

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

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AUSTRALIA**
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**Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns Out of
the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals
Amendment Bill 2026**

February 2026

17 February 2026

Committee Secretariat
Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee

Electronic Submission

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

Multicultural Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee addressing the *Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026*.

Multicultural Australia acknowledges the context and policy objectives to this legislative reform. The deadly and tragic events of terrorism and mass shooting on 14 December 2025 were a direct attack on Australia's Jewish community – and, as noted in the explanatory notes to the Bill, these events followed rising levels of antisemitic and other hate speech, violence and extremism in Australia. We note the purpose of the Bill is to address antisemitism and prevent the misuse of firearms by terrorists and criminals, by amending the Criminal Code, Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, Weapons Act 1990 and other relevant legislation.

All jurisdictions in Australia have committed to strengthen our legislative and policy response to these developments – and we welcome the Queensland Government's commitment to combat antisemitism and address terrorist-motivated offending.

Multicultural Australia has a strong commitment to strengthening legal protections that will support Queensland communities to live safely and peacefully and protect and foster diversity. Through our work, we are deeply committed to advancing multiculturalism and building inclusive communities where everyone belongs. Multicultural Australia was at the forefront of multicultural community initiatives that led significant legislative reforms on serious vilification and hate crimes.

As the Queensland Government works to provide an adequate response to ensure tragic events such as 14 December 2025 are not repeated, we call for a measured, consultative approach that seeks to address all forms of hatred and harm in collaboration with communities.

Multicultural Australia remains concerned that this significant legislative reform is being afforded very limited consultation time. The scope of proposed change is not commensurate to the consideration time permitted. In providing this submission, we reflect the concerns shared with us by members of Queensland's diverse multicultural communities – including members from new and emerging communities. We hope the Committee will acknowledge these concerns through its consultation.

We remain deeply committed to supporting the Committee as it progresses its consultations. We would be happy to support with any further information, as required.

Sincerely,



Jo Nelson

CEO, Multicultural Australia

Introduction

Multicultural Australia supports strong responses to combat hatred and hate speech in our communities. Through our long-standing engagement with diverse multicultural communities across Queensland, we have seen first-hand the harm caused by racial vilification and hate speech, including their role in escalating violent extremism and racially motivated violence.

We acknowledge the *Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026* is in response to the devastating attacks on the Jewish community on 14 December 2025.

We note the objectives of the Bill and its significant scope and coverage.

In recognition of the significance of the proposed reforms, Multicultural Australia raised this for community awareness and discussion at the regular Community Leaders' Gathering (CLG) held at Multicultural Australia on 11 February 2026. The CLG is a regular monthly forum for and by community leaders and representatives from new and emerging communities in Southeast Queensland. CLG members lead discussions on issues of concern and collectively work to address challenges in their settlement in Australia.

Multicultural Australia's response highlights community concerns on the Bill, as raised in discussion at the CLG meeting.

Multicultural Australia's Response

In response to release of the Bill and call for consultation, Community Leaders voiced the following concerns:

- A lack of appropriate time to engage in consultation on the Bill
- Issues contained within the Bill are of great significance to their communities and require appropriate timeframe for community response
- Scope of the Bill is extensive – containing multiple issues (compounding the issue of the tight timeframe for response as each issue requires community engagement and consultation)
- Focus of the Bill is on one cultural group.

Furthermore, Multicultural Australia would like to note that the current consultation process is extremely short – and does not allow for appropriate opportunity to engage or consult on the intended reform.

Acknowledging the intent of the Bill is to address antisemitism, community concerns around the enforcement of the legislation and impact on other cultural communities, requires further consideration. Multicultural Australia notes the significant community consultations that preceded the development of Queensland's current serious vilification and hate crimes framework.

It is our position that community engagement is vital to the creation of workable, enforceable laws that will achieve their desired purpose.

Key areas of proposed change:

Protecting Places of worship: We note changes include introduction of new offences for impeding or harassing people from attending religious services and for wilful damage to a place of worship. We note increased penalties for threatening a person officiating a religious ceremony.

Multicultural Australia supports laws that support religious communities to express and practice their faith – and welcomes the protections afforded to all faith communities.

Tackling terrorist symbols and restricting terrorist slogans: Queensland currently has strong criminal offence provisions against the public distribution, publication or display of a prescribed prohibited symbol in circumstances where a reasonable person would expect the conduct to cause menace, harassment or offence.

In our submission to the *Criminal Code (Serious Vilification and Hate Crimes) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023*, Multicultural Australia welcomed the introduction of this provision. At that time, we noted a requirement for consultation to precede any listing of a prohibited symbol – and for consultation to encompass the views of relevant communities.

We understand that the Bill seeks to introduces a new offence prohibiting the public distribution, publication, display or recitation of prescribed phrases intended to cause menace, harassment or offence, including “*globalise the intifada*” and “*from the river to the sea*”. We acknowledge there is strong demand to ban similar slogans as a response to address antisemitism. At the same time, we acknowledge that there are contested interpretations and variations to the use of these phrases in community and public advocacy. We note these matters have been are under discussion and consideration in other jurisdictions and the contested meanings of certain phrases were acknowledged.

MA invites the Committee to consider the implications flowing from the Bill in the hope to avoid a narrow or selective approach.

Additional considerations:

Multicultural Australia has always maintained a position that community response to proposed legislative reforms is critical. Understanding of the legislative changes, and public faith and confidence in the laws, is vital.

Appropriate engagement with community in any lead-up to legislative changes should be followed through with a wide-ranging implementation process that includes communication, education, resourcing, and a carefully planned and staged lead-in time. In addition to addressing appropriate consultation on the proposed Bill and its measures, we have also consistently supported a call for greater focus on community cohesion approaches through the Queensland Government. This includes understanding and addressing underlying drivers of hatred and violence.

We invite the Committee to consider the issues raised in this submission and would welcome opportunity for further discussion.