



Written by [D. Michael DeRidder](#) on January 28, 2026

Australia's Latest Free-speech Clampdown and Firearms Ban

Following the December 14, 2025, Islamic State-inspired terrorist attack at Bondi Beach that killed 15 people, Australia's Parliament returned early from its recess for a special two-day session, [passing two bills](#) on January 20, 2026 that establish anti-hate-speech measures and expand firearms restrictions.

The [anti-hate-speech bill passed](#) the House of Representatives by a 116-7 vote, and the Senate 38-22. It expands "anti-hate-speech" authority, imposing additional restrictions on speech, banning "hate groups," adding harsher sentences for hate crimes, and enforcing visa cancellations for offenders.



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The [firearms bill passed](#) the House of Representatives by a 96-45 vote, and the Senate 38-26. It establishes a massive national "buyback" scheme and imposes sweeping firearms restrictions, tougher background checks incorporating Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) surveillance data, and stricter import controls.

Instead of focusing on radicalization and failed intelligence, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's government exploited the Bondi Beach tragedy to rush through two oppressive bills that enable the ASIO to decide who gets targeted, turning the intelligence agency into government speech police.

Response to the Firearms Bill

Shadow Attorney-General Andrew Wallace, a member of the opposition Liberal National Party, said of the firearms legislation, "This bill reveals the contempt the government has for the million gun owners of Australia."

But Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke blamed legally owned firearms for the attack, stating that the two shooters, father and son, had "hate in their hearts and guns in their hands." He failed to mention that the shooters [had been investigated by](#) the ASIO in 2019 for ties to an Islamic State cell, and were incorrectly determined to be no threat.

A Thinly Veiled Power Grab

These bills won't stop terrorism. Instead, they are a thinly veiled, opportunistic power grab to disarm and silence law-abiding Australians. With them, the Australian government has taken another shameful step toward that goal. Sadly, Australia is only the latest country to weaponize crises to expand government control.

Importantly, this overreach erodes [the God-given rights](#) of free speech and to bear arms for self-defense. As the American Founding Fathers affirmed, rights come from God — they cannot be granted



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or taken away by governments — and governments have a duty to protect them.

True freedom comes from defending God-given rights, not from governments that restrict freedom following a tragedy.

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