

7/10/2019

## **Submission on the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019**

Dear Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019.

I think these laws are a serious step against the democratic right to protest in Queensland. The laws are disproportionate, overreaching, and appear to have no evidential basis.

The basis given for the drafting of these laws, that activists are using “lock-on” devices to attempt to injure police and safety officers, is not backed up by evidence. I do not believe that protesters are ‘booby trapping’ any lock on devices. The lock on devices do not lend themselves to such ‘booby trapping’ without injuring the people using them, and there have not been any reports of such injury.

The climate activist movement is a non-violent movement and has the objective of keeping activists and the police and general public safe during any protest action. The allegations are completely against the values of the protesters. Under the guise of safety, the government is bringing in laws which are really about stopping protest activity. The right to protest is a recognised pillar of democracy, and this right should include not just tokenistic free speech but actual effective protest activity as developed by historical protest movements.

Australia has a proud history of successful protest movements using civil disobedience. These have advanced the rights of workers, gender and sexual equality, indigenous rights and environmental protection. Many of our national parks today are the result of protest activity which used devices of the kind prohibited under this law. Queensland Labor, which traces its origins to one such illegal protest (the 1891 shearers’ strike) should recognise this.

To bring in superfluous laws, with limited evidential basis, to restrict protest is very dangerous. Not only does it erode our democracy, but it suppresses one of the vitally needed tools we have to address the climate crisis we are currently facing – something which, unlike lock-on devices, actually is a genuine threat to health and safety.

The Queensland Labor Party, which as mentioned, has a proud history in the Australian Labor movement and other public interest causes, will be damaged by this action. The general public will see it as an over reach of powers and the Labor Party is likely to lose considerable support if this legislation were to go ahead.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Your sincerely

Kathryn Kelly

