

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019.  
**Date:** Sunday, 6 October 2019 10:07:51 AM

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06/Oct/2019  
[REDACTED]

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, overreaching, and appear to have no evidential basis.

I work as a Communications Manager in the CBD.

Everyday I wake up and read independent and trustworthy news sources that are simply reporting on scientific facts - the collapse of eco-systems around the world and the greater frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. I feel helpless.

Now these protesters are drawing attention to this very issue in a peaceful manner. It is true that the inconvenience of the truths as laid out by scientists in the IPCC report will be of far greater inconvenience than any protesters preventing me from getting to work.

This bill has been introduced in bad faith, and serves to chip away at civil liberties.

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 appears to be entirely fabricated.

These devices have been used safely for decades, with the only harm occurring to protesters as a result of incorrect removal techniques employed by police. This is a dangerous position from which to be creating new laws.

“It’s important to understand the philosophy behind “locking-on”. By choosing to put their own bodies in a vulnerable situation, the protesters are appealing to the humanity of police or others to treat them with care and respect. As a symbol of non-violence, the lock-on celebrates a shared social contract where there is implicit trust that neither police nor protesters will use personal violence, but rather the rule of law will prevail in an orderly manner.”

— AIDAN RICKETTS, 2019

Activists break laws because living in a democracy comes not only with rights but with obligations. 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.

When governments chip away at our protest rights, they erode our democracy. To protect our democracy and help ensure a better future for all Australians, we must protect our protest rights. 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. To allow legislation that actively undermines the efficacy of protest activity is a disservice to our social growth. I urge the committee to reject this Bill.

Kind Regards,  
Emily Dickson