




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Hate Crimes, Legislation

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.05 am): Like all Australians, I was shocked and disturbed by the footage of Neo-Nazis standing on the steps of the Victorian parliament in the past fortnight. The brazen display of these hateful and disgusting views must be condemned publicly and unequivocally. Hate crimes and vilification have absolutely no place in Queensland or this country and must not be tolerated. We know that Queenslanders reject hatred and prejudice. That is why the Palaszczuk government promised to review and strengthen serious vilification and hate crime laws. I am proud that we will be introducing legislation to strengthen our laws today.

These reforms send a clear message that criminals who commit offences motivated by hatred or serious contempt will face tougher penalties. We are making it illegal for people to publicly display, distribute or publish symbols which represent an ideology of extreme prejudice, such as Nazi or ISIS ideology, in a way that could cause someone to feel menaced, harassed or offended. The offence is intended to capture a broad range of circumstances, including the public display of tattoos and the public distribution or publication of prohibited symbols online. In addition, a number of existing offences in the Criminal Code and the Summary Offences Act will be amended to introduce a circumstance of aggravation where those offences are motivated wholly or partly by hatred. This will increase the maximum penalty for those offences to reflect the seriousness of these crimes and the long-lasting impacts on victims. The bill also moves the offence of serious vilification out of the Anti-Discrimination Act and into the Criminal Code while also increasing the maximum penalty to three years. This change better reflects how seriously the community views these offences.

These reforms strengthen Queensland's justice system for the benefit of all Queenslanders by providing stronger protections for our diverse communities. I thank the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for its work in this area as well as the many multicultural groups and community members who have been involved in the process. Our government is listening and acting, and together we will create a Queensland that is safer and more respectful.