



Mark Speakman
Attorney General

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 5 June 2018

NEW LAWS TO TARGET INCITEMENT OF VIOLENCE

Individuals who incite or threaten violence against people based on their race, religion or sexuality will risk a three-year jail sentence under new laws to be introduced into NSW Parliament, Attorney General Mark Speakman announced today.

Mr Speakman said the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government has listened to the community and is acting to replace provisions in the *Anti-Discrimination Act* that have proven ineffective, allowing some people to escape punishment for vile acts that encourage violence.

“People who incite violence are a threat to community safety. If passed, these laws will help protect individuals and groups from being targeted by cowards who seek to cause physical harm to innocent people,” Mr Speakman said.

“We’re not saying people can’t have opinions or express their views, but if they cross the line into threatening and inciting violence they will not go unpunished”.

The legislation will create a new offence in the *Crimes Act* of publicly threatening or inciting violence against people on the grounds of race, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex or HIV/AIDS status, including a maximum penalty of three years imprisonment and a fine of \$11,000.

The Bill will abolish offences in the *Anti-Discrimination Act* that presently carry a maximum sentence of six months in prison.

“The new laws will send a very clear message to offenders that we will not tolerate behaviour which risks people’s safety simply because they belong to a particular group,” said Mr Speakman.

“In 1989, the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government was the first in Australia to introduce legislation to help protect historically targeted communities from harm. Today we’re acting again to strengthen the law and support people to go about their lives without fearing for their safety just because of who they are or what they believe,” said Mr Speakman.

“Our new laws will boost police powers allowing them to target offenders and better protect a broader range of people, including those belonging to religious groups,” Mr Speakman said.

Mr Speakman thanked the Keep NSW Safe Coalition, religious leaders and other groups for their helpful feedback on the topic, which was considered in the 2013 Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice *Inquiry into racial vilification law in NSW* and Stepan Kerkyasharian’s 2017 *Report on consultation on serious vilification laws in NSW*.