

To Department of Justice
Office of the Secretary
GPO Box 825
Hobart TAS 7001

From Kerin Booth
Tasmania, 7304
23 Sept, 2021

Submission re the proposed 'Workplaces (Protection from Protesters) Amendment Bill 2021'

The right to protest is fundamental to a robust and healthy democracy and should be enshrined in our legislation. Protests over the last century have led to women getting the right to vote and to stand for parliament, protest marches have raised awareness of racial prejudices and gender equality issues. Workers rights for fair wages and conditions have been won by protests which have often led to improved dialogue with industry and fairer workplace laws.

Environmental protests have helped raise awareness of important conservation and biodiversity issues and more recently, climate change. Some stand out examples were the anti-uranium mining and anti-nuclear movement, the Lake Pedder campaign, the Franklin River campaign and the protests relating to the proposal by Gunns for a Tamar Valley Pulp Mill. Environmental campaigns and protests have led to improved government policies and industry standards with more sustainable practices being brought into planning legislation for forestry, mining and agriculture. Land Care continues to foster care for the environment as did Bush Care and Water Watch and yet there is still much more work to do in protecting our environment. Thousands of young students have felt the need to protest about Government's insufficient action to reduce harmful emissions leading to climate change and extremes in our weather conditions, including droughts, floods, extreme winds and fires.

Aboriginal people have been forced to protest for land rights as they have often not been listened to by legislators. Australia's First National Sorry Day, on 28th May 2000, saw more than 250,000 people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, participating in a walk across Sydney Harbour Bridge, organized by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation to protest the lack of a government apology to Indigenous people. This protest march was a show of solidarity and it raised public awareness of The Stolen Generation and other issues facing indigenous people.

Anti-war marches and protest marches have led governments to withdraw from overseas wars and rethink more diplomatic strategies. More recently people have protested in support of asylum seekers being treated with respect and decency, as it is a basic human right to seek asylum.

Protests have been an integral part of Australia and in the shaping of our nation's democracy. It was protestors and their campaigns that led the way for Tasmania preserving some of its outstanding wild places, including the Franklin River, Styx Valley of the Giants, Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Areas, National Parks, reserves and other wildlife rich native forests around the state, such as takayna (the Tarkine) and kooparoona niara (The Great Western

Tiers). Our special places and tourism icons contribute to the economy and community wellbeing of all Tasmanian's and these special places have been protected by citizens who cared, lobbied, campaigned and protested.

Police already have numerous powers to remove and charge people engaged in non-violent direct actions in Tasmania. Activists already face jail terms for non-violent action. Any new laws, such as these new anti-protest laws are unnecessary, harsh and excessive.

I am concerned that this proposed legislation will shield environmentally or socially destructive businesses from being publicly scrutinized. This legislation is not the right balance between the economic interests of businesses and the civil liberties of individuals.

I urge all involved in reviewing, debating and voting on this proposed legislation, to consider the consequences and vote against this proposed legislation if it should be tabled.

Yours sincerely,
Kerin Booth
Meander, Tasmania, 7304, Australia