



LIVESTOCK SA INC

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Senator Glenn Sterle
Chair
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
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Parliament House
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(Email rrat.sen@aph.gov.au)

Submission to the Inquiry into Criminal Code Amendment (Animal Protection) Bill 2015

Livestock SA is a not-for-profit association formed to provide representation for sheep, beef cattle and goat producers in South Australia. It is a founding member of Primary Producers South Australia (PPSA), the body formed to replace South Australian Farmers Federation (SAFF). Livestock SA was incorporated on 30 May 2013 and began operating from that date. In its short existence, membership has now grown to over 2,000 registered members, approximately a quarter of all commercial sheep, beef cattle and goat producers in South Australia. It provides a forum for considering and resolving livestock issues and supports and promotes sound livestock husbandry practices with animal welfare always at the forefront.

Last year Livestock SA supported a similar bill in South Australia introduced by the South Australian Government but unfortunately that bill (the Surveillance Devices Bill) did not pass. Consequently we would like to put our support behind the amendments proposed.

We see the bill having two important overarching functions; firstly it requires the immediate reporting of actions of cruelty and secondly it provides protection from unlawful entry and trespassing onto properties where livestock producers are lawfully carrying on their business. Livestock SA believes that animals should be treated with dignity and respect because there is no excuse for mistreating animals and there needs to be transparency. There should be a mandatory responsibility on any one observing such actions to report the matter to the appropriate agencies immediately. To withhold this information should be considered an offence and capable of leading to legal action against such person or persons.

Livestock SA believes any unauthorised entry onto farms should be treated as a serious crime rather than a minor misdemeanour. The issues here are the personal safety of the transgressor, the matter of biosecurity, the possibility of injury to livestock that are suddenly frightened, the risk of fire, and perverse behaviour resulting in damage to farm infrastructure.

Such actions place the landholder in a position where economic loss can occur. Transgressors may sue for damages due to injuries caused by horses or cattle, diseases may be brought onto the farm (purposefully or inadvertently) resulting in serious losses, and buildings, fences and yards may be damaged.

Livestock biosecurity is the most essential reason why there must not be unauthorised entry onto farms. Producers are currently being encouraged to develop their own farm biosecurity plans. To assist with this process, a national Livestock Biosecurity Network has been established by the peak industry councils, the Sheepmeat Council of Australia, Cattle Council of Australia and Wool Producers Australia. These three bodies pooled \$5 million to fund the initiative for an initial three years using producer transaction levies, in response to industry concerns about the possible impact of diseases and pests on the farming economy. There are regional Livestock Biosecurity Network officers working in all states and territories to facilitate the delivery of information about the biosecurity threat to sustainable farming and livestock health and welfare. This work towards developing effective farm biosecurity plans must not be jeopardised.

Livestock SA would like to reiterate their support of the proposed amendments hoping they will result in a more just outlook for both farm animals and farmers tending them.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geoff Power', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Geoff Power
President Livestock SA