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Activists slam new “draconian” ag-gag laws

Animal protection organisation Aussie Farms has slammed the passing of new ‘ag-gag’ law *The Criminal Code Amendment (Agricultural Protection) Bill 2019* in yesterday’s federal parliament, following a Senate Inquiry that ultimately recommended the bill (see video: [Aussie Farms faces Senate Inquiry](#)).

The new law introduces a criminal charge for “inciting trespass onto agricultural land” by means of simply publishing footage of animal cruelty, or publishing a [map of factory farms and slaughterhouses where such cruelty is known to occur](#), regardless of whether incitement to trespass was intended by the publisher, and regardless of whether the cruelty was legal or illegal.

It follows years of covertly-obtained footage being broadcast to the public by Aussie Farms and other animal protection organisations, revealing widespread practices such as the use of [excruciating gas chambers in pig slaughterhouses](#), the [live shredding of male baby chicks](#) in the egg industry, and most recently, the brutal [slaughter of hours-old male baby goats](#) at a high profile Victorian dairy farm. Publishing such footage now could incur penalties of up to one year in prison.

Executive Director, Chris Delforce: “Ag-gag laws such as this one, designed to limit the public’s ability to see what’s happening inside farms and slaughterhouses by prohibiting the publication of footage or information about those facilities, in this case by claiming that mere publication is an incitement to a crime, have failed in most instances in the US and I have no doubt that, when tested in court, they will fail here too.”

“Consumers have a right to know about the cruelty occurring daily as standard practice within Australian animal agriculture; no business has a right to abuse animals in secrecy, and until the government mandates transparency in animal agriculture or criminalises animal cruelty towards ‘livestock’ animals in the same way that it’s criminalised towards companion animals, this role will unfortunately continue to fall on whistleblowers.”

The organisation has also condemned the language used by opposition leader Anthony Albanese in supporting the bill, with Delforce continuing:

“The use of the word ‘terrorist’ to describe peaceful, non-violent whistleblowers and protesters is absolutely disgusting. Terrorism is a horrific, violent, murderous act; to throw it around as a political buzzword to excuse Labor’s growing merge with the Coalition and One Nation is vile. It seems the only real opposition now in federal parliament is the Greens.”

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