

21/03/2016

Att: David Hurley (Governor of NSW)

Re: the Inclosed Lands, Crimes and Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment (Interference) Bill 2016.

Dear David.

It is with great concern that I write to you about recent developments in our parliamentary system.

I am speaking specifically about the Inclosed Lands, Crimes and Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment (Interference) Bill 2016.

These new laws threaten the very foundation of our democracy, including the right to peacefully protest, to hold governments and corporations accountable for their actions and to promote progressive social change.

These legislation changes would expose both me personally and many members of our community (including farmers, our first nation brothers and sisters, church ministers, spiritual groups and many citizens from the wider community who are acting to protect their land, water, and food integrity,) to up to seven years' imprisonment based on nothing more than suspicion.

In my four years as president of OLOWOF Inc we have helped to protect Newcastle's water catchment by assisting the community of Fullerton Cove. We have helped stop a sand quarry that was operating illegally and breached many of it's conditions of consent on the Central Coast, protecting the water catchment for 100,000 people. We assisted in the Northern Rivers fight against Metgasco. We continue to fight for the Leard Forest and The Pilliga and any other places in great genuine need. The desecration of the environment, cultural heritage, tourism and agriculture is something one needs to witness directly to truly understand. I have never been arrested but attend many actions, often I travel with church and spiritual groups and we work with a wide demographic of people. Our work helps maintain peace and equanimity in many challenging situations.

These new changes will also allow police to be able to crack down on and disperse peaceful protests, and have new powers to stop and search persons and vehicles without a search warrant and to seize property without due process or supervision by the courts.

This exposes us to all kinds of possible violations, for example, we hold vigils to pray near environments and cultural heritage locations that are often destroyed or desecrated, many cultural and environmental protections have been either bypassed or are no longer effective. Under this new legislation, prayer in a public place would ultimately become illegal. These are the dire ramifications of this new legislation. Under current legislation I have already had my vehicle searched on approx six occasions around the Leard State Forest, whilst I was either on my way to a vigil, meeting with church ministers or attending a CWA meeting, I see no reason why these laws need to be further expanded.

Now, more than ever, your responsibilities as Governor of NSW comes into serious play and you have the opportunity to save our democratic right to protest, without this intervention on your part we will sadly, no longer be a democracy of any kind.

It will force farmers into direct conflict with mining, impact regional communities throughout NSW and ultimately plunge us into something akin to a civil war.

Any infringement of the right to "Peaceful Protest" will lead ultimately to only one thing David....Its opposite !!! If people cannot peacefully protest the destruction of their water, their agricultural lands, their cultural heritage, their air, their food, their environment, what choice will they have left? We must do all we can to maintain peace and our constitutional and democratic rights, it is an enormous social responsibility.

This legislation destroys democracy and will one day (if approved) be seen as the turning point of this nation. The responsibility and accountability is yours David as I believe you have the power to change this situation. I do not know you personally but I hope you have the strength of character, integrity and courage to do what is right and just.

It is my will that you do not assent this Bill and I request you refer the matter to the Attorney General and NSW Law and Justice Committee for further investigation.

Much respect

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PBA', enclosed in a white rectangular box.

Paul Robert Burton
President
Our Land Our Water Our Future
+61 (0)411 415 693
paul@ourlandourwaterourfuture.org