

## **INQUIRY INTO ANTISEMITISM IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Organisation:** The Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy  
Australia (ISGAP)

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**Submission to the Inquiry into Antisemitism in New South Wales by the Institute  
for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP), 6 April 2025**

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## **Executive Summary**

This submission to Inquiry into Antisemitism in New South Wales (NSW) by the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) addresses key Terms of Reference for the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism, with particular reference to the growing prevalence of antisemitic sentiment and behaviour among segments of both far-left activist and academic communities and Australian-born extreme political Islamists.

ISGAP is the preeminent international research centre for the critical study of contemporary antisemitism, and this submission explores how ideological networks, activist rhetoric, academic erasure and online ecosystems contribute to normalizing antisemitism across NSW. Grounded in the research of ISGAP (including Professor Charles Asher Small, Associate Professor Joshua Roose, Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann, and Anthony Small) and supported by recent incident data in NSW and Australia, this submission provides evidence of current and emerging radical subcultures and institutional failures that have direct consequences for Jewish safety and wellbeing and for NSW's education and social cohesion.

This submission concludes with targeted, practical recommendations for reform across education, public policy and community engagement to ensure NSW remains a safe and inclusive place for all citizens and visitors. It also recommends a comprehensive investigation of possible external interference (e.g. from Muslim Brotherhood-associated Qatar) that might promote antisemitism in Australia in general and in NSW in particular.

### **A. Antisemitism on the Australian Far-Left and in University and Secondary School Settings**

Publicly since October the 7th 2023 there has been a significant and pressing rise in antisemitism emerging from Australia's political far-left, particularly in university environments and activist circles. This strand of antisemitism is often masked in the language of social justice, settler colonialism, decolonisation, equity, inclusion and human rights, but in its practical application—especially since the 7 October Hamas-led attacks—it has revealed patterns of speech and behaviour that align with classic antisemitic tropes.

These forms of antisemitism are distinct in their style but not in their effect. They foster exclusion, normalise double standards, and create environments in which

Jewish students, staff and broader community members feel unsafe, unwelcome or compelled to hide core aspects of their identity.

### **1. Anti-Zionism as Political Cover for Antisemitism**

Within NSW universities, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, Israel is increasingly portrayed as a unique and unrelenting perpetrator of oppression. This critique, rather than being part of a good-faith examination of international politics, is often absolute and binary. It depicts Jews as newcomer settler-colonialists and Palestinians as perpetual indigenous victims, leaving no space for nuance, complexity or dialogue,<sup>1</sup> and ignoring not only the Holocaust but also the well-documented scientific observation that DNA sequence variation markers for Jews from numerous worldwide communities show tightly shared phylogeographic origins in the Levant.<sup>2</sup>

The terminology used—terms such as ‘genocide’, ‘apartheid’, and ‘Zionist violence’—is rarely applied to other international conflicts. The specificity and intensity of focus on Israel, and on Jewish self-determination, reflect the double standard defined in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, which clearly states that denying Jews the right to self-determination (e.g., by claiming that the existence of Israel is a racist endeavour) is antisemitic.

This form of discourse has flourished in some academic departments and is often led or supported by faculty members and students aligned with far-left wing political ideologies. These actors frequently justify their rhetoric through the lens of postcolonial theory, conflating historical European colonialism with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This conflation results in a widespread academic erasure of Jewish indigeneity, 3,300 year old Jewish history in *Eretz Israel*, and continuous Jewish cultural presence in the Middle East.

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<sup>1</sup> Burchill, S. 08 December 2023 ‘Explaining the Gaza genocide: Settler colonialism in Palestine’, *Pearls and Irritations*. Retrieved 03 April 2025 from:

<https://johnmenadue.com/post/2023/12/explaining-the-gaza-genocide-settler-colonialism-in-palestine/>

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Behar DM, Metspalu M, Baran Y, Kopelman NM, Yunusbayev B, Gladstein A, Tzur S, Sahakyan H, Bahmanimehr A, Yepiskoposyan L, Tambets K, Khusnutdinova EK, Kushniarevich A, Balanovsky O, Balanovsky E, Kovacevic L, Marjanovic D, Mihailov E, Kouvatsi A, Triantaphyllidis C, King RJ, Semino O, Torroni A, Hammer MF, Metspalu E, Skorecki K, Rosset S, Halperin E, Villems R, Rosenberg NA. (2013), ‘No evidence from genome-wide data of a Khazar origin for the Ashkenazi Jews’. *Human Biology* 2013 Dec;85(6):859-900. doi: 10.3378/027.085.0604. PMID: 25079123; as well as Ostrer, H. and Skorecki, K. (2013), ‘The population genetics of the Jewish people’. *Human Genetics* 132, 119–127 (2013). doi: 10.1007/s00439-012-1235-6.

