

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee](#)
Subject: Submission to the Human Rights Inquiry
Date: Friday, 15 April 2016 2:19:48 PM

To whom it may concern,

My name is Michael Imelfort. I was born in Queensland and have lived for the majority of my life in Logan, south of Brisbane. Over the years I have witnessed many changes, both positive and negative, in the ways the people of Queensland have been viewed and treated by Governments, businesses and other communities. If I was given the opportunity to make a submission like this five or six years ago I probably wouldn't have bothered. Nothing is ever perfect, but it seemed at that time like the balance between the needs of those with the strongest voice, e.g. Politicians, Police, Journalists and Business leaders were considered in relation to those of the general population. But I can't agree that this is the case any longer, and I fear for what the future may bring.

For almost 100 years Queensland has been without an upper house, leaving its citizens exposed to the thought bubbles and short term goals of whoever is currently residing in parliament house. Indeed, the landscape of Queensland's legislative structure is remarkably turbulent with successive Governments constantly shredding the will of their predecessors only to replace it with new legislation that will in turn be converted to dust in short order. The recent referendum which has enshrined fixed four year terms into this structure will only serve to embolden those who declare themselves to have a mandate to legislate for whatever frameworks they currently deem to be "good". Sadly, the common pattern that spreads across all of these fluctuations is the continual erosion of the rights of Queensland's people. What we need is a stable framework that dictates clear boundaries for the Government's control of its citizens.

For example, consider that several Governments have tried with varying levels of success to limit the right or the means to protest peacefully. Without any firm legal resistance to these goals, it is only a matter of waiting until such circumstance occurs that allows a Government to push this type of legislation through. We should expect that some successive Government will wind back these changes but in the meantime significant damage will be done. Protest is one of the few ways that citizens can contribute to the legislative conversation that is all too often dominated by Politicians, Journalists and the Business elite and must be protected.

For an excellent example of extremely ill planned and almost certainly short lived legislation we need look no further than the suite of legislation introduced by the Newman Government that includes the VLAD laws. That we should be directed to observe our membership of selected associations as being criminal and accept punished accordingly on the say of a Minister is as frightening as it is insulting. The media did and has continued to label these as "anti-Bikie" laws however the suite of laws do not deal specifically with such groups and could in principle be applied to any group the current Government pleases. That this monstrosity of legislation is able to exist in the State of my birth is an affront and while it is the lack of an upper house that has created this hubris, a Bill of Rights would surely help to limit such callous stupidity.

There are many things I could ask for of a Bill of Rights but I will forego the long list so that I may place emphasis on the three things I care about most. We need a bill of rights that enshrines the right to protest peacefully, that enshrines the right to privacy, both on line and in the physical world and that enshrines the right to be treated fairly by the Police Service and the Judiciary, irrespective of what the current Premier's global world view

may be. We need this so that we can protest about issues with centuries-long repercussions without being limited by the opinions of the current set of caretakers. We need this so that we can communicate in private, away from the prying eyes of those who have empowered themselves in spite of our best interests. We need this so that we can be sure of our position within the legal framework; so that if we are being deprived of our freedom we know how why this has happened, which evidence has been brought forth, how long we will be deprived of our liberty and that even and fair rules have been applied though out. Nothing less than this should suffice.

In closing I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit my views to this committee and be part of this conversation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Imelfort.