

Letter to Parliamentary Committee regarding Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment (Prohibited Hate Symbols & Other Measures Bill 2023.

My name is Kylie Richards and I am a manager of Morpeth Antique Centre, based in the Hunter Region, NSW. Morpeth Antique Centre are purveyors of history. 21 dealers operate within the centre selling all manner of antique, vintage & collectable items.

I am writing to ask if you would consider adding the word *Historical* to this proposed legislation, so Morpeth Antique Centre and other dealers like us might be permitted to continue to sell *historical* objects associated with WWII Germany, for the purposes of educational, academic & *historical* purposes without prejudice.

There's a lot of wording in the proposed legislation about what is reasonable. So, in the spirit of the wording of the proposed legislation, would the committee consider that rather than prohibit all sale/trade of an object associated with WWII Germany, Australia adopt the common sense approach that the rest of the world uses, in permitting a dealer to cover up a prohibited symbol? By doing so an object may not cause offence to any person, yet it may still be permitted to sell that object in Australia?

At Morpeth Antique Centre then, objects featuring a prohibited symbol that is covered, located in a room full of militaria, inside a business, that has a sign at the front entrance stating that it sells WWII German Militaria and that *entry is free at your discretion* would surely then comply with the legislation that it is *not contrary to the public interest or a reasonable person*.

By including the word *historical*, the legislation would still target any sale of items that are not circa 1920's – 1945. This means sale of reproduction items made post WWII and made 'yesterday' by fakers would be prohibited from sale. There would then be far less WWII German Militaria for sale in the marketplace.

In suggesting this, I know I may raise the ire of those who purchase reproduction items because they cannot afford to purchase original historical items, but it may be a compromise between complete prohibition and allowing Australian collectors to still indulge in their passion for collecting.

What do you collect? Collectors are passionate people. Collecting is, for many people, a reason to get up in the morning. It's the thrill of the hunt. It's purchasing a new item to add to your collection and preserving it for future generations. It's researching the item, increasing your knowledge about the object, the company that made it, how many were produced. It's about talking to like minded collectors at conventions, fairs & shows, or on an online forum about your hobby. It's the sharing of knowledge. Some collectables also have the potential to be investments for your future.

If you collect militaria, coins & banknotes, stamps, badges, postcards, books, ephemera, documents, Olympic memorabilia, medals, porcelain, clothing, uniforms, weapons, glassware, ornaments, photographs, linen, crockery & cutlery, soft toys, tinsplate toys, wooden toys, beer & soda bottles, postal & railway history, car & motorcycle memorabilia, family history, this proposed legislation has the potential to affect your ability to discuss, buy and sell your collectables if the object is from the Third Reich era & has a prohibited symbol on it. This proposed legislation doesn't make sense.

What do 15 black clad protestors in a Melbourne street collect? The answer is probably nothing, apart from their five minutes of fame in the media.

An analogy: If eighty thousand people arrived at a football stadium all dressed in black and fifteen of those spectators were protestors bent on getting their five minutes of fame, by

performing an act associated with extreme hate or racism, do you then turn eighty thousand spectators into criminals and ban the game of football in Australia?

I would like to think that a legislation could be created that would permit law enforcement to arrest and prosecute the perpetrators of the hate crime and not everyone else at the same time. This proposed legislation has the wrong target in its sight.

Militaria items at Morpeth Antique Centre are grouped together in one room. In that room visitors will discover 175 years of military history from nations that have been to war and committed atrocities with or against each other – Roman, Greek, Persian, Egyptian, English, French, Dutch, Bosnian, Serbian, Soviet, Russian, Ukrainian, American, Japanese, Chinese, Australian and German. If you are not interested in militaria, you need not enter the room.

No seller of militaria, collector or reasonable person condones atrocity or genocide in any war. Militaria dealers & collectors trade in history for history's sake. The goal is to preserve history through objects. Militaria collectors are typically well educated Australian citizens who purchase an item, take it home and add it to their collections. They are normally very guarded about discussing their collections with anyone who does not share their passion.

When one talks about Militaria, apart from Napoleonic Militaria, WWII German Militaria is the most expensive militaria in the world to collect & it is collected worldwide. For the past fifteen years it has increased in value worldwide at a rate of 25% per year, including in Germany & the Allied nations that fought against Germany in WWII.

When one holds an historical object from the Third Reich, in the palm of one's hand, it is a powerful way of remembering and commemorating the failure of the National Socialist German Democratic Party (NSDAP) and Germany's loss in WWII. It is not about glorifying it.

Perhaps the last word should go to Gilad Baram, an Israeli born documentary and film maker, based in Nuremberg, Germany. "If you ruin it, people say it's erasure. If you preserve it, people will say it's glorification. Everything will draw criticism, and that's why the big question isn't just what to do, but also how to do it. And maybe we should continue asking: 'Why even do anything at all?'

Please consider adding the word *Historical* to the proposed legislation.

Please consider allow sale & trade with common sense restrictions to the proposed legislation.

Thankyou for reading my submission.

Kylie Richards

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