



ASECA

AUSTRALIA'S SPECIAL ENVOY
TO COMBAT ANTISEMITISM

Understanding Antisemitism in Australia

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In the spirit of international collaboration, this resource is modelled on the 2023 Canadian Handbook on the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. Australia, like Canada (and many other countries), has officially adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism. We gratefully acknowledge the support and guidance from former Ambassador Deborah Lyons and the Canadian Office of the Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism.

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GENERAL THE HONOURABLE SIR PETER COSGROVE AK AC(MIL) CVO MC (RETD)

Foreword

Australia is a nation built on respect, fairness and the dignity of every person.

Antisemitism stands in direct opposition to those Australian values.

Jewish Australians have experienced a deeply concerning rise in hatred, intimidation and exclusion. These trends have been fuelled by misinformation, online extremism and a growing confusion between legitimate political debate and hostility toward Jewish people.

The tragedy at Bondi brought this reality into sharp focus. It was a moment of profound national grief. It was also a stark reminder that hateful ideologies are not abstract. They have real consequences for real people. It was also a reminder that hateful words can lead to hateful deeds and violence.

Australia must respond with clarity, unity and resolve. Antisemitism has no place in Australia. We must work together to banish it.

The Australian Government has reaffirmed its support for the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism and Australia adopted the IHRA working definition in 2021, joining more than forty-five nations and over 1200 global organisations worldwide. This reflected a bipartisan commitment to understanding and confronting antisemitism based on international best practice.

The IHRA definition is a practical, internationally recognised framework that helps identify antisemitism in its contemporary forms.

This Handbook explains what the IHRA definition is, why it matters and how it can be applied responsibly in Australian contexts. It is intended as a practical resource for schools, universities, public servants, community organisations and anyone seeking to understand antisemitism today.

By working together to fight antisemitism and all hatred we can ensure Australia remains one where diversity is valued and where every community belongs. Our response to antisemitism will be shaped by every Australian, in small and large ways. All of us have a shared responsibility and a role to play, in our commitment to civility and to one another.

Acknowledgement of Country

Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live and work, and acknowledges their deep and continuing connection to land, water, sky and community.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



Figure 1: Marc Light, Gumnut Chanukiah, c.1980. A chanukiah is a candelabrum used to celebrate the Jewish festival of Chanukah – an increasing number of candles are lit on each of the 8 nights of the festival. Jewish Museum of Australia 5313 Image reproduced courtesy of the Jewish Museum of Australia.

Preface

'The Australian Government's official definition of antisemitism is the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition'

— Australian Government.¹

In 2021 Australia formally adopted a definition of antisemitism.² Australia's official definition of antisemitism is the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism (IHRA definition). The IHRA definition is the leading definition of antisemitism worldwide.³ As of January 2026 it has been adopted or endorsed 1,337 times, including by 47 countries, 386 educational institutions, and 548 local and regional governments (in Australia this includes New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, as well as some local councils), as well as multiple international organisations.⁴

While other definitions exist, (including the Nexus Document, the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, the Universities Australia definition and many academic definitions), the IHRA definition has widespread support from Jewish communal organisations in Australia,⁵ and reflects the lived experience of antisemitism of Jewish Australians. As with other marginalised groups, Jews have the right to define their own oppression. Fundamentally, the IHRA definition is about anti-racism and the right to live free of vilification, harassment, discrimination and hate.

The drafting of this handbook benefitted greatly from a series of consultations held in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Hobart, Launceston, Perth, Adelaide and Canberra. Over 50 individuals were consulted, including Jewish community leaders, rabbis, academics and teachers, lawyers, parliamentarians, civil servants and political staff, law enforcement agencies, and the National Student Ombudsman. Numerous experts on antisemitism were included in the consultations, as well as the independent experts appointed as members of the Australian Government's delegation to IHRA.

We also conducted interviews and gathered information about the Australian Jewish community's lived experience of antisemitism. We acknowledge and express our gratitude to those who shared their testimonies. Their insights and experiences helped to inform and contribute to this handbook.

This handbook on *Understanding Antisemitism in Australia* is not intended to – and does not – supersede, modify or direct an interpretation of any existing federal, state, territory or local statute or regulation. It does not constitute a binding directive on any government department or agency requiring the IHRA definition to be implemented or used in a particular manner.

Case studies provided in the handbook are representative examples of antisemitism that exist in Australia at the time of publication.

Please note:

This handbook documents and discusses hate and harm, which can be triggering, distressing and challenging. Hate directed towards Jews by its very nature distorts Jews and Judaism, and its modern form increasingly distorts representations of Israel and Israelis (as a Jewish collective).

To combat antisemitism and to address misconceptions about Jews and Judaism it is necessary to go beyond this resource. Effective ways to prevent baseless hatred, build social cohesion and challenge prejudice may include engaging strength-based grassroots, community-driven, cross-cultural initiatives that promote:

- empathy and understanding
- critical thought
- dialogue
- capacity for challenging conversations
- deeper knowledge through education.

The more than 3-millenia story of the Jewish people is an inspiring one of survival, resilience and hope.

We encourage readers to find out more about the diversity of Jewish experience and cultural expression, including through Jewish museums, galleries, festivals and theatre, as well as grassroots community organisations.



Figure 2: Stand Up's 'Derech Eretz' (Hebrew for 'the way of the land') connects university students with the communities of Toomelah and Boggabilla. Picture: Instagram.

"Shared joy is a double joy; shared sorrow is half sorrow." — words of support and consolation to "[o]ur Jewish Mob" from the Gomeri Mob in Boggabilla and Toomelah following the Bondi terrorist attack. Buddy Hippie led a vigil to **"acknowledge grief and loss, and to show that hate and violence have no place in our communities"**.⁶ For the Jewish community the words, songs, and candle-lighting created a feeling of unity. **"Last night reminded us that our community is not alone, everyone who shares this land we call home shares this pain and equally joins us in the light of Chanukah."**⁷

1 Australian Government, [Eliminating Antisemitism: Australian Government response to the Special Envoy's Plan to Combat Antisemitism](#), December 2025, p.5, accessed 3 March 2026.

2 [Scott Morrison, Australia. Pledges to the Malmö Forum Remember – ReAct](#), video posted on YouTube of then prime minister Morrison presenting pledges to the Malmö Forum Remember – ReAct, 20 October 2021, accessed 3 March 2026. The definition was also endorsed by Anthony Albanese as leader of the Australian Labor Party on behalf of his party while he was Opposition Leader as well as Penny Wong while Shadow Foreign Minister.

3 'Remarks of Elan S. Carr', United Nations Alliance of Civilizations-European Union Joint Event, 15 June 2022. <https://combatantisemitism.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Elan-Carr-Remarks-20220615-UNAOC-EU-Joint-Event.pdf>; Ahmed Shaheed, 'Taking Action to Combat Antisemitism: Follow-up Action Plan for Advancing the Implementation of the Recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief in his 2019 Report to the UN General Assembly (A/74/358)', [PDF document] 26 May 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/ActionPlanChanges-May2022.pdf>.

4 Combat Antisemitism Movement, 'The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism Worldwide Adoptions and Endorsements Database,' January 2026, <https://ihra.combatantisemitism.org/>, accessed 15 March 2026.

5 Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), Policy 48.6 and 48.10, <https://www.ecaj.org.au/about/our-policies/>, ECAJ website, n.d., accessed 15 March 2026; Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV), *Defining Antisemitism: The Victorian Experience*, 25 January 2025, [Research Data Hub – JCCV](#), accessed 15 March 2026; G Narunsky, 'NSW Jewish Board of Deputies Endorses IHRA', Australian Jewish News, 19 November 2021, [NSW Jewish Board of Deputies endorses IHRA - NSW Jewish Board of Deputies](#), accessed 15 March 2026.

6 Winangali Infusion, 'Vigil of solidarity and support for our Jewish Mob', [post], Instagram, 17 December 2025, accessed 7 April 2026.

7 Stand Up for a better world, 'Gomeri and Jewish mobs together in solidarity and love', [post], Instagram, 19 December 2025, accessed 7 April 2026.



Why do we need this handbook?

The Australian Jewish population is small (less than half a percent of Australia's population), so many Australians may not have met a Jewish person or understand how hatred directed towards Jewish people manifests and is experienced in Australia today or the ways in which it is harmful not only to Jews but to the whole of society.

This handbook is an educational resource to:

- help people in Australia understand and recognise antisemitic expression, behaviour, methodologies and impact, guided by the definition adopted by Australia in 2021
- provide non-prescriptive guidance on how the Australia-adopted definition can be used as an effective resource in efforts to recognise, address and combat antisemitism within existing legal and policy frameworks
- help provide clarity and guidance to create greater consistency across Australia through the application of best-practice standards
- provide practical examples that help to draw the line between what is and is not antisemitism, including in the context of Israel-related discourse
- help various sectors – such as workplaces – identify behaviours that contravene existing policies and expectations
- support overall efforts to combat racism in Australia and contribute to social cohesion.

Importantly, applying the IHRA definition should involve a nuanced, fact-driven, context-dependent process.

Appendix A outlines the Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism.

Appendix B is an Australian Antisemitism Framework, summarising key elements of this handbook.

Appendix C addresses common misconceptions about the IHRA definition.

Appendix D comprises a summary of how antisemitism has operated across time.

Appendix E is a hypothetical case study.



Figure 3: Tree vandalised with a Nazi swastika, Morack, Vermont, VIC, March 2023. Image courtesy ECAJ

Executive summary

'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.' – **The core definition within IHRA's working definition of antisemitism**

Based on the world's most respected definition, this handbook has been prepared by Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism to support national efforts to understand, recognise and counter antisemitism. It responds to rising concern across government, civil society, education, law enforcement and workplaces about the nature, prevalence and evolving forms of antisemitism, and the harm this causes Jewish Australians and Australia's social cohesion.

Purpose of the handbook

This is a resource for Australians in all forms of community and institutional leadership. It's designed to:

- assist Australians to identify antisemitic behaviour, rhetoric and impact, guided by the IHRA definition, adopted by Australia in 2021
- provide practical guidance on applying that definition within existing legal and policy settings
- promote consistency and best practice across jurisdictions and sectors
- distinguish between antisemitism and legitimate political debate, including on the topic of Israel
- help organisations recognise antisemitic behaviour, and when a code of conduct may be broken
- contribute to broader national efforts to combat racism and strengthen social cohesion.

Consultation and evidence base

This handbook is informed by extensive national consultations and testimony, including:

- engagement with Jewish community leaders, rabbis, educators, academics and legal practitioners
- participation from parliamentarians, public servants, police and regulators
- interviews documenting lived experience of antisemitism in Australia
- consultation with the Expert Members of the Australian Government's delegation to IHRA.

Core framework

This handbook gives context to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism:

- explaining the development and global adoption of the IHRA definition
- situating it within Australia's anti-racism architecture, including federal and state discrimination law and the National Anti-Racism Framework
- emphasising that use of the definition requires careful, fact-based and context-specific assessment.

Topics covered

- historical and cultural context for antisemitism and Jewish life in Australia
- explanations of how antisemitism adapts across time and political environments
- analysis of contemporary forms, including those that arise in public debate about Israel
- discussion of the impact of antisemitism on individuals, families and communities
- sector-specific guidance for education, government agencies, law enforcement, workplaces, arts and cultural organisations, civil society, health, sport, media and online environments.

Guiding principles

The handbook is grounded in the view that:

- antisemitism is a specific form of racism and is incompatible with Australian values of fairness, freedom and mutual respect
- hate speech and discrimination can escalate into serious harm if left unchallenged
- education, dialogue and community-based engagement are central to prevention
- democratic freedoms and human dignity must be upheld while responding firmly to prejudice.

'Antisemitism erodes and is contrary to values that define Australia: fairness, freedom and mutual respect. It is a hatred that manifests in harmful words, and has led to violent acts, undermining the basic right to live free of discrimination and hate and attacking the very foundations of a thriving democracy. As such, it poses a threat not just to Jewish Australians but to our entire nation.'

— *Jillian Segal AO, Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism*



Historical and cultural context of antisemitism in Australia

Antisemitism has caused the death of at least 15 Australians in Australia since December 2025.

'It's incredibly important that we fight antisemitism. And one of the things about antisemitism is that it begins with hate speech, then it might be a chant at a rally, then it moves online, then it becomes graffiti on a Jewish building, then it's malicious damage, then arson, and then it escalates to the kind of horrific violence that we saw yesterday. We have to combat it across the board.'

— Chris Minns, Premier of NSW, 16 December 2025, in the wake of a terrorist attack targeting families at a Jewish event celebrating the first night of the festival of Chanukah at Bondi Beach, 14 December 2025. Fifteen innocent people were killed, including a 10-year-old girl and an elderly Holocaust survivor: the deadliest terrorist attack in Australia's history.

'And we all threw ourselves into that pit with all our children beneath us. I was just doing everything in my power to make sure that my body was covering her entire body ... I could feel the shots getting closer and closer and closer and I just thought there was a whole gang of people just coming, walking towards us to just spray bullets. I just don't want her to have to crawl out from underneath my dead body. I just, the image of that was, I was playing that out in my mind, like, what's she going to do when she comes out from underneath and she's alone?'

— A mother describing how she shielded her 5-year-old daughter from gunfire during the Bondi Beach attack.⁸



Figure 4: Tributes to the victims of the deadliest terrorist attack on Australian soil, laid outside Bondi Pavilion, December 2025

⁸ A Harvey and H Meagher, *Bondi Beach terrorism survivor Jessica Chapnik Kahn threw herself and daughter to shelter as people around them were killed - ABC News*, 16 December 2025, accessed 16 December 2025; ABC News, 'A mother describes how she shielded her 5-year-old daughter...' [Instagram], 16 December 2025, accessed 16 December 2025.

Antisemitism is recognised as the world's 'longest hatred',⁹ having existed in various forms for millennia. While the hatred is ancient, the term 'antisemitism' is more modern. It was coined by German journalist and racist ideologist Wilhelm Marr in 1879, to make anti-Jewish hate more socially acceptable by inventing a pseudo-scientific word based on race rather than religion. Marr wanted to differentiate his hatred of Jews from *religious* to *racial*, replacing the word 'Judenhass' (Jew hatred) with the pseudo-scientific race-based term 'antisemitism'. There were no 'Semites' (or ideology of 'semitism') against whom this movement arose; the term provided semantic cover for what was anti-Jewish hatred.¹⁰ Despite the difficulties with this word, it is widely understood to mean Jew-hatred or harm and is the term used in this handbook.

No forms of racism and hate are acceptable in Australia's inclusive and diverse society, as reflected in Australia's *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth), state and territory anti-discrimination legislation, and the National Anti-Racism Framework.

Antisemitism has been called the 'canary in the coal-mine' for all forms of hatred and intolerance because it often predicts and intersects with other forms of prejudice and hate. It is an indicator of fractures within society and therefore flourishes in societies that are facing other social, economic and political stresses. Whenever it arises, it raises a question about what deeper issues in society require examination.

The racialising process by which antisemitism is nourished and sustained mirrors the way social groups are 'othered' – putting people into defined groups, assigning them essentialised traits that point to their inherent failings, and making that difference hierarchical. While Australia's social cohesion may be holding steady, it is under strain due to national and global pressures.¹¹

In recent years antisemitism has grown in incident numbers, despite expansion of the anti-racist movement and the development of a national approach to combatting racism.

'We need an end to antisemitism. It is evil. It diminishes us as a nation ...'

– Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, following an antisemitic arson attack on a Synagogue in Melbourne in December 2024)¹²

Antisemitism erodes and is contrary to values that define Australia: fairness, freedom, justice and mutual respect. It is a hatred that starts with harmful words that can lead to – and has led to – violent acts, shattering the foundational right to physical safety and security. Antisemitism, even in its mildest forms, undermines the basic right to live free of discrimination and hate, and attacks the very foundations of a thriving multicultural democracy. As such, it poses a threat to the entire nation.

The first step to combatting antisemitism is understanding it.

Antisemitism exists on a continuum from subtle and casual forms to violent extremism. It can be interpersonal or structural and systemic.

Antisemitism is directed towards Jewish people, but harms both Jews and the wider community. In that sense, antisemitism is not only a Jewish problem. It is a problem for anyone who believes that everybody has a right to respect and security.

