



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**Federation Chamber**

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**Ideologically Motivated Extremism**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 4 September 2023**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> Khalil, Peter MP	<b>Question No.</b>

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**Mr KHALIL** (Wills) (16:55): I also thank the member for Spence for moving this very important motion because in the recent period we have seen an increase in the presence of far-right extremism. It's been observed around the world, not just in Australia. That shift has also been reflected in the threat assessments that our intelligence agencies have been making with respect to putting more resources into addressing far-right extremism.

In my home state of Victoria we've seen, in recent years, Neo-Nazis marching openly in the Grampians. We've seen them spewing hatred in front of the Victorian parliament. We know, all too well, that this extremism often goes far beyond marches and demonstrations as well. It's insidious. Only a handful of years ago our friends across the Tasman Sea saw the horrific consequences of far-right terrorism in the form of the Christchurch mosque shootings.

We know with the Nazis and Neo-Nazism that their fascist ideology is built on the hatred, the ignorance, the violence and the discrimination against people of various and different identities. Whether it be their race, their religion, their gender or their sexuality, it's all part of their ideological playbook to pick a minority, manipulate misunderstanding and ignorance and try and sow hatred, division and fear within the community. It's about dividing. It's an ideology that really poses a very serious and real threat to our wellbeing, our way of life and our national security.

That's why our intelligence agencies and law enforcement recognise far-right extremism for the threat that it is. The AFP, for example, has stated that right-wing extremism has been spreading across the country, particularly in our rural and regional areas. In 2021 the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation—ASIO—noted that roughly half of its priority caseload consisted of far-right threats. Across the board these institutions have worked diligently to disrupt a number of plots that could have resulted in lethal consequences for innocent Australians.

The AFP has advised that the rise in far-right violence is, in large part, aided by the ease with which extremists can spread their material online. Much like Daesh, these groups use the internet as a recruiting tool, picking out those who they view to be susceptible to their vile belief systems and vulnerable to those ideas. So it's important that our security agencies play a role in addressing all of those threats across the board. That's why the Albanese government is committed to providing them with the resources they need to protect Australians.

We're also undertaking a wide-ranging cybersecurity review to assess and develop solutions to the challenges posed by online extremism. But we also know that far-right extremists often try to manipulate, as I said, people within the community to sow discord. So we all have a role to play; we all must play our part.

We often see that the rise of the far right also occurs in the context of social and economic inequality and socioeconomic disadvantage. That disadvantage, anger and frustration is manipulated by these groups for their own advantage. As a government we are committed to addressing that disadvantage while also equipping our intelligence agencies to tackle the threats that far-right extremism poses. It's got to be a whole-of-government focus, not just of the intelligence and security agencies but right across the board, because it's about addressing inequality. It's about addressing the issues that make people ripe for exploitation. That is so fundamental to our social cohesion as a nation.

We should make no mistake here. We cannot afford to become complacent with respect to this issue and this risk. History shows us what the consequences of failure look like. We know the ultimate aim of these groups is sinister, destructive and insidious. They want to break down the very foundations of a pluralistic, diverse, democratic society. That's their goal. They want to replace it—by force if they can—with one that subjugates those they view as inferior. Their whole ideology is based on a hierarchy of those who are superior and those who are inferior, based on identity.

We talk a lot about multiculturalism in this country and the diversity of our nation. I've always said that multiculturalism is a strength of our nation. That's very true. But we know now that there are many people in those

groups that seek to divide us based on our identity, differences and diversity. Safeguarding Australia's highest held ideals of democracy, and the diversity that makes us who we are, is so necessary to preserve our cultural identity, our economic stability and our national security. At all levels, from the individual to the community groups to the federal and state governments, we have to come together to acknowledge the threat that far-right extremism poses to us as a people and ensure that it is not allowed to take a foothold in this great nation.