




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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SUMMARY OFFENCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (6.46 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate of the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I am disappointed with the time it has taken for this legislation to make its way into the parliament. I am further disappointed with how the Labor government has overplayed the impact of these laws and how they will be applied. It is of concern that this bill is very limited and will not adequately address the extremist protesters such as Extinction Rebellion. It will not address, I believe, what members of the public are expecting to see in this response. This bill really is just tinkering around the edges. I want to elaborate on some of the shortcomings of the legislation in my contribution.

The LNP have led the way when it comes to dealing with this type of domestic terrorism. The LNP have been on the front foot of this issue. That is why we have proposed amendments to this bill to toughen up these laws. The LNP want to deal with these illegal activists who have been terrorising our farmers, food processors and miners and who are now doing that in the city of Brisbane. The LNP introduced a private member's bill on 1 May this year. I want to thank the member for Burdekin, who has championed this LNP private member's bill. The Criminal Code (Trespass Offences) Amendment Bill, introduced by the LNP, could have been debated and supported six months ago by this Labor government.

The reality is that we need tough legislation. We need to make these extremists think twice about the consequences of their actions. There is a really important question: how is it that the LNP opposition can bring forward a comprehensive private member's bill to deal with these extremists and activists when the Labor government, with all the resources of government, has taken six months to bring forward a bill that only tinkers around the edges? Maybe the Labor government's heart is not really in this. Maybe the Deputy Premier is blocking much needed reforms to stop this extortion. Maybe it has something to do with the alliances between the Labor Party and the Greens party—and who would know what the alliances might be between the Greens party and some of these extremists?

I have no problem with the legal right to protest—it is a fundamental tenet of our democracy—but the right to protest does not allow or excuse people breaking the law by trespassing on farms, interfering with agricultural equipment and other primary production associated facilities such as abattoirs and saleyards, stopping traffic in the city to cause public disruption or disrupting the commerce of the city or community, or those who choose to act like a moron and tie up valuable emergency services resources.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Warrego, that is unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw.

Ms LEAHY: I withdraw. The LNP does not oppose the bill but holds concerns about the limited application and ability to crack down on extremist protesters such as Extinction Rebellion. The so-called lock-on device laws are very specific. Unfortunately, I believe they will have only a minimal impact on the serial protesters causing anarchy on the streets of Brisbane. Specifically, we are concerned about

the limited breadth and application of this bill on these extremist protesters. The lock-on devices are only a small part of these extremists' tactics. Legislating for the lock-on devices alone will not fix the problem. In recent times the protesters have relied on methods such as gluing themselves to the road to cause as much disruption as possible. The bill specifically states that glue is not declared as an attachment device and neither is a bike lock, a padlock, a rope or a chain.

Further, this bill will not stop invasions, such as what happened at the feedlot near Millmerran or at the abattoir at Warwick, and would not have stopped the four invasions by vegan activists that my constituent endured on his family owned piggery. It will not stop that situation. It will not give him any confidence. I have no doubt that the vegan activists who invade properties, threaten farmers and threaten my constituents are some of the same people involved with the extremist behaviour in the Brisbane CBD.

The LNP will support the bill; however, we will seek to amend the bill so that there is strong deterrence of this extremist behaviour. The bill needs provisions for mandatory jail for the new unlawful assembly offence to ensure that anyone convicted of multiple breaches of the new unlawful assembly offence faces mandatory jail time of one week. The bill also needs tougher changes to bail law to reverse the presumption in favour of bail for offenders charged with unlawful assembly who commit an offence of a similar nature while on bail.

In its current form, the bill will not stop the public disruption, the events that stop traffic or people hanging from bridges unless the person is using a lock-on device. It is very specific. As it currently stands, the bill will not apply to the Extinction Rebellion protester who chained himself up and sat on the railway. This alone causes millions of dollars of loss when those coal trains cannot get to port. As I said, protesters have a right to a peaceful protest—and there are places where they can do that—but no-one has the right to break the law repeatedly. Anyone who breaks the law, particularly on more than one occasion, deserves some consequences for their action. This is why this bill needs to be strengthened—not to mention the danger in which emergency services workers are placed to remove the lock-on devices. It sometimes requires a rescue squad type capability to remove these people from plant or equipment without harm to either.

Civil disobedience for any cause is not a justification for mass public disorder. Labor is always there to talk, but there is not much action. The Premier has overstated the impact of Labor's laws. They do not go far enough. Annastacia Palaszczuk and her government's priorities are wrong. The government needs to be much tougher on this illegal behaviour. What Queenslanders need is a bill that guarantees jail sentences for serial illegal protesters and enforcement of the tougher bail laws. There needs to be real consequences for these serial law-breakers. I look forward to listening to the remainder of this debate and commend the amendments brought to the House by the member for Toowoomba North.