

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee](#)  
**Subject:** PROTECT OUR CIVIL LIBERTIES  
**Date:** Tuesday, 8 October 2019 8:44:50 AM

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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 especially concerned with the excessive police powers within this proposed legislation. Police have broad stop and search powers in Queensland, under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 which they already use liberally to conduct searches on people suspected of being involved in activism. There is no need for additional legislation.

This Bill will grant Police increased authority to issue fines for activities related to protesting. Vesting police with this discretion about whether certain protesting activities will constitute an offence essentially authorises police to be the arbiters of what constitutes a legitimate protest activity.

Of further concern is that there appears to be no factual basis for this Bill. The justification for this Bill and the new criminal offences and police search powers it proposes originated in serious allegations that protesters were "booby-trapping" devices to harm themselves or others. To date, there has been no evidence produced in support of these claims. I use a bicycle for transport and want to be able to secure it safely to avoid it being stolen, but do not want to risk facing charges for having a "dangerous device" in my possession.

Similar laws attempted in Western Australia in 2015 drew extensive criticism from a number of human rights and advocacy groups, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, who released a statement opposing the legislation for its attempts at 'criminalising lawful protests and silencing environmentalists and human rights defenders'. It was later abandoned.

Common to these anti-protest laws are the prioritisation of business interests over the rights of Australians, under the facade of public safety.

I am also very concerned that these proposed laws aim to silence dissent, and are not consistent with community expectations or the democratic pillars on which Australia is built. Like the 97%+ scientists, who are backed by thousands of peer-reviewed papers, the wider Queensland community understands the realities and urgency of the climate crisis, and they want their governments to act on this.

Targeting members of the public who participate in protest action by banning an effective method of peaceful protest through legislation is unjustifiably inconsistent with our right to freedom of expression. This right is protected by section 7 of the Human Rights Act (Qld) and articles 19 and 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Protesting is a necessary mechanism for civic engagement and pressuring change when governments are no longer listening to their constituents. The suggestion that the government should decide when people protest and what they should get to protest about is inconsistent with strong democratic protections. To deny citizens the right to engage in peaceful protest actions which harm no one is a slippery slope towards a repressive regime which seeks to silence critics. Protest outside of the law is part of our democracy, and has a long and important history. When governments chip away at our protest rights, they erode our democracy. To protect our democracy and help ensure a better future for all Australians, we must protect our protest rights not allow a return to the Joh era. To allow legislation that actively undermines the efficacy of protest activity is a disservice to our social growth.

I trust you will reject this Bill and protect our democratic rights

.Yours sincerely,

Jennifer Brown  
[REDACTED]

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