



# Trish Doyle MP

## Member for Blue Mountains



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### New South Wales Parliament Legislative Assembly

#### Right to Farm Bill 2019

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My contribution to debate on the Right to Farm Bill 2019 will be brief, yet it is necessary. I grew up in the Riverina, so I do not want to hear Nationals Members complain that this is a speech being given by someone who does not know anything about farm life or the realities of managing livestock on the land. I will get that out of the way quickly because it is all too easy for The Nationals to bleat and moan about Labor not knowing anything of the bush, while they collect their travel allowances to subsidise their inner-city accommodation.

I will not be lectured by them.

However, there are elements of this bill that are reminiscent of a bill brought to this place in 2016 by the then Baird Government, the *Inclosed Lands, Crimes and Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment (Interference) Bill*, which is now an Act in New South Wales.

This Government has a long history of interfering in the democratic right to protest against one thing or another. On the one hand the Liberals, I imagine, are the ones responsible for the legislation which protects the mining activity of their mates in big business and makes criminals of peaceful protesters like the Knitting Nanas.

The Nationals, on the other hand, are responsible for the emotive, sensationalist and provocative Bills in this place that blow out of all proportion one issue or another. The Nationals do that not because there is some endemic need or some catastrophic social ill underway that they seek to fix; indeed, if that were the case they would turn up here to legislate against their own incompetence. They would do something about the dry rivers and empty dams in this State instead of providing political cover for the Liberal Party to run roughshod over farmers and industry in rural New South Wales.

I would far rather hear The Nationals' ideas about building back up our inland towns and cities or building public transport infrastructure in the Central West or the Southern Tablelands or improving health and education outcomes for young people who live beyond the reaches of Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. Instead, we see them introducing confused, poorly drafted and ineffective legislation like this bill, which actually solves none of the existing problems but which they hope—beyond their emotive posturing in their brand new R. M. Williams boots and their khaki trousers that still have the creases in them from Myer on Pitt Street—will be received by the farming community as some kind of win for the agriculture sector.

This legislation does not capture the primary concerns of a majority of farmers that regional planning legislation is inadequate and does not protect against the encroachment of urban development on prime agricultural land. That is the fact.

Likewise, when I last drove along the New England Highway the greatest issue of concern seemed to be from farmers who were protesting and erecting signage against the destruction of their agricultural land by mining interests.

There is nothing in this bill that protects the right to farm of those on the land whose farms are situated in mining exploration areas or in the coal seam gas fields of the New England region.

I know who this Government will side with in a fight between small business owners on the land and the big mining companies. I suspect The Nationals know too that farmers and rural communities do not actually stand a chance in the Cabinet room against the New South Wales Liberals and their business agenda.

In the same vein, the bill does nothing to upset the property developer lobby to whom this Government is absolutely captive.

There is nothing in this bill that protects the right to farm for those on the land who see urban and regional sprawl threatening the viability of their farms.

Labor will not oppose this bill in the lower House but it will seek to move amendments in the upper House, where the numbers are tighter and the IQs of The Nationals members are higher.

The Labor Party is committed to animal welfare and the prevention of cruelty to animals. The Nationals should be committed to those principles and in fact I know that most farmers are.

There is a lot to do to fix the Bill but my greatest concern, beyond the general dishonesty and political chicanery of The Nationals, is that yet again there is a push to limit the democratic freedom of people to protest.

I must put my concerns in that respect on record.