

07/10/2019



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, which are reactionary, disproportionate, overreaching, and appear to have no evidential basis.

Although not living in Queensland, these laws have repercussions for people all around Australia. Also I have lived and owned property in Australia and travelled extensively throughout - mainly for work purposes. I have many friends and acquaintances there including many First Nations people who are more than a little disturbed at the tack the current Queensland Government is following:

It is important that people be allowed to express their views and there are cases when you have not even thought to ask. In particular First Nations people are having Native Title extinguished.

The following are my reasons for asking you to reconsider:

– Although you give the basis given for the drafting of these laws as activists are using “lock-on” devices to attempt to injure police and safety officers, this is not backed up by evidence. Historically, these devices have been used for decades, yet the Queensland government has not offered examples of police injury or booby-traps inside lock-on devices being used. I would suggest this is pure speculation on your part.

– The current law has sufficient power, if devices were being used to injure police.

– The terminology in the legislation in fact misrepresents the devices by including sinister-sounding terminology. (“sleeping dragon”, “dragon’s den”). NB this is not used by the activists themselves.

– 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. In so doing I would say this is overstepping the mark in a Democratic Society.

– These laws purely serve to allow 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 effective protest activity as developed by historical protest movements. Free speech is important but expression in the form of process is also important.

– I am surprised that Queensland Labor is trying to following the path of the Federal LNP in regard to expression of opinion in the form of protest. 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 sum up, bringing in superfluous laws, with no supporting evidence to demonstrate need thereby restricting protest is very dangerous. If Qld Labor loses power, this may well backfire. The very least it does is 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.

**The Climate Crisis is something that all levels of Government need to take action on. These laws will limit protests targeting the current Federal LNP Government. Maybe this is something you need to consider also.**

**I ask that you seriously reconsider this legislation and take no further action with it.**

Regards  
Trish Hammond