

Submission to the Senate Committee on the proposed Anti-Terrorism Bill 2005

My work in the local community and overseas, often voluntary, has involved preparing campaigns against such issues as genetically engineered food and seed, pesticide use, the economic monopolisation of particular industries (ie seed production) and participating in various pro-environmental actions regarding the conservation of our precious forest resources, soil and water, and the production of healthy food. These are just some current issues that involve concerned Australians, people from diverse cultures, who are simply highlighting the erosion of our environment, health and deteriorating food quality standards.

My concerns regarding the proposed new Bill are that such informed actions, that have never harmed anyone or been in any way part of a 'terrorist' movement, but are my specific personal views, may now be considered 'seditious' acts under this new law - why seditious? Simply because these views and actions 'assist by any means' groups that challenge the government, large industry, etc. This law is blatantly anti-free speech, anti-democracy and anti-humanist, badly drafted and obviously unacceptable to the majority of our thinking population.

In defense of my rights, as an educated Australian citizen, I further wish to highlight that sedition laws are archaic, unnecessary and a relic of a bygone era, the era of fascism, dictators and oppressed populations. These types of laws have historically led to abuse by governments intent on censoring or harming critical or radical elements of the population, especially ethnic and indigenous minorities, that were previously rarely classified as terrorists. This proposed new law indicates a serious attempt by the government to turn Australia into a nation of entirely oppressed peoples, unable to express their views and speak out for fear of imprisonment under such charges as supposed 'sedition'. These charges and associated prison terms are beyond belief, ridiculous in a supposedly democratic nation – the government is making a mockery of democracy and the

principle of truth that we should be upholding fervently. We are not buying such rubbish.

I recommend that the sedition section be dropped from this proposed 'anti-terrorism' Bill and call for a Citizens Bill of Rights to be adopted before voting for full acceptance and passing this Bill into law. I request that amendments be made to the proposed new detention laws, specifically regarding the issue of withholding names of detainees under the Bill (5 year sentence) and other aspects that may add to the likelihood of 'disappearances' of innocent people, without trial and possibly without sufficient evidence.

I call into question the need for this Bill and hope this Senate Committee will heed the various concerns of the Australian people, many of whom are justifiably becoming alarmed by the current government's behaviour in proposing this style of Bill that contradicts 'good governance'. I personally do not want to see Australia become a 'little America', following Bush style fascism and blatant manipulation of the truth. The truth on 'terrorism' in Australia requires more careful handling of sensitive matters, such as refugees, and prioritising the development of an effective, conscious and morally representative justice system.

I will continue to uphold my beliefs and if necessary speak out and challenge this government on various issues, including its human rights records (focus now on West Papua) and their stance against so called terrorism.

Let's be united, brave and peaceful Australians, think for ourselves and become a truly democratic and independent free nation. Following Bush will lead us to further war and the unnecessary loss of our freedom and inherent basic human rights.

Yours truly
Julia DesBrosses