

**Submission
No 87**

MEASURES TO PROHIBIT SLOGANS THAT INCITE HATRED

Organisation: The Independent and Peaceful Australia Network ACT

Date Received: 12 January 2026

Submission to the NSW PARLIAMENT INQUIRY INTO BANNING PROTEST SLOGANS

Many people from Canberra frequently travel to Sydney for various purposes, including at times, protests. A number attended the March for Humanity across the Harbour Bridge on 3 August 2025, so legislation against protesting will also affect ACT citizens.

We are concerned that banning political language would undermine protest rights, and weaken democratic participation in NSW.

(a) Community cohesion and safety

There is no evidence that the use of these slogans, in and of themselves, poses a threat to community safety. In our experience, they are used in peaceful protests to express political opposition, solidarity and calls for justice.

Silencing one community's political expression is more likely to deepen division and mistrust than to promote social cohesion.

(b) Claims that slogans are "inherently hateful"

Slogans cited in this inquiry have contested meanings and are used in different ways depending on context. Treating them as "inherently hateful" is racist and ignores the need to consider intent or actual harm.

Political disagreement or offence should not be treated as criminal conduct. Restrictions on speech should be limited to situations involving genuine threats, intimidation or violence.

(c) Protecting communities from hatred and violence

We strongly support protecting all communities from hatred, intimidation and violence.

NSW already has criminal laws that address incitement to violence, threats and harassment. These laws focus on harmful conduct and provide appropriate safeguards. New laws banning political slogans such as "globalise the intifada" and "From the River to the Sea" are unnecessary and divisive.

(d) Better approaches than banning slogans

Education, dialogue, anti-racism initiatives and the use of existing criminal law are more effective ways to address hatred and violence than banning words or phrases.

Broad slogan bans risk escalating conflict rather than reducing it.

(e) Free political expression

Banning specific political slogans would directly restrict political communication and protest.

Political expression opposing occupation, apartheid or state violence should be protected, not singled out for punishment.

(f) Existing laws are sufficient

Existing NSW and Commonwealth laws already deal with genuine threats to safety. Expanding into bans on political language risks inconsistent enforcement and overreach without improving community safety.

(g) Other concerns

Turning political language into an enforcement trigger risks increasing police–citizen confrontation at protests and damaging trust between communities and authorities.

Such outcomes undermine long-term community safety and social cohesion.

Our recommendations

We recommend to the Committee that:

1. No additional political slogans or symbols be banned or criminalised, including those associated with Palestinian advocacy.
2. Any proposed bans on specific slogans, including, “Free Gaza,” “globalise the intifada,” “From the River to the Sea” or “From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be Free” be abandoned.
3. Palestinian symbols, slogans and expressions of solidarity be explicitly recognised as protected political communication, not hate speech.
4. Legislation and guidance clearly distinguish between universally recognised hate symbols and political expression opposing occupation, apartheid or state violence.
5. Existing criminal law continue to address genuine threats of violence or intimidation without expanding into content-based regulation of political speech.
6. Protest rights and political expression be clearly protected within NSW criminal and public order law.
7. NSW Government acknowledge and reject the racial discrimination inherent in selectively policing Palestinian political expression.
8. NSW ensure any guidance to police and public authorities is content-neutral, evidence-based, and designed to prevent discriminatory enforcement against Palestinians and those advocating Palestinian rights.
9. Community education and dialogue initiatives be prioritised over broad prohibitions or expanded police powers.

Thank you for considering our comments.

IPAN ACT

12 January 2026