

**Submission  
No 138**

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

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## **Submission to the Committee on Law and Safety Inquiry into and report on the use of slogans**

**Melinda Jones<sup>1</sup>**

I welcome this opportunity to address the Committee on this very important matter. Much of my career has been dedicated to social justice and the search for social harmony and cohesion in a multicultural democratic society. As a human rights scholar I have worked for a world in which all people are treated with dignity and respect through a framework of rights and law. Assaults on dignity, when channelled through group identity, can be characterised as hatred. This is so whether the perpetrator expresses hatred or not – the question is the effect of the behaviour in diminishing the group in question.

The exploring the importance of maintaining social harmony and cohesion has been key to my work and many publications. A system of rights is part of a liberal framework for society. Understanding liberal political philosophy, which underpins the modern human rights system, is key to understanding human rights. The liberal principles are designed to empower the individual, and to protect from attacks on individuals. At the same time, social justice and social cohesion refer to the relationships between individuals and the groups with which they identify. Beyond this, there must be harmony between groups and a social contract to govern intergroup peace and security.

### **The Significance of Social Cohesion**

Social cohesion refers to the strength of relationships and the sense of solidarity among members of a society. It encompasses trust between individuals and institutions, shared norms and values, and the degree to which individuals feel part of a collective identity. According to Chan, To, and Chan (2006), social cohesion includes five key dimensions: belonging, inclusion, participation, recognition, and legitimacy. A cohesive society enables individuals and groups—regardless of background—to work together, resolve conflicts non-violently, and contribute to shared public life. It is not the absence of diversity, but the presence of mutual respect and trust that makes social cohesion vital in multicultural democracies.

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Social cohesion is important because it underpins democratic stability, economic resilience, and public well-being. High levels of social cohesion are associated with lower crime rates, greater civic participation, and stronger institutions (Putnam, 2000). When individuals feel safe, valued, and connected, they are more likely to invest in public goods and less likely to withdraw into mistrust or extremism. Conversely, hate speech, exclusionary politics, or discrimination can erode cohesion by deepening social divides and weakening the fabric of mutual obligation. As Waldron (2012) argues, social cohesion is not merely a cultural value—it is a democratic necessity, ensuring all people can participate equally in the life of the nation

**Hatred, intimidation, and violence are antithetical to social cohesion** because these forces not only harm individuals but undermine the foundations of democratic, inclusive, and peaceful societies. This protection is supported by moral, legal, social, and psychological reasons, as explored by scholars such as Katharine Gelber, Luke McNamara, Jeremy Waldron, and others.

Protecting citizens from hatred, intimidation & violence is key to upholding human dignity and equality. Hate and intimidation strip people of their dignity, particularly those from historically marginalized groups. As Waldron (2012) argues, dignity is essential for citizens to function as equals in public life, which is necessary for the functioning of a democracy: “The harm of hate speech lies in its power to mark its targets as second-class citizens.” – *Waldron*

Hatred and intimidation cause fear, anxiety, social withdrawal, and trauma, especially in racial, ethnic, religious, LGBTQ+, and migrant communities. Studies in political psychology (e.g., Bilewicz & Soral, 2020) link hate incidents to collective trauma, reduced well-being, and community fragmentation. Social cohesion be protected by preventing the psychological and social harm of hatred.

Societies thrive when individuals and groups feel safe, valued, and connected. Hate rhetoric breaks down bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000), making cooperation, dialogue, and civic trust impossible. “In cohesive societies, diversity is a source of strength, not suspicion.” – *Chan et al., 2006*

Equal access to public participation is a basic requirement of a society bound through social cohesion. Free speech is hollow if some people are intimidated into silence. This involves a clash of two speech interests. It is not inevitable that the speech of the hater should be prioritised over the speech of the target of hatred. As Gelber and McNamara (2016) argue, hate speech excludes its victims from open participation in democracy; Jones argues it has a chilling effect on free speech: “Speech that excludes others from speech is not freedom—it’s domination.”

A society that aspires to social cohesion cannot risk its citizens by allowing the growth of hatred and radical ideologies. It is well known that hate slogans and speech can act as precursors to hate crimes and collective violence (Baider, 2022). It is significant that normalizing hate creates an environment where **extremist views become mainstream**, raising the risk of **radicalization** and **terrorism**. This is already happening in Australia.

Beyond all else, Australia operates within the legal and ethical framework of international law. International frameworks (e.g., **ICCPR**, **ICERD**) require governments to **protect individuals from incitement to hatred** and violence. Democracies have a **duty to protect vulnerable groups**, especially when freedom of speech is weaponized against them. Allowing hatred to fester is the opposite to building a socially cohesive society.

