

**Submission
No 57**

MEASURES TO PROHIBIT SLOGANS THAT INCITE HATRED

Organisation: Indian Crescent Society of Australia Inc

Date Received: 12 January 2026



Indian Crescent Society of Australia Inc

12th Jan 2026

Committee on Law and Safety
NSW Parliament

1. Introduction: Commitment to Peace, Harmony, and Community Safety

We migrated to this beautiful part of the world, our adopted country, Australia, for the betterment of our lives and to raise our families in a peaceful and secure society. Peace and harmony are therefore deeply important to us.

We make this submission as a long-standing community organisation in New South Wales committed to social cohesion, civic participation, peace and harmony, and community safety. Our work spans engagement with Australian families, young people, faith and non-faith leaders, educators, and community organisations, particularly during periods of heightened social tension.

Our leadership reflects Australia's diversity, including Australians of Indian Muslim background, not to centre any one community, but to reflect the lived experience of how global events and political media language can affect local Australian communities in immediate and tangible ways.

2. Importance of This Inquiry for a Multicultural NSW

(Terms of Reference (a) and (c))

New South Wales is one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world. This diversity is a strength, but it requires care, responsibility, and restraint in public language.

In recent years, slogans associated with overseas conflicts have increasingly appeared in protests, online spaces, and public discourse in NSW. Phrases such as "globalise the intifada" carry historical and political associations with violence and civil unrest.

The concern in NSW is not about supporting or opposing international causes. It is about the impact such language has on community safety, including its capacity to intimidate, inflame tensions, incite hatred, and undermine social cohesion.

3. Lived Community Impacts on Safety and Participation

(Terms of Reference (a) and (c))

Through sustained engagement across communities, we consistently hear that:

- People feel unsafe or intimidated when such slogans are used publicly.
- The language is widely interpreted as endorsing violence, regardless of intent.
- Tensions escalate rapidly in public and online spaces.
- Some individuals withdraw from civic participation due to fear.

These are not theoretical concerns. They are lived experiences that weaken trust and make public spaces feel less safe for everyone.

4. Preventing Harm Through Proportionate and Targeted Measures

(Terms of Reference (b) and (f))

Any measures adopted should be targeted, proportionate, and evidence-based. In our experience, effective prevention focuses on:

- the context in which a slogan is used,
- its widely understood meaning and historical associations, and
- whether it could reasonably be expected to cause fear, intimidation, or harm.

NSW and Commonwealth laws already address intimidation, threats, terrorism advocacy, and vilification. The issue is not the absence of law, but the need for clarity, consistency, and public understanding of how existing offences apply to slogans that function as instruments of fear.

5. Protecting Democratic Debate While Rejecting Intimidation

(Terms of Reference (e))

The implied freedom of political communication is essential to Australian democracy. However, it has always co-existed with limits designed to prevent intimidation, hatred, and violence.

Targeted measures that protect people from fear and harm are not inconsistent with democratic values. Rather, they preserve the conditions necessary for meaningful, inclusive, and peaceful public participation.

6. Lessons from Australian and International Approaches

(Terms of Reference (d))

Other democracies, including the United Kingdom, have sought to distinguish between legitimate protest and language closely linked to violent movements. These approaches demonstrate that it is possible to protect freedom of expression while setting clear boundaries against intimidation.

Australia should continue to learn from these experiences while ensuring any NSW measures align with constitutional principles and the needs of local communities.

7. Media Literacy and the Online Amplification of Harm

(Terms of Reference (g))

The online spread of slogans has significantly amplified their impact. Many people encounter such phrases without understanding their historical background or potential consequences. Alongside legal measures, NSW should invest in media literacy, community-led dialogue, and responsible moderation to prevent escalation before harm occurs.

8. Addressing Root Causes Alongside Regulatory Measures

This submission also responds to the broader context surrounding proposals to prohibit slogans that incite hatred.

The tragic events at Bondi were deeply distressing and must be unequivocally condemned. Violence against innocent people can never be justified.

However, restricting slogans alone will achieve little if governments remain silent in the face of global oppression, persecution, and war crimes. Suppressing language without confronting these realities risks treating symptoms rather than causes.

A politics driven by fear, whether relating to Antisemitism, Christianophobia, Hinduphobia, Islamophobia, Sikhphobia, or extremism, has too often been exploited, while deeper issues of injustice and persecution remain unaddressed.

9. Leadership Actions to Promote Peace and Prevent Extremism

We call on Australian leaders to address both domestic harmony and international responsibility through:

1. Strong parliamentary statements condemning atrocities in all parts of the world and calling for the immediate cessation of violence.
2. Active peacemaking diplomacy beyond symbolic statements.
3. Australian Defence Force assistance for humanitarian relief in conflict zones.
4. Support for registered Australian NGOs to raise and distribute humanitarian aid.
5. Strengthened partnerships with organisations such as MSF and Oxfam.
6. National standards for religious leadership, including accreditation, ethical criteria, and proportionate enforcement where preaching incites hatred or violence.

These steps address the conditions that fuel extremism, not merely its expressions.

10. Community Grants and Investment in Social Cohesion

The NSW Government should work in partnership with established ethnic organisations to promote and spread messages of peace across communities.

Rather than limiting funding solely to religious events or programs serving one faith or one ethnicity, the NSW Government should provide grants to organisations that have clearly demonstrated community cohesion through their programs and events.

All events funded by the NSW Government must ensure that they actively foster unity, inclusion, and strong community cohesion.

11. Strengthening Peaceful Community Cohesion Through Education and Dialogue

A peaceful and cohesive society cannot be sustained through regulation alone. It must be reinforced through education, dialogue, and shared civic values that are deeply rooted in Australia's democratic traditions.

NSW should continue to invest in community-led education programs that promote mutual respect, non-violence, and peaceful disagreement. Schools, youth organisations, cultural institutions, and community centres play a critical role in teaching young Australians how to engage with complex global issues without importing conflict or hostility into local communities.

Structured interfaith and intercultural dialogue programs grounded in Australian civic values rather than overseas politics help communities build trust before tensions arise. These initiatives should prioritise shared responsibilities, respectful language, and the rejection of violence in all forms.

By proactively supporting education and dialogue, NSW can strengthen peaceful community cohesion, reduce the risk of polarisation, and reinforce Australia's long-standing reputation as a society where diversity thrives alongside unity.

12. Conclusion: Building Safety Through Unity and Moral Leadership

This inquiry offers NSW an opportunity to demonstrate that community safety and democratic values are mutually reinforcing.

Communities are not asking for censorship. They are asking for:

- Clear boundaries,
- Fairness, and
- Leadership that prioritises social cohesion.

We support reasonable and proportionate measures that prevent language from being used to intimidate or instil fear, while fully protecting lawful and peaceful political expression.

At the same time, we urge this Committee to recognise that lasting harmony cannot be built through restriction alone. It requires moral leadership at home and abroad, a commitment to justice, and the courage to confront both hatred in our streets and oppression beyond our borders.

W| www.icsoa.org.au

E| contact@icsoa.org.au