

**ANIMAL WELFARE AND TRESPASS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2020**

*Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr J.R. Quigley (Attorney General)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the Attorney General.

*Second Reading*

**MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General)** [12.22 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to now move to the second reading of this bill, which the Nationals WA have been demanding the presentation of for some good time and we deliver on today.

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** That is why I am so pleased to introduce the Animal Welfare and Trespass Legislation Amendment Bill 2020.

I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

This is a bill that the National Party has waited a long time for and it has been vociferous in its demands that it come forward.

The bill will amend three primary acts: the Western Australian Criminal Code, the WA Restraining Orders Act 1997 and the WA Animal Welfare Act 2002. This bill has been prepared in response to a number of incidents occurring nationally and across our state when people have trespassed on land used for commercial animal food production, and interfered with those businesses, purportedly to draw attention to inhumane animal husbandry practices. These events reflect important and related issues of community concern. The unlawful behaviour of these people is not acceptable to the WA community. There is a clear need to protect our agricultural sector, and in particular, regional farming families from the adverse economic, biosecurity and personal effects of this type of trespass. What is also evident is that the WA community cares very strongly about animal welfare. There is a clear need to maintain community confidence in the animal welfare practices employed by our agricultural sector. High consumer confidence in animal welfare has the added benefit of securing the long-term viability of commercial animal food production. The bill responds to these complex issues by bringing together a number of law reform measures in a single package. I will address each of these in turn, starting with the reforms set out in parts 3 and 4 of the bill.

**Criminal Code and Restraining Orders Act amendments:** The amendments to the Criminal Code and the Restraining Orders Act are aimed at deterring trespass on land used for animal-source food production. The bill increases the applicable criminal penalties and improves accessibility to misconduct restraining orders in specific circumstances. The current maximum penalty for trespass under section 70A of the Criminal Code is imprisonment for 12 months and a fine of \$12 000. The bill seeks to amend the Criminal Code to provide for circumstances of aggravation when in the course of or as a result of the trespass on an animal-source food production place, an offender interferes with, or intends to interfere with, animal-source food production; or assaults, intimidates or harasses, or intends to assault, intimidate or harass, a person in the context of their engagement in animal-source food production or a family member of the person. That the trespass occurred on an animal-source food production place is a key element of the aggravated offence. This is defined to mean an abattoir, a knackery or an animal-source food production facility, and is intended to capture traditional family animal farms, piggeries, poultry barns, feedlots, abattoirs and knackeries. Finally, the offence must be committed in circumstances of aggravation.

The first circumstance of aggravation is that the person has interfered with animal-source food production. This includes negatively impacting biosecurity, damaging or stealing property, or releasing or causing animals to escape. The second circumstance of aggravation is that the trespasser intimidates, harasses or assaults a person engaged in animal-source food production or a family member of such a person. The reference to “family members” recognises the reality that farms are often family homes as well as commercial operations. This circumstance of aggravation only applies when the intimidation, harassment or assault occurs in the context of the person’s engagement in animal-source food production. This is designed to exclude disputes of a purely personal nature. This offence has been narrowly framed with the deliberate intent of minimising the risk of unintended impacts. The amendments introduced by this bill are not aimed at stifling protest; instead, they are intended to deter or prevent trespass that has an adverse effect on relevant commercial operations or that unreasonably targets persons engaged in such operations. It is also important to note that the new offence contained in this bill does not propose to expand the circumstances in which a person commits the offence of trespass. When a person has a lawful right to access land or to enter property, the offence of trespass is not committed and the proposed circumstances of aggravation do not apply. This principle applies in the industrial context; for example, a person exercising the right of entry

under division 2G of the Western Australian Industrial Relations Act 1997 or parts 3 and 4 of the commonwealth Fair Work Act 2009 does not commit trespass and will therefore not be affected by the new measures. The government has been very considered in the drafting of this new offence to ensure that it is appropriately directed.

The proposed maximum penalty for the new offence of aggravated trespass is two years' imprisonment and a fine of \$24 000. This is double the usual maximum penalty for trespass, reflecting the seriousness of the conduct. If a court does not impose a term of imprisonment, it must impose a minimum penalty of a community service order and a fine of at least \$2 400, unless exceptional circumstances exist. A community order made pursuant to the minimum penalty must contain a direction prohibiting the offender from attending specified places—for example, animal farms—and require that the offender undertake unpaid community service. A person who commits another offence while subject to a community order and who breaches a condition of the community order may be resentenced for the original offence. This will allow penalties to be escalated for repeat offending to the maximum penalty of two years' imprisonment or a \$24 000 fine.

**The Restraining Orders Act:** In addition to the harsher penalties available under the proposed new Criminal Code offence, part 4 of the bill amends the Restraining Orders Act to make it easier for a person who has been, or may in the future be, affected by aggravated trespass to obtain the protection of a misconduct restraining order.

**Animal welfare amendments:** I now turn to the amendments to the Animal Welfare Act, contained in part 2 of the bill. The Animal Welfare Act creates powers of entry and inspection for the purposes of investigating animal cruelty. At present, these powers do not allow for the implementation of a monitoring program and permit only general inspectors to enter a place either by consent or when the inspector reasonably suspects that an offence has been, is being or is likely to be committed. These powers are inadequate to meet the community's expectations; namely, that the appropriate authorities have, and exercise, the necessary powers to monitor for compliance with welfare standards in animal source food production.

The powers-of-entry provisions in this bill are limited to designated inspectors employed by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and may be exercised only when monitoring activities in abattoirs, knackeries and intensive production places. An "intensive production place" is defined to mean a non-residential place where intensive production is carried out. This definition will ensure that the powers of a designated inspector do not extend to a residence. Limiting the powers of entry in reference to intensive production places, abattoirs and knackeries will also help ensure that inspectors are targeted towards higher-risk production methods. This specifically excludes extensive farming operations for which grazing is a key component of the animal food production system. The proposed amendments will provide a level of assurance to concerned members of the public that animal welfare standards in these types of establishments can be properly monitored by the appropriate authorities.

The intent behind the ability to regulate certain stocking densities is to enable the inclusion of livestock that are, for all intents and purposes, intensively produced but that may not be adequately caught by the definition in the act. A prescribed stocking density provides a clear, confident measure to regulate in these instances. Taken together, these reforms address the difficult question of how best to encourage transparency in, and extend protections to, commercial animal farming operations. Most of us here in WA consider ourselves to be animal lovers and do not want to see animals mistreated. However, we equally do not support the activities of those who trespass on agricultural land, causing distress to the animals, farmers and their families, as well as negatively impacting on biosecurity. For these reasons, I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr A. Krsticevic**.