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

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to express my strong opposition to the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026.

The Western world is sliding into authoritarianism and while Queensland has thus far avoided the worst of it, these new amendments will see us catch up to the UK, Germany, the US and yes, NSW. It's clear that the government's intent is not so much to combat Antisemitism or terrorism as purported in the bill, but to restrict free speech and intimidate the Palestine liberation movement in the state into silence. I'm generally in favour of gun control, but I'm even suspicious of the government's intent regarding this issue in the bill.

This bill was supposedly created in response to the Bondi terror attacks and a growing tide of Antisemitism. But these terrorists were already on ASIO watchlists and they could have been apprehended under existing laws. It's unclear how these new laws could have prevented the attacks. Furthermore, the Bondi terrorists were linked to ISIS which has no ties to the Palestine liberation movement in Australia. Indeed, ISIS and Al Qaeda are more closely linked to Israel and the US as we saw in Syria, where they recently installed an Al Qaeda terrorist to be leader of that country. I have attended numerous rallies in Brisbane and I never saw any Antisemitism at the rallies. In fact, some of the speakers were Jewish and they were appalled at the actions of Israel and what is being done in their name.

This leads to my next point, which is the conflation of Judaism and Zionism. Jews are not a monolith and not all of them identify with the state of Israel. It is actually Antisemitic to assume all Jews support Zionism and Israel. Prior to the Balfour declaration in 1917, Zionism was a fringe movement amongst Jews with strong opposition from most religious Jews. This opposition from religious Jews continued up to the formation of the state in 1948. One of the most important figures in Hasidic Judaism in the 20th century, the Satmar Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, described Zionism as idol worship. Was he Antisemitic? Originally, the strongest advocates for Zionism were Christians and Antisemites, who saw it as a convenient way of relocating Jews far away from their countries and into Palestine. And the early Zionists saw Antisemites as potential allies. Theodore Herzl said "the anti-Semites will become our most dependable friends, the anti-Semitic countries our allies".

The government is looking to outlaw certain phrases with this bill like "From the River to the Sea". This phrase is not calling for the extermination or ethnic cleansing of Jews from Israel. Rather it is calling for an end to the Apartheid against Palestinians and the illegal occupation. One state where everyone has equal rights. Only a racist could oppose this. Interestingly, the Likud party has a similar slogan in its charter "Between the Sea and the Jordan, there will only be Israeli sovereignty". Should we proscribe Likud as a terror organization? Now there's a thought...

Having attended over a dozen peaceful rallies, I am grateful to live in a free country where the right to protest is enshrined in law. I was struck by the mutual respect between protesters and the Queensland police in attendance. That is now being threatened by this Bill. I don't want to see in Queensland the ugly scenes of violence that played out recently in Sydney where protesters and people praying were brutally assaulted by police. We don't want a return to the dark days of the 1970's where the Premier in this state used the police to terrorise people who were protesting South African Apartheid and the Springbok tour. The protesters back then were on the right side of history. As the pro Palestine protesters are on the right side of history now.

Yours sincerely,

Mathew Pillai