



# ***JUSTICE, INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE***

**Members present:**

Mr MA Hunt MP—Chair  
Mr MC Berkman MP  
Mr RD Field MP  
Ms ND Marr MP  
Hon. MAJ Scanlon MP  
Ms C Mullen MP

**Staff present:**

Ms F Denny—Committee Secretary  
Ms H Radunz—Assistant Committee Secretary

## **PUBLIC HEARING—INQUIRY INTO THE FIGHTING ANTISEMITISM AND KEEPING GUNS OUT OF THE HANDS OF TERRORISTS AND CRIMINALS AMENDMENT BILL 2026**

### **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

**Thursday, 19 February 2026**

**Brisbane**

## THURSDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2026

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### **The committee met at 9.30 am.**

**CHAIR:** Good morning. I declare open this public hearing for the committee's inquiry into the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026. My name is Marty Hunt. I am the member for Nicklin and chair of the committee. I would like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today. With me here today are: Charis Mullen MP, acting deputy chair and member for Jordan, who is substituting for Peter Russo MP, member for Toohey; Melissa McMahon MP, member for Macalister; Natalie Marr MP, member for Thuringowa; Michael Berkman MP, member for Maiwar; and Russell Field MP, member for Capalaba. I want to note that Meaghan Scanlon MP, member for Gaven, will be substituting at various times throughout the hearing for Melissa McMahon.

This hearing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the parliament's standing rules and orders. Only the committee and invited witnesses may participate in the proceedings. Witnesses are not required to give evidence under oath or affirmation, but I remind witnesses that intentionally misleading the committee is a serious offence. I also remind members of the public that they may be excluded from the hearing at the discretion of the committee.

These proceedings are being recorded and broadcast live on the parliament's website. Media may be present at these proceedings and are subject to the committee's media rules and the chair's direction at all times. You may be filmed or photographed during the proceedings and images may also appear on the parliament's website or social media pages. I remind witnesses to turn on the microphone in front of you by pressing the button when you are ready to speak and turn it off when you are finished. Turn phones to silent or off.

### **POSNER, Mr Howard, Adviser, Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies Inc.**

### **PRIOR, Ms Karen, Executive Member, Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies Inc.**

**CHAIR:** Good morning.

**Ms Prior:** I would like the committee to note that our submission is over the hand of our president, Jason Steinberg, who is currently overseas. I am appearing in his place.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. I invite you to make an opening statement to the committee.

**Ms Prior:** At Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025, a 10-year-old girl and 14 others attending a Jewish festival, a Hanukkah celebration, were murdered. Forty-four people were injured. This is the greatest loss of Jewish life since the 7 October 2023 assault occurred in Israel. It is the second largest massacre of people in Australia in history. The Jewish community has experienced unprecedented levels of hate, intimidation and fear. The reforms in this bill send a clear message that anti-Semitism and hate have no place in Queensland. The proposed laws draw a clear line between legitimate political discourse and the promotion of terrorism.

**CHAIR:** The submission states—

Violent acts of racial hatred are more likely to occur in a social climate in which expressions of racism are free to proliferate.

Do you have any comments about the last couple of years in terms of leading to the horrible incident we saw at Bondi? How have you observed that proliferation?

**Mr Posner:** The incidents that occurred in October 2023, which started the situation now in Gaza, started off with an attack by Hamas on Israelis in Israel. The Australian government—it may have been the New South Wales government—wanted to paint a picture on the walls of the Opera House with an Israeli flag saying that they disagreed with what had happened with Hamas. This is before the reprisals started.

A group of supporters of what had happened—quite a large group—appeared and chanted what I can probably safely say almost everybody thought was 'Gas the Jews', except one or two members of the NSW Police—you can look at the videos of it—and nothing happened. It is only an opinion—although it can be an opinion—but I think the rot set in then, because it was at that time that the Gaza/Israel thing became inextricably conflated with 'the Jews'. From that moment onward it has been going

downhill, so everything that happens in Israel and Gaza now becomes ‘the Jews’. However much people say, ‘Oh, it isn’t the Jews. It isn’t the Jews,’ because there was that statement at the start and nobody did anything about it, almost everybody in Australia—whether they are pro Israel, pro Palestinian, pro PA or pro Hamas—sort of conflates the Jews with it: ‘Here’s a Jew who doesn’t agree with it; therefore, we’re not anti Jewish.’ But the reality is that it has become hopelessly conflated with being Jewish. If I walk down the street and I am wearing a yarmulke, I can expect to be challenged for my views on a dispute on the other side of the world.

If a Serbian walks down the street in Australia, thank God they are not challenged: ‘What do you think of the situation between Serbia and Croatia and Montenegro?’—although there is a 1,000-year-old hatred with that, too. It has become a Jewish problem here in Australia. It culminated in the Bondi massacre, but for most people who were Jewish—I have appeared before parliamentary committees before on other occasions and always said, ‘Look, we’ve been blessedly free of anti-Semitism in Australia,’ and we have been blessedly free. It is probably the least anti-Semitic country on the planet—or it was until, I would say, that moment in Sydney when they chanted it and nothing happened. Because nothing happened, I can get challenged—not as an Israeli. I am not buying into the Israel versus Gaza problem; I could have all sorts of views on that. But if I walk down the street with a yarmulke on my head, I will be challenged for my view on a dispute on the other side of the world because of my religion—nothing to do with me being Israeli. That is our position now. That is why we need help.

**Ms MULLEN:** Thank you, both, for appearing before us today. May I begin, of course, by extending my condolences for the 15 lives lost in Bondi and the ongoing hurt and sorrow of the Jewish community here in Queensland. My question relates to something in your submission as well. On page 2 of your submission you state—

The percentage increase in anti-Jewish incidents in Queensland reported to QJBD from 2022 to 2025 is 188%.

Would the Jewish Board of Deputies consider that the proposed legislation would have addressed all of those reported incidents?

**Ms Prior:** That is a hard one to answer in all honesty, but most certainly the calls for hate, the calls for the destruction of the State of Israel have very much impacted the lives of people in Queensland and Jewish people around Australia—and it was not only Jewish people, so it is people around Australia.

**Mr Posner:** If I could just add to that—a shorter answer: no, of course. No piece of legislation can stop anti-Semitism or, for that matter, racism generally, or anti-Indigenous people—of course not. There is no 100 per cent fix and there can never be a 100 per cent fix, but if society makes it clear that something is completely unacceptable, what happens is that the proportion of people prepared to do it moves. There are still people who believe Hitler was right—very few, but there are—but the proportion is tiny, because society pretty much all over the world has made it clear that that is not an acceptable position. What happens is that you will still have the tiny minority who does it, but that is all. There are always those. The more it is acceptable and nobody really minds and, ‘Well, who cares?’ you move that group from the absolute core far-far right or far-far left lunatics into the sort of fellow travellers. So you move from maybe 100 people prepared to do it to 1,000. Of course it will have an effect on the amount of anti-Semitism and of course it will not stop it all.

**Ms MARR:** Thank you for being here today. I am going to look at the same paragraph that we just spoke about, with incidences. Talking about community safety and personal experiences, can you briefly tell us where it says that there are many incidences that go unreported? Can you explain to us why people do not report it and the experiences they have to prevent them from doing that?

**Ms Prior:** People do not report out of fear. People have told us that they want to tell us about something but they do not want it to go any further. So they will speak to our community security group to provide a number for an incident, but they do not want it to be taken any further.

**Ms MARR:** Would the changes in this bill make any change to that, of people reporting incidences? I should not ask for your opinion, but you hear from people who do not report. Have you heard from them how this bill affects them now?

**Mr Posner:** I can be specific. My son had the misfortune to be studying at University of Queensland at a time when ‘globalise the intifada’ and ‘river to the sea’ were being basically yelled in his face on a regular basis. He completed his degree. It is fine. He is okay. He chose not to become a martyr. If it gets stopped, he will not have that. There will still be anti-Semites at UQ, but they will not be chanting that in his face in the middle of the quadrangle—having to walk through a gauntlet every day. That is specific.

**Ms Prior:** I would like to add an example that happened to my husband. My husband is a religious man and wears a yarmulke every day of his life. On a Sunday evening he nicked into our local Woolworths in Ascot, near where we were living at the time, to pick up a roast chicken for our little dogs for dinner. His usual habit before he gets out of the car is to pop a cap on his head, but he did not do that on this occasion. He raced in just to grab his chicken and to go through to pay for it, and he realised that there was someone following him, filming him with his phone. That is quite confronting to somebody, to realise they are being followed around their local Woolworths supermarket being filmed. That is an incident that, because of his profession, he would not have reported if I had not insisted.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Like the deputy chair, I want to begin by offering my condolences to the Jewish community, those families affected by the Bondi massacre and obviously condemning the 7 October attack by Hamas. One particular statement in your submission on page 4, I believe it is, refers to three main anti-Semitic hate movements, the third of which says is currently ongoing. It states—

It is a hateful fixation on the Jewish State, Israel. It uses the language of human rights and social justice to provide a permission structure to (collectively) target Jews ...

It is effectively saying that anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism. I would like to table three documents just for context on this question if I may, please.

**CHAIR:** Is leave granted?

**Mr Posner:** Have we had the opportunity to read those?

**Mr BERKMAN:** I can provide you with a copy.

**Mr Posner:** We obviously cannot talk to them or do anything with them until we have read them.

**Mr BERKMAN:** I expect they are documents you would be familiar with, but their purpose is more to substantiate elements of my question, if that is—

**Mr Posner:** I do not have a problem. Of course you can table them, but understand that we cannot really talk to them. We cannot really answer the question if you are using those in the context where we have not read them.

**CHAIR:** Sir, just allow the document to be tabled. There will be a question put and if you cannot answer it, that is a fair enough answer as well.

**Mr BERKMAN:** The first of these documents you may be familiar with is a legal analysis by the United Nation Human Rights Council that concludes a genocide is occurring in Gaza. There are three copies. One can be provided to the witness. The second document is a statement of the International Criminal Court regarding the issue of warrants for the arrest of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former—

**CHAIR:** Member, can you outline how this is relevant to the bill? How are United Nations reports on Gaza relevant to the bill?

**Mr BERKMAN:** I think it is pretty straightforward. We have explicit statements in here about a 'hateful fixation on the Jewish state' and 'using the language of human rights and social justice to provide a permission structure to target Jews'. I am speaking directly to the actions of the Israeli state and the way those are addressed—

**CHAIR:** Member, can you get to a question rather than make a statement, because we have limited time with this witness.

**Mr BERKMAN:** I am seeking to table documents, Chair.

**CHAIR:** Can you get to a question in relation to the bill, please.

**Mr BERKMAN:** The second document is a statement of the ICC regarding the issue of arrest warrants for the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former defence minister Yoav Gallant. The third document is commentary on a recent Federal Court case that makes it clear that in Australia anti-Zionism is distinct from anti-Semitism.

**CHAIR:** Member, get to your question, please.

**Mr BERKMAN:** I am right there, Chair, never fear. I appreciate this is not your submission. It was prepared by Mr Steinberg—

**Mr Posner:** We stand by the material.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Indeed. Your submission says, in effect, that anti-Zionism is simply anti-Semitism by another name. In the context of those three documents—arrest warrants, UN findings of genocide and Australian Federal Court decisions that distinguish the two—is that a position you think you can sustain?

**Mr Posner:** Mr Berkman, the problem with your question is that you have couched it in terms of three documents that you have not given us. How can I answer it until I have read the three documents that you have not given us, that you have ambushed this committee with on one minute's notice and us with nought minutes notice.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Can I ask—

**CHAIR:** Member, you have asked a question. The witness has had a go at answering. In the interests of time I am going to move on. You have asked a question. The witness has given you an answer—

**Mr Posner:** I have tried.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Are these three documents—

**CHAIR:** Member, order! I have made a ruling on that. You have asked a question. You have taken up a considerable amount of time with your statements. The witness has answered that he is unable to answer. I am going to move on.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Chair, in fairness, we have very little time for this hearing because of the program that you have decided.

**CHAIR:** Member, you are warned under the standing orders. I have made a ruling and I am moving on.

Mr Posner, the bill gives the minister the power to make expressions unlawful if they incite hatred and violence. Would you accept that even a perhaps naive protester who wants to join in might not mean certain things by certain phrases, however, those phrases can invoke fear in people?

