

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

Submission No: 243
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Statement of Opposition

I strongly oppose this Bill.

Antisemitism, racism and threats of violence are real and must be addressed. Jewish Queenslanders deserve safety and dignity, as does every community.

But the response must be effective, targeted and consistent with democratic freedoms. Legislation that reaches beyond genuine incitement and begins to capture political language, protest slogans or controversial viewpoints risks undermining the very rights Parliament is meant to protect.

In its current form, the Bill threatens to narrow the space for lawful advocacy and public debate, particularly regarding Palestine, foreign policy and human rights.

Key Concerns

1. Criminalising contested political expression

The proposed framework risks turning disagreement and protest into matters for police attention. Words can be interpreted differently depending on context; criminal law requires clarity, not ambiguity.

2. A chilling effect far beyond extremists

When ordinary people cannot tell where the legal boundary lies, they step back from participation altogether. Students, unions, faith groups and community organisations may avoid lawful events simply to reduce risk.

3. Expansion of state power without clear necessity

Queensland already has offences covering incitement to violence, threats and harassment. The case for why new speech crimes are required has not been convincingly made.

4. Equality before the law

Restrictions that are perceived to shield some political positions more than others can weaken confidence that the law is applied impartially.

5. Future misuse

History shows that once governments are granted broader authority to police expression, those powers can be used in ways never originally promised.

Conclusion

Protecting communities from hate is essential. So is protecting the democratic freedom to speak, protest and advocate peacefully.

These goals are not in conflict, but they require legislation that is tightly drafted, demonstrably necessary, and accompanied by strong safeguards.

I urge the Committee to recommend substantial amendment to ensure the Bill cannot be used to penalise lawful political communication or peaceful solidarity actions.

Queenslanders should not have to choose between safety and freedom.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Regards,

Pedro Torres Da Costa