### **Antisemitic Slogans**

Antisemitic slogans and discourse significantly erode social cohesion by fostering division, normalizing discrimination, and undermining the foundations of democratic, multicultural societies. Antisemitic slogans do not just affect the Jewish community; they pose a direct threat to the safety, integrity, and shared values of a multicultural and democratic society.

The slogans that interfere with social cohesion—i.e., those that deepen polarization, provoke fear, or threaten intergroup trust often carry symbolic violence, perpetuate historical traumas, or implicitly call for exclusion or harm. Here is a list of slogans which should be considered as dangerous and a threat to social cohesion.

1. “Jews will not replace us”  
→ Associated with neo-Nazi “Great Replacement” conspiracy
2. “ZOG (Zionist Occupied Government)”  
→ Classic antisemitic conspiracy that Jews control global politics
3. “Soros is behind it all” / “Soros funds everything”  
→ Dog whistle invoking antisemitic views of Jewish financial control
4. “Globalists are destroying our nation”  
→ Often coded reference to Jews in far-right discourse
5. “Khaybar, Khaybar, ya Yahud”  
→ Evokes a 7th-century battle, often interpreted as a call for expulsion or violence against Jews
6. “All Zionists are ... babykillers, terrorists...”
7. “Holocaust denial→ Holocaust inversion; equates Jewish identity with oppression

8. “Death to Israel” / “Death to Zionists”
  - Dangerous blurring of political and ethnic targets
9. “Jews control Al-Aqsa”
  - Often used to stir religious tension, can lead to violence
10. “Ban the IOF” – accusing Israel’s national defence force of being an occupation force.
11. “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free”
  - Seen by many as a call for the elimination of Israel; others see it as a call for equal rights
12. “Zionism is racism” (*when used to erase Jewish self-determination entirely*)
  - Conflation of Zionism with racism can delegitimize Jewish identity and violate inclusivity standards
13. “Globalize the Intifada”
  - Ambiguity allows both symbolic solidarity and perceived incitement to violence
14. “No Zionists in our movements”
  - Exclusionary slogan that often marginalizes Jewish voices regardless of political stance
15. “Israel is a settler colonial project” (*used in totalizing terms*)
  - While academically debatable, when used to deny any Jewish connection to the land, it can fracture dialogue
16. “Plandemic” / “COVID was a Jewish scheme”
  - Old “Jew as poisoner” trope modernized
18. “New World Order” / “Deep State”
  - Coded references often interpreted as antisemitic
19. “Hollywood elites / Pedophile cabal”
  - Frequently draws on antisemitic QAnon-style narratives
20. “The woke Jews are brainwashing us”
  - Targets Jews as cultural manipulators, common in some online subcultures

Each slogan in this list evokes historical tropes or collective trauma; generalizes identity groups (especially Jews) as a threat; and leads to fear, polarization, or dehumanization. Outlawing antisemitic slogans can reduce public hate, affirm dignity, and disrupt radicalizing narratives—but only when done in tandem with education, consistent law enforcement, and digital platform accountability. Unchallenged slogans lead societies to believe that prejudice and discrimination against Jewish people are acceptable. Further,

in environments like schools or universities, the failure of authorities to address these slogans can be interpreted as "tacit approval," emboldening further hate speech. What's more increased antisemitism is often a "harbinger of societal breakdown," signalling a rise in general repression and intolerance. Hate speech rarely ends with words; it frequently translates into physical threats, exclusion from programs, and violence. Slogans used as political tools divide communities by forcing "false dichotomies," which fractures collective power and undermines interfaith or multicultural alliances. Antisemitic rhetoric often animates other forms of hatred, including white nationalism, racism, and xenophobia, thereby weakening the entire social fabric.

### **Strategies with respect to slogans.**

Slogans could be banned outright, however appropriate regulation could be more effective. Other jurisdictions have regulated slogans during public protests, in school or university grounds and in public institutions. Education programs making it clear that these slogans are antisemitic and unacceptable sentiments in Australian society. For example, courts have not found basic slogans to be antisemitic – “all Zionists are terrorists” and “from the river to the sea”. Had courts been prepared to accept the extreme hatred of these slogans, it could have had a flow on effect to much of society.

*Dear Committee*

*I ran out of time to complete what I would have liked to say. If I can be of any further help, please feel free to be in contact with me.*

*Yours truly,*

*Melinda Jones*