



Mark Speakman
Attorney General

Mark Coure
Minister for Multiculturalism
Minister for Seniors

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GOVERNMENT BILL TO BAN NAZI SYMBOLS PASSES LOWER HOUSE

The NSW Government's bill to criminalise knowingly displaying a Nazi symbol in public without a reasonable excuse has passed the Lower House today with unanimous support.

Attorney General Mark Speakman said the proposed amendment to the *Crimes Act 1900*, introduced by the NSW Government, will provide important, additional safeguards against hate speech and vilification in NSW.

The maximum penalty for the new offence will be 12 months' imprisonment or a \$11,000 fine or both for an individual; or a fine of \$55,000 for a corporation.

"Hateful and vilifying conduct is completely unacceptable in our community," Mr Speakman said.

"New South Wales is a place where everyone can expect protection and safety from serious vilification and hate crimes.

"The display of a Nazi symbol undermines our shared values and causes harm and distress to others in the community, including those from the Jewish faith. This distress is also felt keenly by groups targeted by the Nazis, including Christians, people with disabilities and members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and by veterans who risked their lives in service for our country.

"This bill recognises that the public display of Nazi symbols is abhorrent, except in very limited circumstances such as for educational purposes, and causes profound offence and distress.

"Under the bill, it will not be an offence to publicly display a Nazi symbol where there is a reasonable excuse, including artistic, academic or educational purposes or any other purpose in the public interest."

NSW Minister for Multiculturalism Mark Coure said this Bill reaffirms the NSW Government's position that hate has no place in our tolerant multicultural society.

“This bill also serves another important purpose—to protect those that use a Swastika for religious and spiritual reasons including Buddhists, Hindus and Jains,” Mr Coure said.

“It clearly states that the displaying of a swastika in connection with these spiritualities will not be deemed a Nazi symbol.

“This provision safeguards these communities and ensures the enforcement of this law is done so appropriately.”

Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and Member for Vaucluse, Gabrielle Upton said, “This bill is a clear statement from the NSW Government on behalf of the community that the display of Nazi symbols, and the hatred and bigotry they invoke and inspire, has absolutely no place in our community.”

MEDIA: Sue Finn | Attorney General | 0476 871 252
Scott Hodder | Minister Coure | 0455 094 282