

QLD NEWS

Brisbane City Council's Extinction Rebellion ban could be 'unlawful': Queensland Human Rights Commissioner

Queensland's Human Rights Commissioner has weighed in on a Brisbane City Council ban on Extinction Rebellion protesters using Council meeting places — warning it could amount to unlawful discrimination.

JACK McKAY, The Courier-Mail

Subscriber only | October 23, 2019 8:49pm

A BRISBANE City Council ban on Extinction Rebellion protesters using Council meeting places could amount to unlawful discrimination, Queensland's Human Rights Commissioner has warned.

The Courier-Mail can reveal Commissioner Scott McDougall has spoken to Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner about his concerns with the ban, despite the Commission conceding it is yet to receive a single complaint about it.

Sri defends climate vigilantes, will close office to strike

Protesters not like Anzacs — they're like Martin Luther King: Sri

Cr Jonathan Sri cops flak for supporting climate activists




Extinction Rebellion protesters have been banned from using Brisbane City Council meeting places. Picture: AAP Image/Dave Hunt

The LNP administration passed a motion at last week's Council meeting that barred Extinction Rebellion from making bookings for Council's meeting facilities, such as those in libraries.

Mr McDougall yesterday said that denying access to Council services on the basis of someone's political belief or involvement in protest activity affected several human rights that will be protected under Queensland's new Human Rights Act when it comes into effect from next year.



Queensland Legislative Assembly	
Number:	5619T1948
 24 OCT 2019	Tabled <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> By Leave <input type="checkbox"/>
MP:	MR KRAUSE
Clerk's Signature:	



Queensland's Human Rights Commissioner Scott McDougall has warned Brisbane City Council that its ban could amount to unlawful discrimination. Picture: AAP Image/Glenn Hunt

He also said the restriction on members of the Extinction Rebellion may amount to unlawful discrimination.

“... Existing discrimination laws already prohibit discrimination on the ground of political activity and, on the face of it, the ban would appear to be unlawful,” he said.

Cr Schrinner said he stood by his administration's decision, insisting ratepayers should not be “funding people breaking the law”.

“If the Queensland Human Rights Commissioner wants to talk rights, let's also talk about the rights of law abiding Brisbane residents who simply want to go about their daily lives,” he said



Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner says he stands by his administration's decision.

“My focus is standing up for Brisbane residents and that's what I will continue to do.

“I stand by our decision that no one promoting illegal activity will use Brisbane City Council's bookable spaces to plan or train for illegal, extreme and disruptive actions.”

The council says it has already refused bookings from Extinction Rebellion to use its meeting spaces.

The council motion, which banned Extinction Rebellion from BCC meeting rooms, called on the council to note that its facilities, including libraries, were not suitable meeting places for organisations that “advocate or incite illegal activities”.

The Queensland Human Rights Commission confirmed Mr McDougall had spoken to the Lord Mayor about his concerns with the ban last week.