



Submission to the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion

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Background on AJA

The Australian Jewish Association (AJA) was established in 2017 by members of the Jewish community across Australia who had become concerned that legacy Jewish organisations had veered sharply to the left and away from traditional Jewish values in recent years and were no longer reflecting the diverse Jewish community but rather adopting identical positions on each issue.

Among AJA's founders and early supporters were several former leaders of major Jewish communal organisations. Rabbi Eli Schlanger was an early supporter and member as were many of Australia's Rabbis.

AJA upholds two core values. – Torah values and centre-right democratic values.

There are a plethora of micro-groups claiming to represent left-wing members of the Jewish community, but AJA is the only Jewish organisation to publicly define itself as right of centre, which reflects the views of a significant part of the Jewish community. AJA is a membership-based organisation and has grown rapidly. Thousands of Australian Jews have taken out membership and many more engage with AJA's activities and content. While AJA does not claim to represent the entire Jewish community, it represents a significant constituency within Australian Jewish life.

AJA operates across four key areas.

Communal engagement

AJA frequently hosts in-person events and brings guests from overseas. These are often done as partnerships with other organisations and AJA has partnered with the largest synagogues across Australia to hold events. AJA takes groups from Australia to Israel to understand the situation.

AJA also runs [online events](#) for the Jewish community. These attract an audience of hundreds and sometimes thousands each week, across platforms like Zoom, Facebook Live, YouTube and are played each week on J-Air community radio (Australia's only Jewish radio station). Speakers have included numerous politicians from across the political spectrum, ambassadors, journalists and communal leaders. Since October 7, 2023, antisemitism has become a more frequent topic, and AJA has provided a forum for international experts to address the community.

Politics and public policy

AJA engages with elected representatives and political parties across the political spectrum (except the Greens) and regularly provides briefings as well as submissions and evidence to parliamentary inquiries. AJA has appeared before parliamentary committees and inquiries examining issues including antisemitism.

Media

AJA is regularly approached by newspapers, television networks, radio stations and online publications to provide comment on antisemitism and issues affecting the Jewish community. This will often be several times a day. AJA has written opinion pieces for many publications including the Australian, the Australian Financial Review (AFR), Daily Telegraph etc. AJA will often assist victims of antisemitism to tell their story by connecting them with media outlets.

Social Media

AJA has the largest social media audience of any Jewish organisation in Australia, including approximately 127,000 Facebook followers and 31,000 followers on X. In a community where many people are not formally affiliated with Jewish organisations and it's hard to gauge opinions, former AJA President Dr David Adler described this as the Australian Jewish community "voting with their clicks".

As a result of this extensive engagement, AJA is frequently the first organisation contacted by Australian Jews experiencing antisemitism. AJA has assisted countless members of the Jewish community, helped expose hundreds of antisemitic incidents, and regularly engages with government, media and community stakeholders regarding antisemitism.

Combatting Antisemitism

Over recent years, and particularly since October 7, 2023, combating antisemitism has occupied an increasing share of AJA's work. AJA was the only Australian Jewish organisation to attend the Israeli Government's 2026 International Conference on Combating Antisemitism and AJA also provided a briefing on antisemitism in Australia at the 2025 conference. Following the Bondi attack, Israel's minister for Diaspora and Combatting Antisemitism reached out to AJA and AJA organised an event to host him at Chabad Bondi. AJA has assisted many in the community to make their own submissions to the Royal Commission.

AJA is funded by members of the Jewish community and does not receive government funding. This independence allows the organisation to advocate for the Jewish community in a forthright manner without clouding interests.

As a result of its membership base, public profile, media presence and community engagement, AJA has developed extensive firsthand experience of the impact of antisemitism on Jewish Australians.

Lived experience

AJA and its representatives are frequently subjected to abuse, intimidation and threats, including death threats.

One such threat against AJA CEO Robert Gregory and then-President Dr David Adler resulted in the [first arrest by the AFP's Operation Avalite taskforce](#), which was established to combat antisemitism. The threat was made on the eve of their appearance before a Senate

committee hearing examining proposed misinformation laws and appeared intended to intimidate them from participating in the democratic process.
The offender was subsequently [convicted and sentenced](#).



AJA has received threats by mail, telephone, email and social media.
The volume of threats received by AJA representatives is such that it would not be practical to provide a comprehensive list within this submission. The examples below are representative of the type of abuse routinely directed at AJA staff and officeholders.

“until we Aussies inevitably put all your genocidal kind in next gen gas chambers” –
Underneath a post announcing that AJA CEO Robert Gregory had become a father to a baby girl.



"I want them (Zionists) to dissolve in an acid bath" underneath images of AJA CEO Robert Gregory



The day before hearings at the Royal Commission began, an AJA employee [opened a threat](#) which was received in the mail. Police are investigating.

News > World News

Australian Jewish group receives mailbox death threat

The letter, whose author claimed to “work with Hezbollah,” ended with the words: “Kill and fumigate all Jews.”

May. 3, 2026

CANAAN LIDOR

Threats have come from a wide variety of people including an [employee of the University of Sydney](#)

Dismissal of antisemitism

In addition to antisemitic incidents themselves, members of the Jewish community are frequently subjected to mockery, denial and false accusations when such incidents are reported.

A recurring pattern is that reports of antisemitism are dismissed as “hoaxes” or that Jewish individuals and organisations are accused of fabricating incidents or setting up ‘false flags’ for political purposes.

One example involved reports received by AJA regarding banknotes dispensed from an ATM that had been marked with a Nazi swastika and the words “F*** Jews”. Similar reports were received by police and other Jewish organisations.

After AJA shared an image of one of the banknotes, the post received approximately 4.7 million views on X. Rather than expressing concern about the apparent antisemitism, a large number of users alleged that the incident had been fabricated. Some claimed that AJA itself had created the banknotes. Similar allegations were repeated by journalists and commentators.

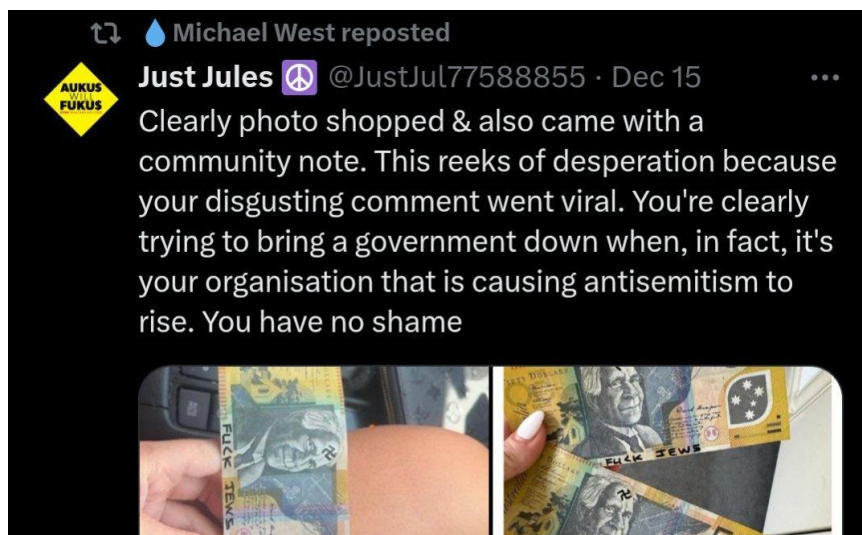
An uninvolved female AJA employee was subjected to particularly aggressive online abuse and false accusations.

