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### Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

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Guy Barnett, Minister for Resources

## Giving Tasmanian workers the protection they deserve

It's now more important than ever that the Tasmanian Government acts to ensure Tasmanians are free to go to work safely, without threat from radical extremists who invade workplaces and endanger employees.

That's why today the Government has released new Workplace Protection legislation for a further round of public consultation.

Our new Workplace Protection Bill has been informed by the public submissions received during the previous consultation period.

Importantly, it helps Tasmanian workers be safe in their workplaces, while also being easier for police to enforce, with appropriate penalties to act as deterrents for extremist protests.

The Police Offences Amendment (Workplace Protection) Bill 2022, focuses on amending the existing Police Offences Act to ensure that our police are able to better protect workers and businesses.

This simplified approach ensures that everyday Tasmanians can go to work or operate a business free from threats and disruption, while also maintaining every Tasmanian's right to protest lawfully.

The Government respects the right of every Tasmanian to express their views and protest lawfully. Importantly, this Bill won't stop legal protests outside hospitals, schools or climate change protests in streets or on footpaths. Tasmanians will still be entitled to protest and have their say.

However, it is the extremist protests that are becoming more prevalent and we must act now to protect Tasmanians.

Under the new bill, it is proposed that an existing offence relating to nuisances clearly include unreasonable obstruction of streets, protecting workplaces and the public, and increases the maximum monetary penalty for the offence to \$1730, while the term of imprisonment will remain the

same at 3 months. This penalty will double if a person is convicted of a second offence within 6 months.

This penalty will not apply for protests and demonstrations that have the required permit.

The amendments also seek to allow the Court to double the penalty where a person is convicted of trespass, and by or while committing the offence, they either obstructed a business, or took an action that caused a business to be obstructed. This will take the maximum penalty to 50 units, or \$8,650 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months.

Body corporates will also be included under the Amendments, liable to pay a fine not exceeding 600 penalty units, or \$103,800.

In short, this Bill will toughen our laws and increase the penalties to better protect workers and their right to work and the right for businesses to operate free from intrusion or workplace invasion.

Our Workplace Protection Bill will complement legislation already passed in the Federal Parliament where it received bi-partisan support.

Labor governments and oppositions across the country have supported similar legislation and it is time that the Tasmanian Labor Opposition finally threw its support behind Tasmanian workers rather than standing side-by-side with the Greens and the Bob Brown Foundation.

This Bill is needed because the existing laws are clearly not adequately discouraging extremist protesters from invading Tasmanian workplace and disrupting legally operating businesses.

The Bill will be open for public comment until 15 April and can be viewed at <https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/community-consultation/consultations/police-offences-amendment-workplace-protection-bill-2022>