

To whom it may concern.

I am concerned about the new ASIO bill. I am very proud to be an Australian because I think we live in a country where people feel safe to criticise some of the government's policies and feel safe to do so. Sometimes citizens agree and disagree with what their Government does and sometimes the government gets it wrong.

I would not want to see our wonderful democracy spoiled by the sort of thing that goes on in the U.S. and other governments around the world, Australia is a place where people can express themselves freely and in good spirit. I recently heard of a play about Rachel Corrie, the peace activist who was run over by an Israeli bulldozer, being withdrawn from a theatre in New York. I thought that would never happen in Australia, and I want it to stay that way. Of course we wouldn't want real criminals and people with intent on destroying or exploiting our country to be allowed to do so but there are people of good will, people fighting for Press Freedom and transparency, human rights, social justice, environmentalists who should be able to get out their message and ideas without being tracked by ASIO.

Sometimes, most of the time the opposition disagrees with the government are they being tracked by ASIO?

In a healthy democracy there must be discussion and dissent otherwise the term democracy has a hollow ring to it.

We must retain our Australian way and not be tempted to repress the people.

Yours sincerely

Jean Sievers