## **2. Institutional Failures and the Role of the NTEU**

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU), the representative body for university staff, has issued multiple statements in recent years condemning Israel, while rarely acknowledging antisemitic incidents on campuses or expressing solidarity with Jewish faculty or students. These statements often make no distinction between critique and vilification.

Perhaps most notably, the NTEU has refused to endorse the IHRA definition of antisemitism, despite its adoption by the Australian Government and numerous international bodies.<sup>3</sup> This refusal reflects a troubling trend: the failure of institutions to protect Jewish members of the academic community in cases where such protection would require confronting the far-left and its current narratives.

Further senior figures in the Union's NSW branch have engaged in conduct that has made many Jewish academic staff feel excluded, unsafe and thus unable to make use of Union resources to support both their safety and ensure their voices are well represented at a time when they are increasingly deplatformed and marginalised. A key example is Vice President Dr Nick Riemer's prominent association with the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement at Sydney University. On 8 October 2023, in response to the abhorrent scenes of massacre emanating from Israel, Dr Riemer argued on social media that 'No progressive should feel the need to publicly condemn any choice by the Palestinian resistance'. In November 2023 he reiterated a common antisemitic trope on X claiming 'the Saturday Paper is owned by Zionists',<sup>4</sup> and has been reported as perpetuating other antisemitic tropes subsequently.<sup>5</sup> On 9 October 2023, just two days after the greatest atrocity inflicted on the Jewish people since the Holocaust, Dr Riemer took part in the antisemitic 'Fuck the Jews' gathering at the Sydney Opera House (see section B2 of this submission).

The consequences are real and measurable. Jewish students report facing hostility in classroom discussions, on-campus protests that glorify terror groups, and

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<sup>3</sup> NTEU, 10 May 2024. 'University Action and solidarity with Gaza: Supporting Human Rights and Academic Freedom'. Retrieved 03 April 2025 from:

[https://www.nteu.au/News\\_Articles/National/Supporting\\_Human\\_Rights\\_and\\_Academic\\_Freedom.aspx](https://www.nteu.au/News_Articles/National/Supporting_Human_Rights_and_Academic_Freedom.aspx)

<sup>4</sup> Narunsky, G, 07 November 2024. 'University of Sydney Education in Hate' *Australian Jewish News*. Retrieved 03 April 2025 from: <http://australianjewishnews.com/university-of-sydneys-education-in-hate/>

<sup>5</sup> Mendes, P June 2024. "'Zionists have no right to cultural safety': The Australian BDS movement's transition from racist "anti-Zionism" to xenophobic anti-Semitism', *Fathom Magazine*. Retrieved 04 April 2025 from <https://fathomjournal.org/zionists-have-no-right-to-cultural-safety-the-australian-bds-movements-transition-from-racist-anti-zionism-to-xenophobic-anti-semitism/>

marginalization from student-led social justice campaigns.<sup>6</sup> Staff have been publicly targeted for speaking out in support of Israel or for teaching Israeli history in a balanced manner.<sup>7</sup> This aligns with the Inquiry's Term of Reference 1(b), which addresses student safety, and reflects a broader failure of institutional accountability in higher education.

### ***3. Erasure of Israel and Jewish Perspectives in Academia and Controlling the Overton Window***

Australian Middle Eastern and Islamic studies departments often provide comprehensive coverage of Arab, Persian and Islamic civilizations, but rarely present the Israeli experience in a meaningful way. Jewish perspectives on indigeneity, Zionism, conflict and statehood are often omitted or presented solely through the lens of critique.

The Overton window, a.k.a. window of discourse, is the range of subjects and arguments politically acceptable. Unlike Jewish studies (limited to a very small number of elite institutions), Middle Eastern studies are widely accessible, often carry strong political leanings, and are taught by academics with a track record of anti-Zionist activism, including acting as prominent members of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. Academic boycotts threaten the very basis of scholarship and intellectual integrity.<sup>8</sup>

Many of the academics teaching and researching in this area appear to ground their approaches in postcolonial theory. Several staff members leading these units have shared content on their personal social media accounts that expresses strong hostility toward the state of Israel, and in some cases, material that borders on or crosses into antisemitism. This public positioning raises legitimate concerns about the likelihood of balanced or pluralistic perspectives being presented in the curriculum. Consequently, many students may receive their first—and perhaps only—exposure to Middle Eastern politics through frameworks that exclude or marginalise Israeli perspectives and reduce complex histories into binary moral frameworks.