**Mr Posner:** Yes, I would. To talk about a specific phrase, 'globalise the intifada', for example, I am sure there are people who genuinely believe that when they chant 'globalise the intifada' what they mean is not a violent internecine war in Australia. Fortunately, we have the advantage of having seen what an actual intifada looks like between 2001 and 2005. It involved an assortment of suicide bombings, including the Dolphinarium bombing, the Sbarro bombing and the Passover bombing. It also involved some fairly unpleasant reprisals by the Israeli Army and the IDF. You will get views from both sides, that is the nature of it, but that really happens. We know what an intifada is, and it is horrible. You absolutely do not want that to come anywhere near Australia. 'Globalise the intifada' effectively says let's have a bit of that in Australia. There might be some people who say, 'No, we didn't really mean an intifada' in the sense of what it actually was, but it was.

To come back to a report that I have read, Mr Berkman, from an organisation that is not especially pro-Israeli, which is the Amnesty International report on the second intifada, which I am sure you are aware of, they characterise the actual second intifada as being an internecine war that involved mass suicide bombings and terrorist actions by one side and brutal reprisals by the other. Setting aside whose side one is on, whose fault it was and which was which, the idea that you would dream of letting somebody chant 'let's have this in Australia' seems to me to be absolutely abhorrent. Unlike the 'river to the sea' argument, there is a legitimate disagreement, for want of a better word, as to what it means, although it is still horrible. I would be amazed if even people who are completely pro Palestine and completely anti Israel could seriously want there to be an intifada in Australia unless they are wilfully ignoring what an actual intifada is. That is my answer to you. Of course naive people will chant things they do not really mean, but its meaning is pretty bloody clear. If you have people chanting it, the fact that some of them do not understand what they are saying does not make it any less dangerous.

**CHAIR:** Does it potentially incite extremist people into violence over time?

**Mr Posner:** Our submission says it does, and I stand by our submission. If you are asking me from the point of view of the submission, I will say yes. If you are asking me from the point of view of giving evidence, whether a thing tends to do something or not inevitably becomes a matter of personal opinion. I believe it does. I think there are trigger events. I think that oddly enough, although it has been completely ignored now, 'gas the Jews' in front of the Sydney Opera House was a signal that conflated it all onto the Jews. I think that was a catastrophic mistake by the New South Wales Police. Whether it tends to incite, yes, of course it probably tends to incite, but I would say does it definitely do it absolutely every time? Who can tell, but you have to do something. You have to do what you can to minimise it.

**CHAIR:** I am loath to cut you short, but we have gone a little over time.

**Ms Prior:** May I add one thing?

**CHAIR:** Briefly.

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**Ms Prior:** It will be brief. Let us not forget that in Australia—in Australia—we have seen four significant events. In addition to Bondi we have seen: the arson attack on the Melbourne synagogue; the bombing of a childcare centre in Sydney; and the bombing of the home of a senior member of the Australian Jewish community. It just happened that he had sold the home a few months earlier. All of these events are happening in Australia.

**CHAIR:** Thank you for your appearance today. We have run out of time. We do have a large witness list to get through. We do have your full submission for the committee to consider. We appreciate your attendance today.

**CHADWICK, Ms Wren, Manager, Policy and Systemic Review, Office of the Victims' Commissioner**

**CONNORS, Ms Kate, Victims' Commissioner, Office of the Victims' Commissioner**

**KAY, Ms Sarah, Executive Director, Office of the Victims' Commissioner**

**Ms Connors:** I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which I join you today, the Turrbal and Yagara people. I also recognise all victim-survivors, those we have lost and their families and loved ones.

As stated in the minister's explanatory speech and the explanatory notes, the proposed amendments in the bill that are the subject of this inquiry have been introduced in response to the anti-Semitic attack that occurred at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025. I offer my condolences to the loved ones of the 15 innocent victims who lost their lives on 14 December and I acknowledge the hurt and grief felt by their communities, particularly the Australian Jewish community. I also recognise the ongoing journey of recovering and healing for those victims who were unlawfully wounded, those who were witnesses and those who bravely responded in those first moments, either as a volunteer or in a professional capacity.

The attack on 14 December was not random: Jewish Australians were the target. I welcome the government's commitment to addressing anti-Semitic hate speech. Anti-Semitism is an ancient and pernicious scourge. Victims of anti-Semitic hate crimes must have the harm caused to them appropriately acknowledged by our justice system and their ongoing safety protected.

I also welcome the government's commitment to introduce measures that address the misuse of firearms. In 2025 the Police Service lodged Operation Whiskey Firestorm as a pro-active response to 2024 statistics that saw more than 3,295 offences involving firearms recorded across Queensland. Those offences included serious crimes such as attempted murder, assault and unlawful entry. Behind every one of those offences is a victim who has experienced terror and fear and who likely lives daily with ongoing trauma as a result of that offence. As the Victims' Commissioner, my statutory function is to promote and protect the rights of victims of crime, and that is the context of my written submission and will be the context of my evidence before you today.

I have raised three issues for the committee's consideration in the context of the bill: firstly, the application of the Charter of Victims' Rights to the proposed new offences; secondly, the opportunity to consider the potential benefits of introducing community impact statements in Queensland; and thirdly, the potential benefit of providing greater transparency for victims and the broader community by improving public access to Magistrates Court transcripts. Firstly, I will speak about the application of the charter.

My written submission notes that the Charter of Victims' Rights in Queensland only applies to the specific class of victims defined in the legislation. Broadly, that is victims of an offence against the person or a domestic violence offence. Victims of some of the new offences in the bill are unlikely to be covered by the charter. In practical terms, that means they will not have legal rights to receive updates on the investigation or prosecution of the offence or the right to make a victim impact statement at sentencing.

My second submission was around community impact statements. The offences in the bill target offences that are committed with the object of not only causing direct harm to individuals but also striking fear, panic and division into the heart of communities and in some instances to all members of a faith or an ethnic community. I have asked the committee to consider whether it would be appropriate to recommend consideration be given to introducing community impact statements that can be given on behalf of an entire community upon the sentencing of an offender. These types of statements are being used effectively now in South Australia. The current review of the victim impact statements in Queensland being undertaken by the Department of Justice presents an opportunity to consider whether they should be introduced in Queensland.

Finally, I have recommended increasing transparency through Magistrates Court transcripts. Several of the new offences in the bill would be heard in the Magistrates Court. The Supreme Court Library Queensland does not publish Magistrates Court sentencing remarks. In my view, improved public access to those remarks would assist the communities that have had hate crimes committed against them to understand how offenders have been held accountable. It could also provide greater judicial accountability and improve community awareness and social cohesion.

Thank you very much. We are happy to take any questions that the committee has.

**CHAIR:** My questions were going to be around those magistrates' rulings and community impact statements and their use in other jurisdictions. Can you unpack a little more how they are used and of what benefit they would be?

**Ms Connors:** As you are aware, at the moment in Queensland you can have a victim impact statement that enables victims to articulate how a crime has affected their lives, including emotional trauma, physical injuries and financial loss. I believe there is benefit in having a mechanism to allow communities to collectively express what has happened to them. Community impact statements would provide an opportunity for a community to tell the court about the harm or loss they have suffered because of that offence. I think they would also serve a useful purpose in highlighting the harm caused to victims who have not had a direct voice in a proceeding because of the type of offence, because they cannot be identified in the offence or because they did not elect to make an individual victim impact statement.

South Australia is the only state in Australia that has this opportunity. They have been largely used around child exploitation material—most commonly. They are not confined to that. They are confined to any community affected by a crime. The opportunity in that case is that often, as you would know, in child exploitation material there is not a direct victim who is giving evidence. In looking at this bill, we thought given that an offender in these types of offences often wants to have an impact that is greater than the individual victims of the action they have undertaken, having the opportunity to express community sentiment, whether that be a targeted faith or ethnic community or a community where the event took place, would be very powerful for the court. As you know, victim impact statements are often used by the court in the sentencing comments. I think it highlights how the ripples of these crimes are beyond and are intended to be beyond individuals who might be directly affected.

**CHAIR:** Briefly as a follow-up from that, in practice how does it work? Are people invited? Who represents the community? Do people seek to submit?

**Ms Connors:** We have spoken to my equivalent in South Australia. The invitation comes from the DPP usually or it can be from other people who have been involved in the investigation or the offence. Then depending on what type of offence it is, either the commissioner can put together a submission with expertise from community members or it can be experts in the field. It can be a mixture of community experience, research and all of those things that are then submitted by the commissioner.

**CHAIR:** The member for Gaven has come in as a substitute. Welcome.

**Ms SCANLON:** Thank you, Chair. Commissioner, noting you are now the third person to hold the role of Victims' Commissioner during the period of this government, have you or any of your predecessors to your knowledge been consulted on the development of this bill and at what stages?

**Ms Connors:** We were not consulted on the development of the bill.

**Ms MARR:** Remembering that we are responding to the awful events at Bondi, do you consider that the new laws are designed to prevent offences occurring in the first instance and thereby avoiding any similar incidents in Queensland?

**Ms Connors:** I think that the introduction of the bill makes really clear the government's commitment to reduce targeted hatred and violence in the community. Victims reflect our vibrant diverse community in Queensland and they will have views about the bill. Certainly the hurt caused by hate crime is deep and ongoing and it is the bill's intention to reduce targeted hatred and violence.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Queensland Health and the victim support groups have said on this bill that these provisions should protect all vulnerable groups including those targeted on the basis of race, religion, sexuality, gender identity or other characteristics. They went on to say that they encourage careful implementation to ensure that reforms enhance community safety without creating unnecessary or unintended harm. Separate from the bill but given that the government has publicly signposted only two phrases that are likely to be prohibited by this regulation, do you have any comment on whether that approach is consistent with protecting all vulnerable groups and, in your view, has consultation on the use of these regulation-making powers been adequate?

**Ms Connors:** I am not going to express a view. I think that some of what you are going to say is outside the purpose and scope of this bill. We are certainly supportive of the intent of the bill. What the bill sets up is the opportunity for more phrases to be added as more incidents in the community arise. The bill does give scope for the minister to prescribe more things that may get to what is being referred to in the Queensland Health and other submissions. I think those are probably all the comments that I would make on that.

**Mr FIELD:** The bill is not designed to support just the Jewish community; it is designed to support all groups and faiths. Is that a fair understanding of the intent?

**Ms Connors:** Yes, that is my understanding of the intent of the bill.

**Ms SCANLON:** I note your views in relation to weapons licensing. Do you believe the Coroner's recommendations should be implemented to investigate mandatory mental health checks for weapons licence holders to protect Queenslanders and potential victims?

**CHAIR:** Member, that is asking for an opinion on public policy and legislation. That is outside the scope.

**Ms SCANLON:** We are examining weapons licensing.

**CHAIR:** I will allow you to answer in the way that you see fit, considering that it is asking for an opinion on policy.

**Ms Connors:** I welcome any strengthening of protections against gun crimes. We certainly hear from victims of crime involving weapons and they are impacted for life. It is a deeply traumatic nature of events involving weapons and it is important that guns are strictly regulated. In this bill I particularly welcome clause 53, which is the new offence of possessing and distributing blueprint material for the manufacture of a firearm on a 3D printer. I think that is a welcome reform to respond to emerging challenges.

**CHAIR:** Commissioner, in your submission you outline your role in terms of supporting victims of crime and offences against the person. Can you outline what offences in this bill would come under your remit and why?

**Ms Connors:** At the moment the charter applies to victims of violent crime in Queensland. A violent crime is offences against the person so that is homicide, sexual violence, physical violence, threats of violence and domestic and family violence. It does not cover property crime unless violence was involved or it was a domestic and family violence offence. We are reviewing the charter and exploring whether the scope and application of the charter meets community expectations in that way. In looking at this bill, we looked at the offences that will be covered by this. Some of the offences proposed in the bill, particularly the ones that are around preparation or planning of an offence because there may not be a specific victim, may not be covered by the charter. We thought the committee might want to give consideration to that. Sarah, do you want to add anything else?

**Ms Kay:** If you turn to page 4 of our submission, we have outlined those offences in the bill that we think will be covered by the charter and those that we think are unlikely to be covered by the charter.

**CHAIR:** Thank you for your attendance today. I appreciate you giving evidence before us. I now invite forward representatives from the Queensland Human Rights Commission.

**LEONG, Ms Rebekah, Acting Director, Legal and Policy, Queensland Human Rights Commission**

**VASEY, Ms Jane, Deputy Commissioner, Public Policy and Prevention, Queensland Human Rights Commission**

**CHAIR:** I invite you to make an opening statement.

**Ms Vasey:** I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which this committee hearing is being held today, the Yagara and Turrbal people, and to pay our deep respects to elders past and present. The commission also would like to acknowledge and recognise the victims of the 2025 Bondi Beach terrorist attack, a national atrocity violated against attendees at the Hanukkah celebration. This incident calls all of us to work more urgently to prevent all forms of hate speech and violence directed towards people because of who they are so we thank the committee for the opportunity to appear today.

