




Speech By  
**Corrine McMillan**

**MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD**

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**SUMMARY OFFENCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (3.04 pm): While I was sitting here listening to the member for Everton I could not help but think about conspiring minds. I thought about a quote from Douglas MacArthur, who once wrote—

The world is in constant conspiracy against the brave. It is the age-old struggle of the roar of the crowd on one side and the voice of your conscience on the other.

I was reminded of that quote while I was listening to the roar of the member for Everton.

Peaceful protest activity has been used as a vehicle by many Australians to advocate for legal and social change. Peaceful assemblies allow interest groups to express their views to the wider public and in particular may allow the concerns of minorities to be voiced, heard and potentially acted upon. However, in recent times there has been an increasing frequency of dangerous protesting activities in our state, jeopardising the safety of protesters, nearby civilians and our emergency services. In light of these occurrences, I rise today to make my contribution to the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, which is currently before this House. This bill aims to prevent any potential disastrous impacts from these recent protests without compromising the freedoms and rights that our community expects.

Initially, the right to peacefully assemble was recognised in Queensland to be of such significant importance that it was enshrined in legislation through the Peaceful Assembly Act 1992 and in the Human Rights Act 2019 which Queensland Labor governments enacted. The right to peacefully assemble is fundamental in our society, and the government supports this right. What this government does not support and will not support is the potentially dangerous activity that is currently happening on our roads and railways and in our cities and our rural communities.

I commend the government for implementing the safety measures within this bill to protect not only the protesters but also our emergency services and nearby civilians. I make comment particularly about the bill's introduction of new offences under the Summary Offences Act 2005 to prohibit the use of dangerous attachment devices as well as its amendments to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000.

Primarily, dangerous attachment devices have been utilised by several protesters of late and are constructed in such a way as to potentially endanger the protester, emergency services workers and members of the public. These protesters have reportedly placed glass or aerosol canisters inside devices such as sleeping dragons and metal fragments have been used to lace the concrete found in dragon's dens. This increases the likelihood that injuries may be caused when trying to disassemble these devices.

We all know the dangers of a grinding disc on the angle grinder which may break or shatter while in operation, causing disc fragments to become potential projectiles and cause severe lacerations. The new offences introduced under this bill will have the sole objective of disincentivising protesters from using these potentially dangerous devices.

Proposed new sections 14C(1) and 14C(2) of the SOA make it an offence for a person to use a dangerous attachment device to unreasonably interfere with the ordinary operation of transport infrastructure and to stop a person from entering or leaving a place of business. The maximum penalties for these offences are two years imprisonment and one year imprisonment respectively, which represents the government's zero tolerance for practices which interfere with the safety of its citizens and lawful protest activities.

In addition to these amendments under the SOA, the bill also amends the PPRA in terms of how a police officer can safely deal with a dangerous attachment device. These amendments allow a police officer who finds a dangerous attachment device that has been used or may be used to disrupt a lawful activity to deactivate or disassemble the device or seize and dispose of the device as considered reasonably necessary. This seizure and forfeiture power can be considered as a preventive measure that allows police officers to intervene before dangerous attachment devices are deployed, thereby minimising the risk of harm to persons and disruption to our community.

As stated previously, peaceful protests are a respected human right within Queensland and in our country; however, the potential threat to any citizen's safety will always be the greatest concern of this government. I believe that the amendments within this bill aim to deter and safely deal with the use of dangerous attachment devices. In the light of the bill's amendments to the SOA and the PPRA, I commend this bill to the House.