




Speech By
Martin Hunt

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

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

 **Mr HUNT** (Nicklin—LNP) (3.58 pm): ‘Never again’ is now. ‘Never again.’ Those words echo throughout Jewish history and the conscience of the free world. They were spoken after the horrors of the Holocaust as a promise to future generations that the hatred which led to such unspeakable evil would never again be allowed to take root. Yet in recent times we have been reminded that the words ‘never again’ cannot simply be a slogan. They must be a commitment that requires vigilance, leadership and, where necessary, legislative action.

On 7 October 2023, the world watched in horror as terrorists launched the deadliest attack on Jewish people since the Holocaust. Innocent civilians were murdered in their homes, families were taken hostage and communities were devastated. The brutality of those attacks shocked humanity and reminded us of the persistence of violent anti-Semitism, but what also shocked many of us in Australia was what followed. In the days and months after those atrocities we witnessed scenes in our own streets that many believed would never occur in this country. Instead of universal condemnation of terrorism, we saw cheering and elation in the streets of Sydney. We see regular protests in which the slogans ‘from the river to the sea’ and ‘globalise the intifada’ are chanted openly and aggressively with what I will call the useful naive joining in increasing numbers. Those words are not calls for peace; they are calls for the elimination of the world’s only Jewish state and, in many contexts, they have been used to justify violence against Jewish people.

For members of the Jewish community here in Australia, hearing those chants is deeply confronting. Many told our committee that they felt fear and isolation in a country that has long prided itself on tolerance and multicultural respect. As chair of the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee that conducted the inquiry into the bill, I want to place on record my appreciation to everyone who participated in the inquiry process. We received submissions from community organisations, faith groups, legal bodies, industry representatives and individual citizens. We held hearings in Brisbane and Townsville to hear directly from members of the public whose lives have been affected by anti-Semitism and hate speech. There were immediate calls from people in regional Queensland who wanted their voices heard on these important issues, and I want to place on record my thanks to the people of Townsville and the hardworking government members from that area who rallied together with short notice to ensure that their voices were heard.

One of the most powerful moments in the inquiry came during the Townsville public hearing when Rabbi Rubin addressed the committee. The rabbi spoke about the lessons he learned from Holocaust survivors in his community. He recalled how, when he was younger, older members of the Jewish community warned him that hatred could rise again even in countries that felt safe. As he told the committee—

They used to tell me, ‘Be careful. One day it can happen here too.’ I had the youthful audacity to laugh at them and say, ‘Not in Australia. This is a safe place.’

Then we saw what happened in Bondi. Rabbi Rubin went on to explain that, although the Jewish community in North Queensland is relatively small—about 1,000 people spread across the region—when anti-Semitic incidents occur, the sense of vulnerability is profound in those communities. His message to the committee was simple: societies must act early to stop hatred becoming normalised.

In her powerful evidence before the committee in Townsville, Dr Sarah Kleinman spoke with extraordinary courage, telling us—

Today I am standing before a crowd of people ... and outing myself as a Jewish Australian.

A frontline doctor, naval reservist and longstanding contributor to her regional community, Dr Kleinman described how anti-Semitism in her lifetime has 'progressed from whispers to a roar', culminating after 7 October in a climate where she no longer feels safe to run along the Strand without checking for protests or to attend public events for fear of being singled out as 'the only Jew in the crowd'. These testimonies were not political arguments; they were personal stories about fear, dignity and belonging.

During the Brisbane hearing, we also heard strong support for stronger legal protections. The Victims' Commissioner reminded the committee that anti-Semitism is not merely offensive speech; it is a form of hatred that has historically led to violence and persecution. She stated—

Anti-Semitism is an ancient and pernicious scourge. Victims of anti-Semitic hate crimes must have the harm caused to them appropriately acknowledged by our justice system and their ongoing safety protected.

That sentiment reflects a principle that should unite every member of this House: every Queenslanders deserves to feel safe regardless of their faith, heritage or identity.

The committee also heard from organisations that welcomed the bill's measures to strengthen community safety and prevent the misuse of firearms by terrorists and criminals. These provisions rightly focus on the access to weapons of those who seek to do harm and have struck the right balance with the rights of legitimate ownership and use.

Our Brisbane hearings also highlighted the voices of Jewish community organisations and leaders who told us clearly of the rise in anti-Semitism in Australia. Community representatives spoke about a surge in hateful rhetoric since the events of 7 October. They described a climate in which Jewish Australians increasingly feel that hostility towards them is being normalised. That should concern every one of us in this chamber.

The committee carefully considered the evidence placed before us. As with any legislation, there were differing views expressed. However, after considering the evidence and hearing directly from affected communities, the committee recommended that the bill be passed. We accept the amendments that came from listening to the feedback given by the community, and it will be substantially the same law the committee recommended be passed. The committee recommended the bill be passed because the core objective of the bill is both clear and necessary: to ensure that Queensland's laws reflect the seriousness of anti-Semitic hatred and the real risks posed by extremism.

Queensland is a proudly multicultural state. People of many faiths and backgrounds live here peacefully and contribute enormously to our society. Jewish Queenslanders have been part of that story for generations. They are doctors, teachers, small business owners, volunteers, police and community leaders. They are our neighbours and our friends. They deserve the same sense of safety and belonging that every Australian expects.

When Jewish Australians hear chants calling for the destruction of Israel or the 'globalisation of the intifada', many hear echoes of history's darkest chapters. When synagogues require security guards, when children feel unsafe wearing religious symbols, when families hesitate before attending community events, something has gone wrong. The role of parliament is to ensure that the law protects those communities and sends a clear message that hatred and intimidation will not be tolerated. That is what this bill seeks to achieve. It strengthens Queensland's response to anti-Semitic hate and extremist conduct, it ensures that the justice system recognises the seriousness of hate-motivated behaviour, and it strengthens safeguards to prevent weapons from falling into the hands of those who would use them to harm others.

Most importantly, it demonstrates that this parliament stands firmly with communities targeted by hatred. The phrase 'never again' carries a profound moral responsibility. It reminds us that the horrors of the past did not begin with violence alone. They began with words—words that dehumanised, words that spread conspiracy and hatred, words that convinced ordinary people that their neighbours were enemies. History teaches us that, when such rhetoric goes unchallenged, it can lead to unimaginable consequences. Today, this parliament has the opportunity to reaffirm a simple principle: that Queenslanders will not tolerate anti-Semitism or hatred directed toward any community. We will not look away, we will not remain silent and we will not allow the lessons of history to be forgotten. 'Never again' is now.