As you will be aware, the Queensland Human Rights Commission is an independent statutory body established under the Anti-Discrimination Act that was introduced in 1991. The commission has statutory functions under both that act and the Human Rights Act. Under the Human Rights Act, one of those functions is to promote an understanding, acceptance and public discussion of human rights in Queensland. The approach to human rights that Queensland has taken is focused upon a dialogue model. That dialogue model involves a collaborative approach and encourages discussion about the protection of human rights between various parts of government. This approach assists government to consider how new legislation will impact people or groups in Queensland communities. The dialogue model also focuses on prevention and this is important because prevention aims to protect people long before harm has already occurred.

Through our work at the Queensland Human Rights Commission, we know that preventing discrimination and protecting human rights can strengthen our communities, reduce long-term impacts and help create more cohesive communities. As our programs of work develop, the commission is turning its focus towards those objectives, including through strengthening our education services and ensuring these programs focus on capacity building and not only awareness raising. In enacting the Anti-Discrimination Act over 30 years ago, this parliament recognised that everyone should have the right to be protected from unfair discrimination. The Anti-Discrimination Act seeks to reduce hateful conduct, including discrimination and vilification, directed at people because of protected characteristics, including their religion, their race and their sex. The bill we are discussing today seeks to enact legislation that we say is complementary to that jurisdiction and, therefore, we appreciate the opportunity to provide constructive input into this parliamentary process.

As we have said in our submission, the commission welcomes the Queensland government's action to reduce targeted hatred and violence in our community, including through strengthening legislation. We recognise and support the purpose of this proposed legislation to protect people against hate speech, which has, as we have said, far-reaching, detrimental and long-lasting impacts. As outlined in our submission, the commission also recognises that achieving this aim requires a careful balancing act to ensure that, in targeting hate speech, other people's rights to freedom of expression are not unnecessarily limited. To be effective and to ensure human rights are adequately considered, laws need to be precise, effective, balanced and enforceable.

The Queensland Human Rights Act provides a framework to undertake this careful balancing act. The act provides a list of factors to determine whether any limit on rights is reasonable and appropriately balanced. As you will know, section 13 provides that a limit on a right is reasonable and justifiable if it is for a legitimate purpose, rational—that is, it seeks to assist to achieve that purpose—necessary so that no least restrictive alternative is available and proportionate. Ensuring that any new legislation applies each of those elements supports the government to create good laws that improve the safety of people in Queensland without causing unintended harm or any more harm than is necessary to achieve that goal.

To ensure this legislation strikes that delicate balance, the commission has respectfully provided the committee with a number of options to consider to ensure that the bill is both appropriate and effective. I also wanted to let you know that overnight we have identified that in our written submission we have misinterpreted the requirements for the proposed prescription of expressions and on closer review we understand that the bill does apply the same boundaries as prescribed to symbols and adds the requirement that expressions can only be prescribed if the minister is additionally satisfied the expression is regularly used to incite discrimination, hostility or violence towards a relevant group, and

this is a welcome safeguard. The commission supports that high threshold for the prescription of expressions given the difference between prescribing words and phrases and the prescription of images.

As we have noted in our submission, the prescription of expressions is a more complicated task than the prescription of symbols because language develops quickly and the meaning of expressions can change. In addition, language in the common vernacular is often used colloquially and without always reflecting a good grasp of its central meaning. Requiring consultation before prescribing expressions would ensure that consideration is given to the impact of the prescribed expressions that may have multiple or sometimes contested meanings. The prescription of hate speech and the protection of rights, including freedom of expression, are complementary and are not mutually exclusive goals. By respecting rights, we can achieve the purpose of a more cohesive and tolerant community and to make steps towards eliminating hatred and violence. Thank you. Rebekah and I welcome your questions.

**CHAIR:** Thank you and thanks for appearing before the committee today. I draw you to page 6 of your submission, if you have it there, and paragraphs 25 and 26 under the heading 'Clear definitions for provisions to protect faith communities' where you outline the offence to obstruct a place of worship without reasonable excuse. In paragraph 26 your concerns are that—

The Bill provides that only a person who obstructs without a 'reasonable excuse' will commit an offence. This defence could be defined to ensure unintentional conduct is not captured.

Unintentional conduct is covered under section 23 of the Criminal Code in terms of accidents or acts not intended, is it not? In terms of your concerns around a defence not being available, I submit that maybe under section 23 there is a defence available. Would you accept that?

**Ms Vasey:** I will defer to my colleague Rebekah in just a moment but add that we understand that a document was published last night from the Queensland Police Service that provided a more extensive analysis of how those laws would apply and we have had the benefit of at least pursuing that document across the course of last night. Rebekah, did you want to add anything further?

**Ms Leong:** I am not sure I can add much more, caveating that we are not criminal law experts. The point of our submission is to ensure that we do not accidentally criminalise acts that are unintentional or accidental, so provided the criminal laws allow for that then that is what we were submitting.

**CHAIR:** Yes; thank you. That concern, I believe, is covered by section 23 of the Criminal Code.

**Ms SCANLON:** Deputy Commissioner, were you or the Human Rights Commissioner, who I note is not here today, consulted on the proposed prescribed expressions announced by the Crisafulli LNP government prior to the announcement made in the media and, if not, have you ever been formally consulted?

**Ms Vasey:** You will note that the new commissioner is in week 3 of her current term, but I can confirm that in December last year the commission was consulted on the prescription of symbols, as was required by the legislation.

**Ms SCANLON:** To clarify, so that was just symbols, not expressions?

**Ms Vasey:** The law requires that we are consulted on the symbols, and that is the consultation that occurred.

**CHAIR:** And the bill proposed requires you to be consulted about expressions as well.

**Ms Vasey:** And that is the correction that we have made in our opening statement today. We understand now that the same test will apply so that ourselves, the CCC and the QPS will all be required to be consulted before the prescription of expressions, which we say is a welcome safeguard.

**Ms MARR:** Thank you for being here today. I did have a question on paragraph 29, but in your statement you mentioned that now that you have read it in order to charge somebody it has to menace, harm or offend. You did talk about that—that you wanted to change that—so can you just elaborate more on that—that is, that somebody is not mistakenly using a language; it is only if they menace, offend or harass? Can you explain that a little bit further? You mentioned it in your opening statement.

**Ms Vasey:** I think what we mentioned in the opening statement was the thresholds that apply to the prescription of symbols also now applying, as we understand it under this bill, to the prescription of expressions. I understand the point that we are making in paragraph 29 is a slightly different one.

**Ms MARR:** Okay.

**Ms Vasey:** I would defer to my colleague, and perhaps it would help us with that understanding for you to repeat the question.

**Ms MARR:** Sure. In paragraph 29 you were saying that the likelihood of unintentional offending could be relatively high. In your opening statement you were saying that in order to charge somebody it has to menace, harm or offend. I am just wanting you to elaborate on that in terms of the likelihood of unintentional offending.

**Ms Vasey:** I think in the opening statement it was a slightly different point that we were making, but we can discuss perhaps in a little bit more detail the submissions that we are making from paragraphs 27 to 29 where we talk through our perspective that it would be helpful to have clear rules for the prescription of terrorist symbols, and perhaps—unless, Bek, you have anything further to add—we could take this question on notice, if that would be okay with you, and we can look at it in some more detail.

**Ms MARR:** That is fine. Thank you.

**Ms SCANLON:** Deputy Commissioner, given we have the Institute of Public Affairs, Anglican Church, Archdiocese of Brisbane, unions, civil liberties advocates and many multicultural organisations—so hardly natural bedfellows—all raising concerns about the bill's impact on free speech and even the Human Rights Commission, the very body meant to be consulted on which phrases should be restricted, is flagging issues with the drafting of this bill, doesn't that breadth of concern suggest these proposed laws have created more division at a time when we need unity?

**Ms Vasey:** My response to that question—thank you, member—is really to confine our submissions today to the bill that is before the parliament. As you have heard me say, we support the purpose of seeking to eliminate hate crime. The commission is strongly committed to that purpose and we approach that in a range of different ways. Our opportunity today is to provide some constructive suggestions for the committee to consider to improve the bill that would achieve that aim, so that is the focus of our time here today.

**Mr FIELD:** Could you please explain what role your organisation plays in reducing and preventing discrimination in general?

**Ms Vasey:** Certainly. The commission has a range of functions, as I said at the outset, under both the Human Rights Act and the Anti-Discrimination Act and we have a range of programs of work that seek to achieve those aims. Some of our functions are to provide education and to consult with organisations as a means of improving circumstances for those who are affected by discrimination that is unlawful under the act. We do that in a range of ways. The complaints process has a preventive element. Because of that dialogue model, the process we undertake is focused on resolving disputes, and often there are systemic outcomes through those complaints where agreements are reached to go back to an organisation and to take steps to prevent that discrimination from happening in future.

In addition, we have a large program of work under our education program that we are currently seeking to uplift that looks to move beyond the initial focus on providing awareness about the legislation to support organisations to build capacity to better prevent discrimination in their organisations from the outset. We are proposing in fact to deliver a new strategy around education that allows us to provide tailored programs that are contextualised to the organisational environment to ensure that that education lands in a way that means people can understand these laws in more detail, because they are quite complex, and to apply them in their everyday decision-making. We also look to prevent discrimination and to protect human rights through our legal and policy functions. That includes through, when appropriate, intervening in legal cases that provides support to the courts to understand better how these laws could be applied. We also do that through our policy programs which is to consult with organisations, as I have said, as a means of ascertaining services and also to offer some perspectives on bills before the House, as we have today.

**Mr BERKMAN:** I appreciate your time here today. I just wanted to ask quickly about the program for today. You no doubt would have seen the complete program and noted that this hearing will not include any Palestinian or anti-Zionist Jewish voices who are directly targeted by the new provisions on prohibited expression. Would you expect those voices to be involved in a committee's process—an interrogation like this—and should they have been called as witnesses, do you think?

**CHAIR:** Member, you are going to a committee process there that was a bipartisan process asking for an opinion outside the committee of how this should be held. I do not think it is relevant to the bill.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Okay. I can move on from that, if that is okay.

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**CHAIR:** I will rule that question out of order and invite you to ask another question relevant to the bill.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Thanks, Chair. Noting that we do have a representative of Justice for Palestine in the room today and others who might speak to these views, I move—

That today's hearing program be amended to include an appearance from Justice for Palestine at 12.45 after the conclusion of the public hearing.

**CHAIR:** A motion has been moved. I am going to have to take us into a private meeting to resolve that motion. We are nearing the end of your presentation anyway, so I thank you for your appearance today and excuse you from further questions. I appreciate your attendance. We will now move into a private meeting. Probably the easiest way to do that is for us to leave the room. I have been advised differently and I am afraid we are going to have to clear the room.

**Proceedings suspended from 10.27 am to 10.32 am.**

**ROSS, Ms Ann, Private Capacity**

**ROSS, Mr Jeff, President, Sporting Shooters Association of Australia Queensland**

**CHAIR:** Welcome. I invite you to make an opening statement to the committee.

**Mr Ross:** I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to put a submission in in relation to this bill and also to speak as a witness here. SSAA Queensland acknowledges this bill going forward. SSAA Queensland supports the measures that target criminal use of firearms, deter trafficking and unlawful supply of firearms, strengthen penalties for serious offences and preserves the rights of fit and proper law-abiding firearms holders. It has been long maintained by SSAA Queensland that a balanced and robust framework is in place and we would like to see it keep a focus on criminal behaviour rather than law-abiding firearm owners. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Much has been made in commentary about tightening firearm laws after the tragic events in Bondi. There has been much commentary around the number of firearms a law-abiding firearms owner might want to own. From a sporting shooters perspective, can you explain for the benefit of the committee why somebody would need a number of firearms to participate in this sport?

**Mr Ross:** The Sporting Shooters Association of Queensland has diverse members and groups. This ranges from people who aspire to shoot in the Olympics to competition shooters. We have five or six people from the single-action group whom we are sending to the United States to compete this year. To compete in this event you require 15 firearms. That is well above the limit. Other people say there are theatrical audience groups that may need multiple firearms under their licences. If you want to shoot more than one discipline—for example, single-action and action pistol—you are probably going to require 20 firearms. Not everyone is going to want them, but to be able to compete they do. We have hunters who use firearms as a tool of trade and there is not one firearm for all jobs. Rat shooting is one thing, right up to large game. Not one firearm fits it all is probably the answer.

