

INQUIRY INTO ANTISEMITISM IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: NSW Jewish Board of Deputies (JBD)

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NEW SOUTH WALES JEWISH BOARD OF DEPUTIES

The Representative Voice of NSW Jewry

ועד הקהילה היהודית בנ.ס.וו.

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Antisemitism in New South Wales

NSW Jewish Board of Deputies Submission

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Introduction

The New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies (JBD) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry on antisemitism in NSW.

The JBD is the elected, representative roof body of the NSW Jewish community. The JBD has 56 major communal organisations as its constituents, which encompass tens of thousands of members of the Jewish community in NSW, ensuring that the JBD is a legitimate and authentic representative of the views of the community.

Members of JBD include organisations at the forefront of managing and responding to antisemitism including Jewish schools, synagogues and major institutions such as the Sydney Jewish Museum and Wolper Jewish Hospital.

Defining antisemitism in NSW

The JBD and the NSW Government¹ have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism (the IHRA Working Definition) and its modern examples. The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is not legally binding and is used as a tool for analysing antisemitic discourse, while the JBD uses the definition of “Racially Motivated or ‘Racist’ Violence” adopted by the Report of the National Inquiry into Racist Violence in Australia in 1991 in order to analyse antisemitic incidents.

As the IHRA Working Definition states:

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.²

Under the IHRA framework, criticism of *the* State of Israel is not considered antisemitic if it is ‘similar to that levelled against any other country’. However, if such discourse amounts to a denial of the collective right of the Jewish people to self-determination – a basic right of all peoples that is recognised under international law – then such discourse is antisemitic.

Use of words such as “Zionist” or “zio” to replace the word “Jew” does not prevent a statement from being antisemitic if its underlying sentiment is so.

¹ <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>

² IHRA Definition

Antisemitism in the NSW context

Antisemitism is well recognised as one of the oldest hatreds and most pervasive kinds of bigotry. It has been a consistent feature of many societies throughout history.

Australia and NSW specifically are no exception but antisemitism in a domestic context has traditionally been consigned to the darkest corners of our polity.

NSW has a long legacy of accepting and embracing the Jewish community which substantially differs from the Jewish experience in other western countries. As far back as 1860, Rabbi Jacob Levi Saphir who was visiting Australia from Jerusalem observed that: *“the Jews live in safety and have a share in all the benefits of the land and in government posts and political administration.”*³

Australia’s commitment to the Jewish community continued after World War II, when Jewish refugees, including many Holocaust survivors, were welcomed with open arms. Australia took in the highest per capita population of Holocaust survivors outside of Israel. These refugees embraced the opportunities offered and made valuable contributions to all aspects Australian society – from the military and judiciary to politics, philanthropy and the arts.

Regrettably, since the October 7 massacre by proscribed terrorist organisation Hamas in southern Israel, and the ensuing conflict, antisemitic attitudes and conduct have increasingly become normalised in our society.

This shift has translated into real-world consequences – Jewish academics have been disinvited from conferences, Jewish cultural performances have been cancelled or not publicised, Jews have been targeted online and doxed and Jewish students have been forced into concealing their identities on university campuses.

Unsurprisingly, but alarmingly, this has also resulted in threats, harassment, intimidation and violence against the Jewish community.

These patterns point to a broader erosion of safety and inclusion for Jewish Australians.

Prevalence of antisemitism in NSW

NSW has outperformed many other jurisdictions in managing and combating antisemitism.

³ <https://collections.ajhs.com.au/Detail/objects/52830>

At the official State Governmental level, bipartisan support for the NSW Jewish community has been welcome since October 7 and, more recently, during what was dubbed Sydney's "summer of terror"⁴.

Despite this, the most recent data of voluntarily reported incidents shows an explosion of antisemitic incidents across the state.

