



Speech By  
**Laura Gerber**


**MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 18 August 2022

**LEGAL AFFAIRS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (3.08 pm): Distressed, disgusted and sorry—this is how I felt hearing and reading the stories of hate and vilification shared with our committee during the inquiry into serious vilification and hate crimes. I want to ask members to close their eyes and consider some of the experiences submitted to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee. You are at home while the kids play in the park across the road. You notice the neighbours filming them. The situation escalates quickly. A man and his partner are throwing rocks at your kids, calling them 'dirty' and other derogatory terms that I cannot repeat in this chamber. Throughout the committee process we heard of so many experiences such as this one—each heartbreaking and each utterly disgusting.

The committee has put forward 17 recommendations. Time will not permit me to go through all of these, so I will touch on one that I think the government can start doing now—education. Recommendation 17 recommends the government develop community education campaigns in conjunction with organisations such as the Queensland Human Rights Commission and Multicultural Australia to educate the community about vilification and hate conduct. We must provide better education to our community and we need to be integrating this education in our schools. One brave parent shared their story with the committee. They stated—

I have six biological, adopted and foster children. Five of my children identify as LGBT+. Four of my children are African American and one is Aboriginal.

They have been exposed to daily bullying with sexist, homophobic, transphobic and racist slurs used on a daily basis. For example, they have been repeatedly told to die because they are Black or 'go back to slavery'. The bullying is intensifying to the point where one child frequently has to miss classes due to panic attacks, and another just sits and cries through classes.

This climate of permitted racial, homophobic, and transphobic slurs makes it difficult for my children to learn, and is very damaging for their psychological and emotional health and wellbeing.

It is truly awful that in the 21st century children are still being targeted by such hateful speech, and it appears to be escalating. This is happening in schools. Education on vilification and hate crimes must be improved because the root cause of harm is individuals making choices to propagate hate through their words or actions.

Just on propagating hate through speech, having heard the Premier's comments during question time this morning, I believe the Premier could benefit from the committee's recommendation for education in order to combat hate and vilification. Having sat on the committee conducting the inquiry into serious vilification and hate crimes, I was disgusted to hear the Premier judge women based on their looks in this chamber. Likening a visit to parliament from Tamika, Brooke and Lauren with the members for Surfers Paradise and Bonney to a 'late-night rendezvous' is outrageous sexist stereotyping. The Premier passed this judgement on these women using the protection of privilege in this chamber. Tamika is a respected businesswoman in my community who was visiting parliament to hear the member for Bonney's speech thanking her for her charity work—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member, I appreciate your passion in relation to that particular issue. I have given you some leeway but I would ask you to come back to the report.

**Mrs GERBER:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The Premier's conduct here is exactly the type of hate and vilification that my committee is trying to stamp out with this inquiry.

**Ms PEASE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member for Currumbin is reflecting upon your guidance from the chair.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I do not view it that way. Member for Currumbin, I ask you to come back to the substance of the report.

**Mrs GERBER:** The substance of the report is an inquiry into vilification and hate crimes. In my view, the Premier needs to apologise immediately for her conduct, particularly as a woman holding the highest office in Queensland.

In the time that I have left, I want to say thank you to the fantastic local organisations in the Currumbin electorate that support our diverse community, especially noting that this month is Queensland Multicultural Month. I am so proud to represent a community that is so supportive of multiculturalism. I want to give a shout-out to the team at Krurungal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation who do incredible work supporting our community. I would also like to give a shout-out to the fantastic Neighbours Connect organisation and Afreket Australia who operate out of Coolangatta. They and so many other organisations in our community do such incredible work upholding this year's theme for Queensland Multicultural Month. The theme this month is 'Inclusion in Action'.

I also want to extend my thanks to those who sat on the committee with me. The secretariat worked extremely hard during this inquiry. Often the testimonials were very difficult to read and hear, and at times I was moved to tears by some of the stories that people very bravely shared with us. Without them sharing their experiences, we would never have been able to grasp the full range of hate and vilification. The recommendations that came out of it are a credit to those people who testified and came forward.

*(Time expired)*