




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.27 pm): Words matter. Symbols matter. They can unite us. They can divide us. Words and symbols can create joy and love or they can create hatred and division, or worse. It is appropriate that this parliament seeks to ensure that words and symbols are not weaponised against certain groups in society. It is also appropriate that this parliament—in fact, I would argue that it is essential—protects freedom of expression and encourages the free debate of ideas within our society.

Like many in this House, I grew up in an era when words and symbols were often used in ways that caused hurt, harm and offence. Sometimes that was just done casually—not necessarily with malintention, instead being utterances of commonly held social prejudices. Women, Aboriginals, homosexuals, people with disabilities, people living with mental illness, immigrants, refugees and people on welfare were all the subject of verbal abuse, both intentional and unintentional. A quick scan of many popular seventies or eighties TV shows will reinforce my points on this matter.

Fortunately, the world has moved on. It is very far from perfect but it has moved. Much of this we know is due to various legislative mechanisms, particularly the various anti-discrimination laws that have encouraged and supported broad societal change. While there have been changes in some of these areas, if offensive things are said it is often done through ignorance rather than malintention and it is often correctable. If there are words and symbols used to engender hate, fear, humiliation, control or worse, it is often done with the full intent to cause these things.

I was very pleased that the Ukrainian Community of Queensland made a submission outlining the use of a symbol that has been used in our own state aimed at causing people to hate them or causing Ukrainian people to live in fear. Their submission outlines a situation where the use of the symbol in question has led to violence, both in this state and other states in Australia. This symbol is used intentionally, but, honestly, if I had seen it a few years ago I would not have recognised it as being a hate symbol or recognised the fear it can engender in people who are Ukrainian. I certainly know that now. That demonstrates why it is important that this legislation provides the capacity to evolve, as, sadly, the range of hate speech and symbols also continues to evolve.

I have been to the Holland Park Mosque, Queensland's oldest mosque, following attacks on the mosque by people who spray-painted hate symbols and hateful words on the mosque—and worse. I have been to the Greenslopes synagogue and watched people enter the synagogue for services with increased security which has had to be put in place to ensure the community is not subjected to violence after threats of such. I have seen firsthand the impacts these things have on good people who attend the mosque and the synagogue, and I want to thank the leaders of both communities who work hard to ensure they are places of peace and contemplation. I am pleased to say that our entire community comes together whenever there is an incident of this nature. It reinforces that we are a community of

tolerance and peace, but that same community wants the sort of protections this bill will bring. They do not want to have to come together anymore and show support. Our community wants this to stop. We want people who act in this manner to be held accountable for this abhorrent behaviour, and I believe this bill takes a significant step in that direction. I commend the bill to the House.