Far from maintaining a separation between activism outside the classroom and what is taught within it, often academic staff reflect their political views in syllabus

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<sup>6</sup> Markus, A. Eilam, E. (2025) *2024 Survey of Antisemitism in Australian Universities* Australian Academic Alliance Against Antisemitism.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Zuckermann, G. (2003), 'Hideous spectre of censorship', *Times Higher Education*, 15 August 2003. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/hideous-spectre-of-censorship/178655.article>

materials and lectures. As just one example in August 2024 a Sydney University academic was documented questioning the veracity of claims of sexual violence perpetrated on a mass scale by Hamas operatives at the Nova Festival Massacre on 7 October during lectures, suggesting that such claims were the results of 'Zionist' media manipulation.<sup>9</sup>

Even if one were to accept that examining media portrayals of sexual violence is a legitimate academic exercise (and we argue that, in this context, it is fundamentally antisemitic), the manner in which it was conducted is deeply problematic. The discussion occurred without acknowledging the broader context in which antisemitic rhetoric frequently seeks to deny or undermine the reality of Jewish suffering—such as in Holocaust denial. It also failed to consider the harm such unmoderated conversations can inflict on actual victims, their families, and students connected to those impacted. This example illustrates how antisemitism can become embedded within the pedagogical process itself.

This contributes directly to the normalisation of antisemitism: students learn to equate Zionism with racism, Israel with colonialism, and any Jewish defence of the state with complicity in oppression, all while minimising actual Jewish suffering both in Israel and in Australia. The cumulative effect is not only a loss of intellectual integrity and scholarly balance, but also a deeply corrosive impact on Jewish inclusion within academic life in NSW and Australia more generally.

#### **4. The 'Alliance' with Islamist Activism**

A further layer of concern is the ideological convergence between segments of the far-left and Islamist political organizations. Certain academic and activist networks have platformed or partnered with groups that openly deny Israel's right to exist and have, at times, refused to condemn attacks on civilians.

This alliance is built on shared narratives of victimhood, resistance and anti-Western sentiment. While some may view it as tactical solidarity, it functions in practice as a powerful legitimising mechanism for antisemitism. Jewish students who challenge these narratives are often accused of supporting oppression; they are silenced or ostracised.

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<sup>9</sup> Chidiac, V and Haghighi, A 1 June 2024 'University of Sydney investigates sociology professor's lecture materials referencing Palestinian genocide' *Honi Soi*. Retrieved 22 August 2024 from: <https://honisoit.com/2024/06/university-of-sydney-investigates-sociology-professors-lecture-materials-referencing-palestinian-genocide/>.

There is also documented evidence of the relationship between Hizb ut-Tahrir, an international extremist Islamist organisation, and university protest activities, including at the University of Sydney encampment. The internal report into antisemitism at the University conducted at the behest of the University senate by Bruce Hodgkinson AM SC<sup>10</sup> acknowledged actors affiliated with Hizb ut-Tahrir were present on campus in this capacity, yet the terms of reference of that review did not explore any further potential links such organisations might have with staff, students and campus organisations. Hizb ut-Tahrir is a proscribed organisation in many other jurisdictions, including the UK due to the organisation's adherence to radical Islamist doctrines, and its activities in the furtherance of those beliefs. The direct role this organisation appears to have played in the encampment at the University of Sydney is thus concrete evidence of this link, and points to dangerous potential for further coordinated action that will undermine safety on campus for students and staff, and greater social cohesion more generally. This should be investigated.

#### ***5. Doxing, Online Harassment and Reputational Violence (Inquiry's Term of Reference 1(f))***

In the wake of recent international events, there has been a marked increase in antisemitic online harassment directed at Jewish academics, students and community leaders in NSW. Jewish academics, artists and public figures have been doxed, vilified on social media, and subjected to campaigns of reputational damage, sometimes merely for being Jewish *tout court* and other times for expressing support for Israel or raising concerns about antisemitism.

A key case in point occurred after the Bondi Junction stabbing killing six and wounding twelve. Sydney Jewish student Ben Cohen was wrongfully identified on social media as the attacker. Cohen was described by one social media poster as a 'radical jew from Bondi Sydney' who also stated 'Only a Jew would stab a baby. Making sense now'.<sup>11</sup> Others, including a known provocateur speculated that the attack 'looks Israeli' and questioned whether the attack was a 'Mossad operation'.<sup>12</sup> Lest these be seen as outliers, these antisemitic falsehoods were amplified by a major news network who reported it as headline news.

