

Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Jacqui Boyde; Hon Alison Xamon; Hon Colin Tincknell; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Diane Evers; Hon Rick Mazza; Hon Aaron Stonehouse; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Alanna Clohesy

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## **CHRISTCHURCH TERRORIST ATTACK**

### *Standing Orders Suspension — Motion*

**HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House)** [2.11 pm] — without notice: I move —

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as is necessary —

- (1) to enable me to move forthwith a motion in regard to the terrorist attack in New Zealand; and
- (2) to allow members to speak to the motion for a maximum of 10 minutes each.

Question put and passed with an absolute majority.

### *Motion*

**HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House)** [2.11 pm] — without notice: I move —

That this house, on behalf of the people of Western Australia, expresses its deepest sympathy to the people of New Zealand and those affected by the abhorrent terrorist attack in Christchurch.

And further, that this house unequivocally condemns all acts of hatred and intolerance within our community.

Last Friday's shocking events in Christchurch, New Zealand, in which people attending regular Friday prayer sessions in two suburban mosques were shot by a single gunman, who claimed he was doing it specifically to kill Muslim immigrants, have resonated with us all. Since then, we have witnessed huge outpourings of grief from the good people of Christchurch. It is appropriate that we, too, send them a message that fear and hatred will be overcome by love and respect, and that we stand with them in respecting people of all faiths' right to safely and peacefully pray. Like New Zealand and Christchurch, Western Australia and Perth are proudly multicultural. We are proud of the oldest living culture of our Indigenous Western Australians and all who came later—that is, immigrants, all of us who are not Indigenous.

In recent days, there has been some debate about freedom of speech and a multi-party reflection on the words of Senator Fraser Anning, who sought to blame the events in New Zealand on immigration and, indeed, on the victims themselves because of their faith. I, too, reject his commentary. Freedom of speech is precious to us all, but it is not an unfettered freedom. We have laws that place qualifications and fetters on our public utterances. We have defamation laws. We have laws about inciting violence. We have social mores as old as our respective faiths and cultures. Saying, "If you cannot say anything nice, do not say anything" may seem trite in this very serious context, but it goes to our long-held values that words have consequences and we should think about the words that we use. It appears from his manifesto that the shooter was emboldened, radicalised and empowered by hate speech about Islam and Muslims. We stand with New Zealand in rejecting hate speech.

The Legislative Council today can do one very small thing for those grieving, Madam President. We offer our deepest sympathies to those affected by the terrorist attack in New Zealand.

**HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan — Leader of the Opposition)** [2.14 pm]: I stand to support this motion, on behalf of the opposition. Madam President, we likewise, condemn all acts of hatred and intolerance within our community. There is no place in our community for hatred or intolerance and no place for violence, threats or intimidation. Like our New Zealand neighbours, we are a community that opens our arms to our multicultural and multid denominational community. We are a society that celebrates and embraces religious diversity.

The terrorist attack in Christchurch last Friday was indescribable. It definitely does not define the culture of our two nations; in fact, it is the antithesis of all that we represent. To say it was reprehensible, disgusting, horrendous or atrocious is to immeasurably understate its impact. Friday's attack was all of these and more. Friday's atrocity was profoundly heartbreaking. It quite rightly shattered the sense of safety and security we derive from living in what we thought were the safe havens of Australia and New Zealand.

To the people of New Zealand, we offer our most sincere condolences. To the people of Christchurch, we offer our love, prayers and sympathy. Your community has suffered too much over recent years and for the loss and tragedy you have endured, we embrace you as closely as we can. To the families and loved ones of the victims, we grieve for you and with you. You have suffered a tremendous loss and we hope that you can find peace and comfort at this terrible time, as difficult as that will be. It was a heartless attack against defenceless people. It was an attack against people of faith at their place of worship, a peaceful place. They were at a place where they would have thought they were visiting peace and harmony, not violence and bloodshed.

To the first responders—the police and paramedics and all others who went to the frontline of this tragedy—our thoughts are with you and we pray for you too. You stared terrorism in the face and had to overlook the horrendous

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tragedy you came upon to support those victims who needed help. Your task was beyond imagination, your efforts beyond praise.

