

Dear Senators,

I write to advise you of my support for the Anti-Terrorism Reform Bill 2009 as proposed by the Green's party and to request that you support this Bill through the Senate, seeing it being enacted as legislation in Australia.

This Bill goes a long way towards correcting the deficiencies in the Howard Government's Anti-Terrorism Legislation that were privately feared amongst the Muslim community and publicly revealed during the handling of the Mohammed Haneef matter.

However I would like to request that the Senate consider further changes to the Bill in its proposed form by also further repealing the ASIO compulsory questioning powers. These powers give ASIO officers unrestricted, and therefore, unchecked powers to refrain a person from exercising basic human rights and civil liberties.

Since 2003, these powers have been employed by ASIO on precisely 15 occasions, and following the publicity of the Haneef matter, were not utilised at all since 2006. Given that they were rarely used in the initial period and are not at present being utilised at all, there seems little utility to having them remain "on the books" so to speak.

It appears to me that they were introduced initially as a means of allowing ASIO to follow up on individuals who came to their attention through the anonymous telephone top line. This service in itself has yielded poor results particularly when considered in light of actual results whilst costing tax payers considerable amounts.

I would strongly encourage the Senate Committee members to adopt the proposed Amendments contained in the Green's bill and to participate in the further refinement of Anti-Terror Legislation by repealing ASIO's compulsory questioning powers.

Kind Regards

Christie Elemam