

# New laws approved

BY MATT MALONEY

TASMANIAN activists who promote protests which involve trespass onto private land could receive 12 months' imprisonment under new federal legislation.

The new laws, which primarily target farmland and farming and forestry businesses, were passed in the Senate this week.

The laws would cover places such as timber and pulp mills, chicken farms and piggeries, abattoirs, and animal saleyards.

Whistle-blowers who exposed animal cruelty and journalists are exempt from the laws.

Bob Brown Foundation spokeswoman Jenny Weber said the laws were anti-democratic.

"This is the most draconian anti-environment legislation in the nation's history," she said.

Tasmanian Liberal senators Jonathon Duniam and Claire Chandler spoke on the bill in Parliament.

Senator Duniam amended

the bill to include wood processing facilities.

"Everyone deserves the right to go to work and earn a lawful living free from intimidation and disruption, and these laws send a strong message that illegal activities from radical extremists will not be tolerated in the workplace," he said.

He added the act alleviated the likelihood of property damage, theft, and potential biosecurity breaches on farms.

Senator Chandler said it would crack down on online protest sites like Aussie Farms - a website that encourages people to upload photos, videos and documents related to the animal rights movement in Australia.

"Many Australians were disgusted at the publication of the details of farmers online by the Aussie Farms organisation, which directs radical activists where to invade," she said.

"Often these addresses are not only the farm location, but also where farmers and their families live."