




Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**

**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 24 October 2019

**SUMMARY OFFENCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (11.30 am): I rise to support the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. The last few years has seen a need to increase the actions governments can use to ensure that the day-to-day lives of Queenslanders can continue uninterrupted and unharassed, whilst supporting the ability to protest. I have taken part in many protests over many years of my life and in different careers. In my portfolio I have seen protests from farmers and fishers. The LNP's own Green Shirts Movement has also protested.

We on this side have no problem with the right to protest, and that has been well indicated by every speaker in this place. Protesting is a fundamental right to hold governments and oppositions to account. Protesters should try to convey their message and bring public support. When you reflect back to the era of September 1977, the then premier had proclaimed—

The day of the political street march is over. Anybody who holds a street march, spontaneous or otherwise, will know they're acting illegally. Don't bother applying for a march permit. You won't get one. That's government policy now.

This proclamation was echoed by the acting police commissioner as well and was police policy until April 1978. Brisbane police prohibited most political street marches until August 1979.

I was one of those protesters in front of City Hall protesting for the fundamental right to protest legally. That right, under the National Party government, was stolen from every Queenslanders. In fact, one of my first employers when I entered the Transport Workers' Union as an official was the then secretary, Allan McPaul, who fundamentally stood by his rights and taught me many principles in terms of standing up for your rights and the rights of other Queenslanders. When he refused to pay the fine for protesting, he was sent to Boggo Road for a period of 10 days—he felt that strongly about the right to protest in Queensland. The then Joh Bjelke-Petersen government, the National Party in this place, had brought in insidious, scurrilous acts to prevent protesting. What this bill is seeking to deliver today is nothing in comparison to that. This bill is not about limiting the fundamental right to protest but about stopping those who engage in these forms of activities.

The member for Maiwar's speech yesterday referred to the need to act on climate change and he said 'but the solutions are within reach'. The Greens talk about solutions when it comes to climate change, but they are never part of any solution. They are the party of talking and platitudes, but not solutions. In 2009, the Greens voted to kill off the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme bills. The Greens talk about climate but then vote against action.

I was a member of the Australian Senate when I saw the Greens sit with Tony Abbott's LNP and vote down climate change. On this bill the Greens try to link this government to the Joh Bjelke-Petersen government. I say to that member that I lived through those days of Joh. I know the struggles. I know the issues that we need to deliver on and I know that just laws will be delivered on this particular bill today. This is again the Greens celebrating purity and inaction and celebrating attacks on Labor without fact.

I place on the record that I support action on climate change. The Labor Party does as well. We need the public to join us on this journey of change and not to be confronted by protests that push potential supporters away through the use of devices and tactics that offend and do not educate.

In a previous life I was an industrial officer with the Queensland Police Union. During that time, like any official, the safety of workers was paramount. I recall that one of my first duties was to run a dispute in the Industrial Relations Commission of Queensland after members had raised an issue with me about the then ID badges with pins on them puncturing their chests, both male and female, as a result of engagement in marches on that occasion. That was rectified and changed to what we see our honest, hardworking members of our Queensland Police Service now wear on their uniform.

The bill before the House enables a police officer to search a person or vehicle reasonably suspected of carrying a dangerous attachment device. While it will not be an offence to possess a dangerous attachment device, police will have the capacity to seize a device prior to its use that would disrupt a lawful activity. Under this bill, police will be able to deactivate, disassemble, seize and dispose of anything that is a dangerous attachment device.

We on this side of the House act, and act quickly, but within the rule of law and with due regard to parliament. Earlier this year, in my portfolio, we as a government amended the regulations under the Biosecurity Act to allow Queensland Police Service and biosecurity officers to immediately fine people who put on-farm biosecurity at risk. We acted, and acted quickly, and broadly industry was supportive of the quick response. Since that change to the regulations there has not been one incursion under the act or the regulations that we amended.

It is always unfortunate when, like the Greens, an organisation is quick to criticise action which is quick, good and works but is not perfect in their mind. Governments need to strike a balance, and this bill is fair in terms of what should be supported by everyone in this House.