




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

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**FIGHTING ANTISEMITISM AND KEEPING GUNS OUT OF THE HANDS OF
TERRORISTS AND CRIMINALS AMENDMENT BILL 2026**

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (6.08 pm): What happened at Bondi in New South Wales on 14 December 2025 was a complete national tragedy. It was an act of hate, an act of violence and an act of vile anti-Semitism. It is difficult to truly comprehend the lifelong trauma and pain that this hideous act has caused the families, friends and communities of those victims of this vile attack and every day since all Australians have grieved with the Australian and Queensland Jewish community. I want to talk about the process that has led to this bill being before the House since that tragedy. After the tragedy, the Labor opposition wrote to the government prior to Christmas offering our support in a bipartisan manner to develop a strong bill. Unfortunately, the Crisafulli government ignored this offer, and that has been contemplated and ventilated by other speakers prior to me.

The Crisafulli government at the same time has indefinitely delayed the strong anti-discrimination laws that were properly consulted on and went through a full committee process, a full public consultation process, and were debated fulsomely in this House. The laws that I am referring to are the respect-at-work laws. In comparison, the bill that is before the House now was very hastily drafted and had only 17 days of public examination. What has come before us is a bill that is very flawed. I am going to speak about some of the ways it is flawed, starting with the clauses that deal with hate speech.

Let me say that hate speech of any kind is not tolerated in Queensland or, indeed, in any modern society and it is right that there are protections for those who would be targeted by these kinds of threatening and violent acts. On this side of the House, our history shows that we support sensible, well-considered and strong laws that actually protect Queenslanders against hate. It was Labor who introduced the Anti-Discrimination Act and tough consequences for serious vilification. I note that the Queensland Law Society stated in their submission to this bill—

As stated at the outset, there are existing offences that we say are broad enough to capture the conduct contemplated by this Bill.

Further—

The Society calls for the implementation of changes to Queensland's anti-discrimination laws contemplated by the Respect at Work and Other Matters Amendment Act 2024 ...

The Queensland Council of Unions stated in their submission—

These are proactive protections Queenslanders would benefit from today had the Respect at Work reforms not been indefinitely paused by the Crisafulli Government. They complement the reforms in the Bill and should commence without delay.

The Bar Association of Queensland made this point in their submission—

- the proposed offence is arguably unnecessary given existing offences and legislative prohibitions at both State and Commonwealth levels.

This goes to show that there are a range of stakeholders that are of the very strong view that existing laws in Queensland provide the protections that people who would be the targets of hate speech can rely on. What is concerning, and where I think the line needs to be drawn, is extreme laws that were originally drafted to give one politician the power to criminalise phrases without debate, parliamentary oversight or, indeed, explanation. In that sense, the bill that has been introduced into this House might more properly be called 'the criminalising free speech bill'. The original bill goes too far. It is a disturbing pattern of behaviour. We have already seen an act of gagging free speech in this parliament from the Premier and now we seem to have his government going further with this bill. A number of submitters have raised very serious concerns with respect to this exact point. The Archdiocese of Brisbane stated in their submission—

Given that speech is a core civil liberty, the criminalisation of expression represents one of the most serious forms of state intervention.

The Anglican Church of Southern Queensland stated—

It is highly problematic and concerning that Premier David Crisafulli and Attorney General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Integrity Deb Frecklington have announced in a joint statement that phrases associated with the Free Palestine movement, such as "From the river to the sea Palestine will be free", will be prohibited, with a two-year maximum penalty imposed for "Distributing, publishing, displaying or reciting" such phrases.

The Islamic Council of Queensland in their testimony to the committee stated—

The legislation before this House attempts to solve complex social tensions. Criminalising language will not achieve this outcome. Rather, it will risk turning the political expression of law-abiding, nonviolent citizens into a crime.

The Institute of Public Affairs stated—

The bill sets a dangerous new precedent of authorising a government by declaration to outlaw words, amounting to a significant threat to freedom of speech and public debate.

The Queensland Council of Unions stated—

Queenslanders have the right to live free from hate and violence. They also have the right to speak, protest, and advocate without fear of arbitrary criminalisation. This Bill undermines that balance.

For a party that calls itself 'liberal', giving a politician the most sweeping restriction-on-speech powers in the country is a very odd take on freedom. When you have the Institute of Public Affairs, the Anglican Church, the Archdiocese of Brisbane, unions, the Council for Civil Liberties and peak law bodies—hardly natural bedfellows—all raising serious concerns, you know that there are serious problems.

In the time remaining to me I want to talk about the foreshadowed amendments which still have not been circulated and cannot be examined by this House. To me, it is a very deliberate, very sneaky and very clever approach from a government that is led by a sneaky and clever politician. Those amendments have only come about because the Premier has lost control of his party room. We know that there were backbenchers in the government who were set to cross the floor this week to vote against the Premier's gag on freedom.

Government members interjected.

Mr McCALLUM: They can have a little laugh about it but it happened last sitting, didn't it? There was somebody over in the government caucus who felt so passionately about an issue of value that they crossed over, and we know that there are others who are sitting over there right now who, if they were put to the test, would have walked over. That is why we have these eleventh-hour amendments, which are not being circulated—subverting any proper process and debate. It is less calm and methodical and more chaotic and crazed. It is clear that the LNP have botched these laws. First it was abortion; now it is freedom of speech. We will always back action that protects Queensland's multicultural communities and keeps guns out of the wrong hands. What we will not do is give any attorney-general the most extreme unchecked power in the country to criminalise phrases that they decide are offensive.