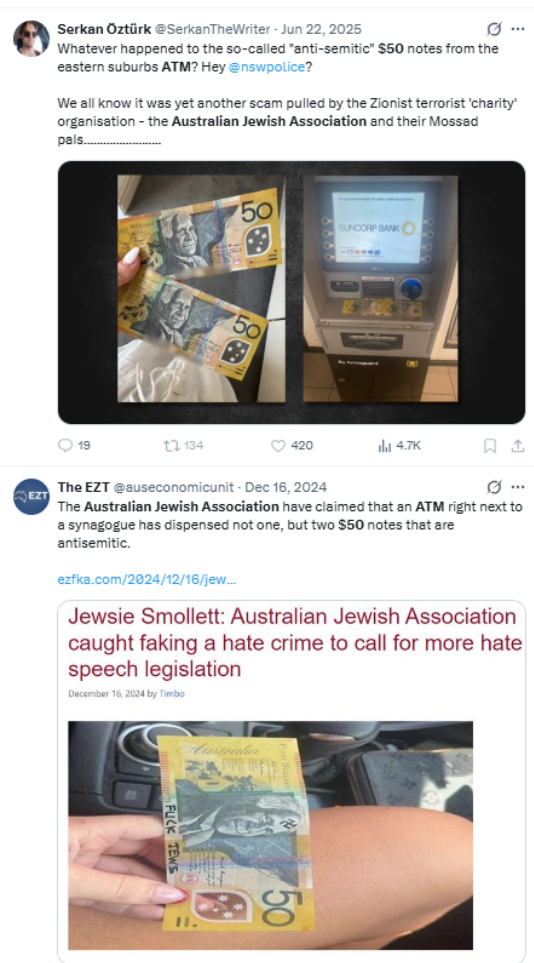
A coordinated campaign subsequently resulted in a Community Note being attached to the post, claiming that it was not possible for the notes to have been dispensed by the ATM.

Even after this [claim was shown to be incorrect](#), the Community Note remained in place.

This incident illustrates a broader problem faced by many Jewish Australians. Victims of antisemitism are frequently required not only to deal with the original incident, but also with

campaigns seeking to discredit them, deny their experiences, or portray them as responsible for the abuse directed against them.





In June 2024, AJA CEO Robert Gregory appeared on Sky News' The Kenny Report to discuss rising antisemitism and growing concerns within the Jewish community. The discussion of antisemitism subsequently became the subject of criticism and [ridicule on the ABC's Media Watch program](#). At a time when antisemitic incidents were increasing dramatically and Jewish Australians were expressing genuine fears for their safety, such treatment by Australia's national broadcaster was particularly disheartening. It is unlikely that ABC would treat the concerns of another minority group this way.

AJA Events

Like many Jewish organisations in Australia, AJA events are frequently subject to security concerns and, on occasion, direct targeting. AJA regularly engages armed security personnel at significant cost. The presence of security has become so commonplace at Jewish events that many members of the community now feel uncomfortable attending events that do not have visible security arrangements in place. On occasions when security has not been present, AJA has received complaints from attendees concerned for their safety. AJA has never received any government funding for security expenses.

For security reasons, the locations of AJA events are not publicly advertised. Addresses are generally provided only to registered attendees after they have been vetted and, in many cases, only shortly before the event. While these arrangements are necessary, they create significant logistical difficulties and are unlike the arrangements required for any other community in Australia.

No Australian community should have to conduct community activities in this manner simply because of concerns about hostility directed towards them.

On several occasions, details of AJA events have been leaked, resulting in pressure being placed on venues not to proceed with bookings. In one recent case, after security concerns arose, the Jewish community's security organisation advised a venue to cancel an event.

The venue, understandably seeking to avoid potential disruption, complied.

AJA hosted an online event with former Deputy Prime Minister of Australia, John Anderson, which was [disrupted by students associated with a Muslim organisation at the University of Sydney](#). Participants dressed as terrorists, abused attendees and caused considerable distress to many participants, including elderly members of the audience.

The difficulties faced by Jewish organisations in securing venues have also become increasingly apparent. The Queensland Cricketers' Club [declined a booking](#) request from AJA to host an event discussing antisemitism featuring British author Melanie Phillips. The venue cited concerns that hosting the event could be perceived as controversial and could attract negative publicity.

On another occasion, AJA held a film screening at a cinema. The venue requested that no signage be displayed identifying the event, with the apparent aim of ensuring that other patrons were unaware that the event was taking place. AJA understood that the venue was concerned about the possibility of protests, boycotts or other adverse reactions.

These experiences demonstrate that antisemitism affects not only individual Jewish Australians, but also the ability of Jewish organisations to conduct normal community activities. Security concerns, venue reluctance, secrecy requirements and event disruptions have become a routine part of Jewish communal life in Australia.

Lawfare

Since October 7, 2023, the Australian Jewish community, and AJA in particular, have increasingly been subjected to what is commonly described as "lawfare".

Lawfare refers to the strategic use of legal, regulatory and administrative processes to intimidate opponents, disrupt organisations, impose costs, consume resources, or achieve political objectives. While legitimate complaints mechanisms serve an important role in Australian society, they can also be misused as tools of harassment when deployed in a coordinated and bad-faith manner.

AJA has observed a significant increase in complaints, investigations and regulatory actions initiated in connection with Jewish advocacy and pro-Israel activity. Complaints connected to AJA's communal and advocacy work have been lodged with bodies as diverse as a local council, medical regulator, anti-discrimination agency and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

These complaints are designed to burden Jewish organisations and their representatives with time-consuming and resource-intensive processes.

One notable example involves Australian Jewish Association Tzedakah (AJAT), a charity focused on combating antisemitism. Anti-Israel activists launched a coordinated campaign seeking to have AJAT's Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status revoked.