On a year-on-year basis, the rise in antisemitic activity is stark. In 2023, 181 NSW incidents of antisemitism⁵ were collated in the ECAJ's annual Antisemitism in Australia report. In 2024, the number of incidents recorded in NSW grew to 510 – a 339 per cent increase and more than 1.5 times Victoria's count.⁶

Most recently, NSW Police data indicates that between October 2023 and January 2025 more than 620 incidents were serious enough to be reported to police.⁷ We note that the incidents that were reported to police do not necessarily overlap with those collated in the ECAJ's annual Antisemitism in Australia report, and in both cases, it is anticipated that there is underreporting for a range of reasons (many of which are persistent year-on-year, but which may well have been exacerbated as a result of heightened levels of fear and concerns about retribution).

The reported incidents included very serious targeted attacks, egregious hate speech, calls to violence and harassment.

"... beat the (usurping) Zionist Jews... we hope you count them and kill them one by one, and don't keep any (one) of them ... shake the ground under their feet ... make an example of them."

Sermon from a religious leader in Roselands - January 2024

Reported incidents ranged in seriousness from graffiti on public property to abuse and bullying in school yards and physical assaults and harassment.

"When the students identified as Jewish, the children directed antisemitic slurs towards them, including phrases such as "Fuck the Jews," "we hate the Jews," "we hate Israel."

Report from a Jewish community member - November 2024

⁴ <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/truecrimeaustralia/police-courts-nsw/wife-of-alleged-terror-van-mastermind-speaks-out-as-pressure-mounts-on-govt-to-bring-him-home/news-story/463fcff0360a365d3861ba056b6cea67>

⁵ ECAJ 2023

⁶ ECAJ 2024

⁷ <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lc/papers/pages/qanda-tracking-details.aspx?pk=102333>

The breadth of antisemitic incidents reported to the JBD paints a deeply concerning picture of the environment Jewish individuals are facing across multiple sectors.

In academia, Jewish staff have been forced to leave their roles due to persistent, targeted antisemitic abuse and many have reported feeling emotionally exhausted and unsafe in their workplaces. The JBD has supported Jewish students who have felt so unsafe on campus, or whose learning experience has been so disrupted, that they have been forced to transfer universities.

At public events, Jewish individuals have reported being physically assaulted or ostracised for expressing their Jewish identity or support for Israel. Online spaces continue to be a significant source of hostility, with an alarming rise in harassment and hate speech directed at Jewish users.

In schools, there have been troubling reports of teachers disseminating antisemitic propaganda through teaching materials, distorting historical truths and perpetuating harmful misinformation. This not only fosters a hostile learning environment for Jewish students but also exacerbates the spread of prejudiced views.

These incidents highlight the urgent need for systemic responses to ensure safety, accountability, and education across all sectors. Every incident targeting Jews, whether motivated by explicit antisemitism or having dual motives, contributed to a pervasive and inescapable feeling of hostility towards Jewish people.

What is driving antisemitism in NSW?

There are several key drivers behind the recent resurgence of antisemitism, each contributing to a broader climate of hostility and exclusion facing the Jewish community.⁸

Fading memory of the Holocaust in public consciousness

As the memory of the atrocities of the Holocaust – the ultimate and most chilling manifestation of antisemitism – fades in the public consciousness, previously suppressed attitudes are re-emerging or becoming socially acceptable once again. This process is accelerating as fewer survivors are able to share their first-hand experiences.

The number of survivors able to regularly share their stories through the Sydney Jewish Museum has declined. Approximately, 30 survivors were regularly available to share their stories at the Museum in 2011. That number is far fewer today and will continue to decline. There has also been an uptick in Holocaust inversion⁹ in both

⁸ ALJ “A Jewish Perspective on the Need for Effective Anti-Vilification Criminal Laws”, David D Knoll

⁹ Klaff, Lesley, ‘Holocaust Inversion and contemporary antisemitism, *Fathom Journal*, Winter, 2014, available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000382159.locale=en>

physical and online spaces¹⁰, and, indeed, educational resources have been developed specifically to address this phenomenon.¹¹

Mainstreaming of antisemitic narratives

Public discourse increasingly tolerates tropes, stereotypes, threats, intimidation and hate speech once confined to extremist groups that target Jews, particularly under the guise of political, religious or cultural critique.¹²

