




Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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### **SUMMARY OFFENCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (6.54 pm): I am very pleased to make my contribution to the debate of the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill following my good friend and colleague the member for Warrego, because many of the things I want to raise were reflected in her contribution. To debate this bill, we need to go back a couple of steps. First, let me put on the record, particularly to the people of Glass House, whom I represent, that I will always defend the right to have an opinion or a view, whether that is based on science or otherwise. I will always defend the right to express that opinion or view. I will indeed defend your right to protest peacefully and nonviolently in defence of that opinion or view and to do so however you see fit, as long as it is peaceful and nonviolent. Indeed, with a few exceptions, Australia and Queensland have a long and proud history of allowing demonstration and protest to put forward a view. In many cases, those protests actually led to legislative change or change within elements of how society operates.

Let us return to why we are here debating this bill tonight. It does not go back to Extinction Rebellion and what it unleashed on the Brisbane CBD and CBDs around Australia and the world. It actually goes back to the vegan extremists that the member for Warrego mentioned and to extremists who have taken actions on railway lines, in ports and on highways in North Queensland. Let us start with the vegan extremists as referred to by the member for Warrego. Piggeries and chicken farms in the electorate of Glass House have been targeted by individuals who have stepped over a line, who have gone from peaceful and nonviolent protest into repeated invasion of private property, created biosecurity issues in doing so, chained themselves to various stalls or feeding areas within these precincts, and created no end of mental and economic trauma for the owners of those businesses.

Moving forward a bit, we now have Extinction Rebellion activists in Brisbane gluing themselves to intersections and hanging themselves from bridges. We have individuals on railway lines using these dangerous attachment devices to make it so much harder for our police and other emergency services to remove them from that infrastructure. We know that these actions will bring potential damage to not only the individual protester but also those trying to remove them. This is not peaceful and nonviolent.

I have been contacted by constituents who say that I must oppose these laws because they somehow stymie their right to peaceful and nonviolent protest. I am sorry: they do not. In fact, they do not even deal with those vegan extremists to whom I referred, because chaining themselves to a pig stall would not be captured as using an attachment device as proposed in this bill. This does not address those aspects, let alone address that peaceful and nonviolent protest aspect about which constituents are contacting me.

As I said, I will defend your right to do that, but when you start using devices such as what we have been talking about to attach yourself to infrastructure, when you start invading private property creating biosecurity risks, when you start disrupting repeatedly the operation of a city—the businesses, the mums and dads who run businesses and who want to get to work and get their kids to school—then you have stepped over a line. Therefore, I will support these laws. In fact, I will go further. I will support the LNP amendments to ensure the bill addresses a number of other aspects—in particular, that it

addresses breach of bail and mandatory jail for new unlawful assembly offences. I say to people: please protest—protest peacefully and nonviolently—but do not repeat the behaviour, because it creates hatred, frustration, anger and resentment within the broader community. That is what needs to be addressed.

This bill does not go far enough. I support the amendments that seek to introduce mandatory jail and change bail laws to reverse the presumption in favour of bail for offenders charged with unlawful assembly who commit and recommit those offences.

I say to the constituents of Glass House and Queensland: continue to hold your views and opinions and continue to protest peacefully and nonviolently, but do not follow the examples of vegan extremists or Extinction Rebellion, whose actions are disrupting so many law-abiding citizens in this state.