**Ms McMAHON:** I want to start by asking were you or your organisation consulted with in the preparation of this bill?

**Mr Ross:** No, we were not.

**Ms McMAHON:** To clarify, in your submission there is only a very short bit about the firearm prohibition orders, but you do request more clarity and transparency in decision-making. Could you elaborate on what the process is that you see in the bill and what you would like to see as part of natural justice and procedural fairness in relation to those prohibition orders?

**Mr Ross:** Can you explain the prohibition orders?

**Ms McMAHON:** I will go to the explanatory notes: being able to strengthen the effectiveness of the firearm prohibition order which is designed to deter high-risk individuals from acquiring, possessing or using firearms. That is, I understand, increasing police powers in order to exclude people from having firearms.

**Mr Ross:** It depends how it goes. For a fit and proper person, that should always be there. It depends how they use it and how small an offence it can be. We would probably like some clarification on that. I do agree with it if somebody is not a fit and proper person or they have a medical issue. For smaller issues, where people do not want to go to a health professional, it is not too bad. They are not going to go and seek help if it is a minor thing so we would like to see clarification there. Sometimes people do need help and it may be enough to take their firearms off them, but if it is not enough to take it off them and they do not go to a professional because they are scared, that is a concern.

**Ms MARR:** Yesterday in Townsville we spoke to veterans, existing ADF members, representatives from shooting clubs, trainers and mentors and they were talking about how concerned they were initially of any gun law changes in Queensland. Can you please briefly go through the people you have spoken to who are lawful citizens with gun licences and what their approach was to this and how they feel about where we have come to with this bill?

**Mr Ross:** We have probably 81,000 members in SSAA Queensland. Going by feedback, most of them are quite happy with the way this bill is proceeding and the way the government has gone with it. The federal and New South Wales governments are jumping in and immediately attacking law-abiding firearm owners. It was pretty hard to take for most of them. Most firearm owners were a little bit nervous. We are probably not against laws, but to attack law-abiding people seems like an easy way out for most firearm owners.

**Ms MARR:** They mentioned yesterday they felt it was more of a balanced approach. Would you agree with that?

**Mr Ross:** Yes, fully agree. It is very balanced, yes.

**Ms McMAHON:** In relation to two proposed changes, the first in relation to a person must be an Australian citizen, do you have numbers on how many members who might be New Zealand citizens or UK citizens who would be directly impacted by this amendment?

**Mr Ross:** No, I do not really have those figures. Going by feedback, from people phoning the office, there has not been many. There have been a couple. Our answer is there is that there has been a fair time to become an Australian citizen. A couple of these people were New Zealanders and they had been here for 15 years. We do not have a problem with them becoming citizens.

**Ms McMAHON:** Finally, on storage requirements—I did get to ask this question yesterday up in Townsville—the need for transitional arrangements in terms of increasing storage requirements, what does that look like for the average firearms owner with these proposed changes?

**Mr Ross:** I think they do need a transition period to do it. Most of the group I am involved with are probably overcomplying with it now, but a transition period would be good for them for inspections, yes.

**Mr FIELD:** You were saying before some of your shooters have more than one firearm—sometimes up to 20 for different disciplines. It might sound a silly question, but they only use one gun at a time; is that right?

**Mr Ross:** They only pull the trigger on one gun at a time, but they may be Western action where they will have one on each hip. Most people only shoot one at a time.

**Mr FIELD:** They might have all these guns for different disciplines, but when they go and do one particular discipline that is the only gun they use for that discipline?

**Mr Ross:** No, that is not correct. If they go and shoot in the discipline of single-action, on the day in the range they will probably shoot all 15 guns, but only one at a time.

**Ms McMAHON:** Going back to the storage issue—I am not up on storage; we always had gun safes at the station—in terms of cost, how much would the average gun owner be spending on their storage solutions? For someone who has to upgrade, what kind of cost implication would that be?

**Mr Ross:** It depends on how many guns they have, but I would suggest from \$200 up towards probably \$1,000.

**CHAIR:** We spoke before about some of your members wanting to be Olympians and others doing it for the love of it. Given that we are hosting the Olympics in 2032 and that shooting is our sixth most successful sport in Australia, what impact would it have if governments were to restrict the number of firearms sporting shooters could own? What impact could that have on our sporting ability across the world in Olympic events et cetera?

**Mr Ross:** I am probably not an Olympic shooter, but any restrictions that come in make it harder and harder for them to compete. Most law-abiding citizens will go out of their way to do it. It is a privilege and something they aspire to do, but each restriction makes it harder and harder. You do not become an Olympic shooter straight away. You start out shooting and enjoy the sport and when you become better you think, 'I could become an Olympic shooter,' or 'I'm good in competitions.' It normally starts in competitions and you build from there.

**CHAIR:** In terms of legislation, after the Port Arthur massacre we saw the Howard government bring in quite restrictive legislation. Since that time, Australia I think probably leads the world in firearm regulation. In your opinion, after Bondi, have we struck the right balance here? There have been discussions in other jurisdictions about further restrictions. Do you think Queensland has struck the balance here?

**Mr Ross:** I think Queensland has gone a long way to striking the right balance. I know the bill has not gone through yet but, if it goes through as it is now, I think most Queensland shooters will be happy with it, unlike other jurisdictions that have jumped in quickly. They jumped in really quickly and banned firearms that do not exist. There was only one of those firearms ever made as a prototype. In terms of other jurisdictions that jumped in to make laws and restrictions, I think Queensland has done a good job of getting the right balance.

**CHAIR:** There being no further questions, thank you for your appearance today before the committee.

**Proceedings suspended from 10.46 am to 11.05 am.**

**STUCKEN, Ms Annita, Assistant Director, Legal, Australia’s Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism (via videoconference)**

**CHAIR:** Good morning. I note we have received a submission from you. Members, it should be in your pack. It is unpublished at this point in time, but we can refer to it. I invite you to make an opening statement.

**Ms Stucken:** Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear today and to speak to the submission made by the office of Australia’s Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism. At the outset, the envoy welcomes the Queensland government’s commitment to addressing the promotion of hatred, violence and terrorist ideologies. These issues undermine social cohesion and the safety and integrity of Australian society and they must be addressed comprehensively and effectively.

Over the last two years, in particular following the 7 October terrorist attacks, there has been a significant escalation in the promotion of hatred, violence and terrorist ideologies right across Australia. At the same time, there has been a significant escalation in anti-Semitic incidents. This has a real-life impact upon the safety, security and wellbeing of Jewish Australians right across Australia, including in Queensland. Today, Jewish Australians are experiencing heightened anxiety and diminished safety. This extends across every sector. Students report feeling unsafe in schools and on university campuses. Workers face harassment. Online abuse has become routine. These are not isolated incidents. Together, they reflect a pattern of escalating hostility and intrude into everyday life.

Part 2 of the bill presents important measures to address the promotion of hatred, violence and terrorist ideologies. In particular, the proposed reforms to serious vilification, prohibited symbols, prohibited expressions and protections for ministers of religion at places of worship present positive steps forward. It is the envoy’s view, however, that there are aspects of the bill which require amendment to ensure it operates effectively to achieve these important objectives. For this reason, the submission provides qualified support for the proposed measures and proposes constructive recommendations aimed at strengthening the proposed framework, improving clarity and closing potential gaps.

Foremost, the submission recommends that the serious vilification offence be amended to fix the threshold of liability solely on whether the conduct publicly and intentionally or recklessly promotes hatred on the basis of a protected attribute. The means requirement—that is, the requirement to prove that the individual incited hatred in a way that includes threatening physical harm or inciting others to threaten physical harm—ought to form a separate offence provision, following the model of recent reforms in Victoria. The proposed broadening of the framework with respect to prohibited symbols and expressions is positive; however, it also requires refinement.

The promotion of terrorist organisations and their ideologies and the promotion of hatred and violence is inherently harmful and must not be permitted under Australian law. The envoy recommends certain amendments to promote this important policy objective and to reduce opportunities for technical avoidance.

Finally, the envoy welcomes the introduction of protections for all Australians accessing places of worship. The submission highlights the importance of these safeguards in preserving Australians’ ability to practise their faith free from intimidation and harassment. It also recommends refinements to ensure consistent and meaningful protection for Australians attending places of worship and other faith-based institutions such as schools, childcare centres, hospitals and other such venues.

Importantly, the refinements proposed by the envoy are situated within the context of a documented escalation in anti-Semitic incidents and extremist conduct both nationally and in Queensland. This environment underscores the need for legislation that is not only principled in intent but also clear, practical and enforceable. Overall, the envoy commends the bill as a positive development and encourages the committee to consider the proposed refinements to ensure the legislation achieves its important objectives. Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, and thank you for appearing before the committee today. The special envoy was appointed on 9 July 2024, I understand, by the federal government—the Prime Minister—in response to growing anti-Semitism. Members of the Jewish community have given evidence to the committee, including in Townsville yesterday, expressing fear about the anti-Semitism being experienced even in regional areas of our state. It is not confined to the cities. Grown men were crying. Theirs was an emotional response.

We have received submissions that the chanting of various slogans means different things to different people. In your experience with the Jewish community, can you elaborate on what emotions are invoked in Jewish people by certain phrases? The intention of the phrase may not be to incite violence, but how do Jewish people feel having things chanted in the streets?

**Ms Stucken:** Certainly. The government has indicated its intention that the framework allow for the prescription of two particular phrases: 'globalise the intifada' and 'from the river to the sea'. Each of these phrases presents calls for violence and undermines the safety and security of Jewish Australians right across the nation and in Queensland.

**Ms MULLEN:** Thank you, Annita, for appearing before our committee. A key action of the envoy's plan to combat anti-Semitism is to review and, where appropriate, strengthen federal, state and territory legislation to address anti-Semitism. Your submission, which we only received this morning so is not publicly available yet, would seem to indicate that there was little or no consultation with your office, as you have raised a significant number of changes you would like to see in the bill. Can I please confirm: was your office consulted in the drafting of this legislation, given it is clearly within the remit of the envoy?

**Ms Stucken:** The envoy's office has worked and will continue to work with government at a national, state and territory level with respect to legislation and other measures which go to combating anti-Semitism. The office was pleased to see this legislation put forward and welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the committee.

**Ms MULLEN:** To confirm, though: was the envoy's office consulted as part of the drafting of the legislation?

**CHAIR:** I think the answer she gave was that they are being consulted right now. Did I interpret that correctly?

**Ms Stucken:** I would not wish to elaborate further. Perhaps I can provide a supplementary answer on behalf of the office.

**Ms MULLEN:** We would like that. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** That question has been taken on notice.

**Ms MARR:** Once again, I have not had a lot of time to go through the detail of your submission, but thank you for sending that through. You did say in your submission—

The incitement of violence against fellow Australians has always been against the law in Australia and is contrary to Australian values and the legal system has failed to address it adequately.

Would you agree that we are moving towards making sure that we have stronger laws and educating people of what is not going to be tolerated with the suggested bill?

**Ms Stucken:** Yes, I would agree that the bill attempts to strengthen legislation in this respect and provide greater clarity around the bounds of particular conduct that does or does not incite violence. I think public education and clarity concerning the scope of the law is particularly important, particularly in respect of the measures proposed by the bill.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Again, receiving your submission today I have had limited time to review it. I did note early in the submission you say you have read the Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies' submission and endorse that. I want to go to one part of that submission which has been addressed already which says that, in effect, anti-Zionism is one of three main anti-Semitism hate movements. This is a quote from their submission—

It is a hateful fixation on the Jewish State, Israel. It uses the language of human rights and social justice to provide a permission structure to (collectively) target Jews ...

I am interested in the context of the United Nations Human Rights Council conclusions around genocide occurring in Gaza, statements from the International Criminal Court around the issue of warrants for the Israeli Prime Minister and former defence minister in relation to war crimes that have been alleged they have committed, and commentary from a recent Federal Court case that clearly distinguished anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. Do you maintain a view that anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism are interchangeable? Do you think there is any role for legitimate criticism of the State of Israel that is not anti-Semitic?

**Ms Stucken:** This question raises some very important issues but issues which do extend beyond the scope of the submission prepared by our office. I very much appreciate that our office has endorsed the submission made by the Jewish Board of Deputies and stands by that endorsement and would welcome the opportunity to answer this question, but that would be best done on notice in writing following this morning's hearing.

**Mr BERKMAN:** If that is to be taken on notice, I might ask one brief follow-up question. I expect you are aware—and I can table a document if necessary—that the opening paragraph of the original party platform of the Likud party, the ruling party in Israel, includes the statement, 'Between the sea and the Jordan'—that is the river—'there will only be Israeli sovereignty.' I noted that was omitted from the Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies' submission as part of the history of 'from the river to the sea'. Do you consider the proposed prohibition of that statement bears on the potential for supporters of the Likud party to find themselves falling afoul of these laws here in Australia?

