

To the Senate Committee examining the anti-terrorism legislation:

I am writing to express my strong concern over the proposed anti- terrorism legislation.

Please consider the following points before you vote:

- There are currently 222 cases of wrongful detention by DIMIA being investigated. This is a frightening example of how badly things can go wrong when government agencies have too much power or whose actions are screened from scrutiny. This terrorism legislation has the potential to bring about even greater injustice.
- Faulty or manipulated "intelligence" was responsible for Australia being involved in the invasion of Iraq. We can have no confidence that faulty "intelligence" will not be used to lock people up, or worse. We only need to look at the killing of an innocent civilian in London, and how the police lied to try and cover their mistakes, to see the dangers in this legislation.
- Anti-terrorism legislation that has been introduced in Britain has many more safeguards built in than does Australia's. Britain also has a Human Rights Act to help balance the needs of protection and civil liberties. We should not accept less in Australia.
- It is outrageous that journalists can be jailed for reporting certain information. This legislation can be used to emasculate the press and make it illegal to print articles critical of the government's handling of incidents which fall within the scope of the legislation. This usually only happens in dictatorships.
- As a person (among millions) who opposed Australia's invasion of Iraq, and who feels for the thousands of Iraqi civilians being killed and maimed by both insurgent and coalition forces, I fear that my democratic right to disagree with the government is under threat. Definitions of sedition should not remove this right.
- Considering the importance of this legislation and its wide ranging ramifications, it is outrageous that the government is trying to force it through parliament with a minimum of examination and debate. Please remember that once this legislation is passed it will be available to subsequent governments for years to come.

I urge the Senate Committee to do its duty to the Australian people and scrutinize this legislation very closely, and make changes which protect our civil rights and the rule of law. Please don't allow Australia to be turned into a police state, where people can be "disappeared", where journalists can be jailed for reporting abuses of power, and where legitimate dissent and criticism of the government can be silenced.

Yours sincerely,

Shelley Frawley
Seymour.