

From: Henry Fijolek [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 20, 2023 2:43 PM
To: Committee, PJCIS (REPS) <pjcis@aph.gov.au>
Subject: Submission on the Anti Nazi Bill

Dear Committee members,

I am writing to you in relation to the Anti Nazi Laws that are going to be introduced by you into Parliament.

Firstly I would like to introduce myself. My name is Henry Fijolek and I am a militaria dealer here in WA trading as Henrys Military Collectables, this is a business that I started in 1980 in a small way whilst serving in the Australian Army as a Major in the Australian Army History Unit. I retired from the Army just over a year ago after 37 years service and now run my online business for a living which I have invested all my savings into. I am in no way a Nazi or a Nazi sympathiser or condone in any way the Nazi ideology, in fact my father suffered during WW2 under the Nazis as a Polish forced labourer and served some time in a concentration camp.

As a militaria dealer I buy and sell militaria items from all periods and countries but must admit a large portion of it is of World War 2 German origin which is highly collectable. My clients are not neo Nazis and they don't just collect items as part of an anti semitism campaign nor do they collect WW2 German only. Some are collectors of particular fields such as edged weapons, headgear, paper related items such as postage stamps and postcards, medals and badges, uniforms, kit and equipment, etc, the list is extensive. These collectors collect because they have an interest in the history and technology of conflicts over the years and unfortunately WW2 Germany forms part of that history. Their collections range from small to very large and they are worth multi millions of dollars collectively. I myself have invested my life savings into my business as have other dealers across Australia.

I personally applaud the steps that you are taking along with the other states on banning the public display of the swastika, but with respect, would like to point out that there is an impact on the collector who wishes to continue growing their collections and of course the dealers like myself who have invested hundreds of thousands of hard earned dollars and rely on their sales for a living. I don't just sell my items within Australia I sell them overseas also and wish to continue my livelihood into the future. All of my sales are through my website, I do not have a shop front and work from home as many other dealers do in this modern world. We would also be trying to modify the telling of history in its raw form to the next generations of historians and collectors alike. There is also the case of where does this stop, do we then start looking at the atrocities of the Japanese during WW2 especially to Australian servicemen.

I would like to recommend a balanced approach to this issue by having a license or a register of bona fide militaria dealers who after passing an application and under strict control are allowed to buy and sell WW2 German items to only serious collectors and historians and perhaps limit it to closed sections of their websites where they must register with the website and provide a declaration that they are not in any way a neo Nazi or a sympathiser. It could go as far as the dealers keeping a register of their clients and items they purchased. If this was considered I could then continue to sell internationally and within Australia to the serious collector.

I am disturbed that in the process of introducing this bill there has been no consultation with any militaria dealers or the thousands of collectors of whom this bill, in its current form, stand to lose

hundreds of thousands of dollars. Not to mention the impact on the future collecting of social historians such as stamp and book collectors, nor has any mention been made of the showing commercially of the tens of movies that contain the swastika such as Schindlers List, how is this going to be controlled.

In finishing this submission I would like to state that if the legislation is passed in an un-modified version I would stand to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost sales as well as other dealers. I am not against tightening the ban on the public display of the swastika but I am against denying the right of the serious collector and historian continuing with their passion and the right of an established dealer to continue earning a living. If the legislation is passed un-modified how would I be able to control the sales through my website and will there be a case for compensation to dealers who will have lost money and livelihood. It is unfair to the genuine dealer and collector alike to be able to conduct their business and collecting passion one day and then to be labelled a criminal the next, this is not the Australian way.

I do hope you receive this submission in a positive way and understand the impacts it has on collectors, historians and dealers alike.

Regards

Henry Fijolek
Henry's Military Collectables

8 June 2023