

Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026

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Office of the Victims' Commissioner

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Submission to the Justice, Integrity and
Community Safety Committee 17/02/2026

Commissioner's introduction

The Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026 (the Bill) aims to stamp out antisemitism and prevent the misuse of firearms by terrorists and criminals.

The Bill has been introduced by the Queensland Government following the 14 December 2025 Bondi Beach terrorist attack, when two gunmen opened fire on the attendees and others at a Hanukkah celebration. This mass shooting tragically killed 15 individuals, including a 10-year-old child and has sparked a national debate on how to build community cohesion, prevent religious hate and tighten laws regulating firearms.

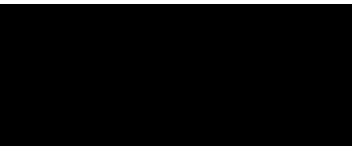
I acknowledge and recognise the victims of this horrific crime, their families, communities, advocates and supporters. The hurt caused to the Australian Jewish community by this crime is deep and will be ongoing. I want to acknowledge the strength, courage, resilience and vulnerabilities of the individuals, families and communities impacted and support their right to lead lives free from fear. Listening to the voices of the Jewish community and other faith-based communities is vital to shaping responses that meet their needs.

To the loved ones of those who have died, I offer my condolences and acknowledge the ongoing hurt and pain you experience.

We all, as a part of Australia's vibrant multifaith and diverse community, have a responsibility to acknowledge this harm and provide the support needed to our neighbours.

I welcome the Government's commitment to addressing antisemitic hate speech and the misuse of firearms. This submission seeks to provide insights about complementary reforms that may assist in achieving the purposes of the Bill:

1. The application of the Charter of Victims' Rights to the proposed new offences
2. The opportunity to consider the benefits of Community Impact Statements
3. The potential benefits of transparency through providing access to Magistrates Court transcripts.



Kate Connors
Victims' Commissioner

Role of the Victims' Commissioner

The role of the Victims' Commissioner is established under the *Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Act 2024 (Qld)* (VCSVRB Act). My role is to protect and promote the rights and needs of victims of crime. My statutory functions include:

- Providing information to victims of crime to help them navigate the criminal justice system
- Dealing with complaints under the Charter of Victims' Rights
- Conducting systemic reviews
- Listening to victims to hear about their own, lived experiences
- Advocating for victims' rights by making recommendations and providing advice to government and non-government entities about improvements to policy, practices, procedures and systems to uphold the rights of victims and better meet their needs.
- Monitoring the implementation of recommendations.

Under section 6 of the VCSVRB Act, a victim includes a person who suffers harm because a criminal offence (including domestic violence) is committed against the person. This includes:

- people who have a criminal offence committed against them directly
- family members or dependants of a person who has a criminal offence committed against them
- people who are harmed because they helped another person who had a criminal offence committed against them
- witnesses of crimes.¹

The VCSVRB Act defines harm as including physical, psychological or emotional harm, damage to or loss of property, and financial or economic loss.² This definition recognises the range of impacts that a crime can have on an individual.

Summary of reforms

The Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026 includes amendments to the *Criminal Code Act 1899*, the

¹ *Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Act 2024 (Qld)* s 6.

² *Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Act 2024 (Qld)* s 6.

Weapons Act 1990 (Qld) and the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 (Qld)*. The reforms proposed in the Bill include:

- strengthening hate speech provisions in the Criminal Code
- providing stronger penalties and protections for faith communities through stronger and new offences in the Criminal Code
- making citizenship mandatory for firearm ownership
- inserting other new offences into the Criminal Code and *Weapons Act 1990*
- increasing penalties for certain weapons offences
- facilitating a broader range of covert controlled operations by police.

Overall, these reforms will have broad impacts and implications for our community as a whole, but particularly for the Jewish community and other faith-based communities in Queensland.

Application of the Charter of Victims' Rights to proposed new offences

The Charter of Victims' Rights (the Charter) is set out in schedule 1 of the VCSVRB Act. The Charter describes the way in which a victim of violent crime should be treated, as far as practicable and appropriate, by government and non-government entities. It sets out the rights of an affected victim³ that are to be upheld by prescribed persons⁴ when dealing with the victim.

The Charter only applies to victims of 'relevant offences' defined as:

- an offence against the person of someone
- a domestic violence offence within the meaning of the Criminal Code, Section 1

³*Affected victim* includes a person who has suffered personal harm because of a violent crime or domestic and family violence committed against them, a family member or dependant of that person or a person who dies as a result of the offence, a person who is harmed when intervening to help another person who is harmed or dies because of the offence. See s 38 and 39 of the *Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Act 2024 (Qld)* for more detail.

⁴ Prescribed person includes government entities, and non-government entities that are funded by government to provide support to victims as its primary function (section 40 and Schedule 2 *Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Act 2024*).

- an offence against the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012*, section 177(2), 178(2) or 179(2)
- an offence of attempting to commit, or conspiring to commit, one of the above offences.⁵

The Bill proposes the introduction of several new offences, namely:

- the recital, distribution, publication or display of prohibited expressions (Clause 7)
- the unlawful possession and distribution of blueprint material for manufacture of 3D printed firearms (Clause 74)
- the reckless discharge of weapons towards a premises, dwelling or a vehicle (Clause 68).

I note that these new offences *are unlikely* to be considered offences against the person and therefore the Charter will not apply to them. These new offences nevertheless may cause harm (such as psychological or emotional harm, property damage or destruction, or financial or economic loss) to a person. Further, these offences may be harmful to a broader community.

