

Search for Your Rights

Media Release Tuesday 15 November 2011

Porter a repeat offender on civil liberties

Search For Your Rights members are extremely concerned about Attorney-General Christian Porter's announcement of the Criminal Organisations Control Bill, according to spokesperson, Pearl Lim.

"We have long known that the Attorney-General had been working on a way to remove the freedom of association, and here it is," said Ms Lim.

"These are not 'anti-bikie' laws. These are anti-association laws. The freedom of association is a fundamental freedom within our society, and Mr Porter has declared his determination to remove that freedom.

"We are waiting to see the details of this legislation before making full comment. But this is a government whose reckless desire to be seen as 'tough on crime' has led to a blatant disregard for the rights of ordinary people, and we are expecting the worst."

Ms Lim pointed out that there are serious problems with legislating against freedom of association.

"Any legislation which proposes to allow guilt by association is extremely radical legislation.

"You cannot legislate only against motorcycle clubs. We are yet to learn how the Attorney-General proposes to determine what can be designated a 'criminal organisation'," said Ms Lim.

"However, we fear it will leave terrifying power in the hands of a few politicians.

"These anti-association laws follow the pattern of the defeated 'stop and search' bill; Prohibitive Behaviour Orders; and the debacle of the CHOGM Special Regulations.

"We saw exclusion notices handed out with neither rhyme nor reason during CHOGM" said Ms Lim. "Our concern is that innocent members of our community will be penalised and victimised under this legislation also.

"Legislation such as this runs the risk of driving truly criminal organisations further underground, whilst turning innocent people into criminals.

"Search For Your Rights will be keeping a very close eye on this legislation when it is introduced.

"We stand ready to oppose the curtailing of civil liberties in Western Australia, and we encourage the community to do the same."

Search for Your Rights is a non-partisan community group of over 2,400 members, initially formed to oppose the Barnett government's stop and search laws. The group recently resolved to expand its platform to oppose further aspects of the Barnett Government's extreme law and order agenda.

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