

ACCOUNTABILITY NEEDED

Recent Royal Commissions have shown us when there is lack of accountability at the top of organisations, unethical, illegal behaviours and practices can become normalised.

The NSW Legislative Council recently handed down its report into "Landowner protection from unauthorised filming or surveillance".

It has six recommendations.

I proposed Recommendation 5 - "That the NSW Government review the laws and penalties of trespass and unauthorised surveillance to consider the responsibility of those planning illegal activities and whether the offences of trespass and unauthorised surveillance should be extended to office bearers of organisations planning and financing these illegal activities."

During public hearings in the inquiry, we took evidence from animal welfare activist groups unabashedly describing the planning of break-ins and trespass of farms across NSW.

Police have powers with respect to those caught in these acts.

There doesn't seem to be any accountability for those planning and resourcing these disruptive, biosecurity risky activities.

Debate and protest are part of our democracy. The inquiry heard contested views of the role of illegal activities in the public interest.

Nevertheless, I believe exacerbating disease and pest risk to our agricultural enterprises, potentially costing industry and farming families tens, if not hundreds of millions of dollars, should come with consequences.

Accountability was an important lesson from the Royal Commissions.

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