

ASIO Powers Bill to Australian Legal and Constitutional Senate Committee
2003.4. ASIO Powers Bill

Submitted 17 June 2003 to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Legislation Committee, Parliament of Australia.

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In our submissions to the Senate Legal & Constitutional Legislation Committee we made the following points:

ASIO Legislation Amendment Bill 2002

- After minor changes this Bill still contains measures that Humanists see as the hallmark of a police state, unacceptable in a liberal democracy like Australia.
 - Secret detention, including minors of 16 years on a mere suspicion of possessing information about terrorist activity, is a draconian method of gathering intelligence, a violation of our civil rights.
 - We believe that existing laws and ASIO powers are adequate to deal with terrorist activities. The proposed additional powers create the potential for basic human rights abuse.
 - The detention of and interrogation of a minor is in breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989.
 - In some rare case the proscription of an organisation might be justified on the basis of its program of violence and criminal activity. However, the power to ban such groups must not be in any one MP as proposed by the Bill. We urge that both Houses of Parliament be involved in such a decision.
 - This Bill creates excessive, unchecked and potentially dangerous powers.
 - We welcome the addition of a three year sunset clause.
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