Universities and unions have been very slow to respond, citing academic freedom or jurisdictional limitations. However, the failure to safeguard individuals from

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<sup>10</sup> Hodgkinson, B, November 2024, 'University of Sydney External Review Report', *Sydney University Senate*, at 21.

<sup>11</sup> Nguyen, K. Workman, M. 15 April 2023. 'Benjamin Cohen was accused of the Bondi Junction stabbings. Here's how the lie spread around the world. *ABC News Online*.

<sup>12</sup> Syrian Girl, Twitter Post, 13 April 2023.



harassment that crosses into hate speech and personal targeting raises urgent questions about institutional duty of care—particularly when students report feeling unsafe in lectures or when faculty members are publicly maligned for their Jewish identity.

These developments clearly intersect with the Inquiry’s Term of Reference 1(f) and call for the establishment of clearer protections for all individuals in academic life, regardless of their ethnicity, culture, faith or political outlook.

***6. Education and the Absence of Holocaust and Antisemitism Awareness (Inquiry’s Term of Reference 1(b) and (h))***

A further point relates to the near-total absence of education on antisemitism in many NSW tertiary institutions. Jewish history, including the Holocaust, is treated as a marginal topic, often confined to electives rather than mainstream courses. Contemporary manifestations of antisemitism—particularly in online settings and through anti-Zionist rhetoric—are almost never addressed in university-wide equity training or inclusion initiatives.

At the secondary school level, recent changes to include mandatory Holocaust education in NSW are to be commended. However, without a more general development of knowledge, training and teaching resources concerning contemporary forms of antisemitism this may not serve as a sufficient educational intervention to fully address the problem of rising antisemitism among young Australians as a result of online misinformation and the normalisation of antisemitic tropes through aspects of anti-Zionist activism.

This lack of engagement is both a cause and a consequence of antisemitism’s normalisation. Without grounding in history, students and staff alike fail to see how their language and actions may echo some of the darkest chapters in Jewish history.

***7. Impact of Activism by Secondary School Staff in Contributing to a Rise of Antisemitism Experience by Students (Inquiry’s Term of Reference 1(b))***

Since October 2023 there have been a number of media reports of activism by teachers at the secondary school level undertaken on NSW school premises. For instance, the group *Teachers and School Staff for Palestine* were reported in October 2024 as having undertaken an action week, publicly campaigning for sanctions

against Israel at lunchtime.<sup>13</sup> In recent months the use of violent anti-Zionist rhetoric by Sheikh Abdulghani Albaf, the Principal of the New Madinah College in Young NSW, on his social media profiles, including calls for the destruction of the State of Israel, and that 'Zionists should burn in the pits of hellfire',<sup>14</sup> have come to light.

Teachers and education administrators in positions of authority publicly undertaking activism of this kind, and at times espousing views that vilify Israelis and Zionists and use theological language that contemplates violence are a dangerous development that require close scrutiny and comprehensive interventions. Unchecked they can contribute to a general climate rife for radicalisation of young impressionable minds, and degrade the safety of Jewish, and non-Jewish students and staff alike.

It is clear that the link between radical and activist teachers operating under the current secondary school framework is having a direct impact on the views and activities of students. In February 2025 a rally was held of secondary students on the premises of Granville Boys Highschool led by local Imam Sheikh Kamel Hamed, to express support for a teacher, Sheikh Wesam Charkawi, after he was stood down for publicly defending the incendiary and potentially criminal statements made by Sydney nurses Ahmed Rashid Nadir and Sarah Abu Lebdeh.<sup>15</sup> While the protest was not technically facilitated by a member of staff, the fact it occurred on school premises, with students still in uniform, and in support of a teacher who had expressed extremely problematic views is highly concerning.

