


Department of Justice
GPO Box 825
Hobart TAS 7001

Dr Andrew Davidson

Howden TAS 7054

Re: the Workplaces (Protection from Protesters) Amendment Bill 2021

To Whom it may concern,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Workplaces (Protection from Protesters) Amendment Bill 2021.

The redrafting of this Bill is a thinly disguised attempt to achieve the same ends as the previous 2019 version, which was deemed unconstitutional by the High Court.

It still seeks to trample on the rights of Tasmanians to protest actions with which they vehemently disagree.

The 2021 Bill:

1. Has replaced reference to “protestors” in earlier drafts of the Bill with “certain actions” but reference to these “actions” by the Premier and Guy Barnett clearly show they refer to protests.
2. Claims to protect workers but fails to demonstrate that protestors threaten/endanger workplaces, thereby requiring protection. No evidence is offered that protestors have threatened the safety of workers and the attempts by WorkSafe to pursue this argument in court have been roundly rejected.
3. If then the “protection” of workplaces is based solely on protecting profit, the State apparently seeks to deny the right of Tasmanians to oppose ethically, environmentally, economically, and socially reprehensible business practice on the basis that the business practice makes money.
4. The Bill does not cover “actions” against all businesses, only those that are socially contentious and the specified businesses to which it applies disproportionately favours the interests of substantial donors to the Liberal Party and/or business that the Liberal Party shows legislative, administrative and commercial favour.

Based on the above, I respectfully submit that the Workplaces (Protection from Protesters) Amendment Bill 2021 remains an unconstitutional attack on the rights of Tasmanians. It constitutes another attempt by this Government to silence legitimate public dissent. I therefore request that the Bill be abandoned.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Andrew Davidson