




Speech By  
**Jim McDonald**

**MEMBER FOR LOCKYER**

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

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (4.50 pm): I rise to speak on the Criminal Code (Serious Vilification and Hate Crimes) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I start off my contribution where the new member for Stretton left off and pay tribute to former member of the House, Duncan Pegg, who was a gentle fellow who not only brought some colour to this House but also brought a lot of caring for the multicultural community. I was pleased to be able to share a number of conversations with Duncan, particularly when there was some lovely food on offer. It is a great thing that we have these laws coming into the House. With the example that was given and myself being a former police officer, for those in the House who do not know, having to deal with some of these terrible crimes, it is a good thing to see some balanced laws brought in that police will be able to use in certain circumstances that they may find themselves.

We on the LNP side of the House certainly do not condone in any way, shape or form vilification and agree that it should be called out, and education around these issues is a vital part of the solution.

One of the problems with hate crimes and vilification is that we cannot control what people think. We can look to see what people are doing and their behaviour regularly lends to what those people are thinking. There is a very strong link, the scholars and psychologists will say, and that behaviour does give an insight into those thought patterns. It is certainly a very great challenge, though, to be able to capture the intelligence around these matters. I know if we had the ability to capture intelligence, then some terrible events that happened in Wieambilla recently would not have happened and a couple of young constables would still have their lives. That is a challenge.

In terms of hate crimes and being able to deal with them as a community, it is alright for us here in this House to move some amendments to make changes so that police then have the ability to deal with this, but it is also very important that we ensure there are the necessary educational opportunities in the community, to empower the community, as well as intergovernmental cooperation—and I am talking about local, state and federal government cooperation as well as interstate cross-government areas—so that when police are dealing with these offenders, then the justice and Attorney-General areas support it.

I can tell members that one of the recommendations in this bill which does away with the request for consent of Crown law is something, as a former police officer, I would love to see right across a suite of laws. It is an absolute impediment to police being able to deal with matters for an application—often a very time-consuming, detailed application—to be made to Crown law to be able to get approval to take action in these matters. If those sorts of controls were removed and there were an ability for police to take action, I can tell members that there would be a lot more effort by police to achieve positive outcomes, not just in this area, but right across a whole suite of different laws. I commend the removal of that application process.

As I said before, it is vitally important that we have the necessary education and community empowerment when it comes to cultural change. Whilst these laws are important, the trouble is that it is all about the culture in a community. A definition of 'culture' can be, 'It is what we do around here.' If it is okay for a community to say, 'This is allowed; we do allow these things to happen,' then we need to change that culture and people need to understand that it is not right to see these things happen.

A very recent example of this is the continuation of the Friends of Israel event that happened yesterday. In the face of the terrible tragedy around the world, a train of thought could have been that we could have postponed that. I commend the member for Chatsworth and those involved in the Friends of Israel event yesterday because we cannot put aside good things. I was on hand to listen to the guest speaker, Suzi Smeed, talk about her journey and her parents' and grandparents' journey from that terrible place. I mention that because one of the areas of conversation for this bill was around the Nazi symbol and the hate crimes that some people try to promote. I am sure, having dealt with a number of these people, that they do not have a concept in their mind of how damaging those things can be. It becomes a trendy matter where they become involved with others in white supremacist activities and many genuinely do not understand the criminality of that behaviour. I think it is vitally important that those who do have mental health issues around these matters get the support that they need. Again, people get carried away in a peer situation and are easily led by others. They need to understand. We, as a community, need to make sure that those conversations are had across our community.

It is unfortunate that many of these crimes are committed against our multicultural community. I want to give a shout-out to Adele Wadleigh and her team in the Lockyer Valley, and also the Lockyer Valley and Somerset regional councils, for their investment in multicultural activities in our communities right across the Lockyer and Somerset that make up the Lockyer state electorate. A lot of those events are multicultural and food-based, with plenty of colour, dance and song. Our communities are richer for the contributions of our multicultural community. I certainly enjoy getting along to those, as many members in the House do, because they are regularly some of the best and most fun things that we get up to. I cannot help but think about the Diwali celebrations that I get to attend on behalf of our leader on occasion, and the colour and food that is on display in those arenas. It is important for our multicultural community to know that we as a parliament here have listened to the submissions and have made a number of recommendations that this bill enacts.

I thank also the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for their consideration of the bill. The conversation I had with the deputy chair, the member for Currumbin, was very helpful in understanding some of the nuances and why some of the opportunities for this bill did not get up, but I think it is a great sign that there was not a statement of reservation completed for the bill, and it shows the genuine spirit of cooperation that was had in order to achieve the bill.

I was interested in the member for Mirani's contribution just a few moments ago where he talked about his own background of the Kanakas and his pride in wearing that name. I have some great Indigenous friends who actually call me 'white fella' and they are 'black fella', and they use those names in the context of a genuine friendship relationship. As a community, we can take a lot of learning and respect from treating each other with kindness, listening to each other and dealing with each other in that context, because you could use exactly the same words in a different context and it will actually be very offensive to people.

I gave a shout-out earlier to our multicultural community in the Lockyer and the wonderful events they contribute to. I would also like to pay tribute to Dr Mohammad Sultan and the leadership he provides in our Islamic community of Lockyer. Whilst he does not live in the Lockyer, he certainly supports a lot of the activities that are held there. There were a number of terrible incidents that happened to the Islamic community in Gatton a short while ago. I was pleased to be a part of the conversation to make sure the community understood that not all of the Islamic community are extremists or terrorists by nature. We were able to do some really good community education in that space. Our community is richer for people who want to make sure that the ladies in their life are respected and treated as equal and seen to aspire. I think when a community does not want to see the women in their lives aspire, we do not want to see that culture in our communities. I commend the bill to the House.