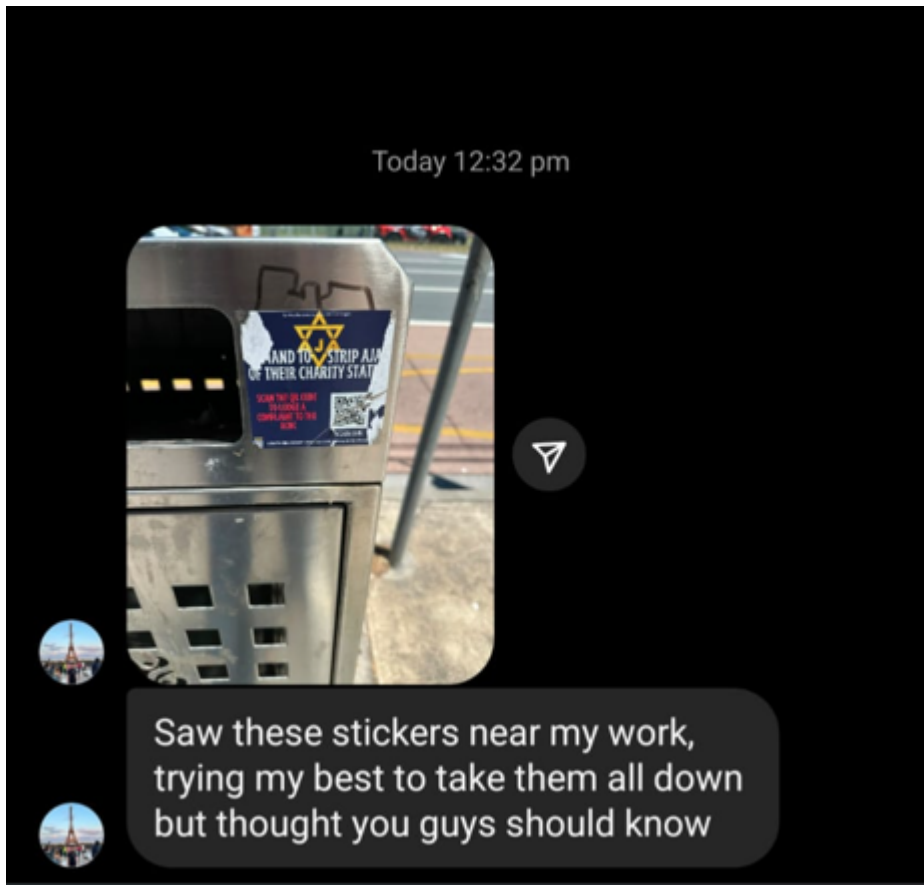
The campaign involved repeated complaints to the ACNC and other authorities and sought to portray AJAT and AJA as a single organisation despite them being separate entities with distinct legal structures and purposes.

Regardless of the outcome of such complaints, the process itself imposes significant costs on Jewish organisations. Time and resources that could otherwise be devoted to combating antisemitism, assisting victims, and serving the community must instead be diverted towards responding to complaints, engaging legal advisers and satisfying regulatory requirements.

AJA submits that the misuse of complaints processes and regulatory systems as a means of targeting Jewish organisations is an emerging and under-recognised form of antisemitic harassment that warrants further examination by the Royal Commission.



AJA has received reports from multiple cities across Australia of stickers bearing the logo of the anti-Israel activist organisation "Free Palestine Printing". The stickers contain a QR code directing members of the public to lodge complaints with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). AJA considers these stickers significant because they demonstrate that efforts to target Jewish organisations through regulatory and administrative processes are not merely isolated actions by individual complainants. Rather, they appear to form part of an organised campaign encouraging members of the public to lodge complaints against Jewish organisations engaged in advocacy and anti-antisemitism work.



Since October 7, 2023, AJA has received approximately a dozen legal threats, including several Concerns Notices issued by the same law firm. AJA is aware that the same firm has issued similar notices to other members of the Jewish community and has publicly announced legal actions relating to Israel and Jewish

community issues against a range of prominent public figures, including politicians and journalists.

None of the Concerns Notices received by AJA had merit or have progressed to substantive legal proceedings. However, responding to such notices requires considerable time, resources and legal attention.

The same firm subsequently lodged a complaint with Anti-Discrimination NSW concerning AJA and also attempted to target Australian Jewish Association Tzedakah, a separate entity focused on combatting antisemitism.

Individual AJA representatives have been targeted, along with many others in the Jewish community.

In another incident, there were dozens of complaints lodged with the NSW Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) in 2024 and 2025 against former AJA President Dr David Adler. None related to clinical care but rather to his work on behalf of AJA and the Jewish community. The HCCC dealt with all complaints expediently in batches and no sanctions were applied to Dr Adler's medical registration which provides a lesson that other regulators could learn from.

While these complaints did not result in disciplinary action, they nevertheless required time and resources to address.

AJA CEO Robert Gregory was similarly unsuccessfully targeted following his appointment by Waverley Council to its Multicultural Advisory Committee.

A coordinated campaign sought to challenge his appointment through complaints to council and public attacks. Some of the complaints made were blatantly antisemitic in nature including alleging that Mr Gregory, the grandson of Holocaust survivors and a prominent public advocate against Nazism was a "neo-Nazi" along with assertions that he "supports genocide" and "belongs in The Hague".

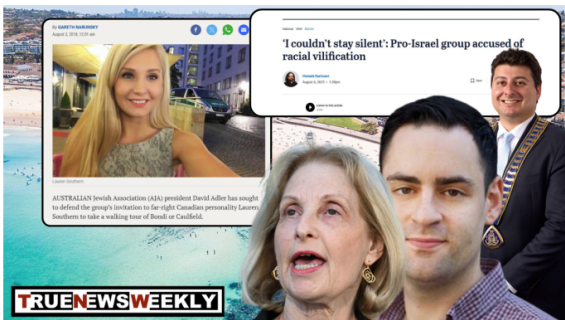
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GENOCIDE COMES TO BONDI BEACH! Waverley's Zionist Mayor And AJA Silent On Why 'Racist Hater' Robert Gregory Has Been Installed Onto Multicultural Committee

20 August, 2025 Aisha Hussain



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While complaints of this nature rarely succeed, their cumulative effect should not be underestimated. They consume significant time and resources, impose personal stress on those targeted, and risk discouraging Jewish Australians from participating in public life, community leadership and democratic debate.

AJA submits that the strategic use of complaints processes against Jewish organisations and community representatives is an emerging issue that warrants careful consideration by the Royal Commission.

Definition of antisemitism

AJA [began campaigning](#) for the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism in 2018, well before the dramatic rise in antisemitic incidents following October 7, 2023.

AJA supports the IHRA Working Definition because it is the most widely adopted and internationally recognised definition of antisemitism. It has been endorsed by numerous governments, public institutions, universities and community organisations around the world. The definition recognises that antisemitism can manifest in both traditional forms and in certain forms of hostility directed towards Israel when that hostility employs antisemitic tropes, denies the Jewish people the right to self-determination, or applies double standards not expected of any other democratic nation.

AJA submits that any examination of antisemitism requires a clear and workable definition. The IHRA Working Definition provides an effective framework for identifying, understanding and responding to contemporary antisemitism.

Due in part to AJA's advocacy, the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism was first introduced into the [Australian Parliament in 2018](#) through a motion moved by Senator Pauline Hanson.