The perpetrator of this attack is a terrorist. His name never requires repeating. The only people we should remember are the victims. They did not deserve the atrocity visited upon them. The stories of those victims have started to be told, and will continue to be told over coming days, weeks and months. One of the most heart-wrenching images of this atrocity has been the published photograph of Mucad Ibrahim, a three-year-old victim of the attack. Mucad has been described as a fun-loving, energetic and playful kid—what a beautiful child. The terror that he must have experienced in the last minutes of his life is unimaginable. He was with his dad at the mosque, participating in Friday prayers. He would have felt safe, happy and secure at every level, and this security was selfishly stolen from him almost instantly through the actions of one depraved individual. I offer a special prayer for beautiful Mucad.

Witnessing the stoic reaction of the families of some of the victims over recent days has been absolutely extraordinary. Watching several of these family members offer forgiveness to the individual responsible for taking the lives of their loved ones shows a strength of character that is almost unimaginable. I am in complete awe of these peaceful, loving people. In relation to the victims, their lives will be celebrated the world over, as they well deserve. But they did not deserve to die. They deserved to continue living rich and fulfilling lives, continuing to make a positive contribution to the communities they called home. May they rest in peace.

**HON JACQUI BOYDELL (Mining and Pastoral — Deputy Leader of the Nationals WA)** [2.18 pm]: I rise on behalf of the Nationals WA to support the motion put forward by the Leader of the House.

I am extremely proud to stand in the Legislative Council of Western Australia knowing that my colleagues in this house completely condemn the actions of the terrorist in Christchurch, New Zealand. I concur with the speakers who talked at length about the people affected—families, children, uncles, aunts and parents. It is an extremely distressing situation, but it has brought the communities of Christchurch and New Zealand together to embrace their multiculturalism, their support for each other and the love they have for each other in their community. It has been amazing to witness, and I congratulate the community of Christchurch, and New Zealand, for the leadership it has shown in showing support for the Muslim community in Christchurch in particular. I also want to reflect on the outstanding leadership of the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern. I have been really comforted by some of the comments she has made over the past few days. She has outwardly rejected the events that took place on not only those migrants to New Zealand, but also citizens of New Zealand. The strength and leadership she has shown in that space has been outstanding. It has allowed the community to come together and celebrate what is great about Christchurch. Their morals and values and their culture as they live together in harmony will continue to be supported moving forward.

To all the residents of Christchurch, to the leaders of the Muslim community and the community in general, I hope that they are finding some solace in the support from the Western Australian Parliament today. I say sincerely: may the victims of this terrible crime forever rest in peace. May their families continue to be supported throughout the time that they deal with this terrible tragedy.

**HON ALISON XAMON (North Metropolitan)** [2.20 pm]: I rise to indicate my wholehearted support for this motion. I think it is very important that this Parliament acknowledges the tragedy that has befallen New Zealand, and indeed has affected so many people around the world. It is with a very heavy heart that I express my profound sorrow to New Zealand as a whole, but particularly to the Muslim community and to those people within Christchurch who were so directly affected by this heinous act.

New Zealand is our closest neighbour. New Zealand as a country still exists within the Australian Constitution, so it has a very particular place within the hearts of Australians. The fact that an Australian murderer-terrorist has wrought this tragedy upon that nation particularly affects all of us. The division and the hatred that has led to this is un-Australian. It is not what we stand for. It is not what a truly inclusive Australia is about. It is with deep distress that I reflect on the rise of Islamophobia, not just within Australia and New Zealand but indeed globally. The sentiment that has allowed Islamophobia has, in many ways, enabled this terrible tragedy.

I want members to remember that so many of the people who were murdered were children, including toddlers. They were people who sought a better life and a life of peace—one which was so very, very cruelly denied them. It has been extraordinarily heartening to watch the rise of everyday New Zealanders, and indeed everyday Australians, saying, “Enough. We don’t accept this. This is not a part of who we are. This is not anything that we identify with or would ever condone.” I can only hope that perhaps we may see a corner turned so that people start challenging when we see this hatred perpetuated.

I would like to read out quickly a comment that came from an amazing Muslim female friend of mine who posted online only a couple of hours ago these words —

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In 22 years of being a Muslim in Australia, today is the first time I have been able to turn on the radio and hear journalists and politicians alike, passionately calling out the dehumanising rhetoric and hate speech that has dominated our public discourse for so long. A grand-scale tragedy has forced us as a society to become introspect.

50 years of manipulation by the media and political fear-mongering, paid for by the blood of 50 innocent martyrs.

