

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Submission to the Inquiry into the provisions of the Anti-Terrorism Bill (No. 2)
2005

We, the undersigned, urge members of the Federal, State and Territory governments to actively pursue full and open public debate on the proposed anti-terrorism laws. These proposed laws are a fundamental challenge to the rights and liberties of all Australian people and any attempt to rush them through Federal parliament without close public attention should be actively resisted. We urge all members to speak out against those sections of the proposed legislation that undermine cherished and long-held legal principles as well as the right to freedom of expression.

We question why these proposed laws are necessary when recent investigations and arrests of alleged terrorists have demonstrated the adequacy of existing laws.

The principle of democracy requires that the proposed laws be opposed and that a more informed and inclusive debate take place about how to strike an acceptable balance between our security and freedoms. We urge Members of both Houses to call for the immediate abandonment of those sections in the proposed legislation dealing with sedition. If implemented, these laws will have grave consequences for Australian citizens and will curtail the right to freedom of expression.

By way of example, at the end of section 30A(1)(b) of the Crimes Act 1914 is to be the addition that "seditious intention means ... (b) to urge disaffection against ... the Constitution, the Government of the Commonwealth ... either House of Parliament." Our writing this submission is demonstration of our disaffection with the Government over this matter. Our encouragement of others to object to the legislation would seem to be urging disaffection with the Government, and to therefore be deemed seditious under the proposed legislation. We reserve our democratic freedom and ability to criticise our Government as loyal citizens.

It is our hope that as elected representatives of the Australian people members of the Government will act to protect the rights we so cherish.

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