⁹ R Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred*, New Mandarin, London, 1992.

¹⁰ International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), *Spelling of antisemitism - IHRA*, IHRA website, n.d., accessed 15 March 2026.

¹¹ J O'Donnell, A Falkiner and K Szachna, *Mapping Social Cohesion 2025*, Scanlon Foundation Research Institute, 2025, <https://scanloninstitute.org.au/mapping-social-cohesion-2025>, accessed 15 March 2026. In particular, 'the common experience of discrimination and the widely held prejudices expressed towards people of different religious faiths and from different migrant backgrounds detracts substantially from Australia's intercultural harmony.' p 32.

¹² M Magennis and D Tassell, *'It is evil': Anthony Albanese condemns anti-semitic attacks and announces \$8.5m for Sydney Jewish Museum | 7NEWS*, 11 December 2024, accessed 15 March 2026.



'Feel more isolated. Antisemitism has risen up to a high concern, when I didn't think about it often before, and If I did it was in more abstract terms. Now I worry for my kids and what they are experiencing. My husband is saying that we should leave Melbourne, that the writing is on the wall; I feel like I am living the life of a Jew from history, rather than the Jew I was 2 years ago.'

— Respondent in National Council of Jewish Women Australia Survey, July 2025 Age 45—54, VIC

'I just feel so sad that I need to educate my children in how to respond if they are screamed at in the street. My mental health took a huge hit when our shul, that was personally built by my grandfather post-Holocaust, was burnt down.'

— NCJWA Lived Experience Survey, July 2025 Age 35—44, VIC



Figure 5: Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, Jillian Segal AO, at the site of the Adass Synagogue, Melbourne, following an antisemitic arson attack in December 2024

How antisemitism works

Antisemitism is a shape-shifting prejudice. It simultaneously accuses Jews of contradictory evils: capitalist and communist, weak yet powerful, exclusivist yet infiltrating.¹³

'But there is nonetheless a new antisemitism. Unlike the old it isn't hatred of Jews for being a religion. It isn't hatred of Jews as a race. It is hatred of Jews as a sovereign nation in their own land, but it has taken and recycled all the old myths.'

— Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

One of the distinctive features of antisemitism is that it morphs to latch onto the dominant values of a particular era.¹⁴ In the Middle Ages, Jew-hatred was justified on theological grounds when the highest source of authority was religion and lies about Jews and Judaism flourished. For example, the expulsion and murder of Jewish communities in Europe was justified by the demonisation of Jews as 'Christ-killers'. Irrational and demonic myths, fantasies and inventions about Jews were developed in Medieval times, including well-poisoning, child-killing, host-desecration, plotting against Christianity and establishing world domination.¹⁵ Many of these inventions and lies have been reworked over the centuries and have found their way into modern antisemitic discourse, adapted to suit local conditions. These older forms of antisemitism are also dominant online. A sample of almost 11,000 antisemitic items gathered over 2 years since 7 October 2023 found that the most common form was content 'promoting

traditional antisemitism such as blood libel and claims that Jews killed Jesus' (47.7%).¹⁶

In Tsarist Russia, where a large part of world Jewry lived, antisemitic propaganda was rife and used to justify massacres, known as pogroms. A key part of this propaganda was the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a 1903 publication that claimed to be minutes of a secret meeting of Jews conspiring for world domination. In 2025, antisemitic world conspiracy libels were the second most common form of antisemitism online.¹⁷

With the Enlightenment and rise of science, Jew-hatred became rooted in the 'scientific' study of race. Nazi ideology relied on Social Darwinism and racial inferiority to justify mass extermination of people of Jewish ethnicity, regardless of their adherence to religion.

Today, the highest value of democratic societies such as Australia is international law and human rights, and so many antisemitic tropes are conveyed and justified in the language of human rights and international legal arguments. For example, sometimes Jews are labelled and libelled as 'settler-colonialists', 'oppressors', and a symbol of a global system of domination that 'can seemingly accommodate even the murder of Jews'.¹⁸

In the modern form of antisemitism, hatred is increasingly directed towards Jewish peoplehood, undermining and delegitimising Jewish self-determination and sovereignty.

¹³ J Sacks, 'The Mutating Virus: Understanding Antisemitism,' keynote address at *The Future of the Jewish Communities in Europe* conference, European Parliament, 27 September 2016.

¹⁴ J Sacks, *The Mutating Virus*, '[t]hroughout history, when people have sought to justify antisemitism, they have done so by recourse to the highest source of authority available within the culture.'

¹⁵ J Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval conception of the Jew and its relation to modern antisemitism*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1943; C Roth, 'The mediaeval conception of the Jew: a new interpretation', *Essays and studies in memory of Linda R. Miller*, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, 1938, pp 28–34; G Langmuir, *Toward a definition of antisemitism*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1990; L Poliakov, *The history of Anti-Semitism: From the time of Christ to the Court Jews*, trans. R. Howard, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2003, vol. 1.

¹⁶ A Oboler, P Scolyer-Gray and L Levin. *Social Media and the Normalisation of Hate: October 7 Two Years On*, Online Hate Prevention Institute, 2025, p 16 https://ohpi.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/October_7_Two_Years_On.pdf, accessed 16 March 2026.

¹⁷ A Oboler et al, *Social Media and the Normalisation of Hate: October 7 Two Years On*, p 18.

¹⁸ D Hirsh, 'Preface: The Critique of the Critique', *Mapping the New Left Antisemitism: The Fathom Essays*, Routledge, London and New York, 2024, p xxii.



Legitimate criticism of Israel is not antisemitic. However, there are many examples of antisemitic imagery, tropes, conspiracy theories and propaganda (echoing medieval myths) that have found their way into anti-Israel discourse. It is also increasingly common for the word 'Zionist' (or iterations of it) to be used as cover or proxy for 'Jew'.

Over recent decades, volumes of antisemitic propaganda recycling ancient myths and libels have been produced globally that deliberately target Israel – and Jews as a collective. It is increasingly difficult to separate truth from lies in public discourse, but this is an essential task to prevent the spread of mendacious claims that generate hostility and justify harmful acts.

Antisemitic methodologies – how antisemitism works across time

Another recurring feature of antisemitism is the methods by which antisemitic thoughts and feelings are generated and sustained. This 'playbook' of antisemitic methodologies has been used over time to generate antipathy and hostility towards Jews and authorise and justify acts of violence against them. These methodologies are referred to throughout this handbook and a summary table with additional information is provided at **Appendix D**.

Antisemitic depictions of Jews and Judaism dehumanise Jews and seek to reduce Jewish people (individually or as a group) to a set of distorted characteristics that depart from reality. Therefore, it is important to have a factual understanding about Jewish people.

Who are the Jewish people?

Jews are an ethno-religious group, being simultaneously both a people/nation and adherents of a religion. Jewish peoplehood is core to Jewish identity and has been documented for thousands of years. Members of the Jewish community trace their origins back approximately 4,000 years to the ancient lands of Israel and Judea. Indeed, the words 'Israelite' ('children of Israel' in the scriptures), 'Hebrew', 'Jew', and 'Jewish', are all derived from this ancient connection to that land.

Judaism is the religion practised by the Jewish people. It began in the Middle East almost 4,000 years ago, and is centred on the land of Israel, where Jews have maintained a

continuous presence. The Jewish people have endured dispossession and repeated exiles, expulsions, and consistent persecution from their homeland, leading to their dispersion throughout the world (the diaspora). As a result, distinct cultural identities and variations in religious practice emerged over time.

The major ethno-religious Jewish groupings are:

- Mizrahi – a more recent term referring to the oldest Jewish diaspora communities of the Middle East and North Africa
- Sephardi – communities established in Spain and Portugal after leaving ancient Israel and Judea
- Ashkenazi – diaspora communities of Germany and France, extending through Central and Eastern Europe. In addition to these groupings, other ancient Jewish communities include Ethiopian (Beta Israel), Indian (Bene Israel and Cochin Jews), and Greek and Roman Jews (Romaniote and Italki).

In 2025, there were around 15.3 million Jewish people in the world – 0.2% of the global population. Almost half the world's Jews live in Israel (7.2 million). In the diaspora – the rest of the world outside of Israel – the largest Jewish communities are in the United States (6.3 million), France (440,000), Canada (398,000), the UK (312,000); Argentina (171,000), Russia (132,000) and Australia (around 117,000 – 0.46% of the Australian population).¹⁹

Links between diverse Jewish communities over time and space include: (a) a common ancestry and shared history, (b) a common set of texts that forms the basis of beliefs and practices and situates these within that history, and (c) a shared understanding of their origins in the land of Israel.

Core to Judaism is the Hebrew Bible or Tanakh and the oral tradition subsequently recorded in the Mishnah and scholarly debates recorded in the Talmud, which also provide the basis for Jewish peoplehood, ethics, law, practice, belief and ritual.

Because Jews are simultaneously a people and a religion, there are many Jews who neither affiliate with nor practise Judaism or believe in God, but still identify strongly as Jewish through their ancestry, culture or family traditions. In addition, there are those who have chosen to join the Jewish religion.

Some of the living traditions of Jewish communities include:

- Tzedek (righteousness / justice) – Judaism commands the relentless pursuit of fairness, truth, and moral integrity in all aspects of life. An element of Tzedek is 'Tzedekah', which is colloquially translated as 'charity' but literally means justice
- Gemilut Chasadim (acts of loving kindness) – true righteousness is expressed through everyday deeds of compassion, generosity, and care for others
- Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) – Jews are called actively to improve society and heal the brokenness of the world through justice and good works.

What is Zionism?

The Jewish people's connection to their indigenous homeland, the Land of Israel, is the basis for Zionism – the belief that the Jewish people have the right to self-determination within their ancestral homeland. This connection was recognised by the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 181(II).²⁰ The resolution reaffirmed the historical and ancestral ties of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel, underscoring the legitimacy of their claim and the importance of their self-determination.²¹

The concept that the term Zionism describes dates back thousands of years to ancient monarchies.

Zion, coming from 'Mount Zion' in Jerusalem, where according to tradition King David is buried, is a synonym for Jerusalem and the Land of Israel. The term 'Zion' is found 157 times in the Hebrew Bible. The longing for return begins after the destruction of the First Temple (reflected in Psalm 137: 'By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, and wept when we remembered Zion' in 586 BCE) and is central to rabbinic Judaism developed after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE and the extensive

exile of Jews from their land. This longing is expressed in liturgy, every life-cycle event, festivals and holy days, and almost all aspects of religious practice.

Modern political Zionism is built on the historical and religious connection to the land of Israel, leading to the establishment of the State of Israel.

Jewish self-determination does not exclude Palestinian self-determination or sovereignty.

Most Jews around the world, while having diverse opinions on Israeli politics and policies, affirm Zionism as central to their Jewish identity.²² Zionism is neither a 'left-wing' nor a 'right-wing' ideology: it is part of the internationally recognised right to self-determination. In Australia, around 90% of Jewish people believe Israel has a right to exist as a Jewish state – the essence of Zionism.²³



¹⁹ David Graham, *The Jewish population of Australia: Key findings from the 2021 Census* (Melbourne, Monash University Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, June 2024), https://jca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/The-Jewish-Population-of-Australia-Report_2021-Census-1.pdf.

²⁰ United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 181(II): Future Government of Palestine, November 29, 1947, [https://docs.un.org/en/a/res/181\(ii\)](https://docs.un.org/en/a/res/181(ii)).

²¹ VM Kattan, 'The UN Partition Plan for Palestine and International Law', *Oxford Bibliographies of International Law* 27 October 2021, accessed 16 March 2026.

²² W Eck, 'The Bar Kokhba Revolt: The Roman Point of View,' *Journal of Roman Studies* 1999, v.89, pp 76–89; B Strauss, 'Jewish Roots in the Land of Israel/Palestine,' Stanford, Hoover Institution, 6 February 2024, [Jewish Roots In The Land Of Israel/Palestine | Hoover Institution Jewish Roots In The Land Of Israel/Palestine](https://www.hoover.org/research/jewish-roots-in-the-land-of-israel-palestine), accessed 18 March 2026.

²³ Plus61J Media, [Crossroads23: Australian Jews on Israel - The Jewish Independent](https://www.plus61j.com.au/news/crossroads23-australian-jews-on-israel-the-jewish-independent), 14 June 2023, accessed 18 March 2026.



Jews in Australia

There are around 117,000 Jewish people in Australia. This makes the Jewish Australian community the eighth largest Jewish community in the world, though only around 0.46% of the Australian population.²⁴

Coming from dozens of nations and traditions, Jewish Australians are not a monolith, having diverse ethnic backgrounds, degrees of religiosity, political affiliations, and cultures. They are involved in and contribute positively to every facet of life in Australia.

The first Jews in Australia arrived as convicts on the First Fleet. Jewish immigration has been driven by both 'push' and 'pull' factors. The majority of Jewish people came to Australia to escape antisemitic persecution in their home countries – they came seeking a better life.

The Jewish community in Australia is made up of successive waves of immigrants, mainly refugees, and their descendants. This includes:

- German Jews after 1848 due to the failure of democratic revolutions
- Russian Jews due to Tsarist pogroms (anti-Jewish violent attacks) and economic discrimination
- refugees from Nazism in the 1930s
- Jewish Holocaust survivors from 1945 to 1960
- post-1950 refugees from India, the Middle East, and other parts of Asia following upheavals in those areas
- Russian Jewish refugees from Soviet antisemitism in the 1970s – with a further substantial wave from the late 1980s and, following the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, until 1997
- substantial Jewish migration from South Africa, initially due to opposition to apartheid, especially following the Sharpeville riots of 1960 and the Soweto riots of 1976, with economic factors and fear of ongoing crime leading to further waves from the 1980s into the 21st century.

As Jews attempted to flee pre-World War II Nazi persecution in Germany, they faced antisemitic impediments to immigrating to Australia. At the infamous Evian Conference in 1938, Australia's chief delegate, Colonel Thomas White, pronounced, 'We ... have no real racial problems, we are not desirous of importing one ...'.²⁵ Fewer than 7,000 European Jews were admitted to Australia in 1933–1939, despite the desperate need.²⁶



Figure 6: A bar mitzvah service in a Sydney synagogue (photo credit: Sydney Jewish Museum, photo by Mark Zworestine)

After World War II, the Australian government began admitting Jews in larger numbers. This included Mizrahi and Sephardi Jews, who migrated from India and Egypt and later from Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and Iran – particularly after anti-Jewish policies intensified in these countries in the 1940s and 50s, including expulsion of Jews stripped of their citizenship in many Middle Eastern countries.²⁷ While 'White Australia' operated it was difficult for Jews from these countries to migrate to Australia.

After 1945 Australia became home to the second largest number of Holocaust survivors per capita after Israel, with estimates of 27,000 arriving in Australia by 1961.²⁸ By then, the Jewish communities had grown to 60,000 people, primarily residing in Melbourne and Sydney, but also in smaller numbers in every capital city and regional areas, as they do today.²⁹

Antisemitism in Australia

While Jewish people have generally been able to participate in all aspects of life in Australia without official discrimination and have 'long found [Australia] a congenial home',³⁰ antipathy towards Jews has existed for a long time in Australia. The history of antisemitism 'is almost as long as European settlement itself',³¹ and has been marked by prejudice, discrimination and acts of violence against Jewish Australians, their places of worship, their schools and community institutions.

As in other parts of the world and

throughout history, incidents of antisemitism in Australia rise and fall over time, often worsening during periods of social unrest or when conflict occurs in the Middle East involving Israel. Jews are frequently blamed for global, social and economic problems, even when there is no connection.³² For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, antisemitic propaganda disseminated the lie that the virus was created and spread by Jews.³³

Open antisemitism became prevalent in Australia in the 1880s, coinciding with the rise of Australian nationalism and the push for federation. This era saw growing hostility from trade unions, politicians, and the press – who directed prejudice toward the small number of Russian Jewish newcomers – reflecting fears about an influx of Jewish immigrants escaping pogroms in Eastern Europe.³⁴

Between the 1930s and early 1950s, the Australian government implemented immigration policies that, while not overtly antisemitic, significantly restricted Jewish immigration. Influenced by the White Australia policy and a preference for British migrants, these policies discouraged refugees from non-European countries, and from Eastern Europe, where most Jews lived.³⁵ Despite the rise of Nazism and the persecution of Jews in Europe, Australia was hesitant to increase significantly Jewish refugee quotas.³⁶ And while there was a postwar increase in immigration, anti-Jewish sentiment persisted, with quotas limiting Jewish arrivals to 25% per ship³⁷ and immigration forms asking 'Are you Jewish?' – a clause

24 D Graham, *The Jewish Population of Australia: Key findings from the 2021 Census*, Jewish Communal Appeal, Monash University, Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, June 2024, [Publications | JCA](#), accessed 18 March 2026.