A more appropriate response from the school administrators and local community that would have furthered social cohesion might have instead seen an intervention aimed at students appropriately contextualising the offensive and potentially criminal nature of what the Sydney nurses are alleged to have said. The fact that the teacher whose actions were in question, Sheikh Wesam, also serves as the convener of the Muslim Vote, a new political movement seeking to galvanise Muslim voters in marginal electorates on the basis of the Federal government's stance on the

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<sup>13</sup> Sandev, M. 23 October 2024 'Teachers have a right to show solidarity with Palestine', *Pearls and Irritations*. Retrieved 4 April 2025 from

<https://johnmenadue.com/post/2024/10/teachers-have-a-right-to-show-solidarity-with-palestinians/>

<sup>14</sup> Holdsworth, R. 'New Madinah College principal investigated for 'anti-Semitic' comments' *ABC News* (online 15 January 2025). Retrieved 4 April 2025 from

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-01-15/new-madinah-college-principal-investigated-anti-semitic-comments/104821400>

<sup>15</sup> Aitchison, A, 'Chaotic scenes erupt outside Granville Boys High School as pupils protest in support of stood-down teacher' *Daily Mail Australia* (online 26 February 2025). Retrieved 4 April 2025

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14436939/Granville-Boys-High-School-protest.html>

Israel-Palestine conflict,<sup>16</sup> might further suggest a systemic failure to prevent inappropriate political influence delivered by teachers while acting in that capacity, and further suggest the transmission and normalisation of anti-Zionist sentiments that are fundamentally antisemitic in nature.

## **B. Antisemitism and Extreme Political Islam in Australia: Localised Ecosystems and Contemporary Drivers**

The rise of radical political Islam within Australia—which is anti-democratic, antisemitic, sexist and anti-Australian—is a deeply concerning phenomenon that merits serious, context-sensitive examination. We would like to stress that the vast majority of Muslim Australians are peaceful, law-abiding citizens contributing meaningfully to society. However, there remains a small but influential extremist cohort that has fostered an oppositional and, at times, antisemitic worldview, particularly among a limited number of second- and third-generation men born and raised in New South Wales.

This section explores the domestic and external drivers of this dynamic, with a specific focus on how identity insecurity, grievance-based political theology and exposure to global jihadist narratives have intersected with local conditions to create environments in which antisemitic attitudes, and in rarer cases, actions, are permitted, and at times, even championed and valorised.

### **1. Second- and Third-Generation Identity Politics**

Some Australian-born Muslims are exposed to a shift away from traditional familial religiosity and multicultural societal institutions toward ideologically driven identity formations. Research conducted by Roose, based on extensive fieldwork across Sydney and Melbourne, notes that this is not by itself problematic. Religiously inspired civic engagement and voluntarism, including by Australian Muslims, has the potential to positively benefit wider society<sup>17</sup> and is a valued contributor to solidarity and social cohesion. However, in the past two decades, some young

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<sup>16</sup> Rachwani, M, ‘Labor will have itself to blame if it loses western Sydney over Gaza issue, says Muslim Vote convener’ *The Guardian* (online 30 August 2024). Retrieved 4 April 2025 from <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/article/2024/aug/31/labor-israel-gaza-war-muslim-vote-wesam-charkawi>

<sup>17</sup> Harris, A. and Roose, J., 2014. DIY citizenship amongst young Muslims: Experiences of the ‘ordinary’. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 17(6), pp.794-813; Roose, J.M., 2012. Young Muslims of Australia: anatomy of a multicultural success story. *The La Trobe Journal*, 89, pp.151-63; Peucker, M., 2020. Muslim community volunteering: The civic-religious ‘culture of benevolence’ and its sociopolitical implications. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46(11), pp.2367-2386; Kayikci, M.R., 2020. In Between Two Traditions: Female Muslim Volunteers in Belgium. *Muslim Volunteering in the West: Between Islamic Ethos and Citizenship*, pp.119-140.

Muslims, particularly young men responding to flatlining or downward social trajectories, have increasingly turned to rigid interpretations of Islam, particularly Salafi orientations, to find structure and sense of belonging in a society from which they feel excluded.<sup>18</sup>

These individuals are not recent arrivals; they are Aussies, fluent in the Australian language and culture, who nonetheless experience dislocation due to racialization, socio-economic stagnation and perceived rejection.<sup>19</sup> In this context, some of them adopt increasingly oppositional identities in which Jewish Australians—and Judaism and Zionism more broadly—are framed not only as political enemies but as symbolic representations of the very structures of power they feel alienated from.<sup>20</sup>

## **2. Localised Ecosystems of Anger and Victimhood**

Our research indicates that there is growing evidence that these young men operate within ecosystems of grievance that combine peer validation, online radicalisation and identity performance. In these spaces—be they encrypted messaging applications, local mosques, or online forums—resentment (and therefore anger and rage), victimhood (and therefore self-entitlement), martyrdom and masculinity often collide.<sup>21</sup>

