

8 April 2003

The Hon. Rob Hulls
Attorney-General
Parliament House
Spring St
Melbourne 3000

Dear Attorney,

Re: Cyber-stalking Bill

I write to raise Liberty Victoria's concerns about the *Crimes (Stalking) Bill* currently before the Victorian Parliament. Whilst government regulation of the internet and other means of publication to prevent stalking may be justified, Liberty is of the view that the draft legislation is far too broad.

Liberty is particularly concerned that, if enacted in its present form, the Bill will have the unintended consequence of unnecessarily limiting freedom of speech, restricting fair public discourse and facilitating the suppression of dissent.

It is Liberty's view that the current Bill would not present the dangers that it does if there were embedded in Victoria's system of governance a Charter of Freedoms and Rights. Such a Charter, which would be based on internationally-accepted human rights standards, would cover matters such as freedom of speech and participation in non-violent political action.

Accordingly, Liberty Victoria urges the Government to:

- introduce a Charter of Freedoms and Rights; and
- pending the introduction of such a Charter, amend the current Bill to make clear that it does not infringe upon fundamental freedoms and rights, and to include an express statement of the human rights objects which the Bill advances.

Members of our executive would welcome the chance to meet with you to discuss how best fundamental rights and freedoms can be protected in Victoria.

Yours sincerely,

Greg Connellan
President

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