25 P Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-45: Entry Denied*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 1994, p 71.

26 S Rutland, ['Post-War Jewish Migration'](#), *Israel & Judaism Studies*, n.d., accessed 31 July 2025.

27 S Rutland, ['Jewish Immigration after the Second World War'](#), *Israel & Judaism Studies*, 2006, accessed 31 July 2025.

28 J Lanicek and A Alba, ['80 years after the liberation of Auschwitz, amid rising antisemitism, the memory of the Holocaust remains contentious'](#), *The Conversation*, updated 29 January 2025, accessed 31 July 2025.

29 G Narunsky, ['Our community by the numbers'](#), *The Australian Jewish News*, 8 August 2024, citing the 2021 Jewish population estimate of 116,967, accessed 31 July 2025.

30 J Jones, 'Confronting Reality: Anti-Semitism in Australia Today', *Jewish Political Studies Review*, vol. 16, 2024, p 33–34

31 S Rutland, ['The long, dark history of antisemitism in Australia'](#), *The Conversation*, 24 November 2023, accessed 31 July 2025.

32 Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: U.S. Helsinki Commission (CSCE), *The Alarming Rise in Antisemitism and Its Threat to Democracy*, 13 December 2022; Facing History and Ourselves, ['Explainer: antisemitism and its impacts'](#), April 2022, accessed 31 July 2025.

33 J Nathan, ['COVID-19 and the plague of online antisemitism'](#), ECAJ, 27 May 2020.

34 S Rutland, ['The long, dark history of antisemitism in Australia'](#), *The Australia Today*, 25 November 2023, accessed 31 July 2025.

35 For example, a Memorandum to Cabinet in 1936 stated that Polish Jews in particular were to be included among those 'who as a class are not desirable'. Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-45: Entry Denied*, p 30; Immigration Museum, ['Journeys to Australia'](#), *Immigration Museum*, Museums Victoria, n.d., accessed 31 July 2025.

36 Yad Vashem Shoah Resource Center: International School for Holocaust Studies, ['Jewish refugees in Australia'](#) [PDF 31KB], 21 July 2004, accessed 31 July 2025.

37 S Rutland, ['Jewish Immigration after the Second World War'](#), accessed 31 July 2025.



that remained in place from 1939 to 1952.³⁸ At the same time, due to the White Australia Policy and anti-Jewish prejudice, darker skinned Jews from India were subjected to humiliating skin colour tests, as were other migrants.

A notable act of solidarity with the Jewish people was led by Yorta Yorta man William Cooper, who on 6 December 1938 led a march to the German consulate in Melbourne to condemn the 'cruel persecution of the Jewish people by the Nazi government in Germany'.³⁹

Throughout the 20th century, antisemitism persisted in various forms, including the exclusion of Jews from clubs, the targeting of Jewish communities by hate groups, and a series of firebombings of synagogues in Sydney in the 1990s.⁴⁰

Jewish Australians hoped these traces of antisemitism would have faded by the 21st century.

Despite the evolution of societal norms and significant efforts to combat prejudice and discrimination through education, legislation, policy and advocacy, antisemitism remains prevalent in Australian society and has significantly worsened in the last few years and increased dramatically since the Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October 2023. The devastating antisemitic terrorist attack on 14 December 2025 at Bondi Beach claimed the lives of 15 innocent people, with many more injured, as 2 ideologically motivated gunmen with long-range shotguns shot at families at a peaceful communal celebration for the first night of the Jewish festival of Chanukah (a festival of lights). Homemade ISIS flags and improvised explosive devices were found in the gunmen's vehicle.⁴¹

On 26 February 2025, the Director-General of ASIO, Mike Burgess, said in Parliament that 'in terms of threats to life' antisemitism is ASIO's top priority. He believed it was the first time a form of racism was the agency's highest priority.



Figure 7: Tributes to the victims murdered in the antisemitic terrorist attack at Bondi Beach, December 2025

38 S Rutland, 'Are you Jewish?: Post-War Jewish Immigration to Australia, 1945-1954', *The Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*, 1991, 5(2):35-56.

39 National Museum Australia, 'William Cooper protests', n.d., accessed 31 July 2025.

40 A Tillett, 'Harsh historical markers in antisemitism of hate', *Australian Financial Review*, 31 January 2025.

41 *The Australian*, [Police find ISIS flags in alleged Bondi gunman's car](#), NSW Police Force Op ARQUES Press Conference, 16 December 2025, accessed 16 December 2025.

This was Australia's worst terrorist attack on home soil and came almost 10 months after Mike Burgess, the Director-General of ASIO, said in Parliament that 'in terms of threats to life' antisemitism is ASIO's top priority by sheer weight of incidents recorded by ASIO.

ASIO's assessment is in line with Jewish community experience of antisemitism. Annual records kept since 1990 by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), the elected roof body of Australian Jewry, have found religiously and ethnically motivated hate crimes against Jewish people have been rising since 2015, with a record 2,062 incidents recorded in the year 1 October 2023-30 September 2024 (representing a 316.5% increase on the previous year).⁴² While there was a decrease in recorded incidents in the period up to 30 September 2025 (1,654 incidents), this still represented an unacceptably high level and includes an increase in the number of arson and vandalism attacks.⁴³ Notably, in recent years, a major theme across all categories of antisemitic incidents were death threats (see page 34 below).

These numbers do not include antisemitism online. The Online Hate Prevention Institute, which has been collecting data on antisemitism on social media and online since 2012, found that in the months after 7 October 2023, across all platforms, the average level of antisemitism was 5.4 times higher than it was before that date, representing a new peak.⁴⁴ In the second half of 2025 antisemitism was increasing month by month and by September 2025 had notably exceeded the previous peak.

Throughout 2025, Jews in Australia faced an unprecedented level of antisemitism – in schools, on campuses, in their communities, in the streets, in workplaces and online. Their places of worship, property, homes, schools, pre-schools, businesses and places where they gather have been targeted.

A new variant of antisemitic atrocity denial emerged in the wake of the 7 October 2023 Hamas terrorist attacks – the

deadliest day for Jewish people since the Holocaust. Disturbingly, these atrocities have been met by some with denial, minimisation, justification and distortion – echoing Holocaust denial, minimisation, and distortion. The depraved nature of the attacks invoked the horrors of the Holocaust, triggering intergenerational trauma in the Jewish community and a sense of collective pain and grief.

The Hamas attacks triggered secondary trauma within many segments of the Australian Jewish community – particularly among individuals whose parents or grandparents were Holocaust survivors or those who suffered persecution, ethnic cleansing and expulsion from countries in the Middle East.⁴⁵ It is important to listen to the voices of Jewish Australians.

42 J Nathan, 'ECAJ report on anti-Jewish incidents in Australia 2024', ECAJ, 24 November 2024, accessed 31 July 2025.

43 J Nathan, 'ECAJ Report on Anti-Jewish Incidents in Australia 2025', [ECAJ report on anti-Jewish incidents in Australia 2025](#), ECAJ, 3 December 2025, accessed 16 December 2025. In the 10 years prior to October 2023 the average annual number of incidents was 342, but in the two years since October 7, 2023, there has been an average of 1,858 incidents per year (p 1).

44 A Oboler, P Scolyer-Gray and L Levin, 'Social Media and the Normalisation of Hate: October 7 Two Years On', Online Hate Prevention Institute, Melbourne, 2025, p 8, accessed 18 March 2026.

45 N Kaltmann, 'Post-Oct. 7 antisemitism upends an Australian Jewish community with Holocaust history', *The Times of Israel*, 16 March 2024, accessed 21 July 2025.



'A tutor in my university class made antisemitic comments very casually which made me feel extremely uncomfortable and unsafe. I am now nervous when entering a uni class'
age 18—24, NSW

'The silence from friends I have known almost all my life, the constant posting of antisemitic slurs and the public broadcasts of factually incorrect reports has been devastating and makes me fearful of what might happen next. Since October 7, when I speak to someone who hasn't offered any support, I often ask myself 'would they hide me' which is a terribly sad situation in our beautiful country where I have always felt safe.'
age 45—54, VIC

'I now hide my Jewish identity and make sure my children do not share their religion',
age 45—54, NSW

'The attacks on my social media have been pretty horrific but, what really chilled me, was when my neighbour emailed me while I was in hospital having just had open heart surgery to let me know that someone had daubed a swastika on my fence post but that he had removed it.' age 65—74, VIC

'School graffiti was very confronting at our door step, young children are being targeted for their belief at a place where they go to learn about how Australia is a great place to live.' age 45—54, NSW

'My world had collapsed in some ways.... I realised for the first time ever how much inter-generational trauma I have.' age 45—54, NSW

'I particularly think of survivors of the Shoah and other pogroms who, having experienced this hate and fear at the beginning of their lives now are facing it at the end. This makes me very sad and very angry.'
age 45—54, ACT

'...distress, isolation, shame, voiceless, not believed, invalidation...'
age 55—64, NSW

'Existential fears for my children's safety.'
age 35—44, NSW

'My child has been bullied and physically assaulted.'
age 45—54, NSW

'My nephew had kids (in year 7) say 'gas the Jews', 'Hitler should have finished the job' and draw a swastika on his arm' age 45—54, NSW

'Being confronted again and again with blind hate towards my people and the place I come from was very painful. It impacted my mood, the way I perceived my community and my place in it, and my daily function.'
age 45—54, NSW





Figure 8: Holocaust Remembrance (Jewish Community Appeal, photo by James Pozarik OAM)



Figure 9: Graffiti 'Jew Die' at a Jewish school, Burwood, Melbourne, 25 May 2024 (ECAJ Incident Report 2024)



Figure 10: Graffiti, Newtown Synagogue, January 2025

'Sabbath is an uplifting day, and Shul is a safe and sacred place. Seeing that vandalism, those symbols in the presence of my mother was a real injury.'

— Lachlan, on the 2025 swastika vandalism on Newtown Synagogue



Figure 11: Georg Chodziesner (1900–1981), Chanukiah, 1940. Wood and metal. Donated by Ben Chodziesner. Jewish Museum of Australia 13579.1 Image reproduced courtesy of the Jewish Museum of Australia.

Refugee Georg Chodziesne made this chanukiah in the Internment and POW Camp in Hay, NSW, in 1940. It was made to celebrate the Jewish festival of Chanukah. Born in Berlin in 1900, Georg fled Germany for the United Kingdom at the outbreak of the war. He arrived in Australia on board the HMT *Dunera*⁴⁶ and interned at Hay. On release, Georg joined the Australian Army 8th Employment Company in which he served for the remainder of the war. He went on to work as a patent attorney until his death in 1981.

Global responses to antisemitism

Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism

These guidelines, outlined in Appendix A, contain best practices that have been proven effective in formulating public policy. The Guidelines, which are legally non-binding, can be used and applied by states, international bodies and broader civil society to inform policy and develop practices to effectively combat antisemitism. The Global Guidelines were signed by Australia's Ambassador to Argentina on behalf of the Australian Government in July 2024.

One of the guidelines is to understand and define antisemitism, and it references the IHRA definition.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism and the Working Definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion

History of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism

In January 2000, the first of 4 Stockholm International Forum Conferences was held, hosted by Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson and Nobel Peace Laureate Professor Elie Wiesel.⁴⁷ Representatives of 46 countries and several international organisations participated, which resulted in a unanimously adopted declaration affirming a global commitment to combatting racism, antisemitism, ethnic hatred, and ignorance of history. Three subsequent Stockholm Conferences built upon the first, tackling the issues of intolerance, truth and reconciliation, and genocide prevention.

These conferences represented a historic commitment by the global community to fulfil the post-Holocaust promise 'Never Again', and to ensure that the memory of the horrors of the Holocaust continued to inform international approaches to the human rights challenges of the 21st century.

Not long after the fourth and final Stockholm Conference, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) conducted a survey of antisemitism in the European Union, where the lack of a common and comprehensive definition became readily apparent. Accordingly, the EUMC Director asked experts on antisemitism to help draft a definition. The experts built upon the foundation laid at the Stockholm Conferences and developed the EUMC Working Definition of Antisemitism (the 'EUMC Definition').

It was after attending the EUMC conference that former Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky identified what he calls the 3 'Ds' to help identify criticism of Israel that is antisemitic, namely: demonisation (invoking tropes of Israel being satanic or uniquely evil); double standards (applying standards to Israel not expected of any other state); and delegitimisation (while criticism of government policies may not be antisemitic, calls for the elimination of Israel are).⁴⁸

In 2007, after the EUMC was replaced by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the IHRA began discussing a definition of antisemitism that built on the EUMC Definition. After some years of expert-level discussion, IHRA member countries unanimously agreed to adopt what is now known as the IHRA definition.

⁴⁶ National Museum of Australia, [Dunera Boys](#), accessed 7 April 2026.

⁴⁷ Government of Sweden, '[The Stockholm International Forum Conferences 2000-2004](#)', accessed 18 March 2026.

⁴⁸ N Sharansky '3D Test of Anti-Semitism: Demonization, double standards, delegitimization', *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 2004, 16:3–4.

IHRA fast facts

- Founded in 1998, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is an international intergovernmental organisation committed to strengthening, advancing and promoting Holocaust education, remembrance, and research worldwide. IHRA is not a Jewish organisation.
- IHRA's members are the governments of Member Countries.
- IHRA combines experts, both academics and practitioners, and diplomats representing each country.
- All decisions, including the IHRA definition, are made on the basis of consensus.
- The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) represents Australia at the IHRA, as it does at other multilateral forums. In keeping with IHRA rules, the Head of the Delegation is a diplomat with the rank of Ambassador. The Australian delegation includes DFAT representatives and independent experts appointed by DFAT.
- Australia adopted the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism in 2021 (announced by then prime minister Scott Morrison on 13 October 2021,⁴⁹ with the definition previously endorsed by Labor leader Anthony Albanese on 14 July 2021⁵⁰).
- The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism has been adopted by 47 countries and multiple international organisations. It has been adopted or endorsed 1,337 times.⁵¹
- The Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism, which Australia signed in 2024 (Appendix A), recognise the IHRA definition as a tool to understand antisemitism's various manifestations.
- The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism states that 'criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic.'
- The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is not a legal instrument and does not impose any limits on freedom of expression. Rather it is a tool to help identify and understand antisemitism.
- The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is not a 'tick-a-box'. Whether something is antisemitic depends on the language and context. Applying the IHRA definition involves a nuanced, fact-driven, context-dependent process.
- In Australia, the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is endorsed by major Jewish community organisations as reflecting their lived experience of antisemitism.
- IHRA's Permanent International Partners are the United Nations, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Council of Europe, the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes (GAAMAC), European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI), the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference), and the Arolsen Archives.

49 B Doherty, 'Australian government to adopt international group's definition of antisemitism', *The Guardian*, 15 October 2021, accessed 31 July 2025.

50 Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC), 'The IHRA working definition of antisemitism', n.d., accessed 31 July 2025.

51 Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM), 'Adoptions & Endorsements of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism', February 2025, accessed 31 July 2025; CAM, 'The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism in the Post-October 7 World: Trends and Case Studies | Combat Antisemitism Movement', 26 September 2024, accessed 31 July 2025.