The widespread use of social media and various online methods of interaction, and the ability for users to engage with relative anonymity has helped expand the kinds of subjects and arguments previously considered ‘politically acceptable’. In addition to this, minority groups like the Jewish community are more likely to be exposed to serious harm as a result of misinformation and disinformation on digital services, given that digital services’ “incentives pull heavily toward ingroup solidarity and outgroup derogation.”¹³

The JBD regularly receives reports about social media posts and accounts devoted to spreading antisemitic conspiracy theories. These are so prolific that the annual Antisemitism Report does not attempt to collate quantitative data about antisemitic discourse. The Online Hate Prevention Institute studies online hate and has documented the trends around the explosion of online hate towards Jews following the October 7 massacre.¹⁴

Recent geopolitical events

The October 7 terror attacks and the ensuing conflict in the Middle East have frequently been used to justify harassment or intimidation of Australian Jews, regardless of their personal views or affiliations.

“Khaybar, Khaybar, oh Jews. The army of Muhammad will return....”

Translation of a chant in Arabic recited by a group of young men in Chullora - 9 December 2024

Weekly protests in Sydney’s CBD and elsewhere as well as activities on university campuses – including encampments – have repeatedly involved antisemitic conduct. In many instances, such conduct has not been appropriately addressed through

¹⁰ In the online space, please see ‘History under attack: Holocaust denial and distortion on social media’, UNESCO, 2022, available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000382159.locale=en>

¹¹ Please see, for example, ‘Countering Holocaust denial and distortion through education: a guide for teachers’, UNESCO, 2025, available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000392455.locale=en>

¹² Ibid

¹³ Fisher, Max, ‘Belonging is stronger than facts: the age of misinformation’, *The New York Times*, 7 May 2021: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/07/world/asia/misinformation-disinformation-fake-news.html>

¹⁴ ‘Online Antisemitism After October 7’, Online Hate Prevention Institute, 25 March 2024, available at: <https://ohpi.org.au/afteroct7/>

university complaints mechanisms, as is evidenced by the reports of the Senate Inquiry into Antisemitism at Australian Universities and the Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism at Australian Universities.¹⁵

Foreign interference

There is growing concern that foreign authoritarian regimes may be playing a role in fuelling antisemitic activity on Australian university campuses¹⁶. International experience has shown that foreign influence can take subtle yet significant forms, including funding arrangements that, while appearing to support academic research or student programs, may in fact be used to advance political or ideological agendas. This can occur through grants being redirected towards advocacy framed as scholarship, the establishment of academic centres or positions that promote particular worldviews, or through students whose enrolment is financially supported for purposes beyond education, including political agitation.¹⁷

Universities, as largely self-governing institutions with substantial financial resources, may be vulnerable to such interference, particularly in the absence of consistent transparency and oversight regarding foreign funding sources¹⁸. Existing guidelines intended to safeguard universities from foreign interference do not appear to be robustly enforced, with delays and resistance often encountered when attempts are made to examine the nature and origin of certain partnerships and financial contributions.

One recent example that caused widespread concern within the Jewish community was the presence of extremist organisation Hizb'ut Tahrir Australia¹⁹ on the campus of the University of Sydney. This organisation has been banned in numerous countries due to its extremist affiliations and troubling views. The University's

¹⁵ 'Commission of inquiry into antisemitism at Australian universities Bill 2024', Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, October 2024, available at: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/AntisemitismBill/Report; 'Inquiry into antisemitism at Australian Universities', Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, February 2025, available at: https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/committees/reportjnt/RB000531/toc_pdf/InquiryintoantisemitismatAustralianuniversities.pdf

¹⁶ 'Commission of inquiry into antisemitism at Australian universities Bill 2024', Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, October 2024, available at: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/AntisemitismBill/Report; 'Inquiry into antisemitism at Australian Universities', Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, February 2025, available at: https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/committees/reportjnt/RB000531/toc_pdf/InquiryintoantisemitismatAustralianuniversities.pdf

¹⁷ See the ECAJ submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights Inquiry into Antisemitism at Australian Universities, 28 November 2024, available at: ECAJ calls on Parliament for action on campus antisemitism - ECAJ, pp. 17.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 18.

