

**To:**

**Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs  
and Transport**

**On the**

**Criminal Code Amendment (Animal Protection) Bill 2015**

**12 March 2015**

Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) is the peak body representing and uniting 15 of Queensland's rural industry organisations who work on behalf of primary producers across the state. QFF's mission is to secure a sustainable future for Queensland primary producers within a favourable social, economic and political environment by representing the common interests of its member organisations'. QFF's core business centres on resource security; water resources; environment and natural resources; industry development; economics; quarantine and trade.

Our goal is to secure a sustainable and profitable future for our members, as a core growth sector of the economy. Our members include:

- CANEGROWERS,
- Cotton Australia,
- Growcom,
- Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland,
- Queensland Aquaculture Industries Federation,
- Queensland Chicken Growers Association,
- Queensland Dairyfarmers' Organisation,
- Queensland Chicken Meat Council,
- Queensland United Egg Producers,
- Flower Association of Queensland Inc.,
- Pork Queensland Inc.,
- Australian Organic
- Pioneer Valley Water Co-operative Limited,
- Central Downs Irrigators Limited, and
- Burdekin River Irrigators Area Committee

## General Comments

The QFF welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Criminal Code Amendment (Animal Protection) Bill 2015. Animal welfare and protection is a chief priority for the QFF, and its members and we applaud members of parliament and Senator Back for endeavouring to protect animal enterprises that are acting lawfully as well as minimising unnecessary delays in reporting of malicious animal cruelty.

## Comments on Amendments

### **1. Failing to report malicious cruelty to animals**

The QFF would indicate its' support for this amendment. The amendment ensures that witnesses of malicious animal cruelty are obliged by law to report the instance within a timeframe that allows authorities to address and further prevent occurrences of cruelty in a timely manner.

We would also support the use of the word 'malicious' in the amendment as it prevents any ambiguity about what might be defined as animal cruelty. For example a perfectly humane practice might be seen as cruel if witnessed by someone who does not understand the process, but it is quite clear to any person if someone has malicious intent.

The second part of the first amendment, the reporting of visual evidence within a 5 day period and that it remain unedited, ensures that evidence that could lead to preventing future cases of cruelty is not stockpiled simply for greater media and shock value.

### **2. Interfering with the conduct of lawful animal enterprises.**

The QFF is strongly supportive of the second amendment which acts to protect any animal enterprise acting lawfully. Intensive animal industries often bear the brunt of campaigns by groups who may not agree with intensive agriculture, and while these groups are entitled to their opinion, no lawful enterprise should be subject to harassment, threats, vandalism and or trespass.

One of the greatest concerns in such instances is breaches of biosecurity. Intensive agricultural enterprises are subject to strict biosecurity procedures because of the risk of infection if there is a outbreak. Furthermore unlike property damage which is immediately identifiable, but in no way less disruptive, biosecurity breaches may not have immediate ramifications but have the potential to present significant consequences further down the track.

There have also been instances where animals have been released during raids leading to aggression between dominant animals and the animals having to be destroyed. Having a criminal liability will hopefully dissuade individuals from such acts, and as such protect the welfare of the animals within the industry.

Once again the QFF would like to thank the Senate Standing Committee for the opportunity to provide comment on a piece of legislation that has direct relevance for our industry and members. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need clarification on any of the comments made.