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## **TRADE UNIONS, CIVIL SOCIETY & HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS ADD THEIR VOICE TO DISALLOW NSW ANTI-PROTEST LAWS**

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Trade Unions, NSW civil society and human rights organisations are calling on the NSW Upper House to seize the opportunity to disallow the short-sighted, draconian regulations in the new NSW Government anti-protest laws through a disallowance motion introduced by Greens MLC, Abigail Boyd.

Ms Boyd's disallowance motion will oppose the regulations which have made it a crime, punishable by up to 2 years in jail and a \$22,000 fine, to block entrances to train stations, ports and public and private infrastructure.

The implications of criminalising protest at iconic sites like Town Hall and Oxford Street is unimaginable to ordinary Australians who have watched and actively participated in protests across countless human rights issues. These new regulations restrict peaceful protest rights that have always been the lawful right of trade unions, climate campaigners and other activists to convey their message.

Statements:

**Josh Pallas, President, New South Wales Council of Civil Liberties said:** "When we unite, we win. Activism changes history and the right to stand together and peacefully protest must be protected and defended for every citizen not pared back. The Perrottet government's anti-protest laws fly in the face of what civil society organisations fight for. We thank Abigail Boyd for vocally opposing these measures which negatively impact on our rights to freedom of speech and peacefully assembly across NSW."

"Labor must stand with Ms Boyd and show its support for human rights campaigners in this state. The labour movement was born out of protest and collective action. It is unthinkable that the parliamentary Labor team condones the uses of these measures to silence citizens who take effective protest action."

**Paul Keating, Secretary, Maritime Union of Australia, Sydney Branch said:** "The NSW trade union movement is united in its condemnation of this legislation from the Perrottet Liberal-National Government. We stand with our community, our members and all workers and remain collectively determined to oppose any legislation that seeks to prevent peaceful, public assembly. Our proud

history is built around grassroots action, supporting the health, safety, wages and wellbeing of workers.”

**Dr Damien Cahill, Secretary, NTEU NSW said:** “The NSW government’s anti-protest laws are unjust and completely unnecessary. They have the potential to criminalise a range of protest, including workers’ legitimate right to take industrial action. The NTEU NSW welcomes the proposed disallowance.”

**Kerry Weste, President, Australian Lawyers for Human Rights said:** “Every single adult and child in New South Wales has an internationally recognised human right to meet and hold a peaceful protest. These draconian laws threaten to breach these obligations as well as the implied constitutional right to freedom of political communication. They will have a chilling effect on the kind of public discourse that is essential to a healthy democracy.”

“Furthermore, laws that threaten the democratic rights and freedoms of everyone in NSW should not be rammed through parliament in a matter of days. They require proper scrutiny with appropriate consideration of Australia’s international legal obligations and should involve processes of public consultation. That this did not happen when these laws were passed in March and reveals how sorely NSW needs a Human Rights Act.”

**Kieran Pender, Senior Lawyer, Human Rights Law Centre said:** “Anti-protest laws are undemocratic and prevent Australians from speaking up about important issues. The NSW anti-protest law should never have become law and must be repealed. It continues a troubling trend of proposals to limit protest rights across the country.”

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