
Mitchell Houghton



7th October 2019

Queensland Parliament

Cnr of George and Alice Streets
Brisbane
QLD 4000

RE: Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 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 these new laws, which are disproportionate, overreaching, and appear to have no evidential basis.

Although I am a Horticulturalist that resides in Tasmania and it might be assumed that these matters don't effect me. I would like to argue that this bill could be the catalyst for other states and territories to follow the same cause of action. Therefore would be the beginning of the end of our rights to protest and our democracy which I'll mention again below.

Firstly, the implication that the devices in question have ever been or ever will be used to jeopardize the safety of anyone, particularly Police Officers, Rescue Workers or remaining Emergency Service Workers is baseless. In my informed opinion there has been no evidence of this and to my knowledge it's never happened in the decades that these devices have been used to peacefully protest.

The misleading terms used by the legislation for example, "sleeping dragon" and "dragon's den" is fear mongering and not used by the activists themselves.

Basically any activist who were to try and use any device to injure people would already face the full force of the laws which are already in place and justice would be served to anyone with those ideologies.

The bill would also unnecessarily give Police Officers more power to hinder and intimidate peaceful protesters via there already utilised "stop and search" authority.

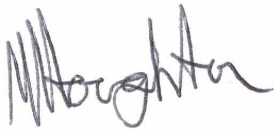
Using the cover of safety, which as mentioned isn't an issue and has been raised without evidence, the government is trying to erode an integral part of our democracy like free speech and peaceful protest. Which is recognised as a human right by the United Nations.

History has proven that peaceful protests and civil disobedience have moved Australia towards many great social changes surrounding workers rights, gender and sexual diversity, indigenous rights and environmental protection. Queensland Labor whose origins emerge from peace protest regarding Sheep Shearers in 1891 should easily be able to recognise the social change peaceful protests can cause

These laws would strip peaceful protesters of an important element utilised to bring about social change in Queensland and, if other states and territories follow suit, around the country. Particularly pressing issues of our time like climate change, an issue that risks every beings safety, unlike devices for protest which compromise nobody's safety, could may not be able to be sufficiently bought to the government's attention by the public.

Sincerely,

Mitchell Houghton

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Houghton", written in a cursive style.