



COLUMBAN MISSION INSTITUTE

Columban Mission: Global and Local

- ♦ Christian-Muslim Relations
- ♦ Peace Ecology and Justice
- ♦ Promoting Communion with the Church in China

Friday 21st October 2005

Dear

Proposed Anti-Terrorism Bill 2005

I am extremely concerned about the proposed legislation "Commonwealth Anti-Terrorism Bill 2005". I have read the draft document released "in confidence" to Mr Jon Stanhope, MLA and displayed by him on his website.

These are just some of my concerns:

- That this legislation is a knee jerk response to the London bombings and is designed as a political tool to play into a climate of community fear,
- That in a democratic society where members of parliament are elected to properly represent the people, the process for introducing this legislation is secretive and is being pushed through in haste without proper consultation and discussion,
- That this raises the questions of who is pushing the agenda and why? If this is so important, it should and must be processed by a proper democratic procedure.
- That this legislation gives too much power to the Australian Federal Police and ASIO and is not in accordance with Australia's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- That there is no juridical review enshrined in this legislation.
- That therefore this legislation has strong possibilities for abuse.
- That there has been no case presented that states the need for this legislation.
- That the current legislation has been recognized as sufficient to deal with possible terrorists or terrorist groups.
- That this legislation would seriously undermine hard-fought-for human rights with no evidence to show that it would be effective against terrorism.
- That this legislation would adversely affect vulnerable people and groups in our society.
- That this legislation will be used to quell legitimate dissent and puts Australia on the road to becoming a police state.
- That in reality the Muslim community will be harassed because of this legislation
- That this legislation and the way it is being introduced treats the Australian people with contempt and is undemocratic.
- This type of response only serves to exacerbate the problems which cause those with grievances to become terrorists.

I urge you to wholeheartedly oppose the rushing through of this legislation without proper scrutiny and due democratic process.

I urge you to pursue changes to this legislation which are not in accord with Australia's obligations under International Law.

I urge you to have courage and stand for the human and civil rights of all Australian people and not allow this Government to play politics with peoples' lives.

I urge you to act to protect Australia as a place where freedom of expression is not only encouraged but practiced.

Anne Lanyon

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Postscript

This letter was written to every Federal politician, including the Prime Minister, out of my serious concerns about the legislation as it was proposed. Little has changed since then except that I am grateful to have the opportunity to present this letter as a submission to this Senate inquiry. I sincerely urge the members of this inquiry to consider my concerns on behalf of all at the Columban Centre for Peace Ecology and Justice who spend so much effort working for a peaceful community.

Anne Lanyon
Co-ordinator.