At the time, the motion was not supported by either the Coalition or Labor and received little attention from Jewish communal organisations. In the years that followed, however, the IHRA definition gained broad acceptance and was subsequently adopted or endorsed by political parties, governments, public institutions and Jewish organisations throughout Australia.

AJA's early support for the IHRA definition reflected its longstanding concern that contemporary manifestations of antisemitism were not being adequately recognised or understood.

Later, AJA played a significant role in advocating for the adoption of the IHRA definition by the NSW and South Australian Parliaments.

Centrality of Zionism and Israel to Judaism

The overwhelming majority of Australian Jews identify as Zionists. For most, Zionism simply means supporting the right of the Jewish people to self-determination in their historic homeland, the Land of Israel. The State of Israel has existed for more than 75 years. Those who oppose Israel's existence or call for its destruction are in effect calling for a genocide against the Jewish population, which is the largest Jewish population in the world.

While criticism of Israeli governments and policies is legitimate and forms part of normal democratic debate, hostility directed at Israel frequently crosses the line into hostility towards Jewish people as a collective. Attacks on "Zionists" are attacks on a core component of the identity of Australian Jews.

The centrality of the Land of Israel and Jerusalem to Judaism is deeply embedded in Jewish belief, practice and liturgy. Practising Jews pray facing Jerusalem three times each day and each time recite prayers expressing hope for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the restoration of Jewish sovereignty there. Similar references appear in Grace After Meals. For nearly two thousand years Jews have prayed daily for the ingathering of exiles and the return to Zion. The connection to Jerusalem is woven throughout Jewish religious life. At Jewish weddings, a glass is broken to commemorate the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. Passover and Yom Kippur conclude with the declaration, "Next year in Jerusalem." The annual fast of Tisha B'Av commemorates the destruction of both Temples in Jerusalem and remains one of the most significant days in the Jewish calendar. Psalm 137, which includes the words "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem", has been recited and sung by Jews for centuries. Jewish burial customs also reflect this connection, including burial facing Jerusalem and the placement of soil from the Land of Israel in the grave.

This connection to Israel is not a modern political development. It is a fundamental component of Jewish religious identity that has endured throughout centuries of exile and dispersion. Long before the modern State of Israel was established, Jews around the world prayed for a return to Zion and maintained a continuous spiritual, historical and cultural attachment to the Land of Israel.

While it is true that a small minority of Australian Jews have chosen to dissociate themselves from this aspect of Judaism and identify as anti-Zionists, the existence of dissenting individuals does not alter the teachings, traditions or historical foundations of the faith. The

beliefs and practices of a religion are not determined by opinion polls of its adherents. For example, while many Australian Jews do not keep kosher, nobody would seriously dispute that the laws of kashrut are a core component of Judaism.

Indeed, if someone were to say, "I have no issue with Jews, only with people who keep kosher," it would rightly be recognised as a form of anti-Jewish prejudice because it targets a central aspect of Jewish practice. In a similar way, claims that one has no issue with Jews but only with "Zionists" cannot be divorced from antisemitism when Zionism reflects the historic and continuing Jewish belief in the Jewish people's connection to, and right of self-determination in, their ancestral homeland.

AJA is concerned that many governments, institutions and organisations continue to focus primarily on traditional manifestations of antisemitism, such as neo-Nazism and far-right extremism, while being slower to recognise antisemitism that emerges from anti-Zionist activism, sections of the far left (often disguised as 'anti-racism'), or Islamist extremism. As a result, some of the most common forms of antisemitism experienced by Australian Jews today are not always identified or addressed with the same urgency as more traditional forms of anti-Jewish hatred.

Islamic antisemitism

Antisemitism within sections of the Islamic community should be a central focus of any serious examination of antisemitism in Australia.

The Bondi terrorist attack reinforced concerns that AJA has raised for many years regarding antisemitism, radicalisation and extremism within certain segments of Australian society. AJA believes these issues require honest examination and cannot be ignored for fear of causing offence.

AJA is concerned that failures to confront antisemitism and extremist ideologies within parts of the community risk allowing these attitudes to become entrenched and passed on to future generations.

Notably, the first event ever organised by AJA focused on the threat posed by radical Islam to the Jewish community. At the time, some within the organised Jewish community opposed the event and sought to persuade several synagogues not to host it. Ultimately, the event proceeded at synagogues in Melbourne and Sydney which had resisted the pressure to cancel.

AJA includes this example because it demonstrates that concerns regarding Islamist antisemitism are not new. For many years, discussion of the issue was often discouraged or dismissed, despite the fact that Jewish communities around the world had already experienced violence inspired by Islamist extremist ideologies.

AJA believes that any comprehensive strategy to combat antisemitism must be willing to examine all sources of anti-Jewish hatred, regardless of their political, religious or ideological origins.

Hate preachers & use of mosques to glorify terrorism

AJA is concerned by repeated instances of Islamic preachers promoting antisemitic views, extremist ideologies or hostility towards Jews and Israel.

Over recent years, a number of Islamic preachers in Australia have attracted public attention for sermons and statements that demonise Jews, glorify violence, or promote conspiracy theories concerning Jewish people. AJA believes such conduct contributes to an environment in which antisemitism becomes normalised.

A particularly concerning phenomenon has been the use of some mosques and Islamic centres to commemorate or glorify individuals associated with terrorist organisations. AJA documented numerous instances of Shia mosques and Islamic centres holding events commemorating members of Hezbollah, a proscribed terrorist organisation under Australian law. Similar events were held following the death of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, an avowed antisemite whose regime has been responsible for severe human rights abuses and the violent suppression of dissidents.

AJA was made aware of approximately 34 mosques and Islamic centres that held events commemorating either Hezbollah members or Ayatollah Khamenei. This would represent a significant proportion of Australia's Shia religious institutions and suggests that the phenomenon cannot be dismissed as isolated or fringe.

