Speech By

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FIGHTING ANTISEMITISM AND KEEPING GUNS OUT OF THE HANDS OF TERRORISTS AND CRIMINALS AMENDMENT BILL

Ms McMILLAN (Mansfield—ALP) (8.09 pm): I rise to contribute to the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026. Before I move to the substance of the bill, I would like to acknowledge the victims of the attack at Bondi in December 2025. The event was a national tragedy, a deliberate act of violence and hate, and an act of bigotry and extreme racism. That Sunday was a significant moment in the Jewish calendar, the beginning of Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the second century BCE rededication of the second temple in Jerusalem after the Maccabees liberated it from foreign occupation, but instead it became a day of incredible grief. Fifteen innocent lives were lost and many more were injured at the hands of individuals who legally obtained the firearms.

This event was the deadliest mass shooting since Port Arthur in 1996. Jewish families were anguished, North Bondi and Jewish communities were left fearful and our nation was shaken. I acknowledge the many Jewish people in my own community, the families living in the village at Burbank as well as the children, Principal Christine Harman and the staff at Sinai College, the only Jewish school in Queensland. I have visited often since this tragic event. They remain on alert and vigilant. It should not have to be like this.

Less than a month later, another act of terrorism occurred in Perth when an alleged homemade fragment bomb filled with ball bearings and screws was thrown into a crowd attending an Invasion Day rally. These rallies, as they do each year, were occurring all over the country in recognition of the resilience of First Peoples, whose ancestors fought on the front line of wars, whose families have been traumatised by the past policies of government, colonisation and extreme racism and, of course, in recognition of young First Nations children who continue to suffer the impact of the trauma of this historical treatment as well as contemporary and continued acts to marginalise and denigrate them.

Fortunately, the bomb did not detonate but it was another act that threatened social cohesion, acceptance and inclusion. Around the world we are witnessing this social cohesion being challenged by right-wing governments. In Queensland we are not immune to this. The rise of Pauline Hanson and One Nation and the lack of determined, sustained, strong and ethical leadership by this government have challenged the past culture of Queensland. My community feels it every day and often mention—

Mr VORSTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. This is straying well and truly from the long title of the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for Mansfield, I have been listening and I urge you to continue to remain relevant to the bill. There is some scope in this debate. However, I would ask you to remain relevant to the bill.

Ms McMILLAN: My community feels it every day and often they speak about the requirement for clear and explicit leadership articulating a vision for who we are as Queenslanders. This context does require a calm and methodical approach, not an unemotive robot and not just rhetoric. Instead, what we have seen is chaos and confusion, a backflip at the 11th hour as the pressure from the LNP party room could no longer be withstood. It is all starting to unravel.

The last weeks have seen the LNP dismiss concerns related to freedom of speech, refute the unconstitutionality of the laws and ignore the risk of the concentration of power to a single minister. Did the LNP not learn anything from the behaviours of Scott Morrison, not to mention a lack of proper cabinet process, committee process—

Mr VORSTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance again. Federal politics has nothing to do with the long title of the bill.

Mr SMITH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is your point of order on that point of order?

Mr SMITH: Yes, it is to the member's point of order. This bill is a direct result of the anti-Semitism and hate laws that were put in place by the federal parliament. Therefore, it is providing context. It is providing context around the larger legislative purposes to which this bill directly responds, especially around gun reform.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Mansfield, I have given you some latitude on this. I understand the context in which you are contributing. I think perhaps now if you could return to the nature of the bill before us that would be good. You have had fair opportunity to make the point you are making.

Ms McMILLAN:—or the focus on particular phrases hurtful to only one particular faith or cultural group. What about phrases deeply hurtful to First Nations peoples or other cultural groups? That is despite the LNP's own backbencher and chair of the committee, who reviewed this bill no less, admitting that different phrases mean different things to different people. The committee did not scrutinise this bill that is before the House. At that time the bill did not contain the two phrases that will be—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. The bill before the House was before the committee. If the member is talking about an ACiD, an amendment that has been circulated, that is something different, but the committee did review this bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am going to seek some advice.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, member for Nanango and other members who are quarrelling across the chamber, please cease. Member for Nanango, thank you for your point of order on relevance. I have sought some advice. Member for Mansfield, to remain relevant to the bill your contribution should relate to the bill that went to committee, the committee process and also foreshadowed amendments, which I believe have been circulated. You may continue.

