

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

### Portfolio Committee No. 5 – Justice and Communities

## INQUIRY INTO ANTISEMITISM IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Hearing: 19 May 2025

### SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

#### Sydney Friends of Standing Together

**(1) You reject a “fortress mentality,” but are security measures not the direct consequence of Jewish institutions being targeted, not Jewish paranoia?**

Our submission clearly states, “we do not contest the need within the Jewish community for enhanced security” and acknowledges that “A series of incidents against Jewish targets over the past few months created an atmosphere of fear in large parts of the Jewish community [...] We agree that selecting Jewish targets, irrespective of the perpetrators’ intent, causes fear in the community.”

“Jewish paranoia” is not mentioned anywhere in our submission. We would not use this language because we respect genuine fear experienced by many in the Jewish community. However, as we say in our submission, we “urge community leaders and politicians to use caution and restraint” because “in a volatile environment, it is easy to stoke fear and division.”

**(a) Isn’t invalidating Jewish fear – while simultaneously denying them safety measures –an act of silencing?**

We acknowledge in our submission that “A series of incidents against Jewish targets over the past few months created an atmosphere of fear in large parts of the Jewish community [...] We agree that selecting Jewish targets, irrespective of the perpetrators’ intent, causes fear in the community”. Our submission clearly states, “we do not contest the need within the Jewish community for enhanced security”.

We oppose invalidating Jewish fear or any other group’s fear, and we oppose the silencing of any group, be it Jewish, Palestinian, Muslim or other.

**(2) Your organisation opposes measures to increase synagogue security or restrict threatening demonstrations. Should Jewish children have to pass through a screaming mob to enter Hebrew school?**

As we state in our submission, in principle “we do not contest the need within the Jewish community for enhanced security”. However, we urge caution in introducing heavy-handed security measures that could create a climate of suspicion and increased fear and serve to isolate the Jewish community. We recommend “a balanced, evidence-based and collaborative approach in implementing solutions, that prevents further polarisation and builds stronger relationships across communities.”

To be clear, no child should “have to pass through screaming mobs”, but we are of the view that this is not a fair description of all pro-Palestinian demonstrations. We acknowledge that many Jewish people find pro-Palestinian demonstrations threatening, however we believe that it is essential to encourage respectful dialogue rather than suppress debate. By promoting an exchange of narratives and fostering open discussions, we can work to reduce inter-community fear and division.

**(a) Do you believe protests involving violent rhetoric should be protected outside mosques, churches or any place of worship?**

We caution against broad use of the term “violent rhetoric.” While incitement to harm should never be tolerated, we urge a better understanding of terminology, including terminology used in protests.

Concerns from the Jewish community must be respected and should be addressed through dialogue and, where needed, mediation—not blanket bans. Protest organisers may be willing to adjust timing or location if approached constructively. Widespread restrictions near places of worship would unduly limit protest rights and risk unintended consequences like unauthorised actions or arrests.

We advocate case-by-case dialogue, respectful engagement, and ongoing education to balance free expression with community safety. It is through open engagement, not suppression, that we build safety and understanding.