¹⁹ Juanola, Marta and McKenzie, Nick, 'From caliphate to the classroom: how hardline group courts the young', The Age, 17 June 2024: <https://www.theage.com.au/national/from-caliphate-to-the-classroom-how-hardline-group-courtsthe-young-20240614-p5jlsb.html>.

decision to include such a group in a formal working group reviewing its defence-related research and investments is deeply concerning.

These developments suggest that the risks posed by foreign interference are real and ongoing and need to be monitored and addressed by Governments at all levels to ensure that Australian universities remain places of open inquiry, not platforms for hostile foreign agendas or antisemitic ideologies.

Why this matters for people in NSW?

Antisemitism poses a serious threat not only to the safety and inclusion of Jewish Australians but to the health of our state's democracy and social cohesion more broadly.

The resurgence of antisemitism in mainstream discourse—whether through overt hatred, coded language or veiled as political criticism—acts as a corrosive force within civil society. Left unchecked, such vilification creates an environment of fear and exclusion that limits the ability of individuals to participate freely and fully in public life.

When antisemitic rhetoric becomes normalised, it desensitises the public to hate, diminishes social trust and sets a dangerous precedent for the marginalisation of other minority groups.

As Rabbi Jonathan Sacks warned, “the hate that begins with Jews, never ends with the Jews”.²⁰ Antisemitism is often a bellwether for and harbinger of broader discrimination and a warning bell for structural weaknesses in a society.

Addressing antisemitism is therefore not only a matter of protecting one community—it is essential to preserving the inclusive, democratic principles upon which Australian society is built.

Opportunities for further action on antisemitism

The NSW Parliament has shown national leadership in responding to antisemitism, particularly in the wake of the October 7 Hamas massacre in southern Israel. However, NSW has also witnessed some of the most serious and troubling incidents in the country during this period.

There are several areas where the Parliament has scope to take further, proactive steps to address antisemitism and promote social cohesion.

Legislative reform

Given some recent developments, JBD once again makes clear its strong support for the Crimes Amendment (Inciting Racial Hatred) Bill 2024 and Crimes Amendment

²⁰ <https://rabbisacks.org/archive/hate-starts-jews-never-ends-there/>

(Places of Worship) Bill 2024. These laws were a necessary response to concerning trends and incidents that we have witnessed and made representations about over a long period of time. Attempts to connect the passage of these laws purely with the “summer of terror” experienced by the Jewish community are misguided and incorrect.

Public Sector

With over 400,000 employees and millions of interactions with citizens each and every day, the NSW Government has a unique capacity to foster a safer and more inclusive culture within its public sector.

Recent incidents of antisemitism in the public service workforce and in public sector systems highlight the opportunity for stronger safeguards and accountability, for example:

Health sector

Whilst recent incidents at Bankstown Hospital have been widely reported, reports from members of the Jewish community suggest broader issues exist across the health sector.

In one case, now subject to a police investigation, a Jewish doctor wearing a kippah at his place of work was harassed and filmed in a lift with the offender saying *“I’m in a lift with this Israeli occupation genocidal dog.”*²¹

In another instance, a Jewish nurse at a major metropolitan hospital was told by other staff not to celebrate Chanukah which coincided with Christmas as *“half the world isn’t having a happy Chanukah.”*²² In hospitals across NSW, Jewish staff frequently report being denied the right to take their leave over religious holidays, which may amount to a denial of freedom of religion, and may constitute workplace discrimination.²³

Law enforcement

Since October 7 2023, NSW Police have been required to manage an unprecedented wave of large-scale, high-intensity protests across Sydney’s CBD and other parts of the state. There is no question elements of these protest movements were driven by antisemitism, with the frequent display of Nazi symbols and use of antisemitic slurs. Many of these protests also prolifically deployed chants

²¹https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/news/news_article?sq_content_src=%2BdXJsPWh0dHBzJTnBJTJGJTJGZWJpenByZC5wb2xpY2UubnN3Lmdvdi5hdSUyRm1lZGhJTJGMTE3NzM3Lmh0bWwmYWxsPTE%3D

²² Incident reported to JBD

²³ <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/fact-sheets/rights-and-obligations/workplace-discrimination>

and symbols which crossed the line from legitimate criticism of Israel to outright antisemitism.

