

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

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To the: Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee

QCC Response to: *Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns Out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026*

Queensland Conservation Council welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the *Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns Out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026*. QCC is the peak body for environment groups in Queensland and has been supporting communities to protect their environment since 1969. Our member groups represent thousands of Queenslanders from the southern border to the Cape York Peninsula who care for and protect their environments.

The right to engage in peaceful protest is an essential part of a thriving democracy, and of critical historical and contemporary importance to the environment movement that QCC represents. A healthy environment needs a strong and cohesive community to care for it, and the history of the environment movement has been built on protests against specific developments, often in regional areas, as well as broader policy agendas of State and Federal Governments. Such protest is an integral part of a healthy environment and democratic society, and has resulted in many positive outcomes for the environment and Queensland communities.

We strongly oppose the newly introduced *Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns Out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026* in its current form. We unequivocally condemn all forms of racism, including antisemitism, Islamophobia, anti-Indigenous and anti-Palestinian racism, and we believe there is no hierarchy in racism. However, we believe this Bill is a dangerous overreach that threatens democratic freedoms, suppresses legitimate political dissent, and disproportionately targets communities advocating for Palestinian human rights.

The process around this Bill has provided less than a week for public submissions, completely insufficient for legislation which has the potential to significantly impact groups and undermine the democratic principles of our society, particularly the fundamental ability to protest.

We are particularly concerned about the following aspects of the Bill:

The Queensland Conservation Council acknowledges that we meet and work across the many lands of Queensland. We wish to pay respect to their Elders - past and present - and acknowledge the important role all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people play in protecting, conserving and sustaining Queensland.

- It potentially severely restricts freedom of political communication which is an implied right in the Australian Constitution.
- Its scope is broad and creates extraordinary power to proscribe political speech without appropriate democratic scrutiny or oversight. If this isn't rectified, future Queensland Governments may have the ability to abuse this power by making amendments defining other political speech as illegal although not included in its current form.
- The explanatory notes seem to conflate antisemitism and legitimate political expression
- While the Bill itself does not specify Palestinians, the drafting of the bill and the accompanying media releases expose the disproportionate targeting of members of the Palestinian community and those exercising their freedom of speech in support of them.

We believe that this Bill risks worsening public distrust and division and would undermine democratic process. In future it is easy to see how the Bill would be used to undermine civil liberties in other protest actions contrary to the interests of the Government of the day. The ability to protest is central to the community's ability to protect the environment, and it must be safeguarded in order to ensure the best outcomes for future generations of Queenslanders and the state's unique natural environment.

Because of the above, we ask the Bill be withdrawn to allow for proper democratic scrutiny of the Bill and a comprehensive review of its impact on civil liberties, political participation and the rule of law.

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

Kind regards,



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