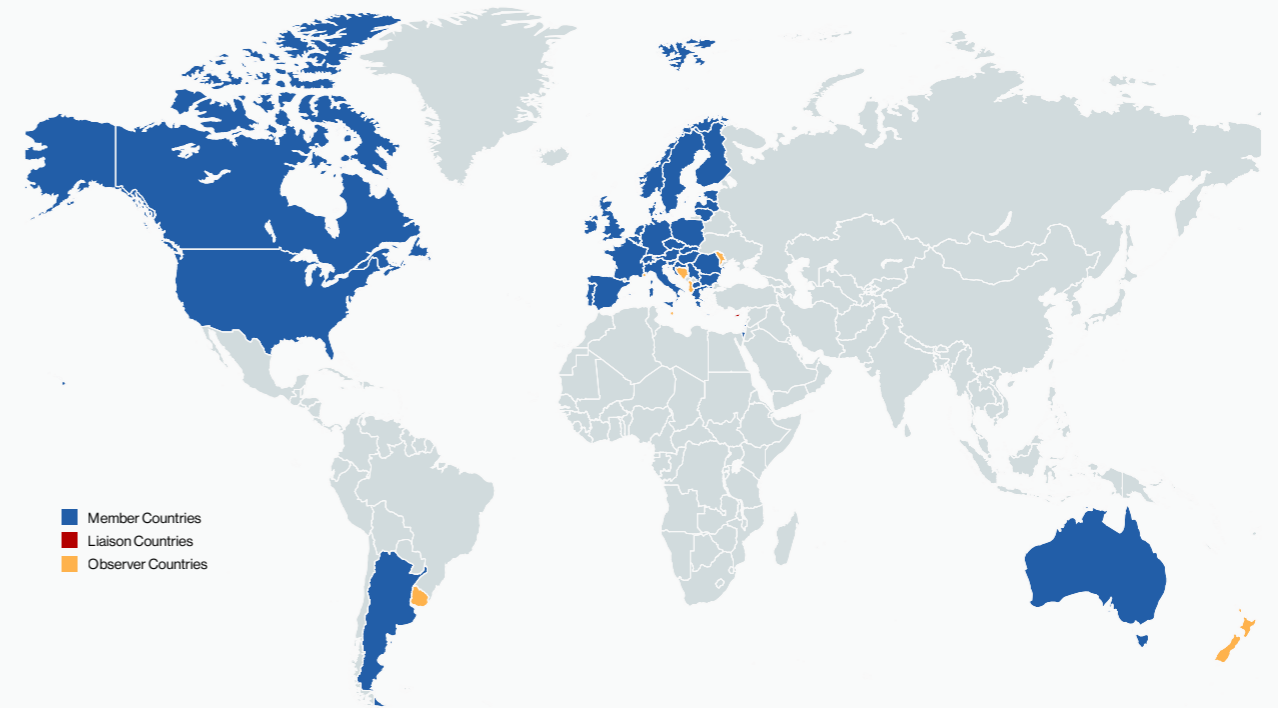


Figure 12: Map of IHRA Member Countries (Created with MapChart)

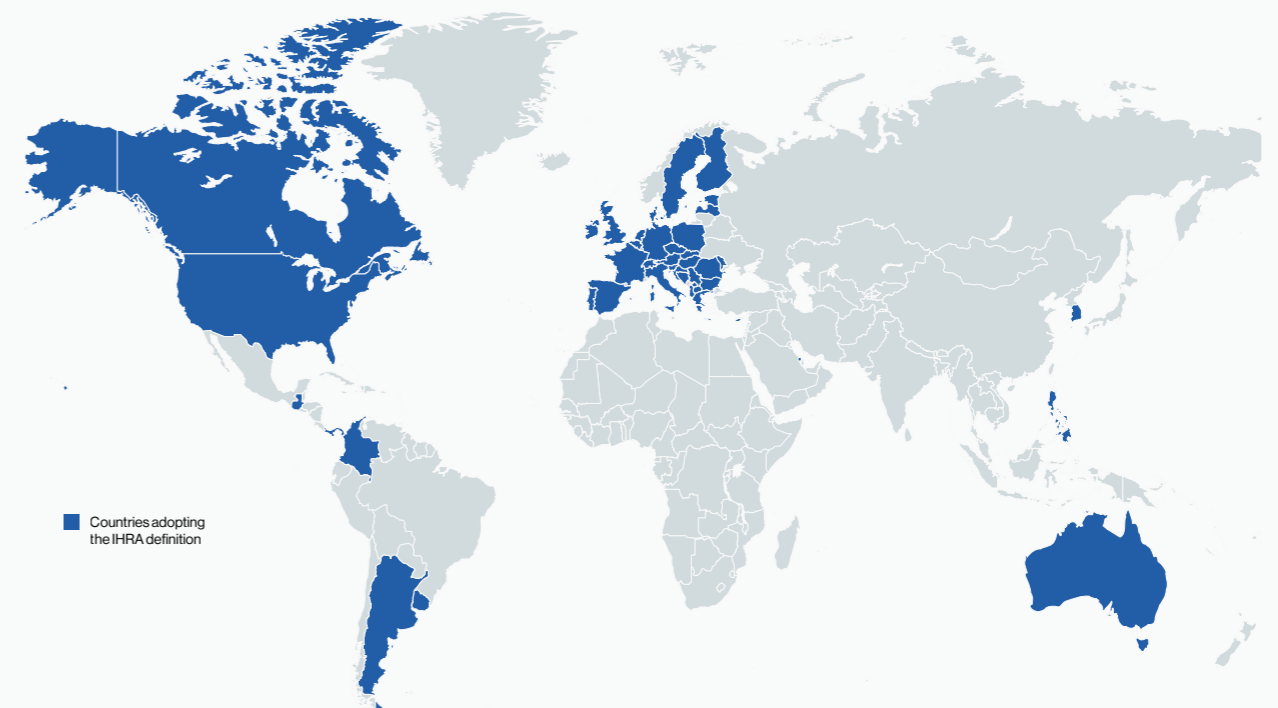


Figure 13: Map of countries adopting IHRA definition (Created with MapChart)

The IHRA definition

Part 1

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.

Part 2

1. To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:

a. Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic.

b. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for 'why things go wrong.' It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

2. Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

Part 3

Example 1: Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.

Example 2: Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective – such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.

Example 3: Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish

person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.

Example 4: Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).

Example 5: Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.

Example 6: Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.

Example 7: Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.

Example 8: Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.

Example 9: Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.

Example 10: Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.

Example 11: Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Part 4

a. Antisemitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of antisemitic materials in some countries).

b. Criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

c. Antisemitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.

IHRA definition explained

The IHRA definition comprises 4 parts. To use the definition, the 4 parts must be read and interpreted together. Below is a detailed explanation of each of the parts, as well as guidance on how to understand the IHRA definition as a whole.

Part 1 – the core definition

Part 1 is the core definition and is intentionally broad to capture the breadth of antisemitic manifestations. The other 3 parts provide **guidance** for practical use – it is **not** a tick-a-box.

'The IHRA working definition defines antisemitism as 'a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews'. There is no difficulty with this ... it is very similar to those found in the major dictionaries: 'hostility to or prejudice against Jews' (Oxford Dictionary of English); 'hostility to and prejudice against Jewish people' (Collins Dictionary) ...'

— Justice Chamberlain, *stated in the UK High Court case of Husain v Solicitors Regulation Authority (2025)*

In her judgment in *Kaplan v State of Victoria*, Chief Justice Mortimer stated that the IHRA definition: '... sits comfortably with the conduct the [Racial Discrimination Act] seeks to prohibit in s 9, and in s 18C subject to exceptions. It suggests, relevantly, the perception of a person or group as Jewish as being the reason for the conduct directed at them. That perception of being Jewish may plainly encompass the race or ethnicity of that person or group ...'

— *Kaplan v State of Victoria (No 8) [2023] FCA 1092, para 23.*

Part 2 – key concepts

To unpack some of the key points, this section quotes important terms from the IHRA definition and provides context on them.

'Jewish collectivity'

'The new antisemitism focusses not on Judaism as a religion nor Jews as a race but on Jews as a nation...[it] is an attack on Jews as a nation seeking to exist as a nation like every other on the face of the earth with rights of self-governance and self-defence.'⁵² This does not mean that Israel cannot be criticised. However, content that involves delegitimation, demonisation or double standards crosses a line.⁵³

'criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic.'

The IHRA definition addresses the relationship between antisemitism and the State of Israel. Crucially, it states that 'criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic.' This language sets a threshold as to what criticism of Israel does not cross the line into antisemitism. What underpins this line-drawing exercise is the concept of discrimination – wrongful differential treatment on a certain basis. In this case, the basis is subjecting Israel, the sole Jewish majority country in the world, to criticism of a type and intensity unlike that applied to any other country. Criticising the government or government policies is not antisemitic but calling for the country to cease to exist treats Israel differentially to other countries.

52 J Sacks, 'Future tense: the new antisemitism', 1 November 2007, accessed 31 July 2025.

53 N Sharansky, '3D Test of Anti-Semitism: Demonization, Double Standards, Delegitimization', Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 21 October 2004, accessed 31 July 2025.



Blaming Jews for 'why things go wrong'

Antisemitism often manifests through conspiracy theories and conspiratorial thinking, as well as scapegoating – blaming Jews for any or all societal ills.

Blaming others for when things go wrong (commonly through conspiracy theories)⁵⁴ is an abdication of responsibility. This helps to explain why, in 2019, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief Ahmed Shaheed declared antisemitism to be 'toxic to democracy'.⁵⁵ Antisemitism tends to be a 'leading indicator', or weathervane, for growing societal intolerance and prejudice.⁵⁶ Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism in Australia, Jillian Segal, notes: 'Attacks on Jews often signal broader assaults on society and the gradual breakdown of cohesion. ... Antisemitism is both an ancient hatred and a modern threat.'⁵⁷

In 2024, Australia's social cohesion was holding steady, but at the lowest levels that it has ever been according to a longstanding survey.⁵⁸

There are only around 1,500 Jews in South Australia. Proportionally they are the smallest Jewish community in any Australian state. The Jewish community in Adelaide plays a significant educational role – educating about Jewish life, Jewish contribution to South Australia, and current forms of antisemitism.

The Jewish community in South Australia has also been committed to interfaith and intercultural understanding and showing solidarity with other marginalised and minority groups. For example, following 9/11 and the rise in anti-Muslim sentiment and incidents in South Australia, the Jewish Community Council of South Australia reached out to and worked in solidarity with the Adelaide Muslim community, and built the Abraham Institute, which continues to promote intercultural and interfaith understanding through education.



Figure 14: Banner 'It's the Jews', Salisbury, Adelaide, 10 April 2024 – the phrase 'It's the Jews' has long been associated with scapegoating, blaming Jews for when things go wrong in society

Overall context is important

It is possible that expression or behaviour that would be antisemitic in some contexts would not be in others.

At a weekend Under 16 soccer game involving a Jewish junior football club, a player from the competing team shouted at one of the Jewish players: 'Free Palestine, kill all the Jews.'

Shouting 'Free Palestine' at a group of Jewish children going about their everyday lives is antisemitic. The rest of the sentence, 'kill all the Jews' makes the antisemitic intent even clearer.

Incidents such as this one are an increasingly common occurrence.

Calling for or justifying the harming of Jews, or holding individual Jews in Australia (or Jews as a collective) responsible for the acts of Israel are examples of antisemitism.

'My son was playing soccer for a Jewish football club. It was quite a high-pressure game for the boys. And one of the boys from the other team tackled my son – a contest for the ball – as a result the boy decided to shout 'Free Palestine, kill all the Jews'. Kill all the Jews is ... that's a call for genocide, right?' – David

The contemporary examples in the IHRA definition are not exhaustive.

This is because antisemitism manifests in a myriad of different ways and is continuously evolving. The contemporary examples are guides for recognising common forms of antisemitism.

Part 3 – contemporary forms of antisemitism

The IHRA definition contains 11 examples of contemporary forms of antisemitism. Some of these forms have ancient roots, while others are newer in origin. This handbook provides Australian case studies for each example.

Content warning: For some people, these images and case studies may elicit strong emotions because of their graphic content.

IHRA example 1: Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion

Regardless of the motivation, calling for or inciting the harming of Jews is clearly wrong.

It is antisemitic to inflict psychological and physical harm on Jews or those perceived as Jews, and to call for, encourage or celebrate such behaviour in any form.

The threat of and actual violence towards Jews – including the killing of Jews – has strong historical and contemporary context. Historical examples of the murder of Jews based solely on their membership of that group, includes but is by no means limited to:

- the Crusades – a series of wars waged over 2 centuries from 1095 by Christian Europe to seize Holy Places (including Jerusalem) from Muslim rule, during which time Jews were attacked and murdered across Europe⁵⁹
- the massacre of Jews in York, England, in 1190
- the Spanish Inquisition – an institution established in 1478 to enforce Catholic orthodoxy in Spain, often through persecution, torture, and execution of those accused of heresy
- pogroms (violent attacks on Jews) in Tsarist Russia
- The Farhud in Baghdad on 1–2 June 1941 in which Jews, including children and unborn babies, were brutally murdered⁶⁰
- the mass, systematic extermination of 6 million Jews in the Holocaust.

54 J Fox and L Topor, *Why do People Discriminate Against Jews?* Oxford University Press, New York, 2021.

55 United Nations, 'Antisemitism, intolerance, can be unlearned, Guterres tells New York commemoration', *UN News*, 14 November 2019, accessed 31 July 2025.

56 United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'Antisemitism Is Toxic to Democracy and Must Be Addressed, Says Expert,' press release, 17 October 2019, citing the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief warning that antisemitism, if left unaddressed, threatens all societies; Helsinki Commission, *The Alarming Rise in Antisemitism and Its Threat to Democracy*, CSCE, 13 December 2022.

57 Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism (ASECA), 'Special Envoy's Plan to Combat Antisemitism', July 2025, accessed 31 July 2025.

58 J O'Donnell and Q Guan with T Prentice, '2024 Mapping Social Cohesion Report', Scanlon Foundation Research Institute, 2024, accessed 31 July 2025.

59 C Roth, *A Short history of the Jewish People*, East and West Library, London, 1948, pp 184–199.

60 E Black, *The Farhud*, Dialog Press, Washington DC., 2010.

The mass murder of Jews was fortified by structures of thought that falsely cast Jews as the enemy of history, society and morality and justified the killing of Jews as a means of salvation.⁶¹ It is almost always preceded by periods of antisemitic propaganda that lay the groundwork for translating rhetorical violence into actual violence.

Foremost among the techniques that incite, justify and authorise the killing of Jews are **demonisation** and **dehumanisation**. Nazi propaganda exemplifies the depiction of Jews as sub-human ('Untermenschen').

Australian case studies

1. Threats of death – a recurring theme



Figure 15: This graffiti occurred in November 2023 in Clayton, Melbourne

In recent ECAJ reports on anti-Jewish incidents in Australia, a recurring theme across virtually all categories (physical assault, vandalism, abuse, messages, graffiti and posters) is threats of death.⁶² For example:

- In a physical assault on a 44-year-old Jewish man in a public park by 3 males, the attackers asked if he supported Israel, then threatened 'I'll kill you!' before violently attacking him.⁶³
- Intimidating threats were shouted at Jews just days after 7 October 2023, such as:
 - 'Death to the Jews!'
 - 'We're hunting for Jews'
 - 'If I could get hold of a machine gun I'd gun down 10,000 of you tomorrow'.⁶⁴

- A Melbourne synagogue received a bomb threat via a direct message to Instagram on 11 October 2023, stating 'We will blow your building up and cut your heads off soon. Gas a Jew'.
- Threats to kill Jews were posted on a Facebook page (by the same person):
 - 'Kill Jews anywhere you see them'
 - 'Peaceful protest what's the use of them. Start slaughtering the Jews, the Holocaust time has come'⁶⁵
- Antisemitic graffiti refers to 'kill Jews', 'Jew Die', and 'Gas all Jews'.
- There are examples in Australia and abroad of 'Zionist' replacing the word 'Jew' in threats of violence. For example, a t-shirt including the words 'Bash Zionists' was promoted online and on social media. Additionally, chants of 'Death, Death to the IDF' – popularised at Glastonbury music festival – were subsequently chanted at protests in Australia, and appeared, along with a Hamas-related inverted red triangle symbol, on clothing worn by a protester during the march across the Sydney Harbour Bridge.
- A Queensland man was charged with a hate crime for calling for death to Jews on an electronic sign on his house.

Given the full sweep of Jewish experience of antisemitism, these threats of death are not merely rhetorical. Tragically, they translate into actual violence as witnessed in Sydney on 14 December 2025, when a child as young as 10 and a Holocaust survivor in his 80s were gunned down, along with many others, in a targeted attack on families celebrating a Jewish festival at Bondi Beach.