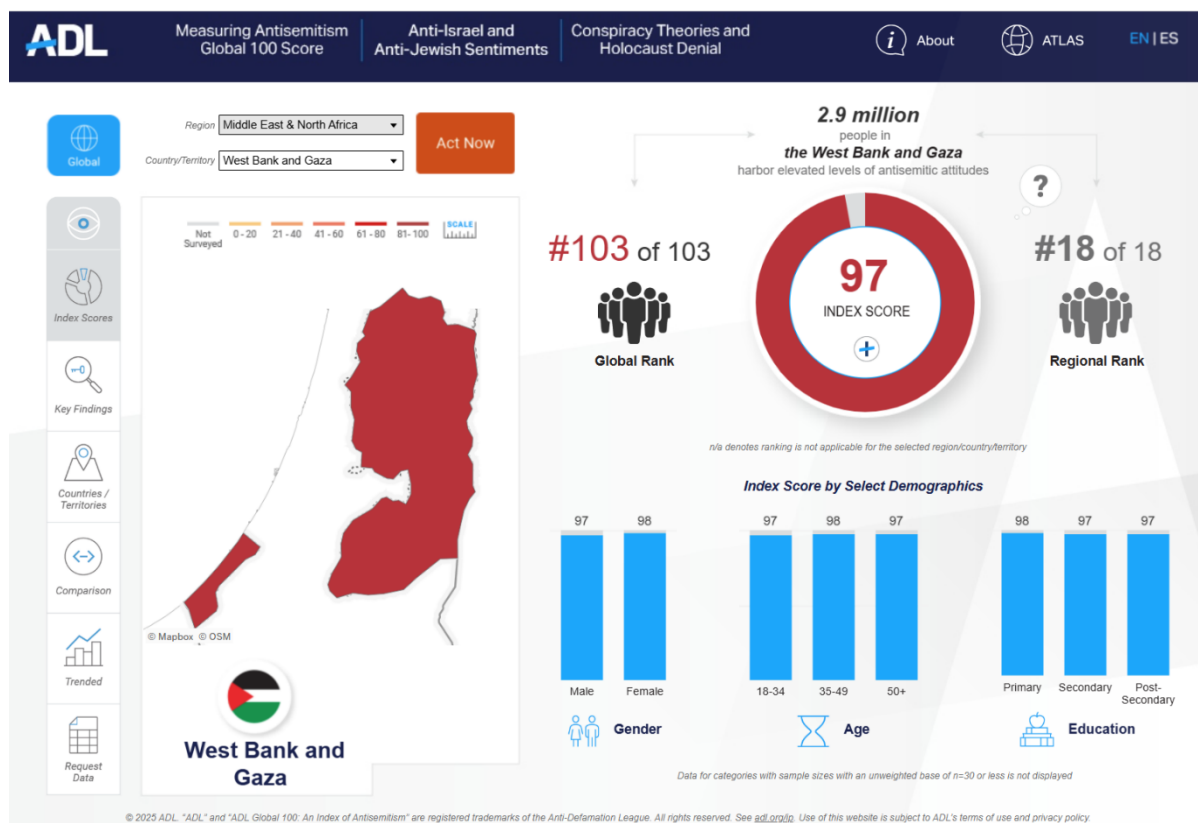
AJA submits that the glorification of members of terrorist organisations, or the promotion of individuals associated with extremist ideologies, should be a matter of serious concern for Australian authorities. Such activities undermine social cohesion, contribute to radicalisation and can foster hostility towards Jewish Australians.

The Royal Commission should examine the extent to which places of worship, community organisations and religious leaders are being used to promote antisemitic narratives, extremist ideologies or support for proscribed terrorist organisations.

Gaza visas

A significant concern within the Jewish and wider community has been the Australian Government's decision to grant visas to thousands of residents of Gaza following the October 7 attacks.

Before the October 7 massacre, Gaza along with the area termed 'the West Bank' was [ranked as having the highest level](#) of anti-Jewish views out of 103 surveyed countries and territories at over 97%.



Surveys also show that the vast majority of [Gazans support the October 7 massacre](#) carried out by proscribed terrorist organisation, Hamas.

Given the documented prevalence of antisemitic attitudes in Gaza, it would be a statistical miracle if visa recipients holding strongly antisemitic views were not among the people coming to Australia.

The Jewish community has therefore sought greater transparency regarding the screening, vetting and risk-assessment processes applied by the Australian Government when issuing these visas.

AJA is concerned that insufficient information has been provided regarding how potential security risks, extremist affiliations, or deeply entrenched antisemitic attitudes have been identified and addressed.

The issue is not merely one of national security. It is also directly relevant to antisemitism. The Royal Commission should examine whether adequate consideration has been given to the potential impact of migration decisions on the safety and wellbeing of Jewish Australians.

Similar concerns have been raised over the government's conduct in the so-called 'ISIS brides' cases.

Hizb ut tahrir & the connection between 'radical' and 'mainstream' Muslim organisations

The line between explicitly radical Islamist groups and those often described as “mainstream” or “moderate” is not always clear in practice. These groups often appear on the same platforms, sign joint statements, attend each other’s events, or host one another’s speakers. Media reporting has exposed that some ‘mainstream’ Muslim organisations are linked to quite extreme Muslim brotherhood ideas and organisations.

There is also a hesitancy among ‘moderate, mainstream’ Islamic organisations to criticise radical groups like Hizb Ut Tahrir.

Islamophobia as a tool to silence criticism

AJA is concerned that allegations of "Islamophobia" are, at times, used to deflect, minimise or discourage legitimate discussion of antisemitism.

AJA has observed that concerns about antisemitism are frequently met with demands that equal attention be given to Islamophobia, even where the issue under discussion relates specifically to anti-Jewish hatred.

AJA is also concerned that accusations of Islamophobia are sometimes deployed against individuals who raise legitimate concerns about antisemitism, Islamist extremism, terrorist organisations, or the conduct of particular activists and organisations. Such accusations can have a chilling effect on public discussion and discourage honest examination of issues that are directly relevant to antisemitism in Australia.

The Royal Commission should examine the extent to which allegations of Islamophobia have been used to discourage, deflect or delegitimise discussion of antisemitism and whether this has affected the ability of institutions to respond effectively to anti-Jewish hatred.

Muslim leadership failure to speak up

Prior to October 7, the Australian Jewish Association, like much of the broader Jewish community, sought to maintain positive relations with Australia's Muslim community.

AJA was a strong public advocate for Muslims facing persecution. For example, AJA spoke at rallies, made submissions to parliamentary inquiries, published articles and hosted events

highlighting the persecution of Uyghur Muslims in China.

THE AUSTRALIAN
Wednesday, December 28, 2022 | Today's Paper | Mind Games

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HOME / COMMENTARY

As a Jew, I can't stay silent on persecution of China's Muslims

ROBERT GREGORY

12:00AM DECEMBER 28, 2022
97 COMMENTS



Blindfolded and shackled Uighurs in China's Xinjiang Province. Picture: YouTube

As a Jew, I cannot stay silent while Muslims face the religious persecution my people know so well.

As analysts and policy wonks debate the recent "tremendous reset" between Anthony Albanese and Chinese president for life Xi Jinping and the meaning of Penny Wong's recent trip to Beijing, an important question is ignored. Are closer China relations something Australia should aspire to at this time?

AJA representatives were invited to community events, EG commemorations organised by the Bosnian Muslim community, and AJA frequently hosted Muslim speakers at its own events.

All this changed on October 7, 2023. AJA is unaware of any major Australian Islamic organisation that unequivocally condemned the October 7 attacks. While some individual Muslims were no doubt appalled, the failure of the Islamic community's leadership to set a positive example has caused a major break-down in Muslim-Jewish relations.

