

**Submission  
No 17**

## **MEASURES TO PROHIBIT SLOGANS THAT INCITE HATRED**

**Organisation:** Palestinian Christians in Australia

**Date Received:** 9 January 2026



## Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry

*“Measures to prohibit slogans that incite hatred”*

January 2026

# **Palestinian Christians in Australia Submission: A Call to Stop Harmful Legislation, Preserve Democracy, and Protect Australian Human Rights**

### Introduction

We make this submission as Palestinian Christians living in Australia—members of one of the world’s oldest Christian communities, with deep ties to the Holy Land and a long history of coexistence with Jewish and Muslim communities. We are Australians committed to democracy, pluralism, and the rule of law, and we are Christians whose faith calls us to uphold human dignity, truth, and justice for all people.

We begin by expressing our unequivocal solidarity with Jewish Australians affected by antisemitism, including those harmed by the recent antisemitic attack at Bondi. Antisemitism is real, persistent, and dangerous. It must be confronted clearly, consistently, and without qualification. Jewish communities, like all communities in Australia, deserve safety, dignity, and freedom from fear.

At the same time, we are deeply concerned that the government’s response to antisemitism risks undermining these very principles by falsely conflating antisemitism with Arab identity, Palestinian advocacy, and lawful political expression. This approach does not protect Jewish Australians; instead, it harms social cohesion, weakens democratic norms, and places Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and allied communities under unjust suspicion.

### The Impact on Palestinian Christians and Other Communities

Palestinian Christians in Australia occupy a unique and often misunderstood position. We are both Christian and Palestinian, connected spiritually and historically to the land where Christianity was born, and directly affected by the ongoing occupation and dispossession of Palestinians. Our advocacy for Palestinian human rights is grounded in international law, Christian ethics, and nonviolent public witness.

Recent government measures and public rhetoric have increasingly framed Palestinian advocacy as inherently suspect or extremist. Surveillance, policing of protest, and the broadening of speech-related offences have created a climate of fear. Many in our communities feel they are being collectively



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punished or held morally responsible for acts of violence that we neither support nor condone, and which contradict our values.

This climate has a chilling effect on civic participation. Students, faith leaders, academics, and community members report self-censorship, withdrawal from public discourse, and fear of legal or professional consequences for expressing lawful views. This is not compatible with a healthy democracy.

## Freedom of Expression and the Rule of Law

We are particularly concerned about proposals and actions that criminalise or stigmatise political speech, including the use of contested phrases such as “globalise the intifada,” without regard to context, intent, or existing legal standards. While we recognise that language can cause harm and should be used responsibly, criminalising speech through vague or politically charged interpretations sets a dangerous precedent.

Similarly, the embrace of the Segal Report and the continued reliance on the IHRA definition of antisemitism—particularly where it is used to restrict or sanction criticism of the State of Israel—risk collapsing the crucial distinction between antisemitism (a form of racism) and legitimate political critique of a state’s policies. This undermines free expression, academic freedom, and the ability of faith communities to speak prophetically on matters of justice and peace.

As Christians, we are especially concerned when theological, moral, or humanitarian critiques of state violence are framed as hate speech. This erodes the space for ethical discourse and weakens Australia’s commitment to human rights.

## Democracy, Anti-Racism, and Equal Protection

We believe that antisemitism is best confronted through strong, universal anti-racism frameworks that protect all communities equally, rather than through exceptional or punitive measures that single out particular groups. The selective expansion of police powers or speech restrictions risks deepening social divisions and fuelling racism, including anti-Arab and anti-Muslim racism, which Palestinian Christians also experience.

We therefore urge the government to prioritise preventative, rights-based approaches that strengthen democratic institutions rather than weaken them. This includes education, community-led initiatives, and robust human rights protections that apply to all.

## Our Calls to the Inquiry

We respectfully call on the parliamentary inquiry to recommend the following:



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1. Halting and repealing discriminatory laws and measures that undermine freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and political participation, particularly where they disproportionately affect Arab, Palestinian, Muslim, and allied communities.
2. Abandoning the Segal Report and ceasing the use of the IHRA definition of antisemitism in ways that restrict legitimate criticism of Israel or suppress lawful advocacy for Palestinian rights.
3. Fully funding and implementing the National Anti-Racism Framework 2024, ensuring equal protection and dignity for all communities, including Jewish, Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and Christian Australians.
4. Strengthening the powers and independence of the Australian Human Rights Commission, enabling it to effectively address all forms of racism and discrimination without political interference.
5. Advancing gun law reform and public safety measures that are evidence-based and non-discriminatory, without scapegoating migrant, refugee, or racialised communities.

## Conclusion

We reject the false choice between standing against antisemitism and standing for Palestinian human rights. We do both. We stand with Jewish Australians against antisemitism, and with Palestinians against illegal occupation, collective punishment, and systemic injustice. We oppose all forms of racism, discrimination, and dehumanisation.

Democracy depends on open civic space, equal protection under the law, and the courage to defend human rights consistently, not selectively. As Palestinian Christians in Australia, we ask this inquiry to uphold these principles—for the good of all who call this country home.



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