

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee](#)
Subject: Submission on the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019
Date: Sunday, 6 October 2019 11:25:36 PM

7/10/2019

Dagmar Roth
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Members,

I am writing to you to express my deep concern and opposition to these new 'antiprotest' laws, which are disproportionate, overreaching, and appear to have no evidential basis.

I am especially concerned with the excessive police powers within this proposed legislation.

I am a mother of two little children concerned about the impacts of climate warming and the government's inaction to mitigate this very real threat. This bill coincides with the recent climate protest which can be inconvenient, but absolutely necessary for our political leaders to finally accept the science and start protecting our environment, water sources, climate and future.

My concern is that there appears to be no factual basis for this Bill. 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 anti-protest laws are the prioritisation of business interests over the rights of Australians, under the facade of public safety. It is very troubling to the government continue to prioritise the interests of fossil fuel corporations, over those of everyday citizens. 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 99% of 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.

Protesting is a necessary mechanism for civic engagement and pressuring change when governments are no longer listening to their constituents. Civil disobedience, including the actions this Bill targets, is an important form of protest. Most activists undertake such actions not to cause harm, but to raise necessary alarm, and signal that they do not consent to the status quo. The suggestion that the government should decide when people protest and what they should get to protest about is inconsistent with strong democratic protections.

By punishing protesters, instead of engaging in conversations and telling the truth, there is a real chance the the next protests will be violent and innocent people or emergency services will be hurt.

Activists break laws because living in a democracy comes not only with rights but with obligations. Protest outside of the law is part of our democracy, and has a long and important history.

To protect our democracy and help ensure a better future for all Australians, we must protect our protest 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,

Dagmar Roth