

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

Submission No: 261

Submission By: Christine McClafferty

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TO THE QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY JUSTICE, INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Re: Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns Out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026 (Qld).

Statement of Opposition:

My name is Christine Mary McClafferty and I am a resident of Queensland. I am making this Statement of Opposition because I strongly oppose the newly introduced *Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns Out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026*, at least in its current form. I unequivocally oppose all forms of racism and bigotry including antisemitism. The Australian Jewish community is a diverse community, both religiously and politically, and deserves protection from genuine hatred and discrimination. However, legislation that singles out one ethnic or religious group risks being discriminatory in and of itself and may ultimately undermine its stated objective.

Key Concerns

- The increase in antisemitism must be understood in the broader context of the Israel-Palestine conflict, a global phenomenon rather than an issue unique or confined to Queensland or more broadly Australia. The proposed amendments do not address this underlying reality and are therefore unlikely to achieve its stated purpose.
- Many Australians who are witnessing events that violate the human rights of the Palestinian people feel powerless to influence a just outcome. Restricting political speech in this context risks exacerbating frustration and disengagement rather than fostering social cohesion.
- The only power available to me and other Australians is our voice in what is a time-sensitive conflict. I believe this law infringes on my right to freedom of expression and opinion - a right implied by our Australian Constitution, and the protections under international law—specifically The Human Rights Act and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- While the Bill seeks to protect Jewish Australians, it fails to adequately recognise or represent other affected communities, including Palestinian Australians, Palestinian refugees or Muslims more broadly. This imbalance is concerning, particularly given documented increases in Islamophobia and the absence of comparable protections awarded to them and other minorities.

- Media and political discourse frequently employ imprecise and unequal language when describing the Israel-Palestine conflict, contributing to perceptions of bias and marginalisation. This Bill may reinforce such perceptions by prioritising the sensitivities of one group while overlooking the lived experience of others who also face racism.
- While the objective of the proposed amendments to the Bill is to safeguard minority groups from slogans, symbols, or other potential offenses, implementing, and maintaining such measures, in an ever-changing political environment may impose significant administrative burdens on the Queensland Government, and more broadly, confusion amongst the citizens of Queensland. This concern is particularly relevant in light of the Federal Government's new Hate Speech Law which also had limited consultation and introduced without explanatory education to all Australians.
- The Bill has been introduced with minimal time for public consultation. This is particularly troubling given its potential impact on the civil liberties of minority communities and all Australians broadly. The existence of a Federal Royal Commission into Antisemitism and the appointment of a Special Envoy further underscores the need for careful, coordinated, and consultative law-making rather than rushed legislation.

For the above reasons I strongly oppose this Bill without proper democratic scrutiny. The Bill must be withdrawn to allow for a comprehensive review of its impact on civil liberties, political participation and the rule of law, including international laws and obligations to uphold same. Other minorities within Queensland society must also be consulted to ensure their right to social cohesion is also met by this or other proposed Bills.

We call on the Committee to uphold and defend Australia's democratic foundations by safeguarding the fundamental right to political communication.

Thank you for accepting my submission.

Christine Mary McClafferty

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