

Dear Committee Secretary.

I wish to let Mr Howard know that not all the people of Australia support this bill, and I believe it should be withdrawn.

We have seen today that the current legislation is sufficient to arrest people on suspicion of planning a terrorist act. Why is the proposed draconian legislation so necessary? It seems to me that I have far more to fear from the current Australian Government than I do from a group of possible terrorists. The Government seems to have become very arrogant in its current push to pass a number of bills of legislation - Industrial Relations, Welfare to Work and the Terrorism Bill - with very limited consultation. I do not think that the Government has the support of the people that it believes it has or that it is acting for the good of the Australian People rather than the short term political good of the Government. But back to the details of this bill.

The proposed legislation removes civil rights and there is no overarching legislation in Australia to protect them. How is it possible to be arrested but not be told of the charges and not be given any opportunity to seek private legal council, or the opportunity to appear in a court of law and address the charges that have been laid against you? How is it that you are supposed to provide the desired pieces of information that you are presumed to know, when you don't know what is you are supposed to know or even the context of the supposed knowledge?

I am concerned that there are no independent checks and need to prove any crime before the police need only to seek permission from other police rather than a court, to proceed with an arrest and incarceration.

I am concerned about the sedition laws and free speech will become a thing of the past. The very punitive clauses that will curtail the open work of journalists will plunge the Australian people further into a Police State where we have little knowledge of what is exactly going on.

When John Howard says "It is all OK. Trust me. Look to our past record.", I can't trust the Government on its past performance, or that of its agents - ASIO, DIMIA, and The Commonwealth Police.

Did Mr Howard say there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq? I don't think they found any.

Did Mr Howard say the illegal immigrants were throwing their children into the sea from the "Tampa"? We know they didn't.

Did Mr Howard say Australian citizens would not be held in detention facilities for illegal immigrants. We know there are many possible cases not just Christina Raou.

What about deporting Australian Citizens? That is not true either.

What about the way the Government is behaving in putting bills forward in the Parliament and lack of time for consideration of the Labour Relations Bill being adequate? I don't think so.

Once again, I urge that this bill be withdrawn.

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