

08/10/2019

85 George Street Central,  
Burleigh Heads Queensland 4220

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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 am the convenor of Stop Adani Gold Coast. We are a community organisation that is currently unincorporated and part of a network of groups throughout Australia focused on stopping the Adani Group's Carmichael coal mine in Central Queensland.

Currently we have over 2000 members from the Gold Coast on both our mailing and social media lists and approximately 60 active volunteers within our community. These volunteers represent the full range of people in our community including Indigenous people, people of colour, Pacific Islander people, retirees, school students, parents, workers from blue and white collar backgrounds and university students.

We are deeply concerned about the proposed legislation particularly the impacts on the rights to peacefully protest and the lack of credible evidence provided by the Premier and her colleagues to justify such legislation. Please see the below points as part of our submission.

- The basis given for the drafting of these laws, that activists are using “lock-on” devices to attempt to injure police and safety officers, is not backed up by evidence. These devices have been used for decades, yet the Queensland government has not offered examples of police being injured, or anybody being charged with setting “booby-traps” inside lock-on devices; only speculation.
- The legislation in fact misrepresents the devices by including sinister-sounding terminology like “sleeping dragon” and “dragon’s den” which is not used by the activists themselves.
- If it was the case that activists were trying to use lock-on devices to injure police, that would already be illegal and the law has sufficient power to punish that.
- The law gives police extra powers to search without a warrant. Police already use “stop and search” powers as a way to intimidate and hinder protesters who have not broken any law, and this law will give them more justification to do so.
- Under the guise of safety, the government is bringing in laws which are really about stopping protest activity. The right to protest is a recognised pillar of democracy, and this right should include not just tokenistic free speech but actual effective protest activity as developed by historical protest movements.
- Australia has a proud history of successful protest movements using civil disobedience. These have advanced the rights of workers, gender and sexual equality, indigenous rights and environmental protection. Many of our national parks today are the result of protest activity which used devices of the kind prohibited under this law. Queensland Labor, which traces its origins to one such illegal protest (the 1891 shearers’ strike) should recognise this.
- To bring in superfluous laws, with limited evidential basis, to restrict protest is very dangerous. Not only does it erode our democracy, but it suppresses one of the vitally needed tools we have to address the climate crisis we are currently facing – something which, unlike lock-on devices, actually is a genuine threat to health and safety.

We hope you take these points into account sand thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Matt  
Convenor  
Stop Adani Gold Coast