It is revealing to compare this with how the Australian Jewish community responded to the Christchurch attack against Muslims. The Australian Jewish community responded to Christchurch with condemnation, sympathy and solidarity with the Muslim community. Jewish leaders attended vigils and memorial services. Rabbis and Jewish representatives met with Muslim leaders and families. Jewish groups [launched fundraising campaigns](#) for the Muslim victims, [raising \\$1 million](#). Jewish groups [continued marking the anniversary](#) of the attacks with annual messages of support and solidarity for the Muslim community. -

Federal Government contribution to the growth of antisemitism

A series of decisions and public statements by the Albanese Government contributed to an environment in which antisemitism flourished, and Australian Jews felt increasingly isolated and unsupported.

The election of the Albanese Government ushered in a period in which Australia-Israel relations deteriorated significantly and antisemitism in Australia reached unprecedented levels.

Prior to the 2022 election, AJA publicly warned that the election of Labor would have consequences for the Jewish community. Many of those concerns were later borne out. In October 2022, as Australian Jews gathered to celebrate Simchat Torah, the Albanese Government announced the reversal of Australia's recognition of parts of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The decision reportedly came without warning to Jewish communal leaders and began a difficult period for the Australian Jewish community.

Over the following months and years, the Government altered longstanding bipartisan voting patterns at the United Nations and increased funding to UNRWA, despite the involvement of UNRWA employees in the October 7 massacre and years of well-documented incitement from UNRWA employees and textbooks.

The immediate response from Foreign Minister Penny Wong to the October 7 massacre was to call for 'restraint'. Following the October 7 massacre, many world leaders travelled to Israel to express solidarity with the victims and their families. Leaders from the United States, United Kingdom, France and Germany all made visits. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese did not. Foreign Minister Penny Wong later visited Israel but declined to visit sites associated with the massacre. The Government's actions and inactions on the Middle East left a vacuum which was filled by those espousing hate. Many Jewish Australians interpreted these actions as a lack of solidarity at a time of immense trauma for the Jewish people.

Former Prime Minister Scott Morrison [explained](#) that *"Changing one's policy is one thing but to do it in the circumstances of October 7 has had absolute diabolical consequences here in Australia giving licence, I believe to antisemitism."*

It is no coincidence that the first Australian government since the creation of the state of Israel to abandon bipartisan policies toward the Jewish State also oversaw the largest surge in anti-Jewish hatred in Australian history.

Visa Cancellations and Exclusion of Jewish Community Speakers

One of the most significant issues affecting the Jewish community was the cancellation or refusal of visas for speakers invited by Jewish organisations.

These included Hillel Fuld, an American-Israeli technology entrepreneur invited to address a fundraising event for Magen David Adom (a Jewish medical charity); former Israeli Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked, invited by AIJAC; and Simcha Rothman, Chair of the Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee and a senior member of Israel's Government, who had been invited by AJA for a nationwide tour in solidarity with Australia's Jews.

Mr Rothman's visa was cancelled without notice as he was preparing to leave for the airport, despite the visa having previously been approved. AJA had organised events across Australia, including appearances in synagogues and meetings with Jewish youth.

Among the reasons given were that Rothman had called to 'eradicate Hamas', a position that would be supported by almost every Jew in Australia.

The cancellation caused significant disruption and was widely perceived within the Jewish community as discriminatory treatment,

At the same time, media reports exposed numerous cases in which individuals accused of extremist views or hate preaching had been granted Australian visas. This was a troubling double standard.

AJA is also aware of other cases in which Jewish organisations have chosen not to publicise visa difficulties for Israeli guests. The result has been a degree of self-censorship and reluctance to invite Israeli speakers.

Government Rhetoric and Community Impact

AJA is concerned that statements by senior ministers have, at times, contributed to hostility towards Israel and indirectly towards Australian Jews.

In August 2025, Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke criticised Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu by stating:

"Strength is not measured by how many people you can blow up or how many children you can leave hungry."

This language reinforced false narratives portraying the Jewish State as deliberately targeting civilians and starving children.

Similarly, in July 2025, Prime Minister Albanese publicly commented on an image of an emaciated Gazan child that was later revealed to have omitted significant medical context, stating, *"the distress that people around the world would feel when they look at young Mohammed, 1 year old... He is not a threat to the state of Israel nor is he someone who can be seen to be a fighter for Hamas"*. Many members of the Jewish community felt that the Government was too willing to accept and amplify allegations against Israel without appropriate scrutiny. The picture was later revealed to be of a boy suffering from a serious medical condition, cerebral palsy. This had not been disclosed in the news coverage, and his emaciated state was presented as caused by Israel.

AJA believes that rhetoric portraying Israel in uniquely negative terms can contribute to an atmosphere in which hostility towards Israel spills over into hostility towards Jewish Australians.

Sanctions and Double Standards

In June 2025, the Albanese Government imposed sanctions on Israeli ministers Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir.

These sanctions were unprecedented. Australia had rarely, if ever, imposed sanctions on ministers serving in the democratically elected government of a democratic ally because of their political views.

At the time, AJA put out a statement saying, *"This government's willingness to engage with authoritarian regimes, including Holocaust deniers like Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, while targeting the world's only Jewish state, exposes a disturbing double*

standard. There is no other explanation for this disparity than blatant antisemitism... Under the Albanese Government, Australia's longstanding bipartisan relationship with Israel has been severely damaged. Their actions have emboldened Islamic extremists globally, provided a propaganda win for terrorists, and contributed to a rise in antisemitism at home"

The Government subsequently imposed sanctions on Israeli shepherds and small farms in Judea and Samaria. These measures as inconsistent with Australia's treatment of far more serious human rights abuses elsewhere in the world.

AJA is concerned that the repeated application of exceptional standards to the world's only Jewish state sends a message that hostility towards Israel is acceptable in a way that hostility towards other nations would not be.

Warnings Ignored

AJA repeatedly warned that hostile rhetoric and punitive measures directed at Israel would contribute to rising antisemitism in Australia.

When the Albanese Government announced its intention to recognise a 'State of Palestine' in September 2025, AJA [publicly warned](#):

"It is Australian Jews who bear the brunt of Labor's actions. Recognising an entity governed by a proscribed terrorist organisation undermines Australia's national security and risks Australian lives."

These concerns were echoed by senior Israeli officials.

In August 2025, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wrote to Prime Minister Albanese:

"Your call for a Palestinian state pours fuel on the antisemitic fire... It rewards Hamas terrorists. It emboldens those who menace Australian Jews and encourages the Jew hatred now stalking your streets."

That same month, Israel's Minister for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism, Amichai Chikli, accused the Australian Government of contributing to hostility towards Jews and argued that its own actions should be examined as part of any serious inquiry into antisemitism.

"The next special report on antisemitism by the @AlboMP government should begin with a record of the government's own antisemitic actions—the most hostile government toward the Jewish community since 1939,"

Following the Bondi attacks, AJA observed that the federal government had noticeably toned down their anti-Israel rhetoric and actions, however in recent weeks, there has been a significant increase, including the issuing of further disproportionate sanctions against Jewish shepherds as well as Foreign Minister Penny Wong [appearing to endorse](#) outrageous allegations from anti-Israel activists.

