


From: 
To: [Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee](#)
Subject: Submission
Date: Saturday, 5 October 2019 3:32:51 PM

Submission on the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

5/10/2019

Dear Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. I am writing to you to express my deep concern and opposition to these new laws, which are disproportionate and absolutely unnecessary. I am especially concerned with the excessive police powers within this proposed legislation. Police have broad stop and search powers in Queensland, under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 which they already use liberally to conduct (arguably unlawful) searches on people suspected of being involved in activism. Greater police discretion means more power for those in charge and more ability to use force when they think it is "expedient". This will send us all back to the days of Joe Bejelke-Petersen!

The justification for this Bill and the new criminal offences and police search powers it proposes, originated in serious allegations that protesters were "booby-trapping" devices to harm themselves or others. To date, there has been no evidence produced in support of these claims, and it is entirely fabricated. I am also very concerned that these proposed laws aim to silence dissent, and are not consistent with community expectations or the democratic pillars on which Australia is built. Like the 97%+ scientists, who are backed by thousands of peer reviewed papers, the wider Queensland community understands the realities and urgency of the climate crisis, and they want their governments to act on this. Targeting members of the public who participate in protest action by banning an effective method of peaceful protest through legislation is unjustifiably inconsistent with our right to freedom of expression.

Our democracy isn't something that "happens" to us once every couple of years at the polling booth. Its enduring success rests on vital foundations like press freedom, freedom of assembly, the rule of law and the right to dissent. Protest outside of the law is part of our democracy, and has a long and important history.

History is filled with examples of the efficacy of such non-violent direct action, especially peaceful disruptions. This form of protest helped to win the eight hour working day, to protect the Franklin and the Daintree and advance Aboriginal land rights. Protest helped to secure women's right to vote, to stop our involvement in the Vietnam War and end the criminalisation of homosexuality. Protest continues to play a key role in highlighting the cruelty of our refugee policies, in protecting workers' rights, in stopping coal seam gas exploration and so much more. I urge the committee to reject this Bill.

Thank you,

Kind Regards,

Jennifer Horsburgh (Mrs)

