



Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Minister for Training and Skills

In reply please quote: 3040092

12 NOV 2015

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
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Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to Petitions No. 2472-15 and 2366-15, presented to the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 13 October 2015 seeking changes to legislative definitions of "place of worship" and "religion".

The petitioners ask that the House make legislative changes to the definition of "place of worship" and "religion" to exclude certain groups and people.

There are a range of references in Queensland legislation to "place of worship" and "religious" bodies, which govern rights and responsibilities in a variety of circumstances. Whether these provisions apply would be determined on the basis of case law developed by the courts over a considerable period of time.

As is appropriate, other laws of general application, including those for controlling anti-social, violent and other types of outlawed conduct, may equally apply to religious bodies, their followers and their places of worship.

I note that the petitioner is particularly concerned about groups and people who advocate violence. Queensland's laws contain a wide range of offences with significant penalties to ensure those who commit, or are a party to, an act of violence are held accountable.

Offences such as public nuisance, common assault, assault occasioning bodily harm, grievous bodily harm, unlawful wounding, torture and murder cover all forms of violence and there are no exceptions or excuses relating to religious purpose or context. These offences carry maximum penalties of between six months imprisonment for the offence of public nuisance to mandatory life imprisonment for murder.

Similarly, in instances where a person harms the State of Queensland, a person can be charged with sedition or demand with menaces upon agencies of government. Those offences carry maximum penalties of between three years imprisonment and mandatory life imprisonment.

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The Queensland Government is also committed to ensuring the safety of Queensland against acts of terrorism. In this respect, I can advise that since 2002, there has been a national legal framework targeting terrorist acts and offences.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yvette D'Ath'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'Y'.

YVETTE D'ATH MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Minister for Training and Skills