



# The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

## Minister for Primary Industries

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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**\*\*Note: NSW Farm Trespass Policy is attached\*\***

**\*\*Note: Stakeholder endorsement of the policy overleaf\*\***

Tuesday 9 December 2014

### NEW MEASURES TO PROTECT FARMERS

Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, has today announced new measures to better protect NSW farms from trespass and surveillance activity.

Ms Hodgkinson said illegal entry onto farms presents a major biosecurity risk to our \$12 billion primary industries sector.

“Our intensive farms are highly susceptible to pests and diseases – only last year an outbreak of avian influenza on two properties near Young led to the destruction of close to half a million layer hens,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“So when people enter farms without the knowledge of the risk of introducing and spreading disease increases – potentially putting at risk the welfare of animals and the industries that underpin regional economies.

“To break and enter is a crime and all NSW residents have the right to be protected against unauthorised persons sneaking around their home, their shed or their backyard.

“The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government has been working alongside our farmers, the police and RSPCA NSW to develop a comprehensive cross-agency policy to address the issue of farm trespass.”

Ms Hodgkinson said this policy will put in place essential guidelines and strong penalties to better protect our farmers and the welfare of animals.

“NSW proudly maintains some of the strictest biosecurity and animal welfare measures of anywhere in the world,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“The welfare of all animals, including livestock, is protected under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* and NSW legislation includes mandatory requirements for commercial pig production, layer hens and transportation of livestock.”

**NSW Farmers:**

Tamworth egg producer Bede Burke, who is also the NSW Farmers' Egg Committee Chairman, welcomed the NSW Government's strong position on this issue.

"A farmer in Tamworth has the same right to expect the law to protect him from illegal trespass as a family in Turrumurra – I commend the NSW Government for developing this policy," Mr Burke said.

**RSPCA NSW:**

RSCPA NSW chief executive officer, Steve Coleman, said there are strong penalties and robust processes in place in NSW to limit cases of animal cruelty in NSW.

"If people have legitimate animal welfare concerns they should contact the RSPCA NSW, NSW Police or the Animal Welfare League NSW and they will investigate them, as the independent enforcement agencies for the *Prevention of Cruelty Against Animals Act*," Mr Coleman said.

**Australian Pork Limited:**

Australian Pork Limited chief executive officer, Andrew Spencer, welcomed the planned strengthening of the biosecurity arrangements in NSW.

"Unauthorised access to pig farms has already created unnecessary anxiety and heightened the risk of the spread of endemic and exotic diseases," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"These new measures will clearly support improved awareness and understanding along with more robust compliance and enforcement across the community, the legal fraternity and the port industry."

**Australian Lot Feeders' Association:**

Australian Lot Feeders' Association chief executive officer, Dougal Gordon, supported the NSW Government's Farm Trespass Policy.

"The Australian feedlot industry is reliant on Australia's 'clean, green and disease free' reputation, particularly given we export two thirds of our production," Mr Gordon said.

"Whilst we are also proud of our transparency, systems and people – and are happy to have people enter feedlots via the front door – we do not support people trespassing and accordingly support the NSW Government's Farm Trespass Policy."