




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

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CRIMINAL CODE (SERIOUS VILIFICATION AND HATE CRIMES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (5.21 pm): In the time remaining for this debate I just want to offer a few remarks in relation to this bill because this bill sets another line in the sand when it comes to freedoms and the expression thereof in that with every freedom there is a responsibility. On occasions there are limitations to those freedoms and this bill sets down another line in the sand for Queensland where that is to be drawn, and that is why the opposition offers its support for the bill tonight.

In a horrifying week for world affairs, I want to comment on the Friends of Israel gathering on Tuesday night which was organised by the member for Chatsworth and well attended from both sides of the House, because that was an opportunity to again express our sympathies and our thoughts with the people caught up in this horrifying event in the Middle East. I want to pay tribute to the member for Chatsworth for his words and also to the Treasurer for his words on the evening. I particularly want to pay tribute from that evening to Jason Steinberg, who is well-known to all of us in this House. I had not heard the story of Suzi Smeed and her escape as a Hungarian Jew as a very young child and the trials and tribulations that Suzi and her family faced as they escaped Hungary and ultimately came to Australia to forge a new life here.

I want to offer that expression of tolerance. It is not a well-known thing, but the first Jewish synagogue in Queensland was in Toowoomba. It was led by the Spiro family, who are well-known in Brisbane. The Gadens chairman is Paul Spiro and it was his ancestors who started the first Jewish synagogue in Toowoomba. In fact, Paul Spiro's uncle was my ophthalmologist and a well-respected member of the community. As I said, the first Jewish synagogue was in Toowoomba. I now represent a significant Islamic community where there is a mosque in my electorate today. That mosque has itself been subject to two arson attempts and there have been some significant challenges for worshippers to get to their place of worship, their place of gathering.

This bill, as I said, lays down some of those lines of freedom and that expression that we all want in a multicultural society where everybody can worship and express themselves regardless of faith, of creed, of culture and to be able to express themselves and their views with respect and decency to others but also to give that great expression to what it means to be an Australian in all its glory and in all its diversity. That is why this bill is an important marker—an important line in the sand—as we continue to build a more tolerant, diverse and accepting culture not just here in Queensland but right across our nation.