Today, here in Australia, my motherland, I am now a human being. Last week, I was demonic, a terrorist, backward, extreme, oppressed, fair game, worthy of abuse and discrimination, and deserving of suspicion. Today, at the cost of 50 lives, I am a human being.

After all, there is hope.

We should take from those words from a member of the Muslim community that nothing good ever comes out of these sorts of tragedies, but we hope that there is at least some chance for us to be unified as a result.

**HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West)** [2.24 pm]: I rise on behalf of One Nation WA to also agree with this motion. The tragedy of what happened in Christchurch over this past week is something that is happening all too often right around the globe. This is a global problem. This is something that we need to find an answer to. It is a major issue.

The Leader of the House talked about freedom of speech. I agree with most of what she said about freedom of speech. I think part of the problem that we face in the world today is that people are marginalised. As people go further to the left or further to the right, they get marginalised and find themselves without a voice. All of a sudden, we find these sorts of tragedies happening. This global issue needs a global response.

We completely condemn what happened in New Zealand. I have family and friends in New Zealand. I have been to Christchurch many times in my life. What happened there is an absolute tragedy. The people of Christchurch have already been through so much trauma and so much death and destruction in the past 10 years. When this was unfolding, unfortunately, I locked onto it and watched what was going on, and was absolutely appalled.

The three members of One Nation in this house are all immigrants into this country. We know the struggle that immigrants face when they arrive in this country and in any other country. We are all peace-loving people who believe in free speech and protections for all immigrants wherever they go around the globe.

There has been a lot of commentary over the past few days in the media turning a lot of this into political pointscoring. I also abhor that. That is not going to help one issue. The One Nation party stands for peace. We embrace all immigrants into this country. People should be treated with kindness and care. I am a Christian; I was born into that belief. I just hope that we do not see another incident like this in the near future, or in any future. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I appreciate that.

**HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (North Metropolitan — Minister for Regional Development)** [2.27 pm]: I wish to briefly add my support to this motion and stand with our NZ cousins to support the Muslim people of the communities of New Zealand and Australia. Australia and New Zealand are nations that are made strong by our diversity; in fact, it is the very essence of our nations. By weaving together the strands of so many cultures, we have created a strong, beautiful and resilient fabric. It is so tragic to see that fundamental insight not understood, and acted against. As I said, the very essence of the nations of Australasia is indeed this cultural diversity.

This has happened in the past. Going back 100 years or more, many people questioned whether Irish Australians could truly be loyal Australians and loyal to their country because of their religion. Now that would seem such a completely fanciful and ridiculous idea, yet we see subsequent waves of immigration going through this process, and now the potential for this to play out in the vile way that it has in Christchurch is aided by the availability of weapons, literally of mass destruction, and indeed aided and abetted by the echo chambers that can be created within social media.

As has been said by other members, I also respect immensely the way in which Jacinda Ardern has led her country's response to this tragedy. I hope, and I believe, that she will have the capacity to do what John Howard did and use this dreadful, dreadful event as an opportunity to deal with the fundamental problem of guns in our community.

One of the things we can do is reach out to the different mosques and Muslim communities across our electorates, and I urge all members to do that, to show very strongly that we here in this Parliament support them and want to work with them to create that great dialogue between all members of our community.

**HON DIANE EVERS (South West)** [2.30 pm]: I have just a few words to say. I wholeheartedly support the words in this motion, in particular that we condemn all acts of hatred. This violent episode on Friday stemmed from hatred.

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The issue is not only hatred but also that people fear “the other”. That is where a lot of this hatred grows from. Maybe we are all part of this. We in this place have the opportunity to do something and to say something, yet I feel quite angry about the fact that I do not think tomorrow will be any different from today—but it should be. Something like this happened in New Zealand, in Christchurch, to people who did not deserve this, and I feel so angry that we sit here in this place and we have the opportunity to make changes, and we do not. That infuriates me. I feel somewhat disgusted even with myself that by standing in this place and speaking these words, I might walk out of here thinking I have done something and feel a little bit better, yet my words are impotent in the face of arms, guns and ammunition. It is just impossible. My frustration is that we need to make systemic changes at all levels of government, including globally. We need to go back to some of the religions that profess love, compassion and peace. We have so many people, religious people, who do not seem to be professing those ideas anymore. It is infuriating that this hate is so much a part of our culture and this fear of “the other” is so much a part of what we do, how we live and what we go through each day. Even if we are not encouraging it, or even if we are speaking against it and talking about the right to free speech, each day we go on accepting that this is happening. We cannot even blame it on social media. Social media is a tool, but we accept what it is doing. Maybe we can find some way to challenge that. That is what we need to do. There needs to be a systemic change. It is great that after the Port Arthur massacre, we changed the gun laws. That was a first step. However, that is not combating the hate that goes around in our community.

