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Dear Secretary

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed Anti-Terrorism Bill 2005. The proposed human rights violations contained within this document are shocking to say the least.

It is clear that these laws have been formulated in order to take advantage of people's fears in this climate of global terrorism, in order to increase government powers to an unprecedented level.

What particularly concerns me is the blatant discriminatory nature of the laws. We have seen no draconian, pre-emptive laws for terrible crimes that affect Australians every day, such as rape, home-invasion, assault, murder or paedophilia. I don't know a single person who has not at some stage had their home burgled. However where the crime is supposedly carried out by 'Muslims' the most tyrannical and oppressive laws are proposed - even without a related terrorist attack having ever occurred on Australian soil. There would be a public outcry if every Priest was monitored or placed under house-arrest or preventative detention due to the potential (based on mere suspicion) of him committing an act of paedophilia. Or if every Aboriginal was held in preventative detention to prevent home burglary. We shouldn't generate laws based on stereotypes.

Forget the presumption of innocence. It can be argued that the current proposals create a situation in which one is "Innocent until Proven Muslim". Once Muslim, a range of human rights violations can be imposed without a crime having occurred or even being intended. Already before these laws were proposed the Muslim community in Australia has suffered abuse and hate-crimes. I myself was witness to a Muslim woman and her two children almost being run down by a car which purposefully drove onto the kerb to hit or scare them. Just this morning a Muslim woman was assaulted walking down my street. We feel like Jews living in 1930's Germany.

Police corruption is not a new issue to Australia, our states have been dealing with it in the very recent past. Yet the proposed legislation entrusts an individual's life and liberty to the mere suspicion of another individual. Without full and transparent judicial review, what guarantees do we have against personal vendettas or racist motives? We shouldn't assume that every police officer has the objectivity of an open judicial process - or even that all of them are well intentioned. If such was the case, names such as Rodney King would not be synonymous with Police brutality.

One may also question the potential for these laws to be taken advantage of by other criminal elements - Home invaders or kidnappers would merely need to present themselves as 'ASIO' and unknowing innocent citizens would open their doors, or go with them freely.

Terrorists have repeatedly stated that their actions are in retaliation for oppression in Palestine, for oppression in Afghanistan, for oppression in Chechnya, for oppression in Iraq. Is it not then logical that the oppression of

the people of Australia could have a similar effect amongst its citizens, and lead to increased dissent against the government?

I lament the fact that my children will not grow up in the Australia that I grew up loving. Although these laws in the immediate time-frame threaten the human rights of Muslims, very soon they will destroy the very fabric of the democracy we are privileged to. Already the democratic voice of over 1 Million protesters were ignored when Australia joined the Iraq war. Already the government appears to be stifling debate in parliament and using their majority to force the adoption of oppressive, unpopular and undemocratic laws. It seems as though this so called democratic government is not listening to the voices of its people. Must the names of Freedom and Democracy be tainted further?

It is ironic that Australia joined in what is predominantly believed to be an illegal war in Iraq to replace an oppressive police state with a free democratic government. I fear that if we continue on the road we are on, in several years time the Iraqi army may feel compelled to come to Australia and reciprocate the favour.