Some individuals in these ecosystems express their disempowerment through narratives of persecution by Western governments and media, frequently employing antisemitic tropes to describe a ‘Zionist lobby’ and ‘Jewish control’ of political structures. These narratives are not mere expressions of frustration; they are part of a conspiratorial *Weltanschauung*, worldview, in which Jews become avatars for an imagined global conspiracy against Islam. The rejection of Israel’s right to exist is not framed as a political position, but as a moral imperative—one that is occasionally articulated with violent language and intent, most notably expressed on the steps of the Sydney Opera House on 9 October 2023, where pro-Palestinian activists, primarily from Muslim communities (but also Dr Riemer, see above),

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<sup>18</sup> Roose, J.M., Peucker, M. and Akbarzadeh, S., 2023. Socio-Economic Disadvantages and Lack of Recognition: Impacts on Citizenship Within Australian Muslim Communities. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 44(2), pp.216-238; Dagistanli, S., Possamai, A., Turner, B.S., Voyce, M. and Roose, J., 2018. The limits of multiculturalism in Australia? The Shari’a flogging case of R v. Raad, Fayed, Cifci and Coskun. *The Sociological Review*, 66(6), pp.1258-1275.

<sup>19</sup> Roose, J.M., 2016. *Political Islam and Masculinity: Muslim men in Australia*. Springer

<sup>20</sup> Rutland, S.D., 2023. Antisemitism in Australia. In *The Routledge History of Antisemitism* (pp. 77-85). Routledge.

<sup>21</sup> Roose, J.M., 2020. *The New Demagogues: Religion, Masculinity and the Populist Epoch*. Routledge; Roose, J.M., 2016. *Political Islam and Masculinity: Muslim Men in Australia*. Palgrave.

celebrated the 7 October terror attack and shouted ‘Fuck the Jews’ among other things.<sup>22</sup>

### **3. The Influence of Salafi Ideological Networks**

Salafism (in Arabic: سلفية *salafiyya*) is a fundamentalist revival movement within Sunni Islam, opposing religious innovation and promoting the implementation of *sharia* (Islamic law). It originated in the fin de siècle (late 19th century) and is still alive and kicking. Salafi-inspired ideologies remain central to the radicalisation of a small number of Australian Muslims, particularly young men who fall between two stools, feeling disconnected from both traditional Islam and Australian modern, secular life. As Roose’s research on the young men drawn to the Islamic State movement and other local groups has shown, Salafi jihadism presents a powerful narrative of heroic struggle in which martyrdom is the ultimate form of masculine redemption.<sup>23</sup> Within this worldview, Jews are consistently portrayed as corrupt, manipulative, and enemies of Islam.<sup>24</sup>

While many mosques and Muslim leaders in NSW reject such ideologies, a vacuum exists in some communities where charismatic preachers or online influencers shape a generation’s worldview.<sup>25</sup> These influences are global, but their expression is local. They show up in graffiti, in public protests, and, alarmingly, in educational settings—often not through formal curriculum, but through peer influence and activist messaging that goes unchecked.

### **4. The Normalisation of Antisemitism via Anti-Zionist Activism**

A subtler, albeit no less concerning, phenomenon arises through the public-facing activism of certain extreme Islamist individuals who cloak antisemitic sentiments in the language of anti-Zionism. Rather than engaging with Israel as a sovereign nation open to critique, as all democracies should be, these actors position Zionism as inherently racist, genocidal or colonialist, thereby recasting any form of Jewish national identity as illegitimate. Further, they assert that antisemitism is weaponised to shut down criticism.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Evans, D. 02 February 2024. ‘Police Investigation into Sydney Opera House Palestine Protest Inconclusive’, *The Australian*.

<sup>23</sup> Roose, J.M., 2016. *Political Islam and Masculinity: Muslim Men in Australia*. Palgrave.

<sup>24</sup> Schroeter, D.J., 2018. “Islamic Anti-Semitism” in Historical Discourse’. *The American Historical Review*, 123(4), pp.1172-1189; Adraoui, M.A., 2019. The Jewish Issue in Islamic Radicalism: Historicity, Impact and Evolutions. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 32(2), pp.275-291.

<sup>25</sup> Rice, S. Demedtriadi, 08 November 2023. ‘Kill Jews hate preacher unmasked as IS backer’, *The Australian*.

<sup>26</sup> Australian Palestinian Advocacy Network ‘We stand against the weaponisation of accusations of antisemitism’ Retrieved 03 April 2025 at: <https://apan.org.au/antisemitism/>.

