

Submission on the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

5th October 2019

[REDACTED]

[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.

The proposed legislation would effectively limit individuals' rights to freedom of expression. In a democratic society having the right to protest, having the right to non-violent civil disobedience is an essential part of democratic practices. These laws aim to prevent some forms of protest activities.

Historically and still today, lock-on devices are used by individuals to interrupt activity which they are so disturbed by, that they risk arrest to bring awareness to the issue. Inaction by our government to take steps to mitigate climate change is an issue that some Australians want to bring attention to, through non-violent civil-disobedience and protest.

These proposed new laws aim to limit Queensland Australian citizens ability to express dissatisfaction with government decisions or lack thereof. Having the right to express concerns in a public manner is very important to the integrity of maintaining Australia's democratic system.

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,

Jacinta Walsh