

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Feedback on Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019  
**Date:** Tuesday, 8 October 2019 8:20:44 PM

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8/10/2019

Matthew Jay Godfrey

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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 a primary school educator living and working in Sydney, NSW. While I do not get many opportunities to participate in frontline environmental activism, I support those who do and have been grateful for their contribution to protecting our environment often at great personal cost.

I don't believe there is any evidence of "lock-on" devices being being booby-trapped to harm police. In fact I have found that those I know who are active in this area are decidedly non-violent in their approach.

These devices have been used for 30 years and have already contributed a lot of good. 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.

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. In that case, why are new laws needed.

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.

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.

Regards

Matthew Godfrey