

An Open Letter to Christian Porter,

Mr. Porter,

It is with complete frustration that I sit back and watch your misguided attempts to control Law & Order in Western Australia and with dismay to see you hold civil liberties with such little regard.

My partner is a man adored by his family who he is strongly committed to. He's an excited soon to be father, an idolised uncle, brother and of course a precious son. He is a much beloved grandson and a loyal friend with a big heart who will go out of his way to help a mate. He's a favoured employee due to his good nature and willingness to work hard. And to me he is my soul mate, my absolute world.

My partner also happens to be a bikie. As soon as I say that everything I said before no longer matters and you reduce him to someone who apparently exists solely for the purpose of engaging in organised crime. You de-humanise him by proposing legislations that will strip him of his fundamental human rights that we all so naively thought we were always going to be entitled to. Tell that to all those people who he means so much too, tell them he is a worthless member of society, tell them it's ok to treat him as less than human. Tell me and I'll tell you exactly where you can stick it. Tell that to the thousands of other people who are associated by way of family or friendship to a member of a motorcycle club and I'd bet they'll say the same.

You've made a massive effort to keep bikies in the forefront of the media in what is a blatant fear campaign, why? I think recently retired WA District Court Chief Judge Antoinette Kennedy put it best, *"Once you can have people more frightened of disorder than tyranny, it enables you to do almost anything you like so far as legislation is concerned"*.

The proposed legislations and some that are already being enacted, remove the presumption of innocent until proven guilty. The laws rely too much on trust and are open to misuse and abuse, and leave little avenues for defence for those subjected to them. So is that what we're meant to do Mr Porter? Just *'trust'* you. *'Trust'* that every member of the West Australian Police Force will act with honesty and integrity. *'Trust'* that any information deemed as *'confidential evidence'* will be 100% accurate and come from a 100% reliable, trustworthy source, because as you are aware defendants will not have any means to defend themselves against this evidence. What happened to a free and fair trial?

Why the effort to disguise these laws as 'anti-bikie' when you and I know full well that these laws can and will be used on other members of the community. Is there really such a huge problem to warrant this sacrifice of human rights in the first place? As a productive tax-paying citizen myself, I'm quite concerned at the amount of money this kind of focus and attention on bikies must be costing us when I see much bigger issues in our community.

***Let me highlight some for you.***

Aren't almost half of all people in WA jails indigenous? Don't they make up only 3% of the WA population? Would it then be fair to say that almost half of all crime in WA is committed by one minority group, and it's not bikies!? Those figures are appalling and an absolute disgrace on the government and yourself in particular as the Minister for Corrective Services. Yet I can say with absolute confidence that neither you nor anyone else in government would ever dream of introducing a law that removed an indigenous persons human rights, so why is it ok to do it to anyone else?

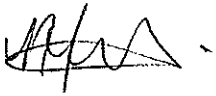
Here's another one, according to estimates in a report released by the Australian Institute of Criminology, 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 7 boys will be victims of sexual abuse in Australia. This abuse is largely unreported. With horrific figures like that, why not put this topic in the forefront of the media. Why not direct massive police resources and funding to a "Dob in a Paedophile" campaign and dedicate a hotline to the cause?

Whatever the issue, if we have to sacrifice civil liberties for 'the greater good' where will it stop? Wouldn't it be wonderful if we lived in a completely crime free and controlled environment! Why, all we need to do is strip people of their privacy and freedoms and look what we have, Utopia! Is that what you think Mr. Porter? It's a scary notion that I once thought impossible but now doesn't seem so unlikely.

What is the point of Australia being signatory to all five international treaties that make up the International Bill of Human Rights if it allows legislations to remove these rights from citizens in its own country? What is the point of Australian soldiers fighting for the rights of people in other countries, when ours are being taken away?

Mr. Porter I put it to you that if the only way you can see appropriate to combat crime is to strip a person of their human rights then you are grossly inadequate in your position and should find yourself a more suitable job, perhaps go to Germany and try to start a Nazi revival?

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'N.F.', written in a cursive style.

N.F., Perth WA