

**Media release
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'Move on' Powers = Powers to discriminate

The Summary Offences and Control of Weapons Acts Amendments Bill debated in parliament yesterday, brings Victoria a step closer to introducing dangerous and discriminatory 'move on powers' for police.

Robin Inglis, Executive Officer of Fitzroy Legal Service says, 'The Government and the Opposition are busy congratulating themselves about the Bill but are choosing to ignore the serious shortcomings of similar legislation in other states'.

The powers make behavior that was previously legal, illegal. In Queensland, the powers have led to huge increases in criminal charges for minor offences. In doing so, the laws have criminalized people who are not criminals.

'If the Government and the Opposition were as concerned about the capacity of police to deal with crime as they claim, they would not pass legislation which increases police workload and widens the criminal justice net unnecessarily' says Mr. Inglis.

The recent *Queensland Crime and Misconduct Commission Inquiry* has clearly highlighted the very significant new costs and new levels of conflict that these laws introduce. The Government should look to the Queensland Inquiry's findings before repeating the same mistake.

The Bill also introduces new random search powers, higher penalties for minor offences and a new offence of disorderly behavior.

The added police powers and higher penalties again reflect the Government's enthusiasm for 'tough on crime approaches' which clearly don't work. Higher penalties are least likely to be affordable by young people and Indigenous people. In other states, it has been shown that young people and Indigenous people are the main targets of 'move on' laws.

The rhetoric in parliament about this Bill is sadly out of step with reality.

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