



## Champion a vibrant democracy

**We envision a democracy where people have the right to protest; where our civil society includes diverse, independent, and locally connected not-for-profit organisations, which are free to participate in public policy debate and advocacy; where government and its agencies, including the police, are transparent, open, and accountable, and genuinely engages with the communities impacted by its decisions.**

The criminalisation of peaceful protest has far-reaching and damaging implications for our democracy. Legislation which unjustly restricts people's freedoms to express dissent should be wound back. Heavy penalties and greater restrictions on peaceful protest are not a proportionate response to non-violent citizen action which draws attention to the climate crisis, environmental damage, racial injustice, or legal, economic and social inequalities.

### Stop criminalising dissent

- ▶ Abolish prison terms for non-violent direct actions and civil disobedience.
- ▶ Repeal Schedule 2 of the *Right to Farm Act 2019*, which amended s4B of the *Inclosed Lands, Crimes and Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment (Interference) Act 2016* to insert a new form of aggravated trespass onto agricultural land with higher penalties, targeting environmental and animal activists.
- ▶ Strengthen defences for activism in the law and recognise the 'emergency climate defence' as a statutory defence for environmental activism.
- ▶ Insert public interest exemptions into:
  - » The *Surveillance Devices Act 2007* to enable footage of routine agricultural practices to be used for raising awareness about animal welfare.
  - » The *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Act 1995* to prevent police from silencing activism based on film and footage classifications.
- ▶ Repeal the addition to section 144G of the *Roads Act 1993* which expands the offence to enter, remain on, or otherwise trespass on prescribed major bridges or tunnels in NSW if that conduct causes a serious disruption on prescribed roads.
- ▶ Repeal the equivalent offence under the *Crimes Act 1900* that legislates against activities that detrimentally affect prescribed public transport or infrastructure facilities.



## **Protect organisations' right to participate freely in public policy debates and advocacy**

- ▶ Support genuine community consultation on proposed legal and policy reform options:
  - » Provide longer notice periods for submissions to government and parliamentary inquiries and review processes.
  - » Provide diverse ways for people and communities to participate in government consultation processes, including face-to-face.