

Opening statement of
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NSW Inquiry into Antisemitism - Prep Document

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Opening Statement

My name is Mia Campbell and I am the President of the UTS Students' Association. We are a student union that represents more than 48,000 students at UTS through our democratically elected student representative council.

The UTS Students' Association unequivocally condemns antisemitism. The safety, inclusion, and dignity of all students, including Jewish students, is fundamental to our mission as a representative body. Addressing antisemitism is a vital part of building a campus free from all forms of racism.

At the same time, many student unions around the country have been subject to allegations of antisemitism or a lack of proper representation of Jewish students. Many of these claims appear to conflate longstanding support for international human rights, including the rights of Palestinians, with prejudice against Jewish people. Criticism of a state's policies, including those of Israel, is not the same as prejudice against its people. This distinction is critical to both international legal norms and democratic debate. The UTSSA's advocacy draws upon legal findings made by internationally recognised bodies such as the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice. Our campaigns include and are supported by students from diverse backgrounds, including Jewish students, and have always been guided by a commitment to justice and equality.

We are concerned by the growing trend of conflating student political expression with antisemitism in order to silence legitimate critique. We acknowledge that antisemitism is real, serious, and must be confronted wherever it appears. At the same time, we believe it must not be weaponised to delegitimise calls for accountability in relation to violations of international law. Efforts to combat antisemitism must instead be integrated into broader anti-racist work. That includes strengthening student services like UTS Counselling and encouraging interfaith and intercultural dialogue in classes, clubs and campus events.

Universities must remain spaces for learning, political engagement, and difficult conversations. Ensuring these spaces remain open, principled, and inclusive is a responsibility we take seriously. We remain committed to accountability and respectful dialogue, even and especially when those conversations are uncomfortable.

End of statement