




Speech By  
**Lance McCallum**

**MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2023

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

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (5.11 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Criminal Code (Serious Vilification and Hate Crimes) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It is my deep belief, and my great hope, that this bill will represent a significant step towards a more equitable society and that get rid of so much of the hurt that results from vilification and hate crimes in our communities. Beauty can be the result of what we say and do as human beings—there are expressions that are so inspirational—however, the flip side is that we can also say and do things that result in incredible hurt and incredible trauma. To be more succinct, what we say and do matters. Actions and words can divide us and cause hurt. I know this through personal experience.

In my inaugural speech in this place I explained that through my life I have certainly been the subject of racism, as many other members in this House, both current and previous, have been. I am absolutely proud to be here as the representative of the Bundamba community—a community that is strong because of its diversity. We are an incredibly multicultural community, with many people from different places across the globe and with many different religions. This is something that we celebrate. It helps to define and strengthen our community. When considering how this bill will result in real change in our local community, I know that the amendments contained in this bill will result in real action being able to be taken, with much more serious consequences, for those few people who choose to engage in heinous vilification of and hate crimes against members of our Bundamba community.

I acknowledge the work of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, which held an inquiry into serious vilification and hate crimes. This bill implements recommendations 7, 8, 9 and 16 of the committee's report. In its report on this bill the committee made another 17 recommendations, all of which have been supported in full or in principle by the government.

How will this bill result in change in our community? One of the most important things, and one of the foundations for the initial inquiry that resulted in this bill, was to look at how the Anti-Discrimination Act in Queensland operated and whether it was, effectively, fit for purpose in terms of its application to serious vilification and hate crimes. One of the recommendations that is being enacted by this bill is to take out certain sections of the Anti-Discrimination Act and put them into the Criminal Code. The bill also makes amendments to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act and the Summary Offences Act.

Many issues were raised during the committee's examination of the bill. There were really important questions that go to the real-world operation of the amendments that are in the bill and whether or not they will be effective in reality—such things as the types of attributes that need to be protected legally when we are considering what serious vilification and hate crimes actually mean when we define them in legislation. Pleasingly, there is the removal of the requirement for a Crown Law officer's consent to start a prosecution. That is a huge impediment, and it was very clear from the public submissions and from the initial inquiry that this was an unnecessary and significant barrier to action

being taken against discrimination and hate crime. The bill increases penalties for and introduces the circumstance of aggravation to offences that are already in the Criminal Code. The bill will also prohibit symbols listed by regulation.

I believe that it is clear from the committee process, from the bipartisan support that this bill is receiving and from the contributions of members from both sides of the House that this bill and the laws that it contains are both practical and workable. I acknowledge the contributions of previous speakers, including former police officers. There has been a lot of support from a lot of different people with very different life experiences who are all keen to rid our community of hate crimes and vilification.

It is particularly prescient for me and many others to be able to contribute to this bill a mere 48 hours or so before our nation heads to the polls on Saturday to participate in the national referendum around establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice in our Constitution and recognising our First Nations people, because the debate, unfortunately, has not been entirely respectful. There have been horrible instances of vile racial abuse that have been directed towards people throughout the course of this referendum. It is really disheartening to see that when it comes to a legitimate democratic process that every single Australian has a part in we have, in some instances, gone down to the lowest common denominator when it comes to the discourse of the Voice debate. I want to acknowledge the abuse and the effect that it has had on the member for Algeester, who shared some of her stories and experiences throughout the course of the Voice referendum debate.

I am very proud to be able to stand here today to support this bill. I think it will lead to a much better and much more tolerant society. I want to close by acknowledging the former member for Stretton, Duncan Pegg, and his role in bringing this bill towards the House. Duncan leaves a legacy with us all individually, and this will be a lasting legacy for every Queenslanders.