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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Dear Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute. There is growing community concern about animal protections. There may be room for fruitful discussion and even agreement between animal activists, farmers, and our democratic representatives.

According to the Department of Agriculture's figures, 95% of Australians today view farm animal welfare to be a concern ('Australia's Shifting Mindset on Animal Welfare'). Our country is almost entirely united on this issue, a rare opportunity for improving practices and meeting public concerns. And yet we have inflammatory and alarming suggestions made by ministers to aggressively punish activists. It is clear that Australians will abhor harsh penalties, when 91% actually want animal welfare reforms to address farm practices - according to the Government's own recent research.

The type of unauthorised activity on farms tends to be safe, infrequent, and within reason.

There are positive impacts of activists exposing extreme or unlawful animal cruelty

- more awareness discourages abuses and encourages better farming conditions

- improved reputation of Australian standards, for example internationally, when welfare issues are aired and addressed

Animal activist compliance with Acts such as the Livestock Management Act and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act could be improved with a cooperative approach to activists. There is untapped capacity for goodwill and cooperation if activists are just informed of relevant Acts and WHS regulations.

With the greater transparency activist footage provides, animal welfare outcomes can be achieved.

I write to propose that animal activists be treated with respect and dignity, and certainly without draconian punishments.

Regards,
Renee Hasseldine

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File1:

File2:

File3: