




Speech By
Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 18 April 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Anti-Semitism

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (6.10 pm): I refer to the Speaker's statement of 16 April concerning correspondence from the Leader of the House. This was the first time this matter had been drawn to my attention. In response to the Speaker's request, I correct the record and advise that I should have referred to the fact that 18 of the 19 government ministers did not make ministerial statements on the day in question.

I want to address an issue of deep concern, one that strikes at the very heart of our cherished principles of multiculturalism, respect and mutual understanding. I have recently met Queenslanders of the Jewish faith who have told me stories of anti-Semitic events they have experienced right here in Brisbane since the terror attacks by Hamas on 7 October 2023. These are stories of fear, isolation and hurt experienced by our fellow citizens. Time does not allow me to tell all of them, but here are some.

I heard the story of a family who came to Australia to escape the violence of the Middle East five years ago. They told me, 'We moved here for peace, but now we feel threatened in our own home.' At home here in Brisbane after her husband returned to support family in Israel following the attacks, one lady told me, 'I was petrified, moving from one friend's house to another just to sleep at night.' Her fears were exacerbated by a stark reminder of conflict: graffiti in a West End park declaring 'Free Gaza', which froze her in fear and made her feel as if she could not escape the conflict or being targeted for what she believes.

Ayelet Rinon faced a direct menace at a Greens community meeting in Kenmore. There she encountered a man wearing a hi-vis shirt emblazoned with a chilling message. She told me, 'The shirt read "Zionist Final Solution"—a phrase echoing the darkest times for my people.' Ayelet says, 'That speaks volumes about the normalisation of such hatred.'

I was also contacted by Elle who, after the October 7 attacks, was shattered to hear of calls for a 'Night of Broken Glass' against Jews in Australia. She says that she feels this reference to the Kristallnacht pogrom was no mere rhetoric; it was a call to violence that left her suffering from severe anxiety to the point of physical illness. There are alarming reports from parents about the experiences of their kids at school. One mother described the daily fear of sending her children to school where they face bullying and chants of hate. She said, 'Imagine sending your kids to school, knowing they might be bullied for being Jewish.'

Lastly, Gail's story was passed on to me. Gail was raised in a small kibbutz near Gaza dedicated to peace. She witnessed the betrayal of that core tenet of her community during the 7 October attacks. Her anguish was evident when she told me, 'The very people we welcomed into our homes were the ones who turned against us.' We must call out all forms of anti-Semitism large and seemingly small. As Ayelet says—

I would like to clarify the point I made about our sense of anxiety and the rise of antisemitism. It is generally not one major incident; it's rather a cumulative effect of many smaller incidents ...

Queensland must be safe for all its residents, anti-Semitism must be condemned and, importantly, irrespective of its government, we must support the ongoing right of the people of the state of Israel to exist free from terror.