Such tactics create a discursive environment in which sympathy for Jewish victims is marginalised, and in extreme cases, the victim is reimagined as the aggressor. This is particularly destabilising in academic and activist spaces, where these narratives go unchallenged, and where Jewish students or staff are treated with hostility, intimidation or exclusion.<sup>27</sup>

### **5. Radical Discourse in Public Protest and Social Media**

Since the 7 October 2023 Hamas-led massacres and attacks on Israel, public demonstrations in Sydney and other parts of NSW have revealed the extent to which antisemitic speech has entered the mainstream of political discourse under the banner of Palestinian advocacy. Chants invoking ‘intifada’ (uprising), posters glorifying Hamas figures and online commentary justifying or celebrating violence against Jews are now part of the public record. While the right to protest should be protected, it cannot be permitted to serve as cover for hate speech or the glorification of terrorism.

Hamas is the Palestinian chapter of the Muslim Brotherhood (الإخوان المسلمون *al-ikhwān al-muslimūn*), whose slogan is ‘Islam is the solution’ and whose allies include Iran and Qatar. ISGAP has already uncovered and established that foreign donations, mainly but not exclusively from Qatar, have had a substantial impact on growing levels of antisemitic discourse, as well as growing support for anti-democratic values within institutions of higher education in the USA.<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, doxing campaigns and targeted harassment—particularly of Jewish students, academics, artists and public servants—have intensified, with Jewish individuals singled out and vilified based on perceived support for Israel.<sup>29</sup> These activities fall squarely under the Inquiry’s Term of Reference 1(f), raising urgent concerns about personal safety, privacy and civic trust.

### **6. Implications for Social Cohesion in NSW (Inquiry’s Term of Reference 1(c))**

The cumulative impact of these developments is a significant threat to social cohesion in New South Wales. When antisemitic attitudes are expressed freely in

<sup>27</sup> Wang, J. 20 September 2024 ‘Unacceptable: University of Sydney vice-chancellor Mark Scott apologises over anti-Semitism from pro-Palestinian encampment protest, *The Australian*.

<sup>28</sup> See Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) (2024). *Global Trends in Campus Antisemitism*; as well as ISGAP (2024). *Columbia University Report. Foreign Influence in Western Higher Education*; ISGAP (2024). *Cornell University Report. Ten Billion Dollar Influence: Qatar’s Investments in Higher Education*; ISGAP (2024). *Yale Report. State-Sponsored Academic Influence and Ideological Capture*; and ISGAP (2024). *Texas A&M University Report. Qatar’s Strategic Investment in Global Universities*.

<sup>29</sup> Nathan, J. *Report on Anti-Jewish Incidents in Australia 2024*, Executive Council of Australian Jewry. Available at: <https://www.ecej.org.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/ECAJ-Report-Anti-Jewish-Incidents-Australia-2024-1.pdf>.

some communities and remain unchallenged in activist, educational or academic settings, a wedge is driven between Jewish and Islamist Australians, undermining decades of bridge-building work.

It is critical to recognise, as has been noted above, that antisemitism within certain activist circles does not represent all the broader Islamic community in NSW. Still, failure to address antisemitism—especially when it is strategically camouflaged in anti-Zionist rhetoric—risks legitimising hate and entrenching division.

### **C. The Extreme Right Nazi threat: A Clear and Present Danger**

While the rise in antisemitism on the far-left and among Islamist-inspired networks has rightly drawn increased attention, it is important not to lose sight of the enduring and deeply rooted threat posed by the extreme right. Far-right antisemitism remains outspoken, aggressive and ideologically explicit—fuelled by white nationalist, neo-Nazi, and accelerationist doctrines that cast Jews as manipulators of global institutions, media and finance. These ideologies are not dormant. Rather, they have evolved through encrypted platforms, male-only extremist fitness groups, and ‘sovereign citizen’ conspiracies, continuing to spread Holocaust denial, racial purity narratives, and violent fantasies of ethnic cleansing.<sup>30</sup>

#### **1. The National Socialist Network**

In Australia, groups such as the National Socialist Network (NSN) and their affiliates have consistently engaged in provocative activities—including Nazi salutes, antisemitic graffiti, and targeted online harassment—to intimidate Jewish communities and recruit followers.<sup>31</sup>

Legislation passed with bipartisan support targeting Nazi’s attempts to mobilise, depriving them of their hate-filled symbols and salutes in Australia has been an important step in addressing their attempts to appeal to marginalised young men who might be attracted to the dark subcultural capital of these movements. However Nazi movements such as the NSN will continuously adapt and evolve to spread their hate fuelled ideology and governments and it is critical the governments are agile and do not take their eye off the ball as to the threat posed.

