

**CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT (CRIMINAL DAMAGE TO PLACES OF WORSHIP)
BILL 2015**

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Clause 1. Short Title

Cites the short title of the Act as the *Criminal Code Amendment (Criminal Damage to Places of Worship) Bill 2015*.

Clause 2. Commencement

Clauses 1 and 2 come into operation on Assent.

The remainder of the Act comes into operation on the day after the Act receives Royal Assent.

Clause 3. Act amended

Clause 3 specifies that the amendments contained in the Bill are amendments to *The Criminal Code*.

Clause 4. Section 444 amended

The existing section 444(1)(b) which is a penalty provision is deleted and a new section 444(1)(b) inserted.

The existing provision for the offence of criminal damage creates circumstances of racial aggravation increasing the maximum penalty to 14 years from 10 years.

The amendment creates a further circumstance of aggravation where the criminal damage is committed on a place of worship.

Place of worship is not defined but carries its normal meaning to include church, synagogue, temple, mosque, or building where religion is taught or worship services are held.