

Dear Senators

I am opposed to the enactment of this Bill as currently put forward by the Government. The process has been unreasonably rushed, without adequate time being allowed for the general public to be informed about the consequences of the legislation for our civil liberties. The scrutiny of the Bill in Parliament is also perfunctory and contrary to the long-established traditions of a democracy.

As a member of the general public I find I can no longer take anything that the Government says about national security at face value. Ever since the events of 11 September 2001 we have been subjected to a litany of half truths and fed dubious intelligence about security threats, both abroad (notably in Iraq) and in this country, from the Prime Minister and his senior colleagues. We would be derelict in our duty as citizens of Australia if we accepted without challenge the latest arguments about the need for more draconian state and police powers relating to preventive detention, sedition and close monitoring of potential suspects. Mandatory detention of asylum seekers has been a big enough blot on our national conscience without a whole range of other sinister restrictions being imposed on our country's citizens, especially those of Middle Eastern origin. The true rationale for this Bill needs to be explained and debated in Parliament and in public forums.

As William Pitt said two centuries ago - 'necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves'. Let us not be slaves to political expediency.

Yours sincerely  
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