These protests have meant that NSW law enforcement agencies are responding to incidents of antisemitism on a weekly – at minimum – basis.

For example, these protests have required thousands of police resources on the ground to respond in real time:

- 15 October 2023: 1,027 police resources deployed
- 29 October 2023: 1,063 deployed
- 12 November 2023: 819 deployed.²⁴

Even by January 2024, more than 250 officers continued were required to be deployed weekly, highlighting the long-term nature of this operational burden.

While NSW Police have undertaken a difficult role with professionalism and restraint, concerns have emerged regarding inconsistent application of enforcement.

On multiple occasions, Jewish community members participating in lawful, peaceful counter-protests have been directed to move on or arrested²⁵, while larger and more disruptive protest groups, often conducting unlawful assemblies and engaging in unlawful conduct, were allowed to continue.

This perceived disparity risks undermining public confidence in impartial policing and emboldening aggressive and antisemitic protests.

Clearer operational guidance, better training on what constitutes antisemitism, consistent enforcement, and a transparent review of protest management protocols are needed to ensure equity in public order policing and the continued safety of all communities affected by escalating tensions.

Education

The JBD regularly receives reports from community members regarding antisemitic bullying and harassment in schools. When such reports are made, the JBD works directly with the schools involved to respond to these incidents.

²⁴ <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lc/papers/Pages/qanda-tracking-details.aspx?pk=98510>

²⁵ <https://www.news.com.au/national/nsw-act/reason-man-waving-israeli-flag-arrested-at-propalestine-protest-in-sydney/news-story/3912027f512609cffdb7b74d19f8e8c7>

Since the beginning of 2024, JBD has received approximately 100 reports of antisemitic incidents in schools. These include cases of student-on-student bullying, inappropriate conduct by staff and other forms of harassment.

This number significantly understates the number of incidents as it relies on parents and students voluntarily reporting incidents to our organisation. We understand that additional complaints about antisemitism in NSW schools are also received by other bodies within the Jewish community and know that many other incidents are not reported.

It is necessary for the NSW Government to support mandatory antisemitism education in its schools and support the provision of psychological support for school children and staff in schools that experience antisemitism.

We note that while students may be exposed to Holocaust education in a very limited sense, this has proven not to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge base to recognise and refute antisemitism. Targeted education against hatred and extremism with a specific focus on the most prevalent forms of prejudice in contemporary Australia, including antisemitism is required. There are several providers that are capable of delivering such education in schools, including Courage to Care and the Sydney Jewish Museum.

In a series of roundtables that the JBD ran with principals of schools in areas with a high population of Jews, the principals expressed their interest in introducing such programs and resources to build greater understanding about antisemitism and its impacts amongst their staff and students. There was also strong interest for engaging student leaders in a roundtable to design student led initiatives to combat antisemitism and other forms of racism. Beyond dealing with these incidents as they occur, there is a valuable opportunity to enhance the understanding and learning about empathy, discrimination and racism with real life, current examples.

Incidents reported to JBD also include examples of teachers using inappropriate antisemitic resources during class. Combatting antisemitism effectively accordingly also needs to ensure that teachers are appropriately educated in what constitutes antisemitism, that public schools are aware of and comply with the NSW Department of Education's Controversial Issues in Schools Policy, and that other schools review their policies to ensure they are appropriate for addressing the escalation in antisemitic incidents that is playing out in schools.

Arts and Culture Sector

The 2024–25 NSW Budget allocated approximately \$1.6 billion to support the arts and night-time economy. This substantial investment includes grants and funding agreements for artists, festivals, and cultural institutions intended to enrich the state's creative sector and promote community engagement.

However, despite this public support, some publicly funded programs have featured divisive or highly politicised content with minimal transparency or accountability.