<sup>30</sup> Hutchinson, J., 2021. The new-far-right movement in Australia. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 33(7), pp.1424-1446.

<sup>31</sup> Roose, J., 2024. Countering Right-Wing Extremism in Australia. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, 16(3), pp.7-12.

## **2. The Threat of Deadly Violence**

As ASIO Director-General Mike Burgess has repeatedly emphasised, the most likely threat to Jewish safety continues to come from a lone-actor extremist, whether ideologically motivated by Islamist or far-right narratives.<sup>32</sup> These individuals are often radicalized online, consume global conspiracy theories, and develop intent without immediate external coordination. Brenton Tarrant, the Christchurch terrorist was not only aligned to an extreme right ideology but actively engaged with members of the NSN (prior to the group's current formation).<sup>33</sup> In this context, comprehensive community security arrangements remain essential. It is therefore critical that government funding and counter-terrorism policy maintain parity of attention across all ideological threats. This includes ensuring Jewish institutions—schools, synagogues and cultural centres—have continued access to federal and state-level protective resources. To neglect the persistent danger posed by the far-right would be to ignore a historically consistent source of violence and intimidation against Jewish Australians.

## **D. Recommendations to the NSW Government**

### **1. Conduct a Comprehensive Investigation into Possible External Interference**

Examine whether external powers, such as Muslim Brotherhood-associated Qatar, have been sponsoring directly or indirectly antisemitism in NSW. (In case such interference is found to exist: legislate against it for both security and social cohesion reasons.)

### **2. Expand Funding and Institutional Support for Jewish Studies and Antisemitism Research**

Fund new professorships of Jewish Studies and antisemitism education at NSW universities. Currently, these programs are scarce, under-resourced and dwindling.

### **3. Establish a Special Commission of Inquiry into Antisemitism in Higher Education**

Investigate the prevalence of antisemitism across NSW university campuses. This includes reviewing syllabi, incidents, activities of National Tertiary Education Union NSW branch staff, funding sources, foreign interference, and student/faculty complaints. Focus should be placed on the arts (humanities and social sciences), with particular attention to Middle Eastern Studies, media and political science.

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<sup>32</sup> Burgess, M. 19 February 2025. *ASIO Annual threat Assessment 2025*.

<sup>33</sup> Begley, P. 02 May 2019. 'Threats from white extremist group that 'tried to recruit Tarrant'. *The Sydney Morning Herald*.



***4. Promote the Adoption of the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism in State Institutions***

Require all state-funded universities, schools and government departments to adopt the IHRA working definition of antisemitism. This definition distinguishes between legitimate political critique and antisemitism disguised as anti-Zionism.

***5. Ensure Balanced Representation in Middle-Eastern Studies Curricula***

Work with NSW universities to mandate the inclusion of Israeli history, politics and society—as well as Jewish perspectives—within Middle Eastern Studies and International Relations programs. Currently, Israel is usually presented solely as a colonial power without historical or indigenous context, reinforcing antisemitic narratives.

***6. Reform School-Level Middle Eastern and Civic Education***

Mandate balanced curricula on Judaism, Israel and antisemitism in NSW schools. Students often form views without an adequate understanding of Holocaust history or contemporary antisemitism. When such topics are taught and discussed there should be strictly enforced guidelines and authorised materials which assist in identifying and appropriately responding to contemporary forms of antisemitism.

***7. Counter Campus Antisemitism Through Student Safety Programs***

Develop a Safer Campuses program with a focus on antisemitism. This includes complaint channels, anonymous reporting and legal recourse.

***8. Support Cross-Community Initiatives that Strengthen Social Cohesion***

Fund bridge-building programs between Muslim and Jewish communities, focused on shared democratic values while explicitly rejecting extremist ideologies.

***9. Strengthen funding and support for protective measures for Jewish Communities in New South Wales***

Recent developments indicate the potential for an act of extreme violence targeting the Jewish community. No stone must be left unturned to prevent such an eventuality. The Community Security Group (CSG), staffed primarily by volunteers, has had to increase its operating costs significantly in order to ensure community protection since 2023, and will have higher ongoing costs going forward. The CSG play a critical role interfacing between Jewish communities and the NSW Police, ensuring strong lines of communication and the quick, accurate passage of information about threats. The NSW government should assist with bearing this burden.