Ms McMILLAN: The Labor opposition will always support measures to protect multicultural communities and keep guns out of the wrong hands. That includes introducing stronger penalties for attacking places of worship and reforms to gun legislation. Whilst you cannot be tough on crime if you are weak on guns, you can be tough on crime whilst not being reckless with freedoms.

Let us not forget the LNP has also ignored the stakeholders who made submissions on this bill. The Labor government introduced amendments to enable individuals and the Queensland Police Service to take action against a person knowingly inciting hatred on the basis of the race, religion, sexuality, sex characteristics or general identity of a person or members of a group. We made amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991, in particular section 124A, and the Criminal Code, in particular section 52A. With regard to section 52A, the Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies Inc. recommended—

> … that sub-paragraph (a) and (b) be removed, such that the offence does not require proof that the conduct involved a threat, or incitement to a threat of physical harm. This would bring Queensland into alignment with the serious vilification offences in Victoria and New South Wales, and reflects the harm caused by the promotion of hatred against a person or group on the basis of a protected attribute.

The Queensland Law Society also noted these existing laws in their submission and made recommendations that were seemingly ignored. In their submission they wrote—

> As stated at the outset, there are existing offences that we say are broad enough to capture the conduct contemplated by this Bill. We note that there are other barriers however to prosecuting that conduct that have nothing to do with whether new criminal offences are created or expanded. Those barriers include a lack of community education and proper education of police offices.

These recommendations are made by experienced lawyers and yet they were ignored by the LNP in favour of endangering Queenslanders' freedom of speech.

A debate of ideas based on values often results in offence; however, it must ensue. Debate is an essential building block of democracy. Queenslanders have a right to expression and therefore a right to freedom of speech, a sentiment echoed by former LNP leader Lawrence Springborg, who said—

> The most important protection of the liberties, in their many and varied forms, of the people of any modern-day society is the freedom of people, whether they be members of the press or the parliament or citizens in their day-to-day lives, to express their opinions in a forthright and honest fashion. Attempts to weaken this freedom, even for good reasons, must be viewed with a degree of caution.

We must ensure that protections for multicultural and faith demographics are right, whether it is ensuring our gun reforms are strong enough or ensuring we get hate speech amendments correctly balanced. It is time for the Premier to stop focusing on being a clever politician and start being smart about the consequences of his government's actions. The LNP government must deliver on freedom, whether it is freedom of speech or living free from hate. These things are not mutually exclusive.

The Labor opposition reached out to the government about this bill at the end of last year in an attempt to work on this issue in a bipartisan way. We were ignored at that time and it is clear that the LNP will continue to ignore the many stakeholders and experts, as it has done time and time again. It has already ignored the respect-at-work laws which, if those opposite had implemented them, would have delivered stronger, carefully considered discrimination laws.

Queenslanders deserve a government that leads with conviction, not one that governs by eleventh-hour backflips and internal chaos. The safety of our multicultural and faith communities is non-negotiable, as is the necessity of keeping firearms out of the hands of those who wish harm, but true leadership requires more than reactive, rushed legislation that sidesteps scrutiny and ignores expert legal advice. We cannot claim to protect our society by undermining the very democratic freedoms like the freedom of speech that define us.

The Labor opposition remains committed to robust, balanced reforms that address the root cause of hate and violence without the chaos and constitutional risk we see from this government today. It is time for the Premier to stop playing politics with Queenslanders' safety and start delivering the thoughtful, inclusive and principled leadership that our state deserves. It is time for this government to stop the robotic rhetoric and the showmanship and finally put the rights and safety of all Queenslanders above its own desperate political survival.