The Royal Commission should examine the extent to which the Albanese government's actions and rhetoric may have contributed to the rise of antisemitism in Australia.

State governments

The performance of Australian state governments in responding to antisemitism has varied considerably.

Of particular note is the New South Wales Government. Premier Chris Minns is widely respected within the Jewish community, and many NSW Jews regard his engagement with the community as genuine and constructive. His approach is often contrasted with that of the Federal Government and AJA has praised his decisions on several occasions.

Nevertheless, significant concerns remain.

The October 9, 2023, events at the Sydney Opera House represented a turning point in the antisemitism crisis in Australia. The events of that evening raised serious questions regarding policing, public order and the protection of the Jewish community.

Among the issues that continue to concern many Australian Jews were the apparent failure to make arrests on the night, the advice given to members of the Jewish community not to attend, the performance of the Police Minister and the absence of a comprehensive inquiry into the handling of the incident.

Many within the Jewish community believe that greater accountability is required regarding the decisions made by authorities on that evening.

NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism

In May 2025, representatives of AJA were invited to give evidence before the New South Wales Legislative Council inquiry into antisemitism.

AJA welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry and provide evidence regarding the experiences of Jewish Australians.

The appearance was hijacked by NSW Labor MLC Stephen Lawrence, who used most of the session to attack AJA and imply that the Australian Jewish Association was the cause of antisemitism, stating *“I’m just concerned that the organisation might be falling into that trap of actually furthering antisemitism by presenting monolithic views of Jewish people. What is your comment on that?”*

The accusation was bizarre because, AJA proudly takes positions independent from other Jewish organisations on different issues.

Mr Lawrence continued this train of attack in written supplementary questions, writing *“I am concerned your organisation may be worsening antisemitism in the community.”*

AJA answered the supplementary questions, *“We don’t propose to correct the numerous errors in the supplementary questions aside from expressing our disgust and disappointment that a hearing on antisemitism has been hijacked this way. We are particularly concerned by the implicit suggestion that Jewish individuals or organisations are responsible for antisemitism, a notion that is offensive and dangerous. We note that Premier Chris Minns has previously reprimanded the questioner, Mr Stephen Lawrence MLC over some of these issues.”*

AJA found these comments deeply troubling. At a time when Jewish organisations were reporting unprecedented levels of threats, intimidation and harassment, the suggestion that a Jewish organisation advocating against antisemitism might itself be responsible for antisemitism was offensive.

Blaming Jews for antisemitism is itself antisemitism. Notably, this took place just months prior to the Bondi attack.

Other Jewish groups reported a similar experience at the hearings and Mr Lawrence's conduct at the hearings were the [subject of media scrutiny](#).

Hate Speech laws

In recent years, state and federal governments have introduced a raft of new 'hate speech' laws. AJA has not seen evidence that these laws have had any impact on preventing or reducing antisemitic incidents or sentiment. The period of increasing 'hate speech' laws has been marked by an increase in antisemitic incidents.

'Hate speech' laws are often introduced in a rushed manner, following antisemitic incidents. After a spate of antisemitic incidents in the Summer of 2024-2025, new laws were quickly introduced.

Subsequent investigations revealed that many of those incidents were linked to the Islamic Republic of Iran and organised criminal elements. AJA is not aware of any evidence suggesting that stricter hate speech laws would have deterred foreign state actors, terrorist proxies or career criminals from engaging in such conduct.

AJA is also concerned that these laws have, in some cases had unintended consequences and generated antisemitism. On social media and elsewhere, Jewish organisations have been portrayed as advocates of censorship and accused of seeking to restrict political debate. Such narratives have themselves become a source of hostility towards the Jewish community.

AJA has been the only Jewish group that has consistently opposed these laws although many other groups in society have done so. In our experience, these types of laws are unpopular in the Jewish community.

Censorship often covers up a problem and doesn't address its root causes.

Foreign influence

Islamic Republic of Iran influence

For many years, AJA has warned about the threat posed by the Islamic Republic of Iran to Jewish communities around the world. As early as 2022, AJA was publicly calling for the expulsion of Iran's ambassador from Australia.

In 2024, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran published a series of antisemitic social media posts attacking AJA, including one which referred to AJA as a "demon Zionist lobby".

AJA believes it is extraordinary that a foreign government was permitted to publicly target an Australian Jewish organisation in this manner. When foreign diplomatic missions engage in conduct that risks inflaming tensions between Australian communities, the Australian Government should respond firmly in order to protect social cohesion and public confidence. In the Summer of 2024/2025, when a series of antisemitic attacks occurred in Sydney, AJA [publicly raised concerns](#) of Iranian involvement [well before authorities](#) reached that conclusion.

It took the Federal Government much longer to reach this conclusion and finally take action by expelling the ambassador.

In AJA's view, the Government was slow to recognise the role that a hostile foreign regime was playing in fomenting antisemitism within Australia.

The eventual expulsion of Iran's ambassador was welcomed by AJA, but only after a prolonged period during which the threat posed by the Iranian regime had been repeatedly highlighted by Jewish community organisations.



Qatari influence in Australia

AJA has undertaken research into the activities of the State of Qatar and Qatar-linked entities operating in Australia.

Qatar's use of soft power, media influence, educational partnerships and foreign funding has been extensively documented internationally. AJA believes similar issues warrant closer examination in the Australian context.

A particular area of concern is the higher education sector. AJA has sought information regarding Qatari funding and relationships with Australian universities and has encountered significant difficulties obtaining transparency regarding the extent and nature of these arrangements.

Al Jazeera content is broadcast through arrangements involving both SBS and the ABC.

AJA understands that this level of integration between a Qatari state media outlet and public broadcasters is unusual among Western democracies and raises legitimate questions regarding editorial independence, influence and transparency.

AJA has [sought to raise public awareness](#) of these issues through articles, research and public webinars examining Qatari influence operations and their potential implications for Australia.

AJA is not suggesting that all individuals or institutions connected with Qatar are acting improperly. Rather, AJA submits that the Royal Commission should examine whether sufficient transparency exists regarding foreign state influence, funding arrangements, media partnerships and educational activities connected to governments that have a documented history of supporting or accommodating extremist movements.

ABC

The ABC was examined in greater detail in another submission by an independent research group and therefore AJA confines its comments to its own direct experience.

Over many years, AJA has lodged complaints with the ABC regarding reporting and coverage relating to Israel, antisemitism and the Jewish community. Some complaints have been upheld, while many others have not. AJA also possesses a substantial record of older correspondence and complaints which can be provided to the Royal Commission if required. AJA's experience has been that the ABC frequently asserts that it operates free from political or ideological bias in accordance with its Charter. However, despite AJA being one of Australia's largest and most prominent Jewish organisations, it is not afforded opportunities to represent its views on ABC platforms.

At the same time, the ABC regularly provides a platform to smaller Jewish groups whose views more closely aligned with those commonly represented in ABC coverage but represent a tiny minority of the Jewish community and are often openly hostile to Jewish causes.

