

August 23, 2007



Trade Practices Amendment (Small Business Protection) Bill 2007.

Senate Economics Committee (SEC)

re the Trade Practices legislation

We seek an AMENDMENT to Section 45DD(3)(a) words changed to (a) "the dominant purpose for which the conduct is engaged in is substantially related to environmental protection, **animal welfare**, or consumer protection; and".

Members of the Senate Economics Committee:

We are shocked that you are putting forward draconian legislation to protect those who would perpetuate cruelty to animals and ask the Senate Economics Committee to reject or at the very least amend this immoral piece of legislation which is an unethical step backwards; further, that Australian taxpayers may be forced to foot the bill for legal action taken against those that speak out against animal suffering and other public interest matters, under legislation introduced to Parliament late last week, to support cruel farming practices, is immoral.

http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/Committee/economics_ctte/tp_protection/info.htm

Earlier this year, Peter Costello the Federal Treasurer, foreshadowed the changes, saying they were aimed at protecting Australian farmers who may be targeted by animal protection groups that call for boycotts. However groups that stand to be affected by the Bill, such as the leading animal protection group Voiceless, the fund for animals, view the new law as a misuse of legislative power and we all say that it may have a chilling effect on freedom of speech.

The proposed amendments to the Trade Practices Act which slipped through under the guise of small business reforms, empower Australia's peak consumer protection body, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), to take representative action against groups that call for consumers not to buy products on ethical grounds.

Many in the community find it extremely worrying that non profit organisations can no longer feel safe from prosecution, when engaging in *awareness raising campaigns*. Is the Senate saying that they support cruelty to animals? The Treasurer and Minister appear to do so, by targeting animal welfare groups. This is frightening. Staggering numbers of animals in Australia today are enduring institutionalised suffering in factory farms. And over the past decade 3,000,000 orphaned joeys were left to a cruel fate. 30,000,000 kangaroos were killed, to appease farmers despite grazing pressure by kangaroos of only between 1% and 8% far less than cattle and sheep. (2006 State of the Environment Report DEH)

Maryland Wilson,

President

Coalition for Wildlife Corridors

www.awpc.org.au

CC: The Federal Treasurer Peter Costello/ Minister for Small Business Fran Bailey