For example, the Sydney Writers' Festival showcased individuals who have promoted antisemitic content online. At one recent performance at the Sydney Festival, supported by NSW Government funding, highly divisive content was featured accusing Israel and the Jewish people of committing genocide.²⁶ Despite requests from organisers that the performers refrain from including this content, the performers declined. It is inconceivable that public funding supports and platforms such public manifestations of antisemitism.

Beyond programming, the arts sector itself has become a sector of intimidation and exclusion, in which Jewish artists and creatives are targeted. In a serious incident in February 2024, the names, photographs, and personal details of over 600 individuals were published online in a coordinated doxxing campaign. This breach of privacy was clearly intended to threaten, shame, and isolate Jewish creatives or those perceived to support them.²⁷

Such behaviour is unacceptable in any professional or civic context, particularly one funded with public money. Yet, it remains unclear whether individuals or organisations involved in such conduct have faced any consequences, or whether they remain eligible for ongoing or future NSW Government funding.

To uphold the integrity of the sector, the NSW Government should implement clear standards of conduct and funding eligibility, ensuring that recipients of public funds adhere to principles of inclusion, safety and respect for all communities.

Local Government

Local councils play a vital role in delivering core services and fostering inclusive and safe communities.

While some councils, such as Waverley Council, Woollahra Council and Inner West Council have focussed on their responsibilities to support social cohesion, many others have not.

In recent months, many councils across NSW have instead engaged in highly politicised and polarising debates on international affairs. While councils have no proscribed functions related to international affairs and are therefore unable to influence global conflicts, they can and do impact their local communities.

²⁶ <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/sydney-festival-in-hot-water-over-propalestine-monologue-at-family-circus/news-story/2fef92c851a33d1036b7d75dc660f2c2>

²⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/feb/09/josh-burns-jewish-whatsapp-group-channel-publication-israel-palestine-clementine-ford>

These debates are routinely hijacked by extremist voices to intimidate and harass local Jewish communities. At a Bayside Council meeting in 2024 debating a 'Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions' motion, it was publicly reported that one Jewish resident was told *"I wish Hitler finished you all off"* by protestors.

At another similar meeting for Inner West Council, NSW Police had to be called after Jewish speakers were harassed by protestors. Police were then required to escort Jewish residents and certain Councillors to their vehicles.²⁸

Such conduct falls well outside the remit of local government and poses a significant risk to community cohesion. Instead of fostering unity, these discussions have created divisive and, at times, hostile environments within council chambers and among local residents.

The state government should consider issuing guidance or developing legislative frameworks to ensure that local councils remain focused on their core responsibilities and do not serve as platforms for hate speech, foreign policy activism or community division.

Privacy

The JBD would like to see privacy arrangements around public information that may identify an individual or their address, such as land title records and electoral roll information, strengthened. We are concerned with the way that prominent Jewish individuals including community leaders, artists, politicians and others have been targeted in antisemitic attacks. For instance, in mid-January 2025, the former home of the ECAJ's co-CEO was deliberately targeted in an antisemitic attack, off the back of the perpetrators obtaining information online about what they believed was his current residential address.²⁹

There are several sites where information about the private residential addresses of individuals can be obtained. Seeking suppression of this information through the office of the NSW Registrar General can be complicated, as well as not being widely known as an option for individuals at risk. It would come as a surprise to many residents of NSW that their residential address can be obtained so easily, and without a compelling reason. The JBD would like to see privacy laws tightened so that individuals cannot be doxed as easily or harassed or harmed at their home addresses. There should be a simplified process for suppressing individuals' addresses from all but law enforcement and government agencies.

²⁸ <https://www.news.com.au/national/nsw-act/politics/police-called-as-propalestine-protesters-derail-inner-west-council-meeting/news-story/4e31dbfd2bec8c9b56ead6db14c7c76e>

²⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2025/feb/20/adam-edward-moule-and-leon-sofilas-charged-alleged-antisemitic-attack-former-home-alex-ryvchin-ntwnfb>

Recommendations

In light of the disturbing rise in antisemitism across NSW and the significant risks it poses to individuals, institutions, and broader social cohesion, the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies recommends the following areas for targeted government action:

Recommendation 1: Develop a statewide strategy to address antisemitism and racism

A cross-government strategy should be developed to coordinate efforts to combat antisemitism and racism. This strategy should include:

- Adoption and operationalisation of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism across all government departments and agencies.
- An anti-racism standard for senior public servants that includes education on contemporary forms of antisemitism.

