

To the Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
inquiry in opposition to the Anti-terrorism Bill 2005.

My name is Pamela Sidney.
I am a Melbourne based poet & singer.

I am absolutely appalled and alarmed at the wording of
this Bill especially Sedition, but other sections as
well, which potentially threaten all I hold dear
regarding freedom of speech and free association etc.

Like quite a few Australian poets, I write political
poetry, and value my right to criticise the government
of the day - whether it be via comedy, satire,
rhetoric or poetry. I value my human right to take an
opposing view.

I am very worried that my creative work will be
subject to attention from 'the-powers-that-be',
understanding that if I show 'disaffection' towards
the government it's policies and individuals within
it, I am liable to at least 5 years jail - perhaps
longer. (I ask what is the interpretation of
'disaffection' ? - a term I consider loose, therefore
to my mind, legally perilous)

To my non-legal mind these laws make void human rights
and dignity.

I remember the police state of apartheid South Africa.

One cannot fail to make the comparison, and I am
ashamed to be an Australian under this current callous
and punitive government.

I want the right to say: (without risk in public) the
invasion of Iraq was illegal and immoral.
I want the right to say: I feel compassion and
sympathise with ordinary Iraqi citizens, that those
citizens have an absolute right to fight off whomever
may invade their country. (just as we would here in
Australia) I want the right to say: John Howard made
Australia a prime target for terrorism, and that I am
very angry about that.

I will refrain from a long list, but I am a dissenter
and value my right to dissent (in public) if I
please. I have a horror that I may already be
self-censoring. If so, that is an insidious intrusion
into my creative soul.

I consider the current government reckless in action,
reckless with the truth, and currently blatantly
manipulating citizens through fear and bullying.

Yours sincerely,
Pamela A Sidney