




Speech By  
**Jessica Pugh**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY**

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

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (8.47 pm): At the outset I put on the record in this parliament my profound sadness, and the sadness of my community, for the horrific deaths of the members of the Jewish community who were murdered in an act of anti-Semitic hate in Bondi in December last year. Hanukkah is such an important celebration to our Jewish community. To see it targeted by an act of hatred was a shocking tragedy. Hanukkah is about the triumph of the light, the coming of the light, and this tragedy occurred in an iconic Australian location. It is not lost on me that the terrorists not only selected a critically important Jewish celebration to target but also ensured the venue provided maximum visibility and impact not only to Australia but also to the entire world. The loss of those innocent lives, people who were simply enjoying the first day of Hanukkah celebrations, is a national tragedy and will be an ongoing stain on our national identity.

The Bondi attack shocked the nation and it shocked the world. With that shock and dismay comes a call to action. On that day many people acted heroically to protect others, including of course our first responders. Australians were also inspired by the actions of passers-by and those who were attending the event and put themselves at risk to protect family, friends and, remarkably, complete and utter strangers. In the days and weeks that followed, the community was united in grief but also clear that they expected their elected representatives to rise to the moment and act with unity and dignity because every single person in this state and this country deserves to feel safe and to be safe.

Therefore, I reflect on the words shared by the member for Jordan in her contribution: in moments of national trauma, governments are tested not by how loudly they act but by how carefully they think. Late this afternoon we finally received a copy of the foreshadowed amendments from the government. Many opposition speakers did not have an opportunity to speak to those amendments because they did not have them at the time they made their contribution. I find that deeply concerning. The changes that we now have before us were not part of the bill at the time the committee was considering it and, therefore, not all members of this place have had the opportunity to speak on these changes. With a bill as important as this one, I think most members of this place and many members of our communities would find that unacceptable. I think all members of the parliament would want to act with unity on important issues like these.

I reflect on the last term when we passed legislation on hate speech. In 2022, the Labor government commenced the hate crime and serious vilification review. The committee was chaired by Peter Russo, who made an excellent contribution earlier. I know some members of this parliament were members of that committee. The review took nine months and the committee partnered with Multicultural Affairs Queensland to engage with difficult-to-reach communities. That review received more than 1,000 submissions from a range of stakeholders, including Jewish and Muslim communities from right across the state. The committee report produced 17 recommendations, including leading the nation—and I think this is something that we can all be proud of—in establishing a criminal offence for the display of the Nazi hate symbol. The committee recommended relocating serious vilification and

hate crimes from the Anti-discrimination Act into the Criminal Code to reflect the serious nature of hate crimes and introduce a statutory aggravation to increase sentences where offending was motivated by hatred.

Those reforms were widely supported. Because of the length, duration and intensity of the committee process, they also performed an educational function. It really highlighted the deep damage that racism and anti-Semitism does not just to our multicultural communities but also to the broader social fabric and social cohesion of our state. At this time, I take a moment to thank the submitters to both this bill and the previous bill. All of the submitters gave generously of their time and their lived experience. I also thank the members of my community, particularly members of my Jewish community, who made the time to come and speak with me about this bill.

**Miss Doolan:** Mr Speaker—

**Ms PUGH:** I was just having a drink. I am glad so many speakers are keen to speak on the bill but I still have almost five minutes on the clock. I admire the enthusiasm of the member for Pumicestone.

This is a bill about language and the impact of language. I want to talk about language and how it can be used to dehumanise. In reflecting on what the bill says it is seeking to achieve, I was reminded of, and so reread, some of the excellent work of one of my favourite authors, Brene Brown, who writes on a large number of subjects. In one of her books, *Braving the Wilderness*, she writes about the dehumanisation of others and the grave consequences that can arise from that. In an article taken from that book she outlined that dehumanisation, which forebodes what we are talking about in the legislation before us today, is a response to conflicting motives. It is what we do when we want to harm a group of people, but it goes against our wiring as members of a social species to actually harm, kill, torture or degrade other humans. The article outlines how there are very deep and natural inhibitions that prevent us from treating other people in a dehumanising way, like animals, game or dangerous predators. Dehumanisation is a way of subverting inhibitions.

Brene's article provides a definition of dehumanisation as 'the psychological process of demonizing the enemy, making them seem less than human and hence not worthy of humane treatment.' Critically, this often starts with creating an enemy image, such as a cartoon or image and things like that. As we take sides, we lose trust and we get angrier and angrier. Not only do we solidify an idea of our enemy; we start to lose our ability to listen, communicate and practice even a modicum of empathy.

I think all members of this House know that language matters, especially in a debate like this. The tone of this debate matters. In the bill about hate speech introduced in the previous term, my recollection was that the debate was a moment of unity. The contributions were considered and heartfelt. The committee process was genuine, bipartisan, respectful and not rushed. The state needs us to lift the tone of this debate.