



A•S•U MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Services Union Victorian Authorities & Services Branch www.asuvic.asn.au
116 Queensberry St Carlton South VIC 3053 phone: (03) 9342 3400 email: services@asuvic.com

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“The Local Government Workers Union”

Public could face two years jail and \$30,000 fine under new Local Government laws

At the recent ASU State Conference, delegates unanimously endorsed a resolution to campaign against the State Government’s recently-formed Local Government Inspectorate (LGI), where inspectors have extreme powers of search and interrogation.

The LGI is able to use these extreme powers against **any person**, including local government workers, councillors and the general public. Similar to the Federal Government’s anti-terror and building industry laws, failure to comply with inspectors’ demands, including refusing to take part in an interview, could result in a jail term of up to two years and fines of almost \$30,000.

ASU Branch Secretary Brian Parkinson announced that the newly appointed inspectors – who must only report back to the Minister for Local Government – could be used like a personal Ministerial police force, which has ASU members extremely concerned and angry.

“Our members have sent us a strong message that they want these harsh laws overturned. Potentially, Council workers could be asked to provide information and minutes of union meetings, which seriously undermines the basic human right to freedom of association recognised by the Federal Government’s Fair Work Act. Many of our members in local government are terrified of the prospect of going to jail or receiving a massive fine for simply being connected to the local government sector.”

These laws have already been used against journalists in Geelong during the Steak Sandwich debacle, where inspectors threatened them with jail and massive fines if they did not reveal sources to the many media articles that appeared regarding the issue.

“The Minister for Local Government says that these laws won’t be used against working people – but the fact of the matter is that they can be used against anyone. The laws are far too broad and could be used to remove workers’ basic human rights so they must be scrapped,” added Parkinson.

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For further information:

Brian Parkinson | Branch Secretary, ASU | Mobile 0419 555 352 | Email: bparkinson@asuvic.com
Richard Duffy | Research and Policy Officer, ASU | Mobile 0425 722 548 | Email: rduffy@asuvic.com

Authorised and printed by:
Brian Parkinson, Secretary, Australian Services Union, Victorian Authorities & Services Branch
116 Queensberry Street, Carlton South, Victoria, 3053, Australia