**Ms Stucken:** Yes. The envoy's office submission also speaks to the phrase 'from the river to the sea', to which you have referred. This particular matter which you have raised is not referenced within the envoy's submission, but I will also take that question on notice and consult the office with respect to a written response.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Certainly. For the benefit of the committee, I table that document so it is on the record.

**Mr FIELD:** Here in Australia we are relatively lucky across the board. Do you agree that no matter what religion or faith you have you should be able to go about your day-to-day business—schooling, shopping and everything else—without being targeted, abused or harassed in any way? Do you believe this bill will go at least some way to dealing with those issues?

**Ms Stucken:** Yes. The introduction of protection for places of worship is certainly a positive development under the Queensland bill. However, these protections under the terms of the bill extend only to individuals accessing or leaving places of worship for the purpose of a meeting of religious worship. The envoy's submission recommends that protections for attendance at places of worship extend to any purpose for attending. An Australian of any religion might attend their place of worship for various purposes and each of those purposes would relate to engagement with their faith at that venue and should fall within the scope of these protections.

Likewise, Australians engage with their faith at other faith-based institutions, such as faith-based schools and childcare centres, and the protections should also extend to these venues. It is, as you have said, a very important policy objective and one which must be the subject of legislative protections to ensure all Australians can engage with their faith free of intimidation and harassment.

**CHAIR:** Further to that, in relation to the other suggested places that these laws should apply, what experiences have the Jewish community conveyed to you around those childcare centres, schools, hospitals et cetera? What is occurring at this point in time that that protection needs to be extended?

**Ms Stucken:** Very sadly, it is now a matter of everyday life for Jewish Australians that they experience abuse, intimidation and harassment in the vicinity of identifiably Jewish venues. That might be a school, a synagogue and the like. To use just one example, for children leaving or attending school there are often shouts of, 'Hitler should have finished the job,' or references to the Holocaust, which are very intimidating and undermine the safety and security and wellbeing of Jewish Australians just in going about their everyday life.

These incidents are detailed in the reports published on an annual basis by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry. Those reports are footnoted within the submission for the committee's reference. I have no doubt the committee has also heard direct testimony from Jewish Australians concerning the nature of these incidents and how they undermine the safety, security and wellbeing of Jewish Australians just in going about their everyday lives.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. Indeed we have.

**Ms MULLEN:** At several points in the envoy's action plan there are references to education as being essential to preventing and tackling anti-Semitism. It was certainly also raised by Rabbi Rubin yesterday in our hearing. Does the envoy have a view on whether the Queensland government is doing enough in the education and community education space and what recommendations would the envoy make?

**Ms Stucken:** Education is certainly a central pillar of the envoy's plan and absolutely fundamental in addressing anti-Semitism in Australia. With respect to your question, it does extend beyond the particular matters in the submission prepared by the envoy for this committee but, again, I will gladly take it on notice and have the office prepare a response for you.

**Ms MULLEN:** The federal government has initiated work on establishing a national hate crimes and incidents database. As part of our committee work we have heard and read many different figures quoted in relation to increases in anti-Semitism incidents. How important is consistent and understood data in addressing anti-Semitism?

**Ms Stucken:** It is absolutely vital. The announcement of the database earlier in 2025 was a very positive development. There are various aspects to this issue. One is consistent and reliable recording of data, but another anterior issue is the consistent and reliable reporting of data. Even though we have seen reported a significant escalation in anti-Semitic incidents, we are also aware of a significant under-reporting of incidents. This is also a matter of education of the public of the importance of reporting both anti-Semitic and other hate incidents against other protected attributes to ensure we do have clear sight on the scope of this problem.

**CHAIR:** Thank you for your appearance today. We appreciate your time. Your responses to the questions taken on notice are due by close of business on 20 February, which is tomorrow. If you could do your best to get something to us by then, that would be great.

**Ms Stucken:** Thank you very much.

**BURTON, Ms Bridget, Co-Deputy Chair, Human Rights and Public Law Committee, Queensland Law Society (via teleconference)**

**HEYWORTH-SMITH, Ms Cate KC, President, Bar Association of Queensland**

**MOSCHELLA, Mr Adam, Member, Criminal Law Committee, Queensland Law Society**

**REECE, Ms Laura KC, Deputy Chair, Criminal Law Committee; Member, Human Rights and Public Law Committee, Bar Association of Queensland**

**CHAIR:** Welcome. I invite you to make an opening statement.

**Ms Heyworth-Smith:** The rule of law is the principle that all people are equal before the law and must obey the law, including the legislatures who make the law. Racism of all kinds and executed in any ways is anathema to the rule of law. It seeks to undermine equality and fairness to those who are its targets and to prevent them from participating in the civic life of the state. However, freedom of political communication is a powerful ally of the rule of law, and upholding its existence ensures that those who would wish to participate in the civic life of the state can do so without fear of arbitrary arrest or imprisonment or standing trial for contravention of an unknown or unknowable law.

There is then a tension in any legislation which seeks to impinge upon freedom of political communication in order to stamp out racism. It will be vulnerable to constitutional challenge if it burdens impermissibly the implied freedom of communication on government or political matters. That vulnerability is likely to be tested in the courts. The central pillar of the rule of law is that the validity of legislation is a matter for an independent judiciary, but it goes without saying that the legislature would not wish to pass legislation possessed of that vulnerability. Similarly, it would not want to pass legislation that created uncertainty in the criminal law—an area which demands absolute certainty. It is to these ends that the Bar Association has provided a written submission. In the time available, it has identified areas of vulnerability and uncertainty. Those submissions are detailed in relation to those matters and there is not time nor warrant to expand upon them in oral submissions.

**CHAIR:** Does the Law Society want to make an opening statement?

**Mr Moschella:** Thank you for inviting the Queensland Law Society to appear today. As well as being a member of the Criminal Law Committee, I am also an accredited specialist in criminal law and I am a senior associate at Bell Criminal Lawyers. Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, QLS President Peter Jolly was unable to appear today and sends his apologies in that regard. In opening I would like to respectfully recognise the traditional owners and custodians on the land on which we meet.

As the committee is aware, the Queensland Law Society is the peak professional body for the state's legal practitioners. We are an independent, apolitical representative body. We acknowledge the importance of a coordinated, whole-of-government response to address anti-Semitism and vilification of certain groups in our society. A comprehensive and compassionate approach is essential to strengthening social cohesion and ensuring that every member of our community can live in safety free from hatred, discrimination and harm.

In a diverse society, anti-vilification laws play a role in protecting the rights of people to peaceful existence. Vilification and hate crimes are complex social problems that are rarely solved by the introduction of criminal offences. Meaningful consultation is essential to ensuring that counterterrorism and public safety and cohesion objectives are achieved in a manner consistent with the rule of law, proportionality and established principles of criminal justice.

QLS has provided a written submission that sets out our views on certain aspects of the bill. We welcome any questions from the committee.

**CHAIR:** I address this question to whoever would like to answer. The committee has heard evidence that over the past couple of years there has been an increase in anti-Semitism such as the 7 October attacks, protests at the Sydney Opera House, chanting of various things, attacks on synagogues et cetera. Whilst recognising that a consultative approach, as you suggested, between communities is warranted, do you agree that a legislative response is appropriate? It escalated to the point of the Bondi incident and legislation is trying to address the anti-Semitism that led to that point. Do you see a role in legislation to combat that anti-Semitism?

**Ms Heyworth-Smith:** The Bar Association does. Our submission is to the effect that the law that is contemplated by the draft bill is for a legitimate legislative purpose in protection of members of the community. That is not the end of the question of constitutional permissibility, but certainly to that point, yes.

**CHAIR:** Would you like to make a comment on that?

**Mr Moschella:** I would agree and I share the Bar Association's sentiments. I think the main point is that where you have draft laws aimed at addressing a certain type of conduct or a certain issue in society the consultation and the development of those laws needs to be comprehensive to ensure they meet the legitimate end it was aimed to meet. Where you rush through legislation, ultimately that is where you see gaps or you see issues in terms of definitions and there are unintended consequences generally. It is that consultation and that stakeholder engagement that I think should be at the forefront, especially of this type of legislation where it does impact such a cross-section of society.

**CHAIR:** Are there any other comments before I move to other members?

**Ms Burton:** I would like to draw the attention of the committee to the process that was undertaken from 2020 through to 2024 in relation to the civil vilification provisions and the review that was undertaken as a result of the Cohesive Communities Coalition work and the extensive consultation that went into that. The Law Society was very involved in those consultation processes. That was a very extensive and multilayered process. There are provisions that have come out of that community-driven consultation that exist within a law that is currently paused and could be unpaused to improve our civil vilification provisions. We are looking at criminal matters today, but when you are looking at the role of legislation generally, to answer your question, there are other ways of addressing these same concerns that have come out of communities' requests.

**Ms SCANLON:** I note that in the Queensland Law Society submission you highlight that there are already existing offences under both the Criminal Code and the Anti-Discrimination Act, and your point that the government has indefinitely delayed some of those other reforms that were the product of significant consultation is certainly noted. My question is: in those circumstances, do you consider the expansion of criminal liability in this bill to be a proportionate response or are there less restrictive, constitutionally safer alternatives available that would achieve the government's objective without further burdening political communication? Does the Queensland Law Society recognise Professor Anne Twomey as a constitutional expert and do you support her comments that this bill gives rise to a number of difficult legal issues and areas of jurisprudence that have not yet been fully developed?

**CHAIR:** Member, that was a very lengthy question. It did contain an imputation that the bill stifles political communication or whatever you said there—

**Ms SCANLON:** It is from a submission. It is a direct quote.

**CHAIR:** Were you quoting from a submission?

**Ms SCANLON:** Yes, I was.

**CHAIR:** I will allow an answer from anyone who wishes to commence an answer.

**Mr Moschella:** To go back to the original point with respect to what already exists, in my opinion that is the starting point for when you are trying to initiate law reform. You look at current legislative frameworks and how they may or may not be working and start there. Something very simple is that the law should be clear. People should effectively know what the law is. Where you continue to introduce offences to effectively rectify societal issues in circumstances where there are already offences that either could be appropriately amended or do already appropriately address a circumstance, it starts to become confusing. People do not know what they can and cannot do. People do not know what the limits are with respect to their conduct.

That is one of the big things with this legislation: there is a lot of subjective tests and there is a lot of those types of offences drafted into the bill. Again, it creates a situation where the law starts to become unclear. It starts to become capable of and susceptible to change. Quite often, for example, with the prohibition on expressions, if the minister can prohibit certain phrases then people need to be aware of what they can and cannot say. That is not something that I think most people would be genuinely aware of when subordinate legislation is passed, although lawyers are. Often we are telling people for the first time, 'That is something you can't say,' or, 'That is something you can't do,' in a conference when they are sitting in front of us charged with an offence.

Ultimately, that is the simplest answer. You need to look at current frameworks and current offences—that is always your starting point—and then move forward from there and then identify the gaps. Then you can address specific offences or specific legislative change to those specific gaps. Again, that is enhanced by thorough consultation.

**Ms SCANLON:** Do you believe that that has not been the case in the drafting of this bill?

**Mr Moschella:** Given the short consultation period with respect to the bill, there are a number of things that are concerning in the bill in terms of how terms are defined, how far-reaching some offences may or may not be, the uncertainty with respect to certain offences. For example, with the express prohibition offence, there is an issue there in that it does not really identify who a complainant is. Where you have a test that says it needs to make someone feel a certain way, who is the complainant? It is different to, for example, the Commonwealth carriage service offence where you have someone who complains of a specific conduct and in evidence in a statement they will say, 'This is how that made me feel.' You do not have that generally so you run the risk, where people may be expressing certain views in a public forum, and there is a real concern that they might be effectively committing what is a criminal offence if the bill is to be passed but they are not actually aware of it. There is an unclear component of, 'Are you committing an offence or not?' It is very difficult to discern where that threshold lies. Again, it goes back to my point that law needs to be clear so people know what they can and cannot do. That is probably the simplest way to put it.

**CHAIR:** Would you accept that legislation is introduced all the time and criminal law is quite complex? There is also the provision of ignorance not being an excuse for that very purpose, that nobody can be right across all the laws. I anticipate that if slogans, chants or phrases are determined by the minister to be unlawful they would be quite well publicised; wouldn't you think?

