

13 April 2022

Via email: haveyoursay@justice.tas.gov.au

To Whom It May Concern

Police Offences Amendment (Workplace Protection) Bill 2022

Unions Tasmania is the peak body representing working people in Tasmania. There is no other Tasmanian peak body dedicated to giving a voice to working Tasmanians and their families. Unions Tasmania represents our affiliate unions, across industry, in the private and public sector, with approximately 50,000 members. We are also the local branch of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU).

Unions Tasmania notes that the *Police Offences Amendment (Workplace Protection) Bill 2022* is the latest version of laws colloquially referred to as 'anti-protest' but is more limited in scope than previous versions struck down by the High Court and widely criticised by civil liberties groups, lawyers, and unions as anti-democratic.

The trade union movement is a movement built on protest. It is through protest activity that many of our rights at work that we take for granted today – for example, superannuation, equal pay, and safety laws – were won through collective action.

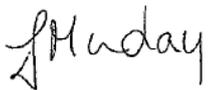
We have, however, always maintained the position that we do not support protest activity that endangers the lives or safety of our members at work either because they stand to be injured themselves or they risk injuring someone else because of dangerous protest activity. All workers deserve a safe workplace

We intend to make two broad comments about this legislation. The amendment to section 13 to create an offence of 'public annoyance' does not appear to target protest activity or workplace safety and we therefore consider it unnecessary.

We would also seek specific exemption for trade union activity to ensure that workers who are participating in legitimate union activity such as industrial action, industrial disputes, or campaigns are not unduly targeted by any legislative change.

We are available to meet further and discuss our concerns if required.

Regards,



Jessica Munday
Secretary
Unions Tasmania