



Luke Foley MP

NSW LABOR LEADER, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
Shadow Minister for Western Sydney



10 May 2016

Father Claude Mostowik
Social Justice Committee CLRI (NSW)
PO Box 259
ROSEBERY NSW 1445

Dear Father

Thank you for taking the time to write to the Leader of the Opposition regarding the Liberal – National Government's anti-protest laws. The Leader of the Opposition has asked me to respond to you on his behalf.

This legislation strikes at the very core of one of the most fundamental principles of any democratic society. **The right of peaceful protest.**

These new laws that were strongly opposed by Labor at every stage prevent legitimate and peaceful protest by law abiding members of our community. This extreme legislation expands police powers without appropriate safeguards and will limit the right of a person to:

- Peacefully protest;
- Signify community feeling and opposition to government policies and actions to which they disagree;
- Hold governments to account; and
- Promote progressive social change.

Activities that were once completely legal now expose farmers, groups such as the 'Knitting Nannas' and the wider community, to unprecedented police search and seizure powers, without the need for a search warrant and with no court supervision, and gaol for up to seven years for acting to protect their land, water and food security.

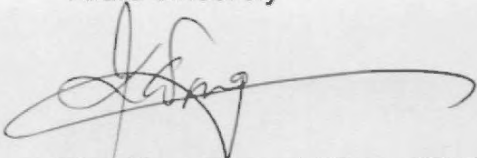
The Baird Government has also created an aggravated form of an existing offence of unlawful entry to protect business premises only, and increased the penalty tenfold from \$500 to \$5,000.

Whilst the Baird Government has strangled the community's right to peaceful protest, as an additional reform the government has reduced the fines faced by large mining companies of up to \$1.1 million dollars to a penalty infringement notice and a fine of up to \$5,000 for exploring or mining without permission.

New South Wales Labor is committed to seeing these unjust and anti-democratic laws removed. A Labor Government elected in March 2019 will repeal these laws within the first one hundred days of taking office.

Thank you again for taking the time to raise this important issue with the Leader of the Opposition.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ernest Wong', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**The Hon. Ernest Wong MLC
Parliamentary Secretary to Luke Foley MP
NSW Leader of the Opposition**