

FOREST HILL
11th November, 2005.

Senate Legal and Constitutional
Legislation Committee,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA, ACT, 2600.

The following is an addition to my submission of 6th November.

I am deeply concerned about the implications of the **proposed Anti-Terrorism legislation** for **freedom of speech**, and the **media**.

Freedom of speech.

A nation that is restricted from feeling free to speak on any matters of importance to the wider community, is in a very dangerous position. Already fears have been expressed about the ability to make comments on action of politicians or government or semi-government organisations. Democracy requires that its members should be able to contribute to the debate which determines its shape and function. Fear is an extremely poor basis for satisfactory communal living. Trust is basic.

It is only a government that feels inadequate that would restrict its subjects in such a way.

Media

Similar conditions apply in this field as in the freedom of speech for individuals or groups within the community. If freedom of reporters or media organisations is restricted, then democracy has gone out the window.

While there may need to be curbs on licence, eg. to disparage people, or to fail to use the truth, it is vital that the media should be completely free of political domination, and should be able to investigate matters of injustice and truth. It is also a matter of course that the populace should be as widely and deeply as possible aware of what is actually happening throughout the community. Without a free press, this is extremely unlikely to happen.

Australia has been very ready to criticise countries where freedom of press does not exist. As we are learning about the proposed Anti-Terrorism legislation, it seems increasingly obvious that there would be a great likelihood of its becoming a police state.

The whole of the proposed legislation provides a basis for considerable apprehension about our future.

I would strongly urge that it should be abandoned in toto. This weeks apprehension and imprisonment of suspected terrorists in Sydney and Melbourne indicates clearly that the current legislation is adequate to deal with any such emergency. Why then, is the government pursuing its current course which is not only unnecessary, but also extremely dangerous and undesirable.

Yours sincerely,

(Ms.) D. Beryl Phillips