2. Coded language and symbols

- A man was sighted on an overpass in Perth, Western Australia, on 26 January 2024, wearing a shirt with 6MWE on it and a Nazi death skull. '6MWE' is code for '6 Million [Jews] Wasn't Enough', referring to the number of Jews murdered in the Holocaust.
- At a rally in Melbourne on 15 October 2023, there were chants of 'Khaybar Khaybar ya yahud, jaish Muhammad soufa ya'oud' ('Khaybar Khaybar oh Jews, the army of Muhammad will return', which refers to a massacre of Jews at Khaybar in 628 CE and is used as a war-cry to threaten and attack Jews).

- A Jewish-owned small business in Brunswick East in Melbourne in 2024 was marked with an inverted red triangle – a symbol used by Hamas militants to identify targets to kill.⁶⁶

'I constantly have a heaviness about me when I am in public places where I see and hear antisemitic things. I also find myself waking up from bad dreams. This is all new to me.'

— Age 65—74, VIC

'I've been yelled at in the street walking home from Synagogue ... I don't feel safe anymore. I don't like leaving the house.'

— Age 35—44, NSW

IHRA example 2: Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions

Spreading false, dehumanising, or stereotypical claims about Jews, or about the supposed power they hold as a group, is a form of antisemitism. This includes, but isn't limited to, the myth of a global Jewish conspiracy or the idea that Jews control the media, economy, government, or other parts of society.

⁶⁶ C Le Grand, 'Jewish-owned business marked with Hamas symbol', *The Sunday Age*, Melbourne, 2024, p 10; 'Red triangles signal a new level of hate in Australia', *The Jewish Independent*, 17 September 2024; *The Jewish Independent*, [Red triangles signal a new level of hate in Australia](#), updated 29 January 2026, accessed 18 March 2026; N Chrysanthos, 'MP's office hit with Hamas-linked symbol' *The Age*, Melbourne, 2024, p 5.

⁶⁷ *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is one of the most notorious and widely distributed antisemitic publications of modern times. It was invented and first published in Russia in the early 1900s to generate antisemitic feeling and justify violence against Jews. It purports to be 'documentary proof' of an ancient myth of a global Jewish conspiracy, by pretending to be minutes of meetings of Jewish figures conspiring for global domination. N Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: the myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1967. Despite being exposed as a fake, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* continues to be believed and cited as fact; for example, in the 1988 founding document of Hamas.

⁶⁸ 'Facing History and Ourselves, Explainer: Antisemitism and Its Impacts', S von Mering and M Hübscher, eds., *Antisemitism on Social Media*, Brandeis University Press, 2021.

⁶¹ RS Wistrich, *Anti-Semitism: The Longest Hatred*.

⁶² J Nathan, *Anti-Jewish Incidents in Australia Report 2024*, p 4.

⁶³ J Nathan, *Anti-Jewish Incidents in Australia Report 2024*, p 7.

⁶⁴ J Nathan, *Anti-Jewish Incidents in Australia Report 2024*, p 9.

⁶⁵ J Nathan, *Anti-Jewish Incidents in Australia Report 2024*, p 10.



When repeated often enough, antisemitic lies take hold as beliefs. When Jews are demonised and dehumanised, it can twist people's sense of morality, making some feel it is acceptable to oppose or even harm them. This is an example of racism at work.

Every human being is entitled to dignity and human rights. Dehumanising or exclusionary language is a red flag for racism and antisemitism.

Australian case studies

1. Public speeches across the political and ideological spectrum:

- In a sermon delivered by a Sydney preacher in November 2023, and subsequently posted online, the following comments were made: 'the majority of banks are owned by the Jews', '... peace is bad for the Jews,' 'There goes our media, our Hollywood blockbuster films,' 'You find that their hands are in everywhere.'⁶⁹
- A state MP, at a public forum in December 2023, said: 'The Jewish lobby as a Zionist lobby are infiltrating into every single aspect of what is ethnic community groups. They rock up and they're part of the campaign, they offer support for things like the campaign against the 18C racial vilification laws, they offer solidarity, they rock up to every community event and meeting to offer that connection because they, their tentacles reach into the areas that try and influence power, and I think we need to call that out and expose it.' The MP has subsequently apologised.⁷⁰

The word 'tentacles' has historical roots in dehumanising imagery representing Jews as 'octopuses'. Ascribing malevolent, hidden intentions and characteristics to Jews also has historical roots and is particularly harmful as it creates a paradigm through which even positive actions (e.g. social justice, philanthropy, civic engagement) are cast in a nefarious light.

- On 8 November 2025 in Sydney, members of a neo-Nazi group staged a protest on the steps of the NSW Parliament, displaying a large banner that stated, 'Abolish the Jewish Lobby'. One of the speakers stated: 'We are here today because the Jewish lobby is destroying our nation.' This protest was rightly condemned by political and civic leadership.⁷¹

These local examples – which portray Jewish Australians as an alien other, not part of Australian society and actively working against it – show how antisemitic tropes appear and converge on the political Left and Right. The rhetoric of these examples echoes historical antisemitic propaganda; for example, Wilhelm Marr's claims in Germany in the late 19th century that Jews were part of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy usurping offices of power.

Example: online to real-world

In early 2024, a network of social media influencers maliciously disclosed the personal details of 600 Jewish artists, musicians and writers and made them the targets of death threats and discrimination at work. The doxing propagated the egregious myth that 'a nefarious cabal of powerful Jews is secretly influencing policy makers and public institutions.' This was an expression of a centuries-old conspiracy theory⁷² about Jews wielding their financial and cultural capital to undermine the societies in which they live.⁷³ The impacted individuals stood accused of using their purported power and influence to stifle criticism of the State of Israel. The ECAJ campaigned for anti-doxing legislation, which was introduced on 12 September 2024.⁷⁴

Example: in the classroom

A student at a public school shouted to a Year 10 Jewish student in a modern history class in a lesson on the Holocaust that 'the Jews deserved it anyway!'. The teacher did not respond to the racist abuse.⁷⁵

Example: between work colleagues

Antisemitic slurs and conspiracy theories exchanged between 2 Sydney lawyers from September to December 2024 came to light through a lawsuit filed against them by their former employer after they were terminated in February 2025. The messages, which were obtained and published by *The Australian*, include:

- 'The claim of anti-Semitism today has been weaponised by the Zionists.' 'Yeah ... the Jews pull a few puppet strings and they get their own senate inquiry.'⁷⁶

The messages exchanged also included antisemitic tropes about money, harming children, and Holocaust inversion.

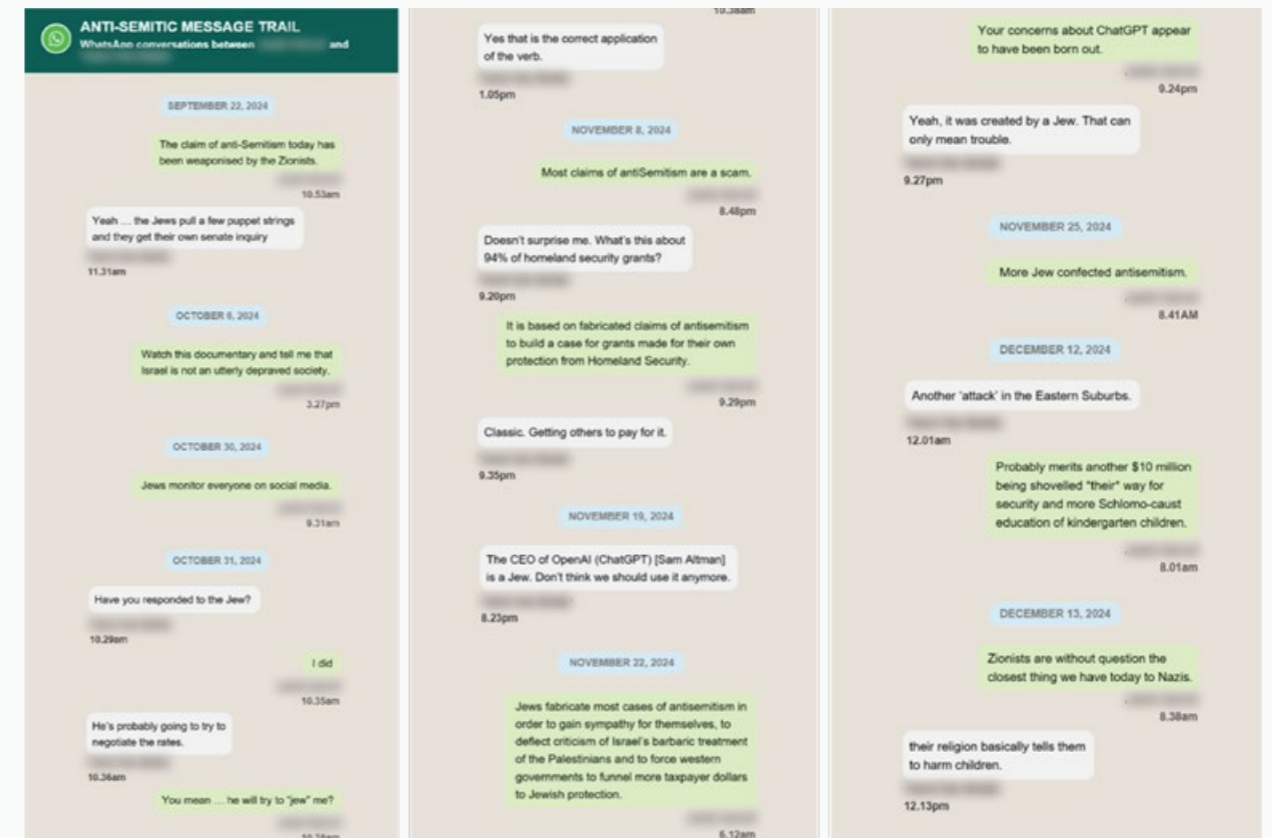


Figure 16: Messages exchanged between work colleagues

69 Federal Court of Australia, *Wertheim v Haddad*, Online file, updated 17 July 2025, accessed 18 March 2026.

70 T Rose, 'Greens MP to tour Sydney Jewish Museum and donate funds after offensive 'tentacles' trope', *The Guardian*, 20 September 2024, accessed 18 March 2026.

71 Parliament of New South Wales, *House Paper 4132 - Neo-Nazi rally outside Parliament House*, Table Office, Legislative Assembly, November 2025, accessed 18 March 2026; Sydney Morning Herald (SMH), *Neo-Nazi protest in Sydney condemned*, 9 November 2025, accessed 18 March 2026.

72 M Rothschild, *Jewish Space Lasers: The Rothschilds and 200 Years of Conspiracy Theories*, Melville House Publishing, Brooklyn, 2023.

73 D Slucki, 'Zionism, anti-Zionism, and the doxing of the "Zio600": Does compassion have to be a zero-sum game?', *Zionism, anti-Zionism, and the doxing of the "Zio 600": Does compassion have to be a zero sum game?*, ABC, 15 February 2024, accessed 18 March 2026.

74 ECAJ, 'ECAJ welcomes anti-doxing legislation', ECAJ, 12 September 2024, accessed 18 March 2026.

75 J Nathan, 'ECAJ Antisemitism Report 2019', ECAJ, 24 November 2019, accessed 18 March 2026.

76 Y Bashan and N Evans, 'BlackBay Lawyers was warned of anti-Semitic views of Justin Carroll and Yianni Van Gelder', *The Australian*, updated 13 April 2025, accessed 31 July 2025; S Rice, 'Ex-BlackBay lawyers Justin Carroll and Yianni van Gelder', *The Australian*, 14 April 2025, accessed 31 July 2025; S Rice, 'The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) lodged complaint against former BlackBay lawyers Justin Carroll and Yianni Van Gelder', *The Australian*, 29 April 2025, accessed 31 July 2025.

IHRA example 3: Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews

These accusations are often tied to conspiracy theories and can be found across the political spectrum. For example, in the 19th and 20th centuries, those against communism blamed Jews for its popularity, while those against capitalism painted Jews as greedy capitalists.

Today, some people hold Jews responsible for events such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine, immigration to North America, or even the transatlantic slave trade and racial inequality. In the past, similar accusations were made about Jews being to blame for the Bubonic Plague, both World Wars, 9/11, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Australian research found that far-right extremists exploited social anxieties about the pandemic to promote their agenda and to recruit and mobilise. Their dominant narrative was about a secret cabal of Jews dominating the world.⁷⁷

Real events and people are frequently interwoven with inventions and falsehoods in antisemitic propaganda and conspiracy theories. This distorts perceptions of the social and political world and perverts public discourse.

Australian case study

A post on 13 March 2023 accuses Indigenous constitutional recognition activist and lawyer Mark Leibler as the mastermind behind the Voice Referendum. Along with figures like World Economic Forum chair Klaus Schwab and businessman George Soros,⁷⁸ Leibler is the subject of 'thinly veiled versions of the centuries-old antisemitic Jewish puppet-master conspiracy theory'.⁷⁹

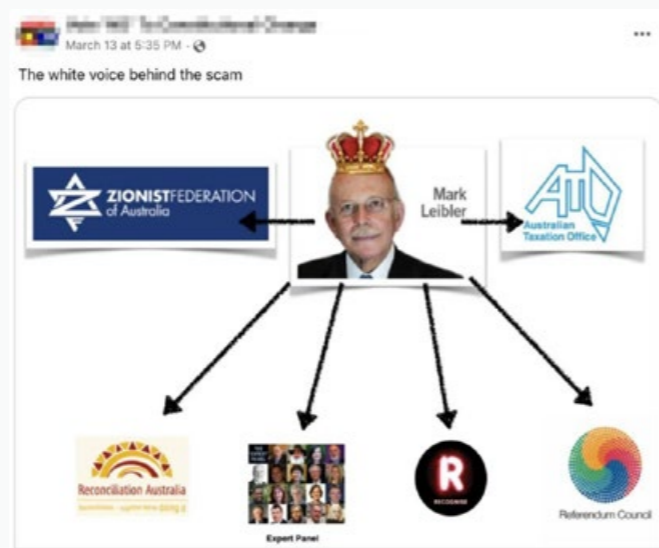


Figure 17: Antisemitic conspiracy theory post

IHRA example 4: Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust)

Denying, downplaying or distorting the genocide of Jewish people during World War II – the Holocaust⁸⁰ – is not only deeply hurtful but a serious form of Jew hatred because it:

- deliberately seeks to erase or minimise the suffering of Jewish people and does so with hostile intent
- denies central truths and erases historical accuracy
- erases the experiences of the victims
- spreads lies
- fuels the same ideologies that led to the Holocaust itself
- casts Jewish people as liars about a tragedy that befell them.

Holocaust denial, minimisation and distortion includes rejecting the facts about how the genocide happened, such as the use of gas chambers, or denying that it was a deliberate, systematic attempt to annihilate the Jewish people.

Holocaust **inversion** (comparing Jews or Israelis to Nazis) is a pernicious form of antisemitism that has the effect of grossly distorting Holocaust memory. (For elaboration, see IHRA Example 10.)

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) found that while 61% of Australian respondents believe the Holocaust is described accurately in historical accounts, the figures are significantly lower among younger age groups. Among those aged 18–49, 18% think the number of deaths were exaggerated, 9% have never heard of the Holocaust, and 8% believe it was a myth.⁸¹

Holocaust Museums around Australia have age-appropriate educational programs to help Australians learn about the Holocaust.

Australian case study

In the landmark case of *Töben v Jones* [2003] FCAFC 137, the Full Bench of the Federal Court of Australia upheld the complaint by Jeremy Jones that Holocaust-denier Frederick Töben, as director of The Adelaide Institute, vilified Jews by (among other things) denying the Holocaust.⁸² Töben's Adelaide Institute website contained articles that denied the Holocaust and that claimed the Russian Revolution was a front for a Jewish takeover. A major motivator for Jones in launching the case was his concern regarding the wide reach of this vilifying material via the internet.

