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October 21 2019 - 5:28PM

Green light for laws to limit Qld protests

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 Queensland will pass laws to stop activists from using dangerous devices during protests.

Laws to stop protesters using dangerous devices to lock themselves to roads and train tracks appear set to be passed in Queensland this week.

It comes after a committee composed of a cross-section of MPs gave the government the green light to pass the controversial Bill, which is due for debate in parliament.

The laws are part of the state government's crackdown on environmental protests that have brought coal-carting trains to a halt, as well as peak hour traffic in Brisbane.

Concerns about the justification of the laws were raised by The Human Rights Law Centre, Caxton Legal Centre, the Environment Council of Central Queensland Inc and Professor Janet Ransley, director at the Griffith Criminology Institute with the committee that vetted the laws.

The government claims protesters have been using lock-on devices containing traps or dangerous substances.

But the legal groups say that claim has not been substantiated, the committee report said on Monday.

The group also say police already have power to search people and vehicles they suspect are carrying the devices without a warrant, which is proposed under the law.

Rail freight company Aurizon suggested items like ropes or flags attached to or used with the devices be included in the law, while the Queensland Resources Council recommended the government seek to include other devices protesters might use as an alternative.

The committee said it had carefully considered the submissions, despite not being able to discuss them in as much detail as usual because its examination period was cut short.

On Monday, Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk denied the laws were being rushed through.

Hundreds of demonstrators and union members are expected to protest against the laws outside parliament on Tuesday.

Australian Associated Press

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