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**Submission on the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019**

**Date: 08/10/2019**

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.

I am a Registered Professional Engineer of Queensland (RPEQ) and owner of a small engineering business based in Fortitude Valley. My business has been negatively impacted by some of the actions taken in recent protests, but I am writing in support of activists' right to protest. I am writing to you in this capacity because one of the typical assumptions in this discussion is that disruptive activism is opposed by all businesses interests.

I am concerned with the excessive police powers within this proposed legislation. Police already have sufficient stop and search powers in Queensland, which they use to conduct searches on people suspected of being involved in activism. Greater police discretion means more ability to use force when it is expedient. The proposed penalties are punitive and disproportionate, particularly compared to the penalties levied for various 'white collar' crimes. Let us be clear, this is an attempt to intimidate and silence dissent.

I am particularly concerned that Anastasia Palaszczuk has refused to provide any evidence to support her claims that protesters have "booby-trapped" devices to harm themselves or others: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/sep/23/queensland-premier-refuses-to-offer-evidence-to-back-claims-of-sinister-climate-activists>

To be frank, I am convinced that she has misled the public in order to justify these new laws. 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. As stated by Aidan Rickets, a lecturer at Southern Cross University:

“As a symbol of nonviolence, 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. In societies where the rule of law and respect for human life have broken down, it would be extremely dangerous to disable yourself in front of your opponents. The safe use of lock-ons as a tactic for civil disobedience is a sign that human rights and the rule of law are being respected on all sides.”

The idea that the government gets to decide when and how people are allowed to protest is repressive, authoritarian and unworthy of a 21<sup>st</sup> century liberal democracy. Protesting is a necessary mechanism for civic engagement and pressuring change when governments are no longer listening to their constituents. Shame on you if you pass this bill.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Scott Laxton', written in a cursive style.

Scott Laxton MEng (Hons) CPEng RPEQ

Director

SL Power Services Pty Ltd

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