Finally, I want to express my absolute awe and appreciation for those people in the mosques who put their own lives at risk to protect others. They did what they knew they needed to do. It is horribly tragic that this occurred.

**HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural)** [2.33 pm]: I also rise to support the motion put by the Leader of the House. I will cover the last sentence of the motion first, and later in my contribution, I will cover the first part. The events of last Friday were, no doubt, a cowardly attack by someone who is full of hate. To randomly murder a gathering of unarmed people, even during a conflict of war, would be considered a war crime. To do so in a peaceful place like Christchurch, New Zealand, is despicable and unforgiveable. The big question in this whole tragedy is: Why? Why would a young man from country Australia and from a seemingly normal family be so hateful? What has failed in our society that he has undertaken this act?

I have watched a number of the many news reports and the dissection by media of every aspect of this tragedy. I have listened to talkback radio and I have seen the TV debates rage, with all sorts of opinions on how and why this has taken place. However, the reality is that no-one really knows. There has been commentary about this being an outrage by a white supremacist. I would not even give him a stereotype, to be honest. Over the last 20 years in particular, extremists have committed atrocities under a number of different flags, whether they be left-wing extremists, Islamic extremists, right-wing extremists—whatever name you want to give them. On our own shores, we had the Lindt Café siege in Sydney, in which three people died; the execution-style murder of Curtis Cheng, a police finance worker, by a 15-year-old boy; and a number of planned terrorist acts that were thwarted by our police, thank goodness. Even overnight in the Netherlands, an attack that left three people dead and five wounded has been connected by police to a terrorist link.

My worry is not how, but why. Whether it is with a firearm, a 20-tonne truck driven through a pedestrian mall, a pressure cooker full of nails, a cocktail of chemicals from a hardware store, or jetliners flown into an office tower, people with hate will find a way. There has been commentary on hate speech being the culprit that radicalises people, or is it an erosion of freedom of speech that things like politically correct language stifle? Is it the frustration and bitterness of not being heard that drives these people underground to be radicalised? We are very fortunate in this country and in this state to have the Westminster system, akin to other western countries, that resolves issues through argument and debate and an acceptance that the umpire’s decision, if natural justice is served, is the end of the debate. A key factor of that system is freedom of speech. I believe that if someone has extremist views, let them be heard; let their ideas be rejected by reasonable-thinking people.

I am very concerned about the politicisation of some of the issues by politicians in the federal arena in particular. That is disappointing at best and, at worst, inciteful. One of my concerns about the level of media hype and political jockeying on this event is that it may fan the flames from one sector of the community and embolden another. Until we are able to understand fully what drives people to commit these despicable crimes and we can somehow break that cycle, we obviously have to remain vigilant, because, unfortunately, these types of events will not go away any time soon, as has been mentioned by other members of this place. One of the tragic facts of modern times within our community and other communities in the world is that in the last 20 years, these sorts of events have happened.

I now come back to the first part of the Leader of the House’s motion. I wholeheartedly express my sympathy to the people of New Zealand who have been affected by this terrible attack. That includes responders such as the police, who quite quickly apprehended this person, and the emergency services personnel and medical professionals who had to deal with the horrific events before them.

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**HON AARON STONEHOUSE (South Metropolitan)** [2.38 pm]: Never did I expect that I would have to make a speech such as this, or that I would have to offer my condolences for the loss of 50 men, women and children who were gunned down while praying in a place of worship in a country so very much like our own. I have been to Christchurch a few times, and while I was there the people of Christchurch treated me with nothing but respect and courtesy. I am, therefore, all the more saddened that an event such as this has befallen the people of that wonderful city.