The Royal Commission should consider whether Australia's public broadcasters have adequately reflected the diversity of views within the Australian Jewish community during a period of unprecedented antisemitism.

The climate for Jews in Australia in 2026

History demonstrates that sustained demonisation of Jews has often preceded outbreaks of violence. Throughout history, false accusations against Jews, including claims that they spread the plague, murdered Christian children for matzah, or engaged in sinister conspiracies have frequently been used to justify persecution.

The experience of European Jewry in the 1930s also illustrates how repeated demonisation and dehumanisation can create an environment in which violence becomes more likely. Propagandists such as Julius Streicher and Joseph Goebbels played a central role in spreading hatred and normalising hostility towards Jews.

Today, Australian Jews are experiencing the re-emergence of similar patterns of dehumanisation. Online, Jews are frequently compared to rats, cockroaches and plagues, while accusations that Jews are child-killers have again become commonplace.

Media outlets, activists and online commentators have promoted claims that Israel is committing genocide, deliberately starving children, training dogs to rape people, or operating an apartheid regime. Whether framed as attacks on Israel, Zionists or Jews, these narratives create and increase hostility towards Australian Jews. Lies and demonisation about the Jewish State are believed and furthered by respectable people and institutions such as in the Micah Letter signed by some Christian leaders.

AJA believes that the repeated dissemination of such claims is contributing to an environment in which antisemitism is normalised and outbreaks of violence against Jews becomes more likely.

Aliyah and the Loss of Confidence in Australia's Future

AJA is aware of a growing number of Australian Jews who are actively considering leaving Australia because of rising antisemitism.

Several individuals closely associated with AJA are currently in the process of emigrating to Israel, including former AJA President Dr David Adler. Others have purchased property in Israel or are making preparations for what they describe as a "Plan B" should conditions in Australia continue to deteriorate. Others intend to make Aliyah after their children complete school or upon retirement.

These decisions are not being driven by economic hardship or a lack of opportunity. Rather, they reflect growing concerns about the long-term future of Jewish life in Australia and the safety of future generations.

Many of those considering emigration are highly educated, professionally successful and active contributors to Australian society. Their departure would represent a loss not only to the Jewish community but to Australia more broadly.

AJA believes this reflects a wider trend within the Australian Jewish community. Because migration decisions often take years to plan and implement, the full impact may not yet be visible in official statistics.

It is a sad indictment on Australia that many feel safer moving to a country currently fighting a multi-front war.

Perhaps most concerning is that many Australian Jews are now actively discussing the possibility of leaving Australia, a conversation that was far less common prior to October 7, 2023. The emergence of this mindset is itself evidence of the profound impact that rising antisemitism has had on the community's sense of security and belonging.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – Implement the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism

Governments, universities, public institutions and publicly funded organisations including ABC and SBS should formally adopt and operationalise the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. Adoption should involve training, policy development and implementation rather than symbolic endorsement alone.

IHRA does not infringe on freedom of speech and almost all US states have adopted the definition which sits comfortably with robust free speech protections in the USA.

NSW Shadow Attorney General Damien Tudehope MLC introduced the *Prevention of Antisemitism Bill 2026* that is worthy of consideration by the Royal Commission.

Recommendation 2 – Recognise Islamic Extremism as a Significant Driver of Antisemitism

Governments, regulators and law enforcement agencies should openly acknowledge the role that Islamic extremism plays in contemporary antisemitism and ensure that policies, reporting and educational programs accurately reflect this reality.

Recommendation 3– Pause Further Hate Speech Legislation Pending Review

Governments should not introduce additional hate speech laws until an independent review has assessed whether recently enacted laws have reduced antisemitic incidents or attitudes and whether they have generated unintended consequences.

Laws restricting speech are unpopular in the Jewish community and broader society. They don't reduce antisemitism. There is evidence that they increase anti-Jewish sentiment.

The same goes for increased powers for the safety commissioner.

Recommendation 4 – End Public Funding for Organisations that Promote Antisemitism, Extremism or Terrorist Glorification

While it should not be a criminal offense to hold antisemitic views, taxpayers should not be obligated to fund organisations or individuals that engage in antisemitism, glorify terrorism, promote extremist ideologies, or repeatedly platform those who do. From arts organisations

to certain Islamic organisations, hundreds of millions in taxpayer funding goes to organisations involved in spreading hate. Funding agreements should include clear conditions and auditing mechanisms. ABC funding should be conditioned on the broadcaster adopting the IHRA definition and adhering to its charter by moderating its anti-Israel bias.

Recommendation 5 – Increase Transparency of Foreign Funding and Influence

Australian universities and other publicly funded institutions should be required to publicly disclose funding, partnerships and donations received from foreign governments, foreign state-linked entities and foreign political organisations.

Recommendation 6 – Protect Against Lawfare and Vexatious Complaint Campaigns

Regulators and government agencies should develop procedures to identify coordinated bad-faith complaint campaigns targeting individuals, charities and community organisations. Complaints found to be vexatious or politically motivated should be dismissed at an early stage.

Recommendation 7 – Allow Armed Guards at High-Risk Community Events

Governments should review whether licensed security personnel protecting events assessed as facing a credible terrorism risk should have access to enhanced protective capabilities, including the ability to carry firearms.

AJA has heard from members of the Jewish community who feel unsafe attending Jewish events in public following the Bondi attack and the disclosure that CSG guards were unable to carry firearms at similar events. These people will avoid Jewish events in public, and this will have a chilling effect on Jewish cultural life in Australia.

Recommendation 8 – Ensure Firearms Policy is Evidence-Based

Governments should avoid using antisemitic incidents or terrorist attacks as justification for unrelated firearms restrictions.

After the Bondi attack, there was a rush to implement tighter firearms laws.

Israel is a country which faces more terrorist attacks than Australia. They have loosened regulations, allowing many more civilians to carry firearms. In 2024 – about two thirds of terrorist attacks in the public space, where a terrorist was neutralised, it was by a privately

licenced firearms bearer. Israel has not reported a major increase in licenced firearms being used to commit crime.

Recommendation 9 – Expand Security Cooperation with Israel

Australian security agencies should strengthen cooperation with Israeli counterparts and draw upon Israeli expertise in counterterrorism, intelligence gathering, critical infrastructure protection and community security.

Recommendation 10 – Strengthen Safeguards on Foreign Aid

Australian aid to UNRWA despite the revelation that several employees took part in the October 7 attacks and that UNRWA has spent decades brainwashing Palestinian Arab children is concerning.

Australia should suspend aid to areas under control of the Palestinian Authority until there is verification of substantial reform of its education system, cessation of glorifying martyrs of terrorism and clear ending of “pay-for-slay” payments for jailed terrorists or relatives of terrorists.

Australian foreign aid programs should include stronger safeguards to ensure taxpayer funds do not directly or indirectly support organisations that engage in antisemitism, glorify terrorism, or educate children using antisemitic material.

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