**Mr Moschella:** I am reluctant to comment on it because we do not know yet. We have to wait for the bill to pass. I think that goes to my point in terms of criminal offences being introduced all the time. The criminal law is amended all the time and that is largely a problem we are starting to see. There is this rhetoric that the criminal law can be used to fix all these issues with society and it is simply not the case. Again, when you are doing it without proper consultation it becomes concerning. Where you consistently change what the law is or make amendments to the law, it leads to uncertainty because people do not know what they can and cannot do because it is always changing. Lawyers are across it, but the general person on the street might not be. How many general members of the public sit down and read legislation? Not many of them.

**CHAIR:** I take you to your comment when you said 'intends to fix it'. I do not think that is the intention. Would you accept that the intention is to be a part of the solution, not to fix it?

**Mr Moschella:** That is so. It is aimed at addressing a certain issue that we see developing or becoming more prominent in society. That is a fair statement. Again, the proper consultation with respect to that is what is required to ensure there is not this duplication of offences and there are not unintended consequences with respect to the legislation, especially in this context where you have the Commonwealth bill that was introduced and now this bill. It is a lot of change in a short amount of time with respect to a very complex area in terms of one antiterrorism and counterterrorism piece of legislation but also hate speech legislation generally and the nuances that come with that. For example, the Bar Association has identified the issues that may or may not be there with respect to the freedom of political communication. Again, it is that rush in terms of a complex matter. Sometimes it can serve a disservice as opposed to addressing an issue. Whilst the Law Society thinks the legislation is required and we support the efforts in order to address this particular issue, it is the lack of consultation that is somewhat a concerning aspect.

**CHAIR:** I guess the urgency came from the escalation of what we saw in Bondi and governments responding. That is a comment.

**Mr BERKMAN:** I appreciate your time in appearing today. In the Bar Association's submission you do address that kind of reversal of the evidential burden around the reasonable excuse defence and on top of that the ambiguity around what represents public interest within that defence. Is there anything more you could say on that? Beyond that, none of the submissions have really gone into much detail around the proposed expansion of prohibited symbols outside the regulation to include symbols that are used by a prescribed organisation or a member of a prescribed organisation to identify the organisation or any part of it. I want to understand how the breadth of that additional definition and what reads to me like a very ambiguous definition will affect the enforceability of it and the cost to the state in the prosecution of these offences.

**Ms Heyworth-Smith:** I think there are two or three questions and I will start with the first one.

**Mr BERKMAN:** I apologise for bundling them. Time is limited.

**Ms Heyworth-Smith:** That is the question of the introduction of a defence with a reversed onus of proof and the introduction of the defence arising from the language being used in a manner that is 'in the public interest', to quote what the legislation says. In criminal law it is always the ideal to make sure it is absolutely certain. The notion of something being in the public interest is something that is not a stranger to legislation. Many acts refer to something being done in the public interest or required to be done in the public interest or it acting as a matter that is relevant to whether or not something is lawful. In the circumstances of this legislation, the Bar Association submission is to the effect that it would like to see the language around what constitutes something said or done in the public interest to be tighter and to be more specific so that Queenslanders can actually be certain as to what is or is not going to amount to a viable defence for language that they are using.

**CHAIR:** Is that satisfactory?

**Mr BERKMAN:** Yes. I appreciate the response. Does the Bar Association or any of the witnesses present have any observations on the offence around the use of symbols that are not prescribed by regulation?

**Ms Heyworth-Smith:** Ms Reece has comment on that particular point, so I will hand to her.

**Ms Reece:** My comment is really very simple. It is that we have not had an opportunity to respond to all aspects of the bill given the time and that we understand that Professor Anne Twomey does cover her concerns from a constitutional and public law point of view about the expansion of the law as it regards symbols.

**CHAIR:** Thank you for your attendance today. It being 11.45 am, that concludes this section.

**BATCHELOR, Dr Daud, Vice-President, Islamic Council of Queensland**

**TRAD, Mr Keysar, Board Member, Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (via videoconference)**

**CHAIR:** We now welcome our next representatives.

**Mr Trad:** I am Keysar Trad, a board member of the parent body for the Islamic Council of Queensland, which is called the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils. I am privy to the submission of the Islamic Council of Queensland and I have assisted in its preparation.

**Dr Batchelor:** I am Dr Daud Batchelor, Vice-President of the Islamic Council of Queensland. We are the organisation that made the submission with the assistance of Keysar Trad.

**CHAIR:** I invite you to make an opening statement.

**Dr Batchelor:** I will ask Keysar to make the opening statement and I will follow him.

**Mr Trad:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak to our submission. The legislation before this House attempts to solve complex social tensions. Criminalising language will not achieve this outcome. Rather, it will risk turning the political expression of law-abiding, nonviolent citizens into a crime. To understand the danger of this overreach, we must subject this bill to a necessary logic test—the *reductio ad absurdum*.

In the Islamic tradition, the word 'Israel' is the sacred nickname of the prophet Jacob, meaning 'the beloved' or 'the servant of God'. It is a word of holiness found throughout the Koran. However, for many Australians witnessing what is currently being described globally as a genocide and ethnic cleansing, that same word when associated with the modern state has taken a devastatingly offensive meaning. For those people, the word 'Israel' now invokes images of death, destruction and a profound sense of helplessness. If this parliament were asked to ban the word 'Israel' because it offends a decent person who opposes war crimes—and this includes many Jewish Australians—you would rightly see that as an absurdity and an infringement on speech. Unfortunately, this bill proposes to do exactly that to slogans like 'from the river to the sea'—a phrase that many in our community use not as a call to violence but as a cry for the very values this House strives to uphold: democracy, equal rights and freedom from occupation.

When we criminalise venting speech, we simply remove the democratic safety valve. We leave people feeling that the law is no longer a shield for all but a weapon used against those grieving from injustice. But this is not just a matter of logic; it is a matter of life and death. It was only last week, on Monday, 9 February 2026, that we saw horrific scenes of violence in Sydney against peaceful protesters including members of parliament and worshippers who had been granted police permission to pray. We are already operating in a highly charged Israelised atmosphere where the act of protesting war crimes is met with what can only be described as Third World brutality. To criminalise innocuous words and symbols in such a volatile climate tells law-abiding citizens to block their senses and remain silent over brazen acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing.

I do not speak these nuances to impress an audience; I speak them to impress upon this House the repressive dangers of these reflexive, rushed measures. Unlike other jurisdictions, Queensland is guided by the Human Rights Act 2019. Under section 21, every person has the right to freedom of expression. This bill, by creating subjective legal standards for offensive slogans, is fundamentally incompatible with that act. If we ban words based on the trauma they cause one group, consistency would require we ban words that cause trauma to our community as well. We do not seek more bans; we seek the protection of the safety valve of speech. Criminalising slogans and creating hate definitions that lack community consent is a recipe for social fracture. It does not bring healing and does not bring cohesion.

History is a stern teacher. It tells us that 'Votes for women' and 'Always was, always will be' were once radical and offensive slogans of their day. Had these words been criminalised then, our society would be poorer and less free today. We urge this committee to reject the temptation of rushed legislation that penalises identity and expression. We prefer to focus on laws that target actual incitement to physical violence rather than police vocabulary that is used by the oppressed. Thank you for giving me this time. I hand over to my colleague.

**Dr Batchelor:** *Dr Batchelor then spoke in a language other than English.* We are here today in relation to this proposed bill in response to the Bondi atrocities. I myself attended the memorial service in Brisbane City Hall in empathy with the victims of that atrocity. I believe we have to be careful that we do not circumscribe the rights of another important party in this whole consideration today. I will elaborate further on this topic.

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Firstly, I would like to address the term 'Semitic'. Historically, many Jews converted to the new religions of Christianity and Islam in the Middle East and so became Palestinian Arabs, so it is not surprising that studies by Eran Elhaik of Johns Hopkins University show that from DNA studies Palestinians are actually more Semitic than the Jews in general. Given that most genocide is perpetrated in Gaza by Israel and that the Palestinians are manifestly the oppressed party there, the position of Palestinians as Semites is at least as deserving as the Jews in equal treatment of this bill.

Australians must adhere to Australian values which are stressed during citizenship ceremonies: values of compassion, rule of law and a fair go, meaning justice. Equally, Australians, including respected committee members: I call on you to stand for the rights of the oppressed Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as the victims of the Bondi atrocity. We must stand for the oppressed victims whenever we can.

I would also like to address some of the phrases that are being discussed in terms of prohibition by this bill. In view of the fact that Israel is expanding openly and the acknowledged stealing of Palestinian lands in the West Bank, against international law, the Palestinians are totally entitled to seek allies in globalising the intifada to stop this infamous land grab. Further, the phrase 'From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free' likely refers to a future where Palestinians and Jews could live freely together in one unitarian state, not an apartheid state. This is a position of the respected Jewish political scientist Ilan Pappé. It does not mean the annihilation of Jews.

On the other hand, the Israeli occupation forces wear a shoulder patch to show they are fighting for the domination over all people in a greater Israel from the Euphrates river to the Nile River. This clearly indicates the eradication of the freedoms of Iraqis, Syrians, Lebanese and Egyptians and their states. Is the Queensland parliament accepting of the right of Israel to enforce that eradication of sovereignties?

I believe the government needs to ask guidance from independent Middle Eastern experts on the real meaning and relevance of these and other political slogans chanted in protest marches. We ask Queensland politicians to not just listen to one lobby group but consider the rights and freedoms of the oppressed people everywhere and the sacred freedoms of Queensland citizens in this beautiful country.

**CHAIR:** Thank you for coming today. I acknowledge the complexities that you have outlined of what is happening elsewhere in the world and also your commitment in your submission to combat violence, hate and anti-Semitism. With that in mind, would you accept that phrases can mean different things to different people and that if a phrase does invoke fear or hatred in somebody else it ought not be said?

**Dr Batchelor:** We say traditionally in Australia that Australians have different viewpoints and mention different phrases in valid discussions to make their point. This has always been the case. I believe that we should protect those freedoms to speak out and put our point of view forward. Obviously, sometimes not everyone is happy to hear those statements, but in reflection they might actually accept them later. Human beings should be open to new ideas, different ideas. Sometimes a statement is made in a pungent manner to try to get people to think about them. This is a good thing. I do not think we should reduce the bar so low that we have to wipe out political statements that are meant to make other people think deeply.

**Mr Trad:** If I may add, I respect that people might feel concerned, aggrieved, offended or even worried for their safety upon hearing an expression. However, as I noted in my opening comments, the word 'Israel' itself causes many in my community to feel that their humanity is being erased in the face of ethnic cleansing. If feeling under threat is the new legal threshold for banning words, then to be fair and consistent this House would have to ban the name of the state itself, which is not what we are advocating. There would be many, many words that would have to be banned under that particular view. What we are concerned about is that once we begin policing vocabulary based on subjective trauma we are no longer a parliament of laws but a parliament of perceptions.

**CHAIR:** In relation to vocabulary and words, the bill proposes to put some caveats around that in that the minister has to decide, in consultation with three bodies, that it is a phrase regularly used to incite violence, hatred and hostilities, I think it is, and then it has to be used in a manner—not just said—to feel menaced, harassed or offended. There are two thresholds that the words have to use. Would you accept that that is what the bill's intent is?

**Mr Trad:** We are really concerned that this will again be subject to subjective interpretations. Australian of the Year Grace Tame just used one of the phrases that is proposed to be banned. She did not do it with any intent to harass or intimidate; she was basically crying out for the rights of people who are suffering genocide. We have seen the backlash from lobby groups that are asking for her to be stripped of her Australian of the Year award.

The ridiculous nature or the absurdity of the situation is that on the one hand we have people who are being killed. We have Australians who have loved ones who have been killed in historic Palestine. On the other hand we have people aligning with those killers and saying that they are afraid of mere words—words that are used as a safety valve, as a venting mechanism—for people in Australia who end up feeling, ‘We’ve done something. We’ve got our message across.’ None of them are calling for violence. None of them are calling for hurting any other Australian, whether they are of Jewish background or any other background. None of them are saying that they are not entitled to have those feelings of alignment with a foreign state or empathy with a foreign state.

What we are saying is that there is a charged atmosphere and it seems that the bar has been taken very low. Yes, we might have some phrases that might appear to give a safety rail, but, again, it is subjective application. What we saw in New South Wales—and I know that is a different state—at the peaceful protest is that even members of the Legislative Council were either pepper sprayed or physically assaulted by officers who were there supposedly to protect them. So in this atmosphere we have to be really careful not to lose our political expression and not to criminalise this political expression. This political expression is no threat to Australian politics. We are talking about some hurt feelings as against people who are trying to scream out against genocide and ethnic cleansing.