Recommendation 2: Address antisemitism in schools through education, policy and practice

The NSW Government should take a whole-of-school approach to addressing antisemitism—recognising that combating hatred requires both cultural change and system-wide accountability. This should include:

- **Reviewing existing policies and procedures** across the Department of Education and individual schools to ensure they are appropriate, clearly define antisemitism (using the IHRA definition as a reference point) and empower staff to respond effectively when incidents occur.
- **Delivering professional development for all educators** that includes antisemitism education and awareness training. Training should equip teachers and school leaders to identify antisemitism, respond appropriately, and support affected students.
- **Embedding antisemitism awareness in the school curriculum** as part of broader efforts to address racism and foster inclusion. This should empower students to identify antisemitism, understand its impact, and confidently call it out.
- **Evaluate the quality of current Holocaust education** in schools.
- **Setting clear participation targets** to ensure all students, at least once during their schooling, visit the Sydney Jewish Museum or engage with its mobile education exhibitions. The Government should work with the Museum and Jewish community partners to identify additional ways to bring lived experiences and survivor voices into schools across NSW.

A comprehensive, structured approach will ensure schools are not only safe for Jewish students, but are also active contributors to a more inclusive, educated, and resilient society.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen policing responses to antisemitic incidents

NSW Police should publish clear guidance for officers to ensure they recognise antisemitism and respond appropriately.

Training should ensure officers are equipped to:

- Differentiate between legitimate protest and hate-based conduct.
- Avoid disproportionate or inconsistent treatment of counter-protesters.
- Appropriately investigate and charge individuals involved in antisemitic threats, abuse or violence.

Recommendation 4: Ensure public sector training and accountability

The NSW Public Service Commission should update anti-discrimination and workplace behaviour training to include clear, specific reference to antisemitism and the IHRA definition, and support public sector agencies to respond to incidents swiftly and transparently.

Recommendation 5: Introduce standards in government arts and cultural funding

All NSW Government funding agreements in the arts and cultural sectors should:

- Include explicit clauses prohibiting content or programming that promotes hatred, vilifies communities, or supports proscribed terrorist organisations.
- Provide for “clawback” provisions where funding recipients breach these standards.
- Require organisations to commit to inclusive, safe and respectful environments, with accountability for breaches such as doxxing or targeted exclusion.

Recommendation 6: Guide local councils away from divisive foreign policy debates

The NSW Government should issue clear guidance, or legislate, if necessary, to ensure councils:

- Remain focused on their core responsibilities of local service delivery.
- Are discouraged from debating foreign policy motions that risk inflaming community tensions.
- Focus on building social cohesion amongst their local communities.

The Government should consider legislative or regulatory measures to restrict the use of “ethical investment” or boycott policies to target groups based on ethnicity, religion or national origin.

Recommendation 7: Invest in community security and resilience

The NSW Government should continue co-investment and grant programs that fund security and resilience for Jewish institutions and other faith based places. Including by:

- Extending the Safe Places for Faith Communities grants program after the 2025-26 budget year.
- Consider eligibility guidelines to ensure resilience programs not specifically tied to “places” can be considered.
- Co-fund physical security upgrades at synagogues, Jewish schools and community centres.
- Expand community liaison and intelligence-sharing mechanisms between law enforcement and vulnerable communities.

Recommendation 8: Tighten protection of privacy

The NSW Government should tighten privacy protections under existing laws so that the private residential addresses of individuals should not be readily obtainable by anyone apart from law enforcement agencies and the NSW Government. At minimum, individuals should easily be able to opt out of their private residential address being available to anyone other than law enforcement or NSW Government.

There should be penalties for anyone who misuses private information of individuals, whether for the purpose of doxing them online, targeting their residential home, or other unlawful conduct.

Recommendation 9: Identify gaps between national and state laws to combat antisemitism and ensure that any gaps are addressed with protections that are at least as robust as at the national level