

Tuesday, 29 August 2023

## NAZI SALUTE AND SYMBOLS TO BE BANNED IN VICTORIA

The Nazi salute and other gestures and symbols used by the Nazi Party will be banned in Victoria under new reforms to prevent hateful conduct and address the harm it causes in the community.

Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes is today introducing the *Summary Offences (Nazi Salute Prohibition) Bill 2023* to Parliament to send a clear message that Nazi ideology and the hatred it represents is not tolerated in Victoria.

Anyone who intentionally displays or performs a Nazi symbol or gesture in public will face penalties of more than \$23,000, 12 months' imprisonment or both.

A broad range of symbols and gestures used by the historic Nazi Party and its paramilitary organisations will be banned – including anything which closely resembles a Nazi symbol or gesture, ensuring that people who deliberately try to circumvent the ban and spread hate are punished.

Exceptions will apply if the performance or display of a Nazi symbol or gesture is done in good faith for a genuine academic, artistic, educational or scientific purpose, or in the course of publishing a fair and accurate report of any matter that is in the public interest.

While the offence will not prohibit the trade or sale of historical memorabilia, traders will need to cover any Nazi symbols or gestures on items that are publicly displayed.

The legislation will come into effect immediately after passing Parliament and receiving Royal Assent to ensure that Victoria Police can quickly begin enforcing the ban.

Victoria Police will have the power to direct a person to remove a Nazi symbol or gesture from public display if the police officer reasonably believes an offence is being committed, and to arrest and lay charges.

They will also be given powers to apply to the Magistrates' Court to search premises and seize property displaying a Nazi symbol or Nazi gesture and is connected to a display offence. This will allow police to seize symbols or gestures that may be publicly displayed in the near future, or that have been displayed at a march or a protest.

The Bill has been informed by feedback from the Jewish community, Holocaust survivors, Victoria Police, the Ethnic Community Council of Victoria, and other stakeholders who made it clear the distress previous incidents have caused to the wider community.

The Bill will complement a suite of reforms the Government is undertaking to strengthen our anti-vilification laws and address the underlying causes of hateful behaviour – with public consultation underway via Engage Victoria.

### Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes

*“Victorians have zero tolerance for the glorification of hateful ideology. We’re making sure people who use these symbols and gestures to harass, intimidate and incite hate are held accountable for their cowardly behaviour.”*

*“While we wish making these laws wasn’t necessary, we will always tackle antisemitism, hatred and racism head-on – because all Victorians deserve to feel accepted, safe and included.”*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Multicultural Affairs Colin Brooks

*“We’ve worked closely with our multicultural communities on this reform and heard how deeply hurtful recent incidents have been to them. These laws are part of our unwavering commitment to challenge antisemitism and hatred whenever it occurs.”*

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