism.**

The Morrison government claims these amendments demonstrate their commitment to keeping Australian farmers and their families safe, but there are no incidents where farmers or their families have been harmed in any way by animal activists. In fact, the majority of activism has taken place in factory farms manned by workers rather than traditional family run farms. The Morrison government's repeated implication that Australian farmers and their families are in danger from animal activists is false, and part of a larger attempt to dissuade people from engaging in ethical and environmental activism by inciting hatred and prejudice toward activists.

We are in the midst of climate catastrophe. It is widely accepted that animal agriculture is a leading cause of climate change and must be reduced and/or stopped entirely in order to reduce carbon emissions. Australia is currently ranked as one of the top ten consumers of beef in the world, despite having a population of only 25 million people. We are facing unprecedented drought and rising temperatures. We must act now.

Animal activists are attempting to inform Australians about where their food has originated and its effect on the environment. Instead of introducing backward and discriminatory amendments to the Criminal Code Act 1995, the Morrison government should focus on encouraging Australians to reduce meat consumption, eradicating factory farms altogether and aiding producers to employ sustainable farming practices and/or phase out of meat production altogether.

Regards,

Gabriela Bourke