If the words ‘from the river to the sea’ or ‘globalise the intifada’ make them feel that they vented and they have got their point across, they are not calling for violence. An intifada, if you are not familiar with that term, just means to shake something off. If that means to them to shake off the occupation, they are entitled to that feeling. They are entitled to want to be free from occupation. Some people locally may be offended, but in terms of criminalising offensive words—unless they are vilifying, which is already covered under law, or unless they are defamatory, which is already covered under law—we should not be going down that path. We should be protecting freedom of expression, as long as it does not breach our vilification or defamation laws and as long as it does not incite actual physical violence.

**Ms MULLEN:** Thank you, Mr Trad and Dr Batchelor. As the chair just said, phrases have different meanings to different people. The government has already announced that it will prescribe two expressions to be prohibited. From your submission it is clear that you do not agree that that threshold for prescribing has been met. Given the Attorney-General alone has to be satisfied, do you believe if this legislation proceeds there should be broader consultation with communities prior to any prohibited expressions being prescribed?

**Mr Trad:** Definitely there should be broader consultation before prescribing any expressions and there should be broader consultation about a number of factors, including determining a particular place of worship or particular places in terms of hate. We just need to be careful that we in Australia have prided ourselves on being so far ahead of repressive regimes that criminalise speech—that we are open, that we are happy to hear conflicting views and ideas. Our politicians walk freely in the streets and somebody can walk up to them and accuse them of a variety of things and the politician just brushes us off and says, ‘Yes, I’m a representative of the people’ and, ‘Let them have their say.’

This is the Australia that I grew up in. It is completely different to when I visit other countries where a politician has to have a number of guards around them—either a police escort or some other forms of guards—and that is because in those countries they have criminalised the safety valve. They have stopped people from being allowed to vent. I recall one politician saying to his car driver and to his associates, ‘Even if you hear the worst insults against me, do not react. Let people speak.’ That is the Australia that we know. This is the beauty of living in this country—the country of the fair go, the country where you have the right to speak and freedom of expression. Whilst I understand the grievance—I grieve for the loss of the families who are impacted by Bondi. If I was there, I believe that I would be another Ahmed Al Ahmed throwing myself in the path of the fire—

**CHAIR:** Thank you, sir. I am loath to cut you off, but I just wanted to get a couple more questions in if we can in the short amount of time we have.

**Ms MARR:** Before you were talking about phrases and you described them as new ideas or different ideas, but do you accept that these phrases or ideas, as you put it, contributed to significant anti-Semitism within Australia which ultimately led to the worst terror attack that our nation has ever seen?

**Mr Trad:** We still do not have enough information about the motivation behind the Bondi attacks and it is very unlikely that simple phrases would have motivated someone to go all the way from the western suburbs of Sydney to Bondi, which is the far east of Sydney—at least an hour and a half of travelling—carrying all these weapons. For them to know that there was this Jewish festival taking place at that time—I did not know, and I know a lot of things that are happening in the community. We still do not know. We need the police to find out exactly what happened. We need to know what

motivated this person and his father to do this. From what I have read so far, it is a young man who pressured his father into this, but we really do not know. We do not know what motivated these people. I do not believe that a simple innocuous phrase would have motivated them. I do not think they would understand—

**CHAIR:** Thank you, sir. I am loath to interrupt again, but we have run a little over time, so we thank you for your appearance today. We do have your extensive submission.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Might I put one very quick question?

**CHAIR:** If you can be very quick.

**Mr BERKMAN:** I will endeavour to make it quick. You might be aware that this bill expands the definition of 'prohibited symbols' to include symbols that are not listed in the regulation but have been used by a prescribed organisation or a member of such an organisation, noting that at various points in the conflict in occupied Palestine the use of the Palestinian flag was outlawed and so the watermelon became something of a symbol for that resistance. I am just looking for you to verify that because I am concerned that this addition could make the use of a symbol of a watermelon punishable by two years imprisonment. Is that the case?

**CHAIR:** If you could provide a very short answer, sir, that would be appreciated.

**Mr Trad:** Yes, this is of great concern, and it is the same with the ISIS flag. They hijacked an expression of faith—the unity of God. They hijacked it. They put it on their flag. The community should be consulted and asked what these things mean. We should not allow any terrorist group to claim anything that is used by a faith of two billion people and we should not wish it—

**CHAIR:** Thank you, sir, but we are going to have to move on. I appreciate your answer and appreciate your submission and for appearing here today. Thank you.

**Mr Trad:** Thank you, everyone.

**BOSCO NGENDAKURIO, Dr John, General Manager, Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland**

**WARD, Ms Lisa, Chief Executive Officer, Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland**

**CHAIR:** Welcome. I invite you to make an opening statement.

**Ms Ward:** Thank you, Chair and members of the committee. ECCQ has represented Queensland's multicultural communities for 50 years. ECCQ unequivocally supports strong and effective measures to address hate speech, hate conduct, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and all forms of racism and exclusion. No community in Queensland should experience fear, intimidation or violence because of their faith, ethnicity or nationality. We recognise that Jewish and Muslim communities are experiencing heightened fear. We also acknowledge that other multicultural communities are feeling the impact of global conflict and rising tensions. That reality must be acknowledged equally and consistently.

Effective reform must respond to both the need for protection and the need for fairness across all communities. Within the limited timeframe available, ECCQ undertook broad statewide consultations with community and faith leaders, multicultural organisations and schools, including Jewish, Muslim and Palestinian representatives. There was strong and consistent support for protecting people from harm. However, there were equally strong views about the importance of laws applying to all communities equally and not being perceived as directed towards one particular group. Concerns were raised about how the speech and symbolism provisions may be interpreted or applied in practice.

Leaders from some Muslim communities explicitly emphasised that they reject anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and all forms of bigotry. Their concern is not with protecting Jewish Queenslanders, which they support, but with the risk of selective treatment that could undermine equal protection and social cohesion. One Palestinian leader said, 'We see these laws as intended to either silence, scare or both.' He went on to state that Palestinian and Muslim communities reject all forms of racism and believe that exceptionalism in responding to racism is unjust and potentially detrimental to cohesion. We also heard from a Jewish community member who described the bill as an alarmist, reactionary and kneejerk response and warned that this approach risks increasing division rather than reducing it.

These voices reflect different perspectives but they share common concern: social cohesion must not be weakened. Laws of this nature must be neutral in design and consistent in application. At a time of heightened tensions, legislation must strengthen safety without unintentionally deepening division. Government has a unique responsibility to act as a stabilising force. Community and faith leaders are relied upon during crises to translate policy, calm tensions and reinforce civic norms. Trust in those leaders cannot be taken for granted. When consultation is limited, uncertainty grows and cohesion is put at risk.

Queensland already has substantial criminal and anti-discrimination power to address serious hate conduct and extremist symbols. Where offences rely on the reasonableness test linked to emotional impact, clarity of threshold is essential. Undefined standards, particularly where 'offended' sits alongside 'menaced' or 'harassed', risk inconsistent interpretation until clarified by the courts. In the interim, that uncertainty can itself cause harm.

We strongly support protection of places of worship. Attacks on religious institutions strike at safety, dignity and belonging. Strong penalties send an important signal. However, legislation must be clearly framed as protecting all communities equally. It must be accompanied by transparent guidance, monitoring of enforcement patterns and community education.

Addressing hate conduct is essential. However, the current trajectory expanding speech-based offences to applying Adult Crime, Adult Time classification risks casting an excessively wide net. In practice, this approach is likely to capture young people engaging in identity formation, political debate or responses to global conflict rather than the serious harm it seeks to prevent. Once criminalised, these consequences cannot be easily undone. Without genuine consultation and education, the bill risks doing lasting harm under the guise of protection. For these reasons, ECCQ recommends pausing the bill to undertake genuine culturally informed consultations with multicultural communities, faith leaders, youth stakeholders and human rights experts. Consultation is not procedural; it is stabilising. ECCQ stands ready to work constructively with government to ensure measures to combat hate are effective, proportionate, consistently applied and grounded in the long-term strength of Queensland's multicultural society. Thank you.

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**CHAIR:** Thank you, Ms Ward. If I could quote a media release from your organisation under your hand, it says—

The Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland ... welcomes the Queensland Government's proposed legislative reforms aimed at addressing antisemitism, hate-motivated conduct and threats to the safety of faith communities. ECCQ supports strong and decisive measures that protect people's right to live, worship and gather safely, and recognises the importance of tackling hate-driven intimidation, violence and extremist symbolism wherever it occurs.

Did you want to comment on that? Do you stand by those paragraphs?

**Ms Ward:** I do. The error we made when publishing that is we did not comment on the framing of the bill that we had. As I mentioned in my opening statements here, we strongly stand by the intent of the bill to reduce hate and eliminate racism as appropriate, but it has to be across all parts of our community. We actually withdrew that statement because of misinforming around the framing of it. We would like to clarify that today.

**CHAIR:** I think it is still on your website. I think somebody got it from there.

**Ms Ward:** We do not have it on our website. We never publish our media on websites. It is not there.

**CHAIR:** My apologies. I am probably wrong.

**Ms MULLEN:** In your submission you recommend, along with other multicultural organisations such as Multicultural Australia, Settlement Services International—well-regarded and respected organisations—that the government pauses the bill in order to conduct meaningful consultation. What is the greatest risk you see in rushing these proposed laws through the parliament without that meaningful engagement?

**Mr Bosco Ngendakurio:** The risk is lacking the voice of the multicultural community the bill is intending to protect, and when the government does not consult, then it is actually thinking and responding on behalf of the people without their voice, insights and ideas considered. Of course, we know that the issue of racism we should be intending to combat is rampant across all communities, not just one community. It is very important that all the voices are heard to actually capture all perspectives. Rushing the bill then does not give the opportunity to the people the bill is potentially intending to protect and all of the people in the community, rather than targeting one community.

**Mr FIELD:** Do you agree that the proposed amendments are designed to protect persons—all persons—at places of worship to allow those people of all faiths to practise religion safely?

**Ms Ward:** I think the way the law is designed, and for the limited time we have had to understand the law and not being a lawyer, overall I think that is the intent, but the framing of the introduction of this law and having certain symbols and certain slogans—it frames it that it is directed to a particular community.

**Ms MULLEN:** Within your submission you reference prevention and early intervention in addressing all forms of racism, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. What would ECCQ, as the peak body for multicultural communities in Queensland, like the government to progress in this space?

**Ms Ward:** I am happy for my colleague to expand on this. We have done a lot of work with government over the past years on identifying ways that we can reduce racism and hate, particularly in our schools. It is something that we hear from our communities an awful lot. Education and consultation on this is essential if we are to get that right, but we also need frameworks and ways that people can raise this in a safe way. We are not asking for new systems. I think the systems and the frameworks already exist. It is just that the requirements and the definitions that sit around them are absent. So education and consultation.

**Mr Bosco Ngendakurio:** I think the government has been listening over the years, and different governments as well. What we are lacking is actually the action by the government to progress some of the discussions we have had. There have been good discussions with the government, but we do not see the tangible actions to tackle the issue of racism meaningfully. As the ECCQ, we have been working with the community leaders, parents, students and school communities to see what we can do within our means to address and reduce racism in schools, but there is minimal involvement by the government. Yes, the government has been listening, and listening carefully, but we cannot see tangible action. We want them on board to be able to progress some of the good discussions we have had.

**Ms MARR:** Remembering that this legislation has come about from the Bondi attack, and the intention of the bill is to keep all of our communities safe. You were saying in your statement that tough legislation sends a real message, and you would have to agree that the message we are sending is that anti-Semitism is not going to be tolerated in Queensland. Do you agree that the new laws will better protect ministers of all religions and all faiths to be able to conduct ceremonies and to have events?

**Ms Ward:** Again, I do not have a concern with protecting people of all religions, all faiths, all ethnicities—that is not our point. Our concern is around the framing of this, and that is doing harm at the moment because it is singling out particularly one community group as though they are the ones that we are trying to protect them from.

**Ms MARR:** So you do not think this bill protects all Queenslanders?

**Ms Ward:** Yes, I do. I said it is around the framing of the implementation and the introduction of this and the actual limit of the number of slogans and symbols that have been put forward at the moment.

**Mr BERKMAN:** I really appreciate your time here today. I refer back to your comments about particularly the importance of wide consultation amongst multicultural communities and, I think you said, the importance that these laws are neutral in design and consistent in application. You might be aware that we have not, in this public hearing, heard any Palestinian voices directly. Do you have any concerns or comments about that in terms of how it might affect the parliament's understanding of the laws and the consequences for that community?

