




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

Record of Proceedings, 3 March 2026

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

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (5.26 pm): I rise to contribute to the bill this afternoon. What happened at Bondi on 14 December 2025 was—and I think everybody in this House agrees—a national tragedy. It was an act of hate, an act of violence and an act born from bigotry, racism and anti-Semitism in the extreme. A day that should have marked the beginning of celebrations for Australia's Jewish community instead became a day of unspeakable grief—15 innocent lives were lost and many more injured at the hands of individuals who were able to legally access multiple firearms. It was the deadliest mass shooting to occur in Australia since the Port Arthur tragedy in 1996. The events of that day saw families shattered, a community traumatised and a nation shaken.

A month later another declared act of terrorism occurred in Perth when what the Australian police described as a homemade fragment bomb filled with ball bearings and screws was thrown into an invasion day rally crowd—an annual rally that was being replicated in capital cities and regional towns all over the nation to reflect on the resilience of First Nations Australians whose ancestors were on the front line of violent frontier wars, whose families have been subject to the full impacts of colonisation and extreme racism in this country, and whose children are still living with the repercussions of all of that. If the bomb had detonated, as was the presumed intent, it would have resulted in a mass casualty event. Fortunately it did not, but it was yet another example of how fragile social cohesion can be when hatred, violence, bigotry and racism takes hold.

In moments like these we are called upon to reflect on the truth of where we are as a society. We are called upon to ask who we are as a people and we are called upon to act in a way that does not further marginalise groups based on race, religion, gender or sexual identity and does not create an environment where extreme division, chaos or confusion can thrive. What we are seeing from this Crisafulli LNP government is nothing more than chaos, confusion and crisis.

This government told this House and the people of Queensland that it had taken a calm and methodical approach to the matters at hand, only to buckle and backflip at the eleventh hour when the pressure became too much. The Premier claimed strength and certainty, yet he now stands exposed as having lost control of his own party room. The truth is that the LNP and the Premier have performed an Olympic-level backflip on this legislation—or, to use a common rowing term for turning a boat, they have performed a backing manoeuvre of elite standing.

For three weeks they insisted their laws were sound. They dismissed concerns, they waved away constitutional questions and they ignored warnings about freedom of speech and the concentration of power in the hands of a single minister. They thought they could use their numbers to ram this through, but they were caught out. We even heard reports that the bill, announced with such bravado, did not even go through a proper cabinet process beforehand. If that is true, it speaks volumes about the disorder at the heart of this government.

This was legislation that handed massive unfettered power to the attorney-general of the day—power over speech, over thought, over what phrases could be criminalised by regulation—and the LNP assumed their majority would shield them from scrutiny. Instead, their own backbenchers were reportedly preparing to cross the floor. The member for Mackay, who took the extraordinary decision last sitting week to cross the floor and vote against his own party on issues related to a woman's right to choose, was reportedly seen wandering the halls while the LNP party room held extended crisis meetings to salvage what was left of this legislative mess. The chaos in the Crisafulli party room threatens to spill onto the floor of parliament once again. First it was abortion; now it is freedom of speech.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Whilst we love listening to a wonderful story, it is not relevant.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): I take your point. It is not inappropriate to canvass issues associated with this bill, but the peculiarities of our respective party rooms or caucuses do not feature in this bill, so I would ask you to return to relevance, member for Algester.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. The bill that went before the committee did not contain the two specific phrases that are now at the centre of this debate. To be clear, the parliamentary committee was asked to scrutinise a bill that did not include the phrases that the government now seeks to insert. Queenslanders were denied the opportunity to properly consider them.

At least 38 submissions raised concerns about the truncated consultation timeframe and the absence of these key phrases. Many more Queenslanders expressed frustration that they were being asked to comment on a framework without knowing how it would actually be used—a framework that allowed the Attorney-General by regulation to prohibit particular expressions. Once prescribed, criminal liability would arise if the expression might reasonably be expected to cause a member of the public to feel menaced, harassed or offended. That was the threshold. It begs the question: what other phrases? What of phrases, for instance, deeply meaningful to First Nations people such as 'Always was, always will be'? Could the Attorney-General, responding to political pressure, determine that such a phrase incites hostility or is likely to offend? During the committee process, when questions were asked about the expressions, the Department of Justice deputy director-general stated clearly—

There are no expressions that are prescribed through the bill. I do not think it is appropriate for me to comment on any potential or hypothetical expressions given that that would be a matter for government in terms of what they prescribe.

A director in the department confirmed—

... the bill does not prescribe any particular phrases but sets up a framework for the Attorney-General to prescribe a phrase.

The departmental response to the submissions said plainly—

No expressions are prescribed by the Bill ... Any further decision to recommend the making of a regulation with respect to a particular expression is a matter for the Attorney-General and is outside the scope of the Bill.

In other words, the committee was told 'nothing to see here'. At least 47 submissions raised concerns about particular expressions; 30 submissions raised concerns about the framework for prescribing prohibited symbols; and 39 raised constitutional issues. Frankly, it was a sham consultation process dressed up as legitimacy. Now, having been rolled internally, the government wants to rush amendments through and pretend that because the words will appear on the face of the legislation all is well. Rushing amendments under the guise of openness is not transparency; it is manipulation. It subverts parliamentary oversight and it subverts democracy.

Stakeholders across Queensland raised the alarm. The Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland recommended that the government pause the bill and undertake genuine, culturally informed consultation with multicultural and faith communities, youth and education stakeholders and human rights experts. Multicultural Australia stated plainly that such significant legislative reform is being afforded very limited consultation time and that the scope of change is not commensurate with the time permitted. Legal Aid Queensland emphasised that the criminal law is a poor tool to improve social cohesion and warned of significant unintended consequences for rushing such reforms. Anglican Church Southern Queensland questioned the lack of meaningful consultation with religious and multicultural communities who will be directly impacted.

Professor Anne Twomey, one of this nation's foremost constitutional experts, warned that the bill gives rise to difficult legal issues in areas of jurisprudence not yet fully developed, affects fundamental human rights and has the potential in the long term to restrict communications on a range of contentious topics. She made it clear that this should not be passed quickly as a kneejerk reaction and that it needs proper scrutiny and assessment in terms of its long-term consequences. These are not fringe voices. The LNP has put its own political interests ahead of Queensland's interests, which of course is not good enough.

What of guns? Of course tougher sentencing is welcome, but sentencing alone does not prevent access, it does not implement coronial recommendations in full and it does not ensure national consistency. If we are serious about preventing another Bondi or Wieambilla then we must focus on supply, licensing, trafficking and cross-border loopholes. You cannot be tough on crime if you are weak on guns.

Labor is united in condemning anti-Semitism and any form of racism and hatred, united in cracking down on criminals and terrorists, united in defending multicultural communities and united in standing up for freedom of speech. All we are seeing from this LNP government is chaos and division and Queenslanders deserve much better.