Today in Australia, prominent Neo-Nazis and white supremacists openly deny or minimise the Holocaust, including online to wide audiences, with online comments such as: 'The holocaust is a lie! 6 million is a lie! 256k at best, most died of disease, the rest killed for being illegal terrorists.'⁸³

Antisemitic literature, including Holocaust denial and minimisation, is commonly dropped into letterboxes in the form of flyers. For example, a leaflet titled 'The Holocaust was a Lie' was placed in letterboxes of an apartment building in Brisbane in 2024.⁸⁴

IHRA example 5: Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust

Accusing Jewish people or Israel of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust is a harmful claim driven by and fuelling antisemitism. This accusation wrongly suggests that Jews as a people or Israel as a state have either 'invented' or used the memory of the Holocaust for sympathy or political gain ('Holohoax'). Such claims often go hand in hand with Holocaust **denial or distortion** and other conspiracy theories.

While social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube ban Holocaust denial today, for a long time this was not the case and social media was a significant spreader of Holocaust denial and distortion.⁸⁵ Despite now being prohibited on a number of platforms, Holocaust denial persists online.⁸⁶ Between 7 October 2023 and Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2026, the Online Hate Prevention Institute collected thousands of examples of Holocaust-related antisemitism across both platforms where it was banned and platforms where it was not.⁸⁷

77 L Waldek, J Droogan, and B Ballsun-Stanton, 'Online far right extremist and conspiratorial narratives during the COVID-19 pandemic', Macquarie University, Report for Department of Communities and Justice, NSW, 2021, p 18.

78 I Burton, 'Pittsburgh shooter suspect thought George Soros was puppet-mastering the world economy | Vox', *Vox*, 3 November 2018, accessed 19 March 2026.

79 C Wilson, 'Voice to Parliament: Conspiracy, hate speech shared widely online', *Crikey*, 11 May 2023, accessed 19 March 2026.

80 The Holocaust was the Nazi-led genocide of European Jewry, which involved the murder of around 6 million Jews (including 1.5 million children) as well as of Roma and Sinti, persons with disabilities, political dissenters and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. The Nazis and their collaborators used a variety of methods such as gas chambers, mass shootings, forced labour and death marches to systematically murder their victims. It was an attempt not only to kill all Jews but to destroy Jewish life and civilisation.

81 Anti-Defamation League (ADL), *The ADL Global 100: Index of Antisemitism*, ADL, accessed 19 March 2026.

82 D Knoll, 'Race-hatred offence: Full Federal Court upholds rejection of racial hatred on the internet', *Law Society Journal*, November 2003, p 61.

83 Post on X, 15 December 2023, accessed December 2023.

84 J Nathan, *Special Report: Anti-Jewish incidents in Australia 2024*, ECAJ, 24 November 2024, p 17

85 Online Hate Prevention Institute (OHPI), 'Facebook bans Holocaust denial', 13 October 2020, accessed 18 March 2026.

86 OHPI, 'Holocaust Denial', OHPI, accessed 18 March 2026.

87 OHPI, 'Holocaust Memorial Day 2026', 27 January 2026, accessed 18 March 2026.

Australian case study

In July 2018, Facebook platformed a series of posts created in Australia that alleged the Jewish people invented the Holocaust.



Figure 18: Antisemitic Facebook post of Holocaust denial and distortion

IHRA example 6: Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations

This example refers to the 'dual loyalty' antisemitic trope, which portrays Jews as disloyal citizens whose true allegiance lies with a secret Jewish global agenda or with Israel. The dual loyalty trope leads to distrust and exclusion of Jews.

A well-known example is the *Dreyfus Affair*, which epitomised racist antisemitism and exposed the depth of the notion of racial traitorhood pervading Europe. In 1894, Jewish French military officer Alfred Dreyfus was accused of treason, based on the antisemitic dual loyalty trope. Although there was substantial evidence pointing to his innocence, and to the actual guilty party, stereotypes of Jews as disloyal and treacherous led to his wrongful conviction, later commuted and finally overturned in 1906. At his degradation ceremony on 5 January 1895, the crowds chanted 'Death! Death to the Jew!', and during his transportation to imprisonment crowds attacked him, chanting 'Death to the Jews', 'Traitor', 'Jew'.⁸⁸ Today, this type of antisemitism persists, with the Anti-Defamation League Global 100 survey on antisemitism finding that 41% of non-Jews agree or partly agree with the statement 'Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the countries they live in'.⁸⁹

Since 7 October 2023, the ECAJ, other Jewish communal organisations, and more recently the Office of the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, have received a substantial increase in reports about online hate directed at Jews, Israelis and 'Zionists' in Australia. This is also reflected in the research conducted by the Online Hate Prevention Institute.⁹⁰ Some of this hate blames the subject it targets for the actions and policies of Israel. It is antisemitic to conflate the policies of the Israeli government with the views of Jewish Australians, and to harass, vilify and/or discriminate against them on that basis.

88 J-D Bredin, *The Affair: the case of Alfred Dreyfus*, George Braziller, New York, 1983, p 5 and p 101.
 89 Anti-Defamation League, *The ADL Global 100: Index of Antisemitism*, n.d., accessed 18 March 2026.
 90 [Online Hate Prevention Institute](https://www.onlinehatepreventioninstitute.org/).



Figure 19: Dual loyalty trope

There has been a sharp rise in hateful rhetoric towards Jews that uses the proxy of 'Zionists' or derivations of that word, such as 'Zios'. This is recognised by Meta's Policy Forum in its decision to remove speech targeting 'Zionists' in several areas, where its process showed that the speech has tended to be deployed to Jews and Israelis with dehumanising comparisons, calls for harm or denials of existence.⁹¹ This was particularly present online after 2 synagogue attacks in Melbourne⁹² and after the Bondi attack.⁹³

Australian case study

Following Australia's 'Summer of Hate' – a spate of antisemitic attacks in late 2024 and early 2025 – an X account holder asserted that Jews in Australia had concocted these attacks and that Australian Jews should be deported to Israel, implying they were not loyal to Australia.

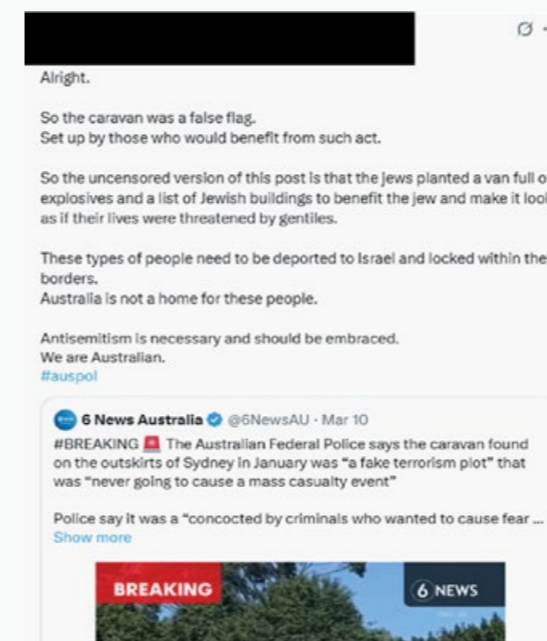


Figure 20: False flag post

Reponses to antisemitism that invalidate Jewish lived experience are psychologically harmful.⁹⁴

'If I see clear antisemitism and my society tells me it's my imagination, I feel my sanity is being questioned.' – Tamara, NSW

91 Meta, *Update from the Policy Forum on our approach to 'Zionist' as a proxy for hate speech*, Meta Transparency Center, 9 July 2024, accessed 31 July 2025.
 92 OHPI, *Responses to the Melbourne Synagogue Attacks in 2024 & 2025*, OHPI, 21 July 2025, accessed 18 March 2026.
 93 OHPI, *Bondi Report*, 14 January 2026, accessed 18 March 2026.
 94 M Bar-Halpern and J Wolfman, 'Traumatic invalidation in the Jewish community after October 7', *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 35(8), 2025, pp 1366–1393.

IHRA example 7: Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.

Article 1 of the *United Nations Charter* enshrines the principle of 'equal rights and self-determination of peoples'.⁹⁵

To selectively deny the Jewish people the right to self-determination in some portion of their ancestral homeland is antisemitic. Similarly, it is antisemitic to deny the indigeneity and continuous religious and historic ties of Jews to the land of Israel, which underlies that right.⁹⁶

The belief that the Jewish people have the right to self-determination in their ancestral homeland (the Land of Israel) is known as **Zionism**, a dream realised in 1948. The attempt to delegitimise Israel and single Israel out among all the nations is an attempt to undo that reality. Many other countries were voted into existence by the United Nations at around the same time as Israel.

The word 'Zion' is an ancient term – referred to at least 157 times in the Hebrew Bible – and has physical and spiritual connection to Jerusalem and the land of Israel.

In line with global trends, Australia has seen a surge in the term 'Zionism' being used as (1) a slur, or (b) as semantic cover for 'Jews'. When used in this way, it may be motivated by or result in antisemitism, or it may create a climate in which antisemitism becomes more acceptable. Using the word 'Zion' in antisemitic propaganda pre-dates the modern State of Israel, and was used, for example, in the antisemitic propaganda tool, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Those who believe in the right of Jewish people to self-determination in the land of Israel are known as **Zionists**. Although the term Zionism was created in the late 1800s, the concept it describes existed long before the term itself. Indeed, while the Jewish people lacked sovereignty and autonomy in the land of Israel

for almost 2,000 years (~73 CE to 1948 CE), they maintained a consistent presence in and connection with Israel, and a longing to return to their homeland. This connection is deeply entrenched in Jewish religion, texts, culture, traditions and beliefs. While not all Jews are Zionists, and not all Zionists are Jews, the two are intrinsically linked and substantially overlapping. In Australia, the majority of Jewish Australians regard themselves as Zionists.⁹⁷ There is an even higher percentage of Jewish Australians who have a high level of personal connection to Israel.⁹⁸ The majority of Jewish Australians support Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, with studies having found around 90% to be in favour.⁹⁹

The recognition of Jewish indigeneity and the right of Jewish people to self-determination in the land of Israel does not negate the right of self-determination for the Palestinians or others on that land.¹⁰⁰ In contrast, it reinforces the right for self-determination of all peoples under international law.

Today Israel is home to a diverse population and people of many different faiths and has many holy sites of significance for Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Australian case study

'I don't see criticism of Israel as a problem. But what we're seeing on campus is not criticism of Israel. It's a call for Israel to be annihilated, for it to completely not exist. At the moment, the campus is plastered with posters that say, 'we don't want your two states. We want all of 48', so that's the message that's consistently there. To me that is antisemitic, because there is only one Jewish country. So facing calls for its destruction is terrifying, and having to face that on a daily basis, I definitely feel like it's not safe for people to know that I'm Jewish.' (University of Sydney employee)

— Cited in ASECA's *Submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Commission of Inquiry into Antisemitism at Australian Universities Bill 2024 (No. 2) Submission 422, p.12.*

Chant 'Israel burn burn! Palestinians will return' and 'We don't want your two-state. We want all of 48' repeatedly chanted, at a rally, Sydney (2 June 2024).¹⁰¹

Online

Following 7 October 2023, there was a marked increase in this form of antisemitism online.¹⁰²

Standing firm against antisemitism parading as 'anti-racism'

The infamous NGO Forum and the UN World Conference Against Racism held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001, descended into rife and aggressive antisemitism directed at both Jews and Israel, including:

- calling Zionism racism
- pamphlets about Hitler¹⁰³

- vile cartoons containing images of Jews as 'hook-nosed, clawed, blood-dripping-from-teeth subhumans'¹⁰⁴
- sessions intended to deal with racism around the world being hijacked with a single anti-Israel agenda.

It epitomised the way in which 'anti-racism' can descend into racism itself.¹⁰⁵ However, the Australian delegation stood firm against the hatred and provided a refuge for Jewish delegates from the isolation and vitriol.¹⁰⁶

IHRA example 8: Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation

Applying double standards to Israel relative to other democratic nations is discriminatory. Criticism of Israel becomes antisemitism when it moves from being legitimate criticism to being discriminatory.

Applying double standards to Israel often manifests in disproportionate, sometimes obsessive, focus on criticising Israel relative to other countries. This frequently includes the use of antisemitic tropes. Demonisation of Israel is another common tactic, generally involving the use of dehumanising, exaggerated or vitriolic language. Furthermore, delegitimation of Israel is a prevalent issue, involving questioning Israel's right to exist or calling for its destruction.¹⁰⁷

95 United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, 24 October 1945, Article 1.

96 W Eck, 'The Bar Kokhba Revolt: The Roman Point of View', *Journal of Roman Studies* 1999, 89:76–89; B Strauss, 'Jewish Roots in the Land of Israel/Palestine'.

97 In a 2018 survey, 69% of respondents indicated they regarded themselves as Zionists: D Graham and A Markus, *Gen17 Australian Jewish Community Survey: Preliminary Findings*, Monash University, Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Melbourne, 2018, p 61.

98 92%, D Graham and A Markus, *Gen17 Australian Jewish Community Survey: Preliminary Findings*, p 60.

99 The Jewish Independent, *Surveying Australian Jews on Israel*, 2023.

100 R Ukashi, "'Zionism, Imperialism, and Indigeneity in Israel/Palestine: A Critical Analysis', *Peace and Conflict Studies* 2018, 25(1):21-23. Further, the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel states, 'THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.'

101 J Nathan, '[ECAJ report on anti-Jewish incidents in Australia 2024](#)', ECAJ, 24 November 2024, p 17, accessed 18 March 2026.

102 A Oboler et al, *Online Antisemitism After 7 October 2023*, OHPI, Melbourne, 2024, p 135.

103 A Gold, 'The Final Countdown: Recalling Durban', *The Australian Jewish News*, 6 March, 2009, p 21.

104 J Jones, 'Thinking locally, acting globally', *Confronting Antisemitism in Modern Media, the Legal and Political Worlds*, A Lange, K Mayerhofer, D Porat, and LH Schiffman (eds), De Gruyter, 2021, p 335.

105 On this phenomenon, see generally: PA Taguieff (trans. H Melehy), *The Force of Prejudice: On Racism and its Doubles*, University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

106 J Jones, 'When Antisemitism is 'Anti-racism': Two weeks in Durban', *Durban 2001 NGO Forum (archived articles and opeds)*, ngo-monitor.org, 2001, [ngo-monitor.org/durban_ngo_forum_archived_articles_and_opeds/](#), accessed November 2025.

107 M Becker, *Antisemitism in Reader Comments: Analogies for Reckoning with the Past*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, pp 103–108; RS. Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession: Antisemitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad*, Random House, New York, 2010, pp 465-469.



Australian case study

Jews and Israelis have frequently been offered 'protection' from harm by removing them, or suggesting that they remove themselves, from threats to their safety. For example, Jewish students and staff were encouraged to stay home from university during encampments.

IHRA example 9: Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis

Antisemitic tropes, symbols, and images persist over centuries in part because they adapt to contemporary norms and situations. Today, antisemitic tropes are recycled to target Israel, Israelis, and Zionists. In many cases, this is as simple as applying the same forms of antisemitism as those described under IHRA Examples 1, 2, and 3, but replacing 'Jews' with 'Israel,' 'Israelis,' or 'Zionists.'

The application of antisemitism to Israel and Israelis has included claims that Israel is responsible for terrorist attacks and pandemics.¹⁰⁸ It also involves the adaptation of the 'blood libel',¹⁰⁹ such as accusing Israel or Israelis of being 'child murderers' and 'organ thieves', or evokes ancient libels of Jews poisoning wells by accusing Israel of poisoning civilians. Jews have been presented as 'vermin', 'rats' and 'pigs' in antisemitic imagery and this is seen in religious, racial and antizionist antisemitism.

Or it may take the form of characterising Israel or Israelis as 'white', 'white supremacists', or 'colonisers'. Notably, the majority of Jewish Israelis are of Middle Eastern and North African (Mizrahi) descent.¹¹⁰ These characterisations **erase** the Jewish indigenous connection to the land of Israel and the diversity of Israelis, while simultaneously **demonising** and **dehumanising** them.¹¹¹

Historical libels portraying Jews as predatory or sexually deviant find modern-day expression in false accusations of Israel being 'pedophilic' or 'rapist' while simultaneously denying the Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) perpetrated by Hamas and other terrorists against Israeli women on 7 October 2023,¹¹² in a form of antisemitic **inversion, projection** and **erasure**.

