

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

05/10/2019



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 increasing police powers against protesters, without providing any evidence that increased powers are justified.

Premier Palaszczuk claimed in parliament that protesters are using cylinders containing glass fragments and gas containers “so that anyone trying to cut a protester free will be injured or worse”, and posted an image on social media to support her claim. The Guardian has since confirmed that the image was from a protest in North Queensland that occurred in January 2018, and cannot be linked to current protests. I ask, why does the Premier need to find images from over 18 months ago to support her actions against current protesters? The Queensland government has not offered examples of police being injured, or instances of anybody being charged with setting “booby traps” inside devices. If the only evidence being provided as justification for increased powers has been taken out of context, then there is no justification for increased powers.

Of course, violence against any police person or other safety officer is wrong. There are already laws in place to punish such actions, were they to be undertaken by protesters. We have not seen any evidence that this is the case or even the intention of protest groups. Increasing punishments against peaceful protesters without any evidential basis is an erosion of our democratic rights in this state, and sets a terrifying precedent. I entreat you to not increase police powers against and punishment of protesters when there is no evidential basis to do so. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,  
Bron Watkins