




Speech By  
**Steve Minnikin**

**MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH**

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

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (12.34 pm): I, too, would like to contribute to the Criminal Code (Serious Vilification and Hate Crimes) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Symbols are indeed powerful. Some symbols are possibly more powerful than others. In my 11½ years in this chamber, one of the greatest privileges I ever had was to have a gentleman who sadly passed away last year, Mr George Stein, accompany me here for lunch several years ago. Then he watched in the public gallery as I delivered a speech. I used words to the effect that he was the embodiment of all that is good in mankind while staring down a dark time in history which displayed the absolute worst examples of mankind. George was a Holocaust survivor. The symbol he had a vexed relationship with all of his life—ever since those six numbers were tattooed into his wrist—was one that he at times attempted to scratch out; at other times he wanted to use that symbol to make sure the Holocaust was never forgotten.

Symbols mean things, and they can mean things in a positive way or, sadly, they can bring out the worst in humanity. The tattooing of Holocaust victims is probably one of the most shocking examples of all, but there have been others. As was mentioned before by the minister, we heard about a pig's head being thrown in front of a mosque on the south side of Brisbane. We are also aware of the symbol that was displayed—of all symbols, the Nazi flag—hanging within view of the Jewish synagogue here in the CBD. I believe it was last year. In relation to symbols, when people say that people should just simply get on with things, I reject that wholesale. Symbols carry with them intent and meaning, which is why I am very proud to be making a quick contribution to this particular bill.

I am aware that the explanatory notes provide that the objectives of the Criminal Code (Serious Vilification and Hate Crimes) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 are due to recommendations 7, 8, 9 and 16 of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's report. Recommendation 7 was that the Queensland government investigate the viability of removing the requirement for the written consent of a Crown Law officer before commencing a prosecution for serious racial, religious, sexuality or gender identity vilification under section 131A. Recommendation 8 was that the Queensland government introduce a statutory aggravation regarding hate and serious vilification in the Criminal Code Act 1899 and the Summary Offences Act 2005. Recommendation 9 was that the Queensland government relocate section 131A—the offence of serious racial, religious, sexuality or gender identity vilification—from the Anti-Discrimination Act into the Criminal Code. Recommendation 16 was that the Queensland government establish a criminal offence that prohibits the display of hate symbols including those—but not excluding others—relating to Nazi and ISIS ideology, with considered exceptions.

At the end of the day, we all know of the horrific events that are taking place in the Middle East at the moment. With your indulgence, Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to reflect and congratulate members on both sides of the chamber who, only a matter of a few nights ago, attended a Parliamentary Friends of Israel function that was held in this chamber. It was extremely gratifying that this particular event was well attended by government ministers, opposition members and the crossbench as well.

I believe that, because of the time we are living in, this bill is as timely as it could ever be. Whilst I am very proud to be the shadow minister for transport and main roads and customer service, I look back fondly at the time I was honoured to be the shadow minister for multicultural affairs a few years ago. It gave me the greatest gift of being able to be warmly received by members of the community with whom I may not have had as much interaction. Every single one of them—regardless of which of the three great monotheistic faiths they belonged to—were looking for something like this to be enshrined. I take this opportunity to simply say that I am very proud to be able to make a very small contribution today. Even though the irrepressible George Stein passed on in about May last year, he would be looking down on this chamber today and he would be absolutely beaming with pride at this legislation that is going through.

In this great state we have one of the great democracies in the western world. In fact I think I used lines to this effect the other night when I was the MC of that parliamentary friends group, and I am so proud to repeat it for the House today. I said that it was a wonderful thing that only a matter of hours earlier we were in here going for it hammer and tongs on both sides of the chamber, yet there we were a few hours later coming together as one group of politicians celebrating the best of humanity.

Bills like this are incredibly important. To the people who have been subject to taunts and physical aggression et cetera, this bill matters. This is not tokenistic. This is not a bill that is simply a tick-a-box routine. This is a bill that absolutely matters. If we are to continue to live in what I believe from the bottom of my heart is one of the greatest states and nations on the planet, we need to make sure we are never blindsided and we never take our foot off the brake when it comes to making sure that people are able to express their freedom of association, freedom of religion and freedom of lawful assembly and gathering. This bill will go a long way to dealing with symbols of hate. It may only be interwoven cloth with certain colours, dyes and pigments, but when those dyes and pigments and that interwoven fabric come together to form a symbol of hate, a symbol of vitriol, a symbol of darkness, we need legislation like this.

I acknowledge that members on both sides of the chamber engage in their communities, and some of them are probably far more multicultural than others just because of their demographic make-up. The one thing I take pride in is the fact that, while being a member of parliament for the last 11½ years, I have seen at times the best in humanity on display. It is bills like this that will ensure for many years to come that Queenslanders can go about their way of life, free and unimpinged from what has been occurring in some cases.

I would like to finish my contribution by saying that I have many friends who come from pretty much every country in the world. I am particularly fond of a sporting code called football. Without trying to be controversial in any way, shape or form, it is the world game and because of that I have friends from, you name it, all across the globe. The one thing they all share in common is simply a love of their family, their society and, yes, their beloved football. In a modern society such as Queensland, we do not have any place for the images we have seen on our screens in our living rooms over the last four or five nights or find that acceptable in any way, shape or form. The intent of this bill is to make sure that, whenever people are out in the great state of Queensland, they can be free from having interwoven cloth with pigments and dyes in their face knowing it is there for one reason: to cause hurt, to cause pain, to cause grief. It gives me a great deal of pride to make a contribution on this bill in this chamber today.