

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

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I welcome the opportunity to provide a submission regarding the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns Out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026. I submit the following concerns for consideration.

I strongly oppose the Bill in its current form. While I fully support efforts to combat racism, discrimination, and violence in all their forms, this legislative proposal raises significant concerns regarding balance, proportionality, democratic freedoms, and the equitable treatment of all communities in Australia.

I unequivocally condemn antisemitism, which remains a harmful and unacceptable form of racism requiring serious attention. However, antisemitism does not exist in isolation. Australia is also witnessing an alarming rise in:

- Islamophobia,
- anti-Indigenous racism, and
- anti-Palestinian racism.

Each of these forms of discrimination is dangerous, widespread, and deeply harmful. Any legislation designed to combat racism should therefore adopt an inclusive, comprehensive, and consistent approach that protects all communities equally.

The Bill focuses its protections overwhelmingly on a single minority group. By doing so, it risks creating a hierarchy of racial protections, leaving other communities equally vulnerable to racism without equivalent legislative support. Anti-racism laws should not be selective. A genuinely effective and principled framework must ensure equitable protections for all racial and religious minorities, without exception.

The Bill contains provisions that pose a serious risk to democratic freedoms, particularly:

- freedom of political expression,
- freedom of association, and
- the right to engage in legitimate advocacy and criticism of foreign governments.

The broad and ambiguous language within the Bill could enable authorities to conflate peaceful political dissidence with extremism, creating a chilling effect on public debate. This is particularly concerning for individuals and organisations engaged in advocacy for Palestinian human rights, who already face disproportionate scrutiny. Legislation aimed at addressing racism or security must not become a mechanism for restricting lawful political speech or for criminalising moral and humanitarian advocacy.

In practice, the Bill risks disproportionately targeting:

- Arab and Muslim Australians,
- Palestinian advocacy groups,
- Indigenous solidarity networks, and
- community organisations engaging in international human rights work.

This selective effect would exacerbate existing inequalities and further marginalise communities already experiencing racialisation, surveillance, and political pressure.

Given the concerns outlined above, I respectfully recommend that the Parliament:

- Undertake a full and comprehensive review of the Bill and its potential consequences.
- Broaden the scope of the legislation so that protections extend to all racial and religious groups equally.
- Remove or amend vague, overly broad, or discretionary powers that risk infringing upon democratic rights and legitimate political expression.
- Ensure that any measures introduced are evidence-based, proportionate, and subject to strong civil liberties safeguards.
- Engage meaningfully with affected communities and civil society organisations, including groups representing Palestinians, Muslims, Indigenous people, and Jewish Australians opposed to discriminatory or politically selective frameworks.

Until these issues are adequately addressed, I cannot support the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns Out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026 in its current form.

I thank the Committee for considering this submission and urge Parliament to adopt an inclusive, balanced, and rights-respecting approach to addressing racism and ensuring public safety.