**Ms Ward:** I mentioned before that we have been doing statewide consultation and various comments and concerns have been raised, including from leaders within the Palestinian community, the Jewish community and also broader multicultural communities, and the way that this bill has been introduced—we are hearing the same consistent view that it itself has created a level of fear. We have a number of our multicultural organisations at the moment doing welfare checks for newly arrived refugees, for example, that do not come from Palestine or are not from Jewish background; however, there is this rhetoric and conversation that is going around in the media, and that is what is causing harm and it is because of the way it is framed. I think everyone should have an opportunity to be heard. The limited consultation around this process is completely inadequate and we should have an opportunity for all groups to be heard.

**CHAIR:** Have the Jewish communities expressed how the last couple of years has made them feel in terms of chants of certain slogans et cetera? If certain slogans, terms or phrases are interpreted by certain groups as racist or oppressive or incite hatred, ought they not be said?

**Ms Ward:** With regard to the consultations we had with Jewish members, I would just like to say that a lot of the people actually approached us as we were consulting. They heard we were consulting and we did have a number of Jewish people come forward. They did not raise that in particular. What they were worried about was, yes, the number of haters has certainly increased over the past few years and it has certainly increased since the events in Bondi; however, they are actually concerned about the way this is being conducted. This is going to amplify it even more, and that was their strong message. Their strong message was that they are scared for their children in schools.

**CHAIR:** We certainly heard a lot of evidence from the Jewish community about that fear. It being 12.25 pm, that concludes this session. Thank you very much for attending today and for giving evidence before the committee.

**PARK, Mr Graham, National President, Shooters Union Australia**

**CHAIR:** Welcome. I invite you to make an opening statement, thank you, sir.

**Mr Park:** Essentially, we welcome the opportunity to present to this committee. Broadly speaking, we support any measures that genuinely work to keep firearms out of the hands of criminals, terrorists—people like that. We are part of the community. No-one wants that. We welcome a number of parts of this bill and I think it would be fair to say that we welcome the stated intent of the bill. It represents a more targeted approach than sometimes is seen in firearms legislation, and we have worked with that all around the country. In so doing, we welcome certain aspects of it, such as increased penalties for people stealing or selling, receiving stolen firearms and illegally trafficking in them. We have seen so many times over the years where they have literally had a slap on the wrist or the charges have been dropped when at the same time the legal owners of those firearms are sometimes harassed instead of being treated as the victims of crime that they are. We welcome this emphasis and we also welcome some of the other things in it.

We have presented in our submission some refinements that I think could be addressed. The reason they are raised is simply that there has not been an opportunity previously, so we are putting them in this arena and then hopefully we can work through to government and get to a practical solution that is able to be administered properly from the government side and from the administrative side but is also fair to the 230,000 licensed firearm owners across Queensland. We are going to keep any of our comments restricted to the firearms issues—the issues around the Weapons Act—because we are not really set up to comment on some of the issues that the other groups have been doing. It does not mean individuals do not have opinions, but it is just that we have a very narrow interest of focus. I am happy to take any questions you may have.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Mr Park. In your submission you raise concerns around the new provisions of blueprints for 3D printing. The provision itself bans blueprints that are intended for a 3D printer or an electric milling machine. Why do you have concerns? Why would somebody legitimately need that material?

**Mr Park:** We agree with the intent. It is already illegal in Queensland to manufacture a firearm with what is called an armourer's licence. It is already illegal. What this does is highlight a growing area of technology and seeks to clarify that. We have no problem with that. It is merely that we think somewhere in there potentially it needs to address intent. You ask: why would people access it? Well, a lot of people who work in the firearms trade—in shops, in gunsmith places—have employees that they will say, 'Go access this. Go access that.' In the digital age, it is very common for them to be looking at blueprints of different things to look at ways of changing them and things in a normal, legitimate part of their business. The boss might have the licence and some of those employees may not, so there are little concerns about that. I will say that it is much more correctly targeted than legislation around blueprints I have looked at in other jurisdictions—and I congratulate the government on that—but I think there is scope for a little bit of tweaking.

**CHAIR:** It does specify blueprints specifically for 3D printing and electronic milling, which ordinarily a firearms dealer would not deal with, I would not have thought.

**Mr Park:** No, except that a number of firearms dealers have armourers onsite and it is becoming more and more common to 3D-manufacture parts or accessories and in so doing you have to look at how that part or accessory will fit in the whole thing.

**CHAIR:** They 3D-print these?

**Mr Park:** Yes. For example, it may be an older firearm that parts are not available for and there may be a non-critical part that could be made. They would then look at the blueprints. It is just a little bit of a grey area. I do not see it as an end-of-the-world issue. I think it is targeted, but I think adding an intent part or clarifying it would help. It would be very small. It would not undermine the intent of what the government is trying to do.

**Ms McMAHON:** For example, if you want to 3D-print a customised grip for a particular weapon, you need the full specs of the weapon to be able to manufacture the grip.

**Mr Park:** Yes, unless you had one that was specifically for that. If it is an older or obscure one you may not, so they may use that as a reference point.

**Ms McMAHON:** That can be quite specific in competition shooting.

**Mr Park:** Yes. When you get to Olympic level, the tiniest little thing might give you a 10th of a second or a 10th of a point and it becomes quite critical, just as it does in any Olympic arena.

**Ms McMAHON:** Going back to your opening statement, I take it from the amount of recommendations you have made—and you had say that you had had good discussions previously but there are still a few things—that your organisation was not necessarily consulted in the preparation of these amendments?

**Mr Park:** No, we had not met with the minister for several months before Bondi. We see this as our opportunity. We obviously jumped on it as soon as it came out and we have had our legal people looking at it. I think it is only with the input of user groups that you can sort of fine-tune things.

**Ms McMAHON:** People have made commentary in relation to firearm prohibition orders. Your submission states that the 'Shooters Union Australia has consistently expressed concern regarding the breadth of Firearm Prohibition Order powers'. Can you give us an idea of what those concerns are and why, and how does the bill feed those concerns?

**Mr Park:** We raised concerns originally when the concept was introduced in Queensland in the community safety bill. Our concerns are based around what we have seen in other jurisdictions, not about the intent. The intent is to keep seriously bad people from accessing firearms. We all agree on that. What we have seen in other jurisdictions, especially in New South Wales, has been a misuse of this, especially against Indigenous communities and sometimes disadvantaged people like homeless people at times. It has been used as a tool there—not here—outside its intended area and I think with serious consequences to public confidence in how that should be done.

**Ms MARR:** What is your and your organisation's view of the government's proposal to lift the penalty for stealing firearms from 10 to 14 years, amongst other increased penalties?

**Mr Park:** We think it is a very good idea. We have actually lobbied both sides of parliament for this for more than a decade—not for those specific numbers but to increase the emphasis on it. We think it is critical. In fact, we have an internal plan where, once this legislation goes through, we are going to print and hand out to our members a bumper sticker style thing and suggest they put it on their gun safe saying, 'Steal a gun, spend 14 years in jail. Is it worth it?'—something along those lines. We want to highlight it. We think it is critical and we think it should be taken seriously. Legitimate firearm owners have to treat that very strongly or we lose our licence. I think most people, whilst we might argue about little bits of it, support the general concept of keeping them out of the hands of bad people. The best way to do that is: if they are robbing a house and they say, 'Will I take the TV or take the guns?' let them take the TV. If we can discourage them that little bit more, I think it is a worthwhile effort.

**Ms McMAHON:** The other aspect of the bill that I am interested in is in relation to the change to the storage requirements. How many firearms owners, perhaps anecdotally, would you be aware are going to be impacted by these changes? What would be the average cost to one of your members to upgrade to that?

**Mr Park:** We do not have hard data on the number of people with wooden storage. It has never been specified. However, I would estimate it would be less than five per cent. That is anecdotal, but I think it is pretty fair comment. I would be very surprised if it is more than that. Going to the cost, you are looking at probably—depending on how many firearms they have, and normally someone who has a larger amount already has steel because they are more focused on security—I would say, between \$500 and \$1,000.

**Ms McMAHON:** We have heard from previous submitters about the inconsistency of storage requirements between states, particularly if you are a competition shooter and you come into Queensland or vice versa. What is your organisation's take on national standards around storage and the role there should be around national storage standards?

**Mr Park:** While there are differences, overall they are quite similar. To my knowledge, Queensland was the last state that had specific wood in there. We have not had a problem with that; we just did not want to see people financially disadvantaged. So long as there is a grace period so that people can adapt to that, that is fine. The part that we have had a problem with—and it goes to inconsistency at some level—is that in Queensland there is a leftover piece in the legislation, which was left from the days before 1996 when you did not have to lock up category A and B firearms. You could just put them in the cupboard. When you did that, you had to take the bolt out as a safety feature because they were really just sitting in a corner. When the new act was done, most states took that out because you had to go in the safe, because it is absolutely pointless at that point to take it out and put it next to it or open it. Queensland did not. It left in there. We have always lobbied for: if we are going to go to steel safes and lift the whole standard and have a more standardised area, we should immediately at the same time—and we put it in our submission—eliminate the requirement to remove the bolt or open the action. I would suggest that no highly competitive target shooter complies right

now because within six months you will destroy the springs in the gun to the point where you may get misfires. In a competition that means potential losing. In an agricultural situation or a hunting situation that could be life threatening. There is an old saying that the loudest sound you will ever hear is when you expect a bang and you get the click, especially if a pig is coming towards you. There is a safety factor in getting rid of it, because many bolts in bolt action firearms that are made by the same company are visually almost identical, but there are many thousands of differences that could result in you putting the wrong bolt in the gun and it exploding. We had a former inspector in charge of weapons branch who went to the range at Belmont and took the wrong bolt. He said it was only by the grace of God that he realised just before he was trying to chamber a round that he had picked up the wrong bolt. Leaving them in helps with that. The spring side helps with the safety. With increasing the level of security to steel, I think it is time to upgrade that as well.

**Mr FIELD:** I understand you are the national president.

**Mr Park:** I am also the Queensland president.

**Mr FIELD:** You would have had feedback from your members throughout the country.

**Mr Park:** Yes.

**Mr FIELD:** What feedback have you had on this bill compared with other states?

**Mr Park:** We have had extremely good feedback. We have been in very close consultation with our members since Bondi, both in Queensland and around the country. I would say our members in New South Wales would be—'livid' is the word that comes to mind. The next election might highlight some of that, but we will see. The members in Queensland I think see pretty much what we see. They do not mind the concept of where it is going. They see the focus. However, they see some minor things, especially around the citizenship area. Our belief is that that should be potentially expanded to be citizens and permanent residents. We think there are a whole lot of New Zealanders in Queensland who can just fly over here and move here, just like we can fly to New Zealand and move there without any paperwork constraints, who are essentially citizens but they are not. I think the government has done a great job with carve-outs for those exemptions. However, potentially we would agree with the Queensland Police Union's position that expanding that a little bit to be citizens and permanent residents is an idea worth considering.

**Ms McMAHON:** In line with that, are you aware of how many members may be impacted who are either New Zealand or perhaps UK citizens who might be affected by this? In terms of a transition provision, it costs a lot of money to become a citizen, regardless of whether you are a permanent resident or not. Do you have any idea of the impact on some of your members?

**Mr Park:** To be fair, for existing licensees I think the impact would be tiny because of the exemptions. However, for newer people getting them I think it will become more of an issue. The government has also said that, for anyone with a current Queensland firearms licence, it will still be valid until the end of its term. Someone may have two, three, four or five years left on their licence before they have to act, which would be time to become a citizen. However, there is just an element of fairness. We do not see why that little bit of expansion could not be handled. There is an exemption in there for target shooting, competition and sports shooting with clubs, and another one for occupational. The occupational is critical because that addresses agriculture, which does employ a lot of people who are not citizens. I know of at least four gun shop owners in Queensland who are not citizens. They are permanent residents. Some of them have been in business over 20 years. The carve-out addresses that and I thank the government for that.

Let us say you are a New Zealander and you have your exemption for target shooting but you are also currently a licensed collector. They have not put that in. There are ways of working around that. That is one of the reasons I think the Police Union had the same view. You could theoretically have a licence for one area and then not have another licence, which already had a higher standard, by the way, to reach. Collectors have generally invested \$15,000 or \$20,000 just in safe storage. If you do not want to expand that then maybe include that once you have a licence in one area you can also get a licence for the other. That gets into the technicality of how you write it. I think the intent is fine; it is just cleaning up a couple of little things.

**CHAIR:** That concludes this hearing. Thank you to everyone who has participated today. Thank you to our Hansard reporters. A transcript of these proceedings will be available on the committee's webpage in due course. I declare the public hearing closed.

**The committee adjourned at 12.45 pm.**