




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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

 **Mr HUTTON** (Keppel—LNP) (5.20 pm): In the Jewish Holocaust Museum, a poem adorns the wall. It says—

First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a communist;

Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist;

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist;

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew;

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak out for me.

These words from Lutheran pastor Martin Niemoller are not simply a lament from history; they are a warning about indifference, about the danger of believing that hatred directed at someone else is not our concern. These words are lived out in the devastating and tragic acts of violence throughout our shared past. In this parliament—and indeed in this nation—we have had for a very long time words of our own. As a former deputy mayor I had the honour on many occasions of hosting citizenship ceremonies in my community. Just as every new citizen is asked to stand up and make a pledge, all citizens in attendance are often called upon to reaffirm their Australian citizenship with these words—

From this time forward, under God, I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I will uphold and obey.

These words are not ceremonial; they are constitutional in spirit, they are moral in substance and they stand in direct opposition to the slow, creeping silence that Niemoller describes. When we pledge 'loyalty to Australia and its people', we do not pledge loyalty to only those who look like us, worship like us or even vote like us; we pledge loyalty to all Australians. When we talk of our shared 'democratic beliefs', we affirm Australia's belief in pluralism. We affirm peaceful disagreement. We affirm that difference is not a threat. When we commit to respect 'rights and liberties', we acknowledge that those rights belong equally to minorities as to majorities. When we pledge to 'uphold and obey' the laws of this nation, we affirm that law is the instrument by which we protect one another from fear and violence.

Niemoller's poem tells us what happens when that pledge is abandoned in spirit, when silence replaces solidarity, when indifference replaces loyalty. This bill is about ensuring that our laws reflect the promise embedded in our citizenship pledge, that our values and beliefs are shared, that never will we accept the permeation of hate in our towns and our homes. The Jewish Board of Deputies said in their submission—

Antisemitism is not only a Jewish problem but a threat to democratic values and pluralistic societies, because the conspiracy thinking and hatred it fosters undermine trust and social cohesion.

That statement could sit very comfortably beside our citizenship pledge because democratic belief and social cohesion cannot survive where hatred becomes normalised.

This bill strengthens bans on hate symbols by enabling the Attorney-General to proscribe terrorist organisations and state sponsors of terrorism listed under the Commonwealth Criminal Code. It ensures that where a person knowingly displays such symbols in a way that menaces or intimidates there are real consequences. That reflects seriousness, that reflects principle, because respecting 'rights and liberties' does not mean tolerating intimidation.

Freedom of speech has always coexisted with the rule of law. This bill targets conduct that could reasonably be expected to make a reasonable member of the public feel menaced, harassed or seriously offended. The proposed offence regarding specific prohibited expressions is framed carefully. It contains safeguards for genuine educational, religious, artistic or historical purposes. It entrusts our courts to determine whether the threshold of menace has been crossed. It ensures slogans are not weaponised to terrorise Queensland communities.

No Australian should walk in fear to their place of worship because of words that have turned into threats. This bill further modernises offences protecting faith communities. Assaulting or threatening a person officiating a religious ceremony will now carry a higher penalty. Intimidating or obstructing people entering or leaving a place of religious worship becomes an offence in its own right. Wilful damage to a place of worship attracts increased penalties. Let us be clear: this applies to all religions. The pledge of loyalty is to Australia and its people, not to one creed or one culture. Just last week we saw an individual charged after a vehicle rammed into the gates of a Brisbane synagogue. When such acts occur, silence should not be an option. When they come for Queenslanders, we need to speak out. Hatred does not end with symbols or words; it escalates.

This bill creates a new offence capturing acts done in preparation to cause death or grievous bodily harm, closing a legislative gap and enabling police to intervene before violence occurs. It establishes an offence prohibiting possession and distribution of blueprint material for the manufacture of 3D printed firearms. When hatred intersects with weapons, the consequences can be catastrophic to our communities. Respecting the 'rights and liberties' of Australians necessarily includes protecting their right to safety.

The new offence of reckless discharge of a weapon towards a building or vehicle carries severe penalties. Where such conduct is motivated by hatred towards a defined group, the law recognises that added gravity. Firing into a place of worship or a family home is never random; it is intended to terrorise not only the individual but also their community.

The pledge says that we will 'uphold and obey' the laws of Australia. That obligation is personal but it is also institutional. As legislators, we must ensure we have laws that are fit for purpose. Our reforms are preventive measures rooted in one simple truth: hatred is a danger to democracy, and democracy is precisely what all Australian citizens pledge to share.

The contrast between Niemoller's poem and our citizenship pledge is stark. The poem speaks of silence, shrinking circles of concern and, ultimately, isolation. The pledge speaks of loyalty, shared belief, respect and obedience to the law. One is the story of a society that failed to stand together; the other is a promise to stand together. Our task in this House is to ensure that promise prevails.

In communities across Queensland—from our capital city to regional towns—people of different backgrounds, cultures and faiths work side by side. They run small businesses, they coach sport, they volunteer, they study, they worship and they raise families. Hatred threatens that fragile fabric. When hatred targets one group—be it Jews, Muslims, Christians, migrants or any other group—the democratic beliefs we share are weakened for all.

Niemoller reminds us what happens when each group believes it is not their turn. Our citizenship pledge reminds us that it is always our turn to defend our democratic values. This bill is about preventing escalation. It is about drawing lines that protect cohesion. It is about saying clearly that Queensland will not tolerate intimidation, violence or the glorification of terrorism—because when they come for one of us, we will speak out; because we have pledged loyalty not only to ourselves but to all of Queensland's people; because we share democratic beliefs; because we respect rights and liberties; because we will uphold and obey the law; and because we have learned from history that silence is not neutrality but abandonment. Let this parliament choose loyalty over science, let us choose cohesion over contempt and let us choose safety over indifference so that no Queenslanders ever has to say, 'There was no-one left to speak for me.' I commend the bill to the House.