The attack in Christchurch was horrifying. The man who carried it out was a monster. The people who were harmed and killed did nothing wrong. We know all these things to be true. I had hoped that in speaking to this motion, we would refrain from making political points, and I am glad that the leaders of the respective parties have done that. However, it hard not to reflect on at least some of the things that are happening in the federal arena in the wake of this event. I would merely like to urge all members of not only this place, but also our wider community to resist the urge to ascribe collective blame. Whenever an attack like this is undertaken, we must resist those base tribal urges to paint entire spots of our community with guilt for the acts of violent and deranged individuals, whether that be the Muslim community or other communities out there.

We ought not use this tragic event to score political points over our opponents. Instead, we should be coming together at a time like this. Despite the polarised nature of our politics today and despite our strong differences, as members of a civilised society we should be able to join together at times like this and rightly condemn violence against innocent people. Those using this as an opportunity to pin blame on their political adversaries are misguided and only serve to fan the flames of old hatreds.

I do not want to give the terrorist responsible for these acts any more airtime than he has already received, but one example might be that he had inscribed the names of several patriotic Serbian figures on his possessions. Surely, we do not seek to blame the Serbian community for the acts in Christchurch. I spent some time with the Serbian community in Perth at the Serbian Statehood Day about a year ago. I am sure that Serbian migrants and refugees of the Yugoslav wars would be horrified to learn that this man tried to link his actions with their community or with their struggle. We need to resist those tribal urges. We should also resist the gleeful encouragement of political violence in the wake of this act. Again, I do not want to give Senator Anning any more airtime than he has already had—I think his comments were disgusting and despicable—but to say that this was an act of vigilantism is a most horrible way to describe this act. However, encouraging political violence, again, will only serve to heighten already existing racial and religious tensions. It will only seek to embolden various groups, and does not help the political discourse in this country or in this region.

I refer to knee-jerk reactions to censor, block or ban opinions we find distasteful. Although there may be a broader discussion about freedom of speech to be had later, today I learnt that several websites that do not hold particular political views but merely host live streaming of videos have been blocked by Australian internet service providers. This is disappointing. Our first response to acts of terror should not be to limit and restrict the rights of all our citizens. This was a horrible act of evil, an act of terrorism, and it is rightfully condemned. I am glad to see that all members of this chamber agree. I hope that we never have to have another motion like this in my time here.

**HON PIERRE YANG (South Metropolitan)** [2.42 pm]: I rise to support this motion moved by the Leader of the House. I want to express my deep sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims of the terrorist attack that happened on Friday in Christchurch, New Zealand. I am sure that members here would agree with me that everyone should have the right to feel safe and to be safe from harm and violence. Violence is never okay. Extremism is never okay. Terrorism is never okay.

I spent last Friday night with a Muslim community organisation, and I heard their concerns and worries in light of what happened in Christchurch. I also heard their stories of verbal abuse or other forms of discrimination that they had suffered because of their faith—discrimination that occurs almost on a daily basis. I want to call upon all community leaders and all political leaders to be kind to each other and be kind to other people. Be more gentle with your words, because words are powerful; words do matter. What we say can help to foster a better community, a more respectful community and a more harmonious community. Equally, it can divide us, segregate us and breed hatred, discrimination and prejudice.

Madam President, I pray for New Zealand, I pray for the victims and I pray for their families.

**HON ALANNA CLOHESY (East Metropolitan — Parliamentary Secretary)** [2.44 pm]: I stand in support of this motion, just as I stand in support and in solidarity with the people of New Zealand, particularly with the Muslim community and the wider Christchurch community. To have this heinous crime inflicted upon you is unbearable, and I cannot fathom the depth of your suffering, but I send my deepest condolences in the hope that it offers some means by which to ease your pain.

**Extract from *Hansard***

[COUNCIL — Tuesday, 19 March 2019]

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In condemning this shocking act of terrorism and in rejecting some of the hateful views expressed by some people in our Australian community following those events, I share the sentiments of Senator Penny Wong, who this morning called on all of us to stand against hate speech, by saying —

We have to say to the Australian people that the Australia that we all have faith in, the Australian values in which we believe, are values of inclusion and acceptance and respect.

We have to choose unity over division. We have to choose respect over prejudice. We have to choose hope over fear, and we have to choose love over hate.

That is what we have to do as a nation, and that is a job for all of us ... We have to choose the values which we want this country to have.

And we have to stand against those that we know tear us apart.

Question put and passed.

**The PRESIDENT:** Members, I ask you to stand in your place for a moment's silence out of respect for these people.

[Members stood and observed a minute's silence.]