

Honourable Senators,

I wish to express my profound concern at the unnecessary, anti-democratic nature of the Sedition provisions within the Anti-Terrorism Bill 2005.

These laws are -

1. Unnecessary.

It is already unlawful to incite crimes and the provisions in no way enhance our capacity to prevent immediate terrorist threats.

2. Undemocratic.

These laws attack the fundamental principle of freedom of speech and will enshrine the capacity for current and future governments to engage in political censorship.

They inhibit open public debate which is fundamental to a democratic society.

3. Counter-productive

Such suppression will only fuel the determination of extremists and force more of those who feel disenfranchised in our society towards secrecy and illegal activity that really does pose a threat to our community.

It also threatens to further divide the remainder of the community and will reduce community goodwill towards other, legitimate anti-terror measures.

Passing of these laws will bring disrepute to our country, both Houses of Parliament and our legal institutions.

If these laws are passed, we can no longer claim to live in a free society or functional democracy.

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John Cumming
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