The application of antisemitism to Zionists is generally achieved through replacing 'Jew' with 'Zionist' and 'Judaism' with 'Zionism'. Zionists and Zionism are then represented as 'privileged', 'oppressors', 'vermin', and 'colonisers', and blamed for the worst societal ills. Racist antizionism which uses these hate narratives to incite or justify violence against Zionists has been seen online, particularly since 7 October 2023.¹¹³

Australian case studies



Figures 21–23: Collation of libels

These images draw on and repeat a series of libels based on classic antisemitic false accusations. The collation of slurs and libels demonises Israel, stigmatises Jews, and casts both as outside the bounds of society.

¹⁰⁸ KW Sundberg, LM Mitchell and D Levinson, 'Health, Religiosity and Hatred: A Study of the Impacts of COVID-19 on World Jewry', *Journal of Religion and Health*, 62(1), February 2023:428–443, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-022-01692-5>; Epub 2022 Nov 17; Facing History and Ourselves, 'Explainer: Antisemitism and its impacts'.

¹⁰⁹ The term blood libel originated in the Middle Ages with false allegations that Jews killed and/or used the blood of Christian children for ritual purposes. Blood libels were used for (and had the effect of) inflaming hatred against the Jewish community, leading to violent attacks against them, deaths, and their expulsion from towns and cities. Blood libels have persisted into the modern era including 1882 in Hungary, 1913 in Russia and were perpetuated by Hitler in the 1930s and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia in the 1960s and 1970s.

¹¹⁰ N Lewin-Epstein and Y Cohen, 'Ethnic Origin and Identity in the Jewish Population of Israel', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 18 August 2019, 45(11):2118–2137, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1492370>.

¹¹¹ B Strauss, 'Jewish Roots in the Land of Israel/Palestine'.

¹¹² The Dinah Project, 'A Quest for Justice: October 7 and beyond', *Dinah Project*, Jerusalem, June 2025, accessed 18 March 2026.

¹¹³ OHPI, Online antisemitism after October 7.

IHRA example 10: Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis

In this form of antisemitic discrimination, Israel and Jews are portrayed as Nazi-like perpetrators of mass atrocities and genocide. This is also known as Holocaust **inversion**. Among other origins, Holocaust **inversion** was inspired by Soviet-era propaganda and antizionism,¹¹⁴ and emerged as a 'powerful historic force' after the extensive antisemitic and antizionist campaigns in the former USSR from 1967.¹¹⁵ The ongoing effects of this propaganda are discernible today, influencing unfavourable attitudes towards Jews, such as blaming Jews for 'transforming themselves from a people of victims to one of aggressors' and establishing a false parallel between Israel and Nazi Germany.¹¹⁶

Holocaust inversion is an especially pernicious form of antisemitism because it:

- diminishes and dilutes the significance of the Holocaust, largely to delegitimise Jewish loss, pain and suffering
- misappropriates the pain and suffering of Holocaust victims, their families, descendants and communities
- seeks to use this misappropriation to cause maximum hurt to Jewish groups, especially Holocaust survivors and their descendants, by using the language of the Holocaust to draw a false moral equivalence between their persecutors and the sole Jewish-majority state
- serves to **demonise** and **delegitimise** Israel, Israelis and Jews.

These comparisons often form a cycle of positive reinforcement with Holocaust **denial** and **minimisation**. (A separate IHRA Working Definition on Holocaust Denial and Distortion (2013) provides specific guidance on identifying discourse and propaganda that denies the historical reality and extent of the Holocaust. Holocaust denial and distortion is a particular form of antisemitism that falls within the broader IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism and the definitions complement each other.)¹¹⁷

Holocaust inversion, denial, distortion and minimisation are especially harmful due to the intergenerational trauma that many Jewish

people carry. In Australia, a large proportion of the Jewish community are either survivors of the Holocaust or descendants of survivors, with around 27,000 Holocaust survivors arriving in Australia as refugees following the murder of their families by the Nazis in Europe. Jewish Australians have a strong connection to Holocaust experience and memory.¹¹⁸

Comparing Israel, Israelis and Jews to Nazis is a modern form of construing Jewish individuals and collectives as the worst imaginable evil, and helps to justify violence against Israel, Israelis, Jews and Jewish institutions. It is highly offensive to Jewish people who were the victims of Nazi atrocity.

The dramatic rise in antisemitism in Australia has re-traumatised many Holocaust survivors.

'... our volunteers are either Holocaust survivors or second- or third-generation Holocaust survivors. They are very fearful and are re-traumatised by what they're seeing around them.'

— Sandy Hollis, Head of Education, Sydney Jewish Museum, in evidence at the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism, 19 May 2025 (Report on Proceedings before Portfolio Committee No. 5, Justice and Communities, Antisemitism in New South Wales, p.17)

Case studies:

- placards of 'Well done Hitler would be proud' and 'Same shit Different asshole', the latter with images of Hitler and Netanyahu, both placards making Nazi analogies to Israel (State Library, Melbourne, 28 October 2023)¹¹⁹
- 3 banners of Hitler removing his mask, revealing the face of Netanyahu, making an analogy between Nazism and Israel, on major roads (Sydney eastern suburbs, 5 November 2023)¹²⁰
- graffiti of a Star of David, equal sign, and Nazi swastika, and another graffiti of 'End the Genocide' on a main road (Lismore, regional NSW, 19 February 2024)¹²¹
- poster comparing Jews with Nazis (Figure 24).



Figure 24: Nazi inversion

114 M Gerstenfeld, 'Holocaust Inversion: The Portraying of Israel and Jews as Nazis', Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 1 April 2007.

115 AD Colombo, 'Before and after October 7: Changes in Italian Undergraduates' Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims' *Contemporary Jewry*, 2024, 44:937-964.

116 AD Colombo, 'Before and after October 7: Changes in Italian Undergraduates' Attitudes towards Jews and Muslims'.

117 IHRA, [Working definition of Holocaust denial and distortion](#), accessed 18 March 2026.

118 "Remembering the Holocaust" emerges as the most important factor in Jewish identity in a Gen17 Study', D Graham and A Markus, *Gen 17 Australian Jewish Community Survey: Preliminary Findings*, Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University, 2018, p 15.

119 J Nathan, *Preliminary statistics concerning surge in antisemitic incidents following Hamas atrocities in Israel on 7 October 2023*, ECAJ, 15 December 2023, p 7, accessed 18 March 2026.

120 A Demetriadi, 'Sydney MPs, Jewish leaders condemn 'grotesque' Hitler posters', *The Australian*, 5 November 2023.

121 J Nathan, *Report on Antisemitism in Australia 2024*, ECAJ, 9 December 2025, p 134, accessed 18 March 2026.

IHRA example 11: Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the State of Israel

Blaming Jews or Jewish communities for the actions or perceived actions of Israel is antisemitic. This imposition of collective responsibility on Jews for the actions of a sovereign country often leads to hostility toward, and physical attacks upon, Jews and Jewish institutions during periods of Middle East tension. This has been demonstrated repeatedly in Australia, with major surges of antisemitism immediately following, and continuing throughout, the outbreak of hostilities between Israel and Hamas. This expression of antisemitism frequently intersects with other tropes, such as the trope of dual loyalties.

Australian case studies

Miznon restaurant, Melbourne, July 2025

In July 2025 masked protestors attacked diners at an Israeli restaurant in Melbourne. Protestors allegedly threw chairs, overturned tables, threw food, stuck their fingers in diners' food and verbally abused diners. Three protestors were charged by police with assault, affray, riotous behaviour and criminal damage.¹²² The protestors posted a statement online justifying the targeting of the restaurant and diners on the basis that the restaurant was co-owned by an Israeli.¹²³ This justification is itself an example of a double standard: there are many foreign conflicts and political causes, but they do not provoke violent and riotous attacks on diners based on the nationality of the restaurateur or the national origin of the food served. This selective and disproportionate response is also an indicator of antisemitism (refer IHRA Example 8).

Book launch in Brisbane, April 2024

On 13 April 2024, a number of Brisbane's Jewish community attended a book launch at a Paddington bookstore for the autobiography of a Jewish author and musician. They were met with violent intimidation by protesters with signs accusing them of supporting genocide, despite the event having nothing to do with the Gaza conflict or Israel. The protesters yelled loud slogans throughout the event and attempted to break into the bookstore, which was prevented by the presence of police. The protestors constantly banged the glass windows of the store for the hour of the event and yelled at and harassed people as they entered and exited the store.

'I was incredibly shaken and was crying afterwards, all of us were'

— Age 45—54, QLD

'Pro- palestinian protestors jostled us & screamed anti zionist insults at us as we arrived & continued chanting & banging on the window of the store during the launch. Police were called but did nothing to prevent the disruption by the protestors. When we left we were jostled & verbally insulted again. The police asked us who had attended the event rather than the disruptive protestors to move on.

This experience was antisemitic because the protestors were accusing us who support Israel and Jews of genocide in Gaza and were calling for the destruction of Israel. We were frightened and angry at their ignorance, also disappointed at the lack of protection or support from the police. We felt fear and anxiety during and after the event. We felt anger when the police who were present did nothing to protect us from this abusive behaviour. It has caused anxiety and fear but also strengthened our resolve as a community to be proud and supportive of each other.'

— Age 65—74, QLD



Figure 25: Protester outside bookshop in Brisbane 2024

National Gallery of Victoria, July 2025

On 27 July 2025, protestors marching through the Melbourne CBD to the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) targeted the NGV with slogans such as 'NGV funded by Zionists' (referring to well-known Jewish philanthropists); carried banners that stated 'Zionism = fascism' and 'blood on your hands'; while others chanted 'NGV, you can't hide, you're supporting genocide'. They also turned the pond in front of the NGV red. This demonstration was labelled as antisemitic by Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan.¹²⁴

Part 4 – relationship with different international legal contexts

Part 4 outlines the general relationship between the IHRA definition and the law – and recognises that every country is different, with different legal systems and laws. It reflects the international context in which the definition was drafted. For instance, Holocaust denial is a criminal offence in Germany and Canada and is addressed by the broader legislative framework in a number of European countries. However, Holocaust denial is not *per se* a criminal offence in Australia. In Australia, various pieces of Commonwealth, state and territory legislation address criminal conduct that involves hatred, bias or prejudice. That conduct may involve antisemitism, which is a form of hatred, bias or prejudice against a Jewish person or people. The IHRA definition is not legally binding but assists in providing an understanding of various expressions of antisemitism.

¹²² ABC News, [Three charged over altercation at Israeli-owned restaurant Miznon in Melbourne CBD](#), ABC News, 8 July 2025, accessed 19 March 2026.

¹²³ ABC News, [Three charged over altercation at Israeli-owned restaurant Miznon in Melbourne CBD](#).

¹²⁴ D White, ['Premier Jacinta Allan labels pro-Palestine protestors who rallied outside NGV 'extremists' and 'antisemitic'](#), *The Age*, 29 July 2025, accessed 31 July 2025.

Practical use of the IHRA definition in the Australian context

Combatting antisemitism within Australia's Anti-Racism Framework

The National Anti-Racism Framework developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) is a foundational plank in combatting all forms of racism in Australia. The main focus of the anti-racism framework is – as it should be – on addressing the widespread racism experienced by Australia's First Peoples. The framework also recognises that there are many forms of racism in Australia.

Aligning with the human rights-based approach advocated by the AHRC, this handbook is grounded in an understanding of racism that is intersectional, community-centric, and recognises racism as a complex and shifting phenomenon.

In particular, the National Anti-Racism Framework emphasises the importance of:

- education
- addressing online hate
- improving data collection
- building greater racial literacy (i.e. the knowledge and skills to recognise and understand racism in society)
- taking a community-centred approach
- keeping people safe from hate and harm
- training for police and public servants and strengthening institutional responses so incidents are properly recognised, recorded and dealt with
- ensuring an accessible, diverse, equitable, and representative media and arts landscape in Australia
- taking a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.

The Envoy's 'whole-of-society' map for Australia is at p. 57. A whole-of-society approach is considered best practice for countering antisemitism.

Efforts to recognise, address and combat antisemitism are therefore an essential part of a broader effort to strive towards an Australia that is free of all forms of hate, discrimination, hostility and racism.

This requires an understanding of:

- how different forms of racism may operate differently within society
- the history and context of some specific anti-Jewish racist ideas and slurs and how those expressions are harmful
- the racialising process through which stereotypes, myths, and tropes are incorporated into a template to construct a malevolent image of Jews. This process often revives and reworks ancient and popular prejudices and myths that are based on inventions and falsehoods as well as distortions, inversions and perversions of facts.

Broader legislative frameworks dealing with all forms of hatred in Australia (including the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*) provide important guardrails for dealing with antisemitism and all forms of discrimination, vilification and hate prevalent in society.

From understanding to application: a practical guide

The IHRA definition has been embraced by the Australian Government, with bipartisan support, as well as by New South Wales and Victorian governments, various local councils, and the National Student Ombudsman, as well as civil society entities. The IHRA definition is widely embraced by Jewish community organisations in Australia as a helpful educative tool in understanding the lived experience of antisemitism in Australia today. This section provides guidance on how the definition may be applied in various sectors.

The guidance is broken down into several sectors, namely (a) educational and academic institutions; (b) law enforcement agencies; (c) legal sector; (d) public sector, government agencies and government programs; (e) workplaces; (f) arts and creatives; (g) civil society and not-for-profit sector; (h) health; (i) sport; (j) media; and (k) online.

Educational and academic institutions

Education, both formal and informal, is key to combatting all forms of hatred, including antisemitism. Education is a key focus area of the AHRC's National Anti-Racism Framework. Anti-hate and pro-social education should begin during primary school and continue through to tertiary levels.

Curricula should be designed to include education on Jewish religious beliefs and practices (including indigenous practices related to the Land of Israel), and historical and contemporary antisemitism, including the most extreme manifestation of antisemitism of the Holocaust and genocide. Curricula may also include education on the history and contributions of Jews in Australia, as well as contemporary Jewish culture and religion. Education on these topics can also help to counter hateful narratives.¹²⁵

In order to teach about antisemitism, educators must understand it themselves. School and tertiary administrators should also learn about antisemitism to ensure that it can be properly addressed in schools and on campuses. For students, principals, teachers, and other educational professionals alike, antisemitism can be included in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs, as well as in relevant policies, codes of conduct and complaints-handling processes. DEI sessions on antisemitism can use the IHRA definition as a guide and as an educational resource.

Schools and tertiary institutions should be where students go to learn about antisemitism – not experience it.

For educators and educational institutions, practical use of the IHRA definition can include:

- using the definition to educate students, beginning at early ages and continuing through post-secondary
- using the definition to educate teachers, professionals in the field of education, and post-secondary professors and administrators on how

to identify antisemitism, to facilitate recording and intervening against antisemitism

- incorporating the definition into DEI policies and complaints-handling processes
- incorporating the definition into school policies and campus codes of conduct – helping administrators and institutions identify what manifestations of antisemitism may look like. This aligns with Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism's University Report Card initiative, which assesses how well Australian universities are responding to antisemitism on campus.¹²⁶ One of the Report Card criteria is the adoption of a definition of antisemitism as recommended by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights Inquiry into antisemitism at Australian universities (February 2025)¹²⁷
- having the definition publicly available.

Lessons regarding antisemitism can also serve as an example of how to combat and prevent other forms of discrimination.



¹²⁵ S Rutland and Z Gross, 'Combatting antisemitism in the school playground: an Australian case study' *Patterns of Prejudice*, Taylor & Francis, 2014:1–22, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0031322X.2014.918703>.

¹²⁶ Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism (ASECA), *Special Envoy's Plan to Combat Antisemitism*, ASECA, 10 July 2025, p 9, accessed 18 March 2026; Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism (ASECA), *2025 ASECA Emeritus Professor Greg Craven Media Release* [media release], ASECA, 17 November 2025, accessed 18 March 2026.

¹²⁷ Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, *Inquiry into antisemitism at Australian universities*, Commonwealth of Australia, February 2025, recommendation 4.66 p xi, accessed 18 March 2026.



Law enforcement agencies

Law enforcement agencies play a critical role in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of Jewish Australians and the security of Jewish community institutions such as synagogues, schools, child-care centres, museums and hospitals.