Some of the proposed new or amended offences *are likely* to be considered offences against the person, namely:

- assaults of ministers of religion (Clause 8)
- intimidating or obstructing persons entering or leaving places of religious worship (Clause 8).

In relation to the proposed offence: 'Preparation or planning to cause death or grievous bodily harm' (Clause 13), it is unclear whether this would be charged in relation to a specific person, or a potential person. If the intention is for this to be charged in relation to a potential person (as opposed to a specific person), then it is unlikely to be considered an offence against the person. The Committee may like to consider if further clarification is required in its inquiry into this Bill.

Review of the Charter of Victims' Rights

In February 2025, my office commenced a systemic review of the Charter of Victims' Rights, pursuant to my functions under section 9(a) of the VCSVRB Act. The review aims to ensure the Charter of Victims' Rights effectively promotes and protects the rights of

⁵ *Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Act 2024* (Qld) s39.

diverse victims of crime, in line with recommendations by the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce⁶ and the Queensland Parliament’s Legal Affairs and Safety Committee’s Inquiry into support provided to victims of crime.⁷

One of the key questions engaged in throughout the review is whether the Charter of Victims’ Rights should be expanded to other types of offences, such as offences against property.

The review will be informed by engagement with victims of crime, their advocates, family members and professionals who work with victims of crime. I will provide a report to the Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support and Minister for Corrective Services by December 2026. More information about the review can be found on my office’s [website](#).

Importance of community impact statements

Healing from trauma is a deeply personal process, with each victim of crime having their own individual needs. For crimes that target communities or faith groups, the harm may be felt at a collective level, with entire communities having their own emergent needs for support and healing. There is significant benefit in having mechanisms which allow for communities to collectively express their needs and voice how a crime has caused harm in the sentencing process.

Community Impact Statements provide an opportunity for a community to tell the court about the harm or loss suffered by that community because of an offence. They can be useful in highlighting the harm caused to victims who do not have a voice in proceedings because of the type of offence, because they have not been identified or because they have not elected to make individual victim impact statements.

Community Impact Statements are utilised in sentencing considerations in jurisdictions such as South Australia⁸ and Canada.⁹ The South Australian provision enables the Commissioner for Victims’ Rights to provide a sentencing court with a neighbourhood impact statement, about the effect of the offence on people living or working in the location, or a social impact statement about the effect of the offence in the community generally. For example, South Australian community impact statements have focussed on child exploitation material offences. In Canada, Community Impact Statements can be

⁶ Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce. *Hear her voice: Women and girls’ experiences across the criminal justice system* (Report 2, 2021) 14.

⁷ Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, *Inquiry into support provided to victims of crime* (Report No. 48 to 57th Parliament, 2023) vi.

⁸ Sentencing Act 2017 (SA) s 15.

⁹ Criminal Code R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46 (Canada) s 722.2.

prepared by any person from the community harmed, including community or religious organisations or cities.

Legislation enabling Community Impact Statements requires the consideration of sensitive and complex matters, noting the potential for varying impacts on community members. The mechanisms and guardrails around any such statements should be developed in deep consultation with various Queensland communities.

I note the Queensland Government's commitment to undertaking a review of the Victim Impact Statement regime,¹⁰ and look forward to engaging with Government as it undertakes the review.

The Committee may like to consider, in its inquiry into this Bill, how Community Impact Statements may assist in achieving the purposes of the Bill.

Increasing transparency through Magistrates Court transcripts

Some of the proposed new or amended offences in the Bill that relate to strengthening hate speech provisions and providing stronger penalties and protections for faith communities are likely to be heard in a Magistrates Court. Relevant offences include:

- the recital, distribution, publication or display of prohibited expressions (Clause 7 of the Bill and proposed new s 52DA)
- the distribution, publication or display of prohibited symbols (Clause 6 of the Bill and proposed amended s 52D)
- assaults of ministers of religion (Clause 8 of the Bill and proposed replaced s 206 – replacing 'offering violence to officiating ministers of religion')
- intimidating or obstructing persons entering or leaving places of religious worship (Clause 8 of the Bill and proposed new s 206A).

When these offences are prosecuted, there is likely to be significant interest from members of the faith-based groups affected by the offending. There is also likely to be a desire for media and public scrutiny of the processes that hold persons committing these offences accountable.

¹⁰ Queensland, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 20 May 2025, 1208 (Deborah Frecklington, Attorney-General).

While the Supreme Court Library publishes Supreme and District Court sentencing remarks, it does not publish Magistrates Court sentencing remarks. This means that few sentencing remarks dealing with offences heard summarily are published.

Improved access to sentencing remarks would assist the community to understand how persons offending against faith-groups have been held accountable. Further, improved access to sentencing remarks by the media, for example, will also provide greater judicial accountability and may improve community awareness contributing to social cohesion.¹¹

To enable this, the Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support and the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Integrity could explore options with the Chief Magistrate of Queensland to facilitate the increased timely publication of Magistrates Court of Queensland sentencing remarks to enhance judicial accountability, and the visibility and awareness of sentencing outcomes for victims and the community.

¹¹ Kate Warner, Julia Davis and Helen Cockburn, 'The Purposes of Punishment: How Do Judges Apply a Legislative Statement of Sentencing Purposes?' (2017) 41 Criminal Law Journal 69, 69-85 <https://www.utas.edu.au/data/assets/pdf/0020/1223831/The-Purposes-of-Punishment-How-Do-Judges-Apply-a-Legislative-Statement-of-Sentencing-Purposes.pdf>