



## The Right to March

*The notorious street march bans of the Bjelke-Petersen era were extremely divisive. Wells introduced the Peaceful Assemblies Act, which restored the right to march. At one level his inflammatory language is the familiar stuff of a political slanging match. Look more deeply, and you will see this as a debate over philosophies, with Wells accusing the conservatives of betraying their own intellectual traditions.*

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The outrageous and repressive restrictions on the right to public assembly perpetrated by successive former National and Liberal Party Governments represent a blight on Queensland's history which will forever remain. The opposition parties, while in Government, inflicted on this State bans on public assemblies which were redolent of the worst excesses of totalitarian dictatorships, rather than the benign democratic inheritance one would expect the parties of tradition to support. While a Liberal/National Party Government used statutory powers to do away with the ancient Common Law right to procession, now an Australian Labor Party Government will use its legislative mandate to create a statutory right to peaceful assembly.

So while history will record that an odious Right Wing Government repressed the Queensland people's liberty to peacefully assemble – so history will .....record that sorry chapter characterised by the subjugation, the domination and the violent suppression of the rights and liberties of Queenslanders is now closed.

**Queensland Parliamentary Debates 1992**

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