

Workplaces (Protection from Protesters) Amendment Bill 2021 submission

I write to oppose the passing of the **Workplaces (Protection from Protesters) Amendment Bill 2021**.

The Bill is a broad attempt to stifle political dissent. To the extent that it covers acts by citizens which may be dangerous to workers in workplaces, we already have pre-existing offences that can be invoked, making the Bill unnecessary. Anything beyond that is aimed at protecting the actions of the Government and the companies acting under its aegis. While the rhetoric surrounding the Bill - from both proponents and opponents - is focused on environmental protest, the provisions of this Bill could be used by future Governments to stifle a broad range of political actions.

At the heart of the proposals as described on the Department of Justice website (<https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/community-consultation/consultations/workplaces-protection-from-protesters-amendment-bill-2021>) is a deep inconsistency. The website refers to “Removing the Act’s references to protesters and protest activity”, yet the title of the Bill includes the words “Protection from Protesters”.

This is a dangerous Bill, as recognised in the fact that previous versions of it have twice been struck down by the Supreme Court. It should not be passed. If protesters are putting workplaces at risk, then existing laws should be used to prosecute them.