Commonwealth, state and territory police agencies investigate allegations of criminal conduct, including that which involves antisemitism. Where a law enforcement agency **receives a report** of alleged criminal conduct (including that which involves antisemitism), the agency **investigates** the incident, **identifies** relevant lines of inquiry and **assesses** an appropriate **response**. In accordance with its policies, the agency will **inform** the victim of its response to the incident.

Within this context, the IHRA definition provides a useful tool for understanding antisemitism. In particular, the definition might:

- contribute towards an enhanced understanding and awareness of antisemitism as a form of racial and/or religious hatred, the varied forms it may take, and its impact upon its victims and the broader Jewish community.

The legal sector

In Australia, Commonwealth, state and territory legislation prohibits discrimination and vilification on the basis of certain attributes, including race, religion and nationality.

The AHRC has responsibilities under Commonwealth legislation to investigate and conciliate complaints of discrimination and human rights breaches,¹²⁸ including those which involve antisemitism.

For all legal practitioners, the IHRA definition provides a useful tool for understanding antisemitism. The definition might:

- contribute to an enhanced understanding and awareness of antisemitism as a form of racial and/or religious hatred, the varied forms it may take and its impact upon its victims and the broader Jewish community.

Public sector, government agencies and government programs

All levels of government – federal, state / territory, and local – have an obligation to foster a safe and cohesive society and to protect Australians from harm.

A whole-of-government approach is informed by:

- Australia's multilateral frameworks, including its membership of IHRA and its endorsement of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism
- the Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism
- Australia's human rights commitments, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)
- Requirements under the *Fair Work Act 2009*.

All levels of government in Australia are committed to having workplaces that celebrate the rich diversity of the Australian community and that all feel respected, safe and valued.

The Australian Public Service (APS) has zero tolerance for antisemitism.¹²⁹ The APS upholds core values as outlined in the APS Code of Conduct:

Impartial

The APS is apolitical and provides the government with advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence.

Committed to service

The APS is professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and works collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the government.

Accountable

The APS is open and accountable to the Australian community under the law and within the framework of Ministerial responsibility.

Respectful

The APS respects all people, including their rights and their heritage.

Ethical

The APS demonstrates leadership, is trustworthy, and acts with integrity, in all that it does.

The IHRA definition links well with these values and the APS Code of Conduct. It can help public servants, departmental staff and other government decision-makers to identify and understand antisemitism. The IHRA definition is applicable to APS workplaces¹³⁰ and can be used in education and training and to ensure respectful communication.

An understanding of antisemitism may be relevant to some public servants in the course of their work and so the IHRA definition, when incorporated into training and education, can assist them in their roles.

Governments and their agencies are responsible for delivering services (Centrelink for example) and engage daily with members of the public from diverse communities, including Jewish Australians.

Workplaces

One key obligation of employers is to take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health and safety of everyone in their workplaces through a system of risk management. This obligation extends to preventing bullying and generally ensuring psychosocial safety. Another key obligation on employers is to take reasonable steps to prevent and address harassment and other forms of unlawful discrimination.

To be able to meet these obligations, employers should be equipped with the proper tools to prevent, educate on, recognise, and respond to possible incidents of antisemitism.

Preventing and combatting antisemitism should begin with the recruitment process and continue during the entire course of the workplace relationship, up to and including dismissal. Employers should prevent and address antisemitic actions and statements by managers, other employees, contractors and customers / clients. Allowing workers to be subjected to antisemitic discrimination, harassment or bullying by outsiders such as contractors and customers / clients can also be unlawful.

All proactive employers would have clear policies and training dealing with diversity, inclusion, discrimination and bullying. Both policies and training should:

- integrate a code of conduct making clear what kinds of behaviours and opinions are unacceptable – including unlawful discrimination and all forms of expressions of racist hatred, such as vilification and incitement to hatred, ridicule or fear
- have a clear focus on how to manage respectful communications at work even when views differ.

While many employers are familiar with these kinds of measures for dealing with discrimination, harassment and bullying generally, content on antisemitism is often noticeably absent from policies and training – and, where included, is often dealt with inadequately or sometimes even harmfully. Employers should ensure that antisemitism is addressed explicitly in their diversity, inclusion and anti-discrimination training.

The IHRA definition is a useful tool and reference for achieving these goals. Its practical use can include:

- incorporating a reference and links to the definition alongside policies that touch on acceptable and unacceptable workplace behaviour, including policies on diversity and inclusion, discrimination and harassment, bullying and any codes of conduct
- integrating an understanding of antisemitism into training materials by reference to the IHRA definition and requiring any external organisation hired to provide training to use the definition
- using the definition for continuing professional development, including training for managers in the areas of people management from recruitment to termination, and in training on psychosocial hazard management
- relying on the definition to assist them to identify, and respond to instances of, antisemitism in the workplace.

This guide can be used to understand Jewish lived experience.

128 Australian Human Rights Commission, <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/legal/legislation>.

129 Australian Public Service Commission (APSC), [Circular 2026/01: Working together to combat antisemitism in the APS](#), APSC,

9 February 2026, accessed 18 March 2026.

130 APSC, Circular 2026/01: Working together to combat antisemitism in the APS, para 13.

Arts and creatives

The Arts play a role in shaping the nation's cultural identity, fostering social connection, and reflecting the diverse experiences of its people. Adopting the IHRA definition in the arts sector can help foster inclusive, respectful, and informed creative spaces. While preserving artistic freedom, the definition provides clear, legally non-binding guidance to identify and respond to antisemitism, ensuring that Jewish artists, audiences and communities are not marginalised or targeted. In a cultural landscape that values both expression and responsibility, the definition can assist art galleries, institutions and artists in distinguishing between legitimate political critique and antisemitic rhetoric.

Civil society and not-for-profit sector

Civil society is the sphere of life that sits between the state, the market and the private household. Civil society organisations impact all facets of Australian society – providing education, services, programming, and advocating for important causes. They range from charities, non-government organisations (NGOs), think-tanks, labour unions, cooperatives and advocacy organisations to sports clubs and community associations.

Because of the important role that civil society organisations play, it is important that they strive to be free of hatred and discrimination. As part of these efforts, civil society organisations should adopt and implement the IHRA definition, for use both internally and in their wider work.

Some civil society organisations have mandates specifically related to combatting racism, xenophobia, hatred and discrimination. Efforts to address antisemitism are often marginalised within the broader struggle against racism and other forms of hatred.¹³¹ It is therefore especially important for these organisations to ensure that combatting antisemitism is part of their mandate.

Generally, civil society organisations can use the IHRA definition to:

- prevent, identify, and address antisemitic incidents within their organisation
- prevent, identify, and address antisemitic incidents in their work – in the provision of services and programming, in advocacy and education.

Civil society organisations with anti-hate, anti-discrimination, and anti-racism mandates can use the IHRA definition to:

- support prevention work, such as developing training manuals and facilitating workshops to improve the competencies of professional groups in recognising and responding to antisemitism
- facilitate the provision of appropriate support services for victims of antisemitism, including legal and psychological counselling or intervening when expertise is needed
- guide the collection, analysis and publication of data on antisemitic incidents and crimes, as well as antisemitic movements or debates
- provide a reference point for monitoring online antisemitism and engaging with social media companies.



Figure 26: Multicultural and multifaith vigil in solidarity with the Jewish community after the antisemitic terror attack on Bondi Beach. The vigil affirmed a shared commitment to respect, compassion and social cohesion. Image courtesy of the Victorian Multicultural Commission

¹³¹ B Borzykowski, 'We're witnessing the highest rise of antisemitism in 50 years', *National Post*, 11 October 2023, updated 13 October 2023, accessed 18 March 2026.

Health

The healthcare sector deals with people at their most vulnerable and is one of the nation's largest employers. Healthcare practitioners are subject to legal and ethical requirements that govern patient care, and among other things are required to: provide safe, effective and person-centred care; act with integrity, honesty and cultural respect; do no harm; provide fair and impartial treatment; and not discriminate, including on the basis of race.

Despite this comprehensive and robust framework safeguarding patients from harm and discrimination, the healthcare sector has not been immune from the rise in antisemitism. Jewish patients have expressed fear for their own safety and compromised care. Jewish doctors have been harassed, vilified and targeted, and there are examples of regulators' anonymous complaints processes being 'weaponised' to target Jewish doctors.

One of the challenges in addressing the problem is the fragmentation of governance in the sector: between public and private health; between federal and state; and between colleges, boards, regulators, unions and industry groups. Starting with the IHRA definition allows for a standardised understanding of antisemitism and greater consistency in relevant codes of conduct. It encourages a unified understanding across a highly fragmented sector and encourages sector participants at all levels to engage with both patients and each other with greater care, respect and sensitivity.

The IHRA definition can also inform a process of 'depoliticising' a fundamentally important part of our society. The definition does not preclude individuals from holding any specific political or social views but provides a mechanism by which expressions of personal views do not compromise patient or workplace safety.



Sport

Sport plays a significant role in Australian cultural life by fostering social connectedness and cohesion, strengthening community identity and creating inclusive spaces where people from diverse backgrounds connect through shared participation.

Australia's sporting sector operates across a highly fragmented governance landscape, spanning federal and state responsibilities, national sporting organisations, state associations, private clubs and community leagues. This dispersion of authority creates inconsistent policies, uneven enforcement standards, and regulatory blind spots, particularly in grassroots competitions where formal compliance frameworks are often limited.

Adoption of the IHRA definition could establish a single, authoritative benchmark capable of operating across these overlapping jurisdictions. A uniform definition provides clarity for administrators, tribunals and participants, reduces ambiguity in disciplinary processes and aligns codes of conduct across elite and community tiers.

A standardised definition equips low-level sporting leagues with a practical tool to identify and address antisemitic conduct that might otherwise be minimised, mischaracterised or overlooked. Embedding a shared and consistent standard across the fragmented sporting ecosystem could strengthen preventative education, improve reporting consistency and support proportionate enforcement, thereby reinforcing sport as a safe and inclusive environment at every level.



Media

Media plays a vital role in shaping public opinion, frames national conversations and reflects as well as constructs the country's sense of identity. In an era where misinformation, disinformation and hate speech can spread rapidly, the IHRA definition offers media professionals a clear, internationally recognised standard to distinguish between legitimate critique and harmful stereotyping or denial of Jewish identity and history. It would provide a practical and consistent framework for identifying and addressing antisemitic content and would reinforce public trust in media institutions. By integrating the IHRA definition, Australian media can actively contribute to a more informed, respectful and inclusive society while maintaining the principles of free expression and editorial independence.

Online

Online antisemitism is not a new phenomenon. It has existed since the early days of the World Wide Web and now thrives across both fringe websites and mainstream platforms. The online ecosystem has the ability to foster conditions in which misinformation, hate and incitement proliferate.

Online hate does not remain confined to the digital space. The views formed online or the harassment, intimidation and incitement fomented online can easily cross over into the real world. In Australia, the real-world consequences have, in a number of cases, been severe. Jewish Australians have been doxxed online, subjected to abuse – both online and in the real world – and had their businesses and families targeted, forcing some to close businesses and move their residences.

Effective moderation of antisemitic content remains a persistent challenge for digital platforms. Australia's Online Hate Prevention Institute has monitored takedown rates since 2016,¹³² with the most recent data from 2024 showing the overall removal rate on antisemitic material was, on average, just 18% across 10 social media platforms – with the removal rate on individual platforms ranging from 36% down to 4%.¹³³ This was an improvement on 2023 (before 7 October 2023), when the average removal rate was 14%.¹³⁴ The Center for Countering Digital Hate in the United Kingdom found similar rates in its 2022 *Failure to Protect* report.¹³⁵

Without a clear understanding of what constitutes antisemitic content or behaviour, platforms cannot accurately assess risk, design appropriate safeguards, or meet reasonable expectations to prevent harmful material from being generated or amplified.

To strengthen moderation, platforms require a clear, consistent and widely accepted definition of antisemitism to guide Community Guidelines, AI training data and human-review processes. The IHRA definition, and its illustrative examples, provides a practical foundation.

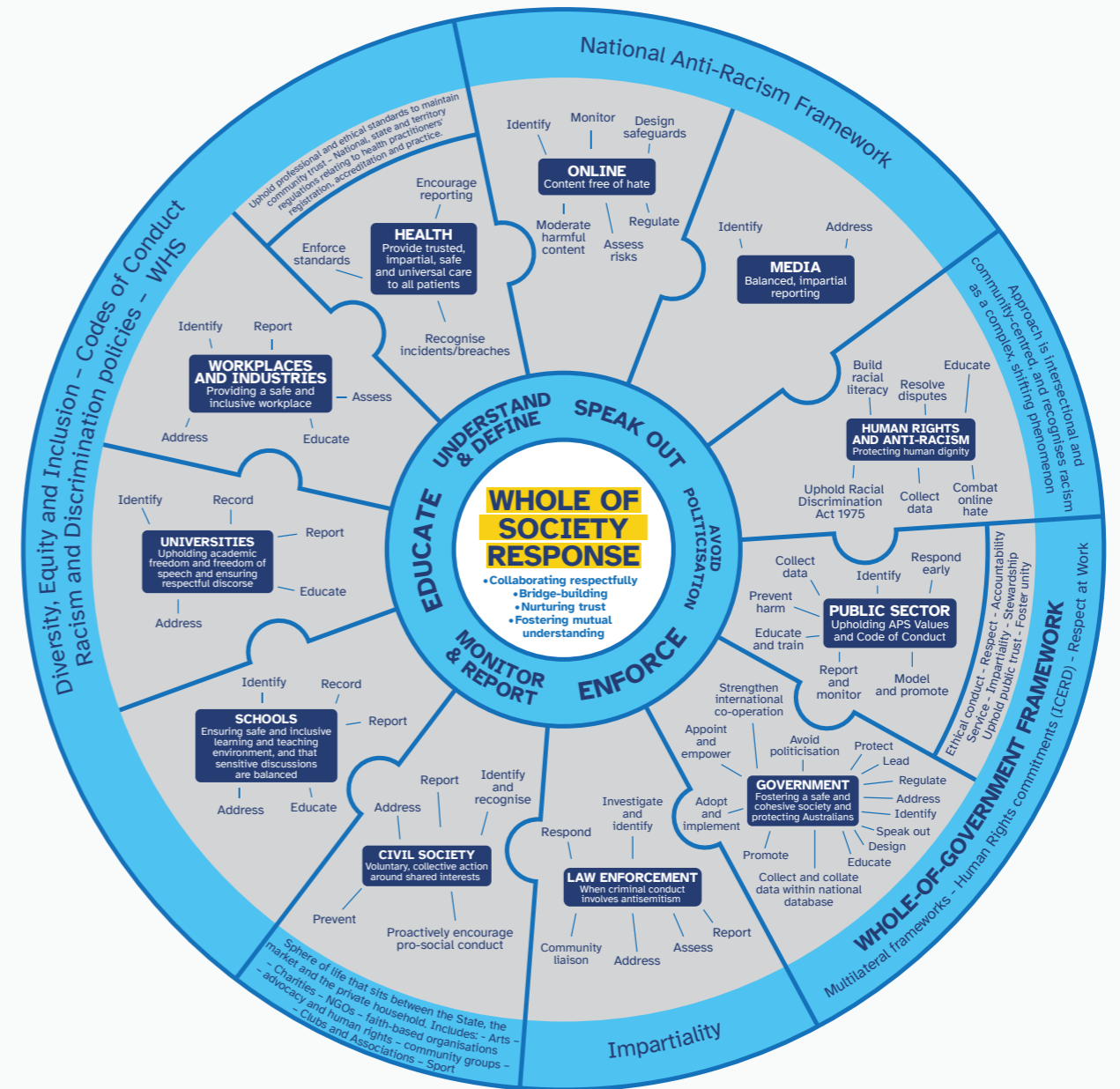


Figure 27: ASECA's whole-of-society map for Australia

132 A Oboler, 'Measuring the hate: the state of antisemitism in social media', Caulfield South, Victoria, 2016, accessed 18 March 2026.
 133 A Oboler, E Roth, J Beinart, and J Beinart 'Online Antisemitism After October 7', 25 March 2024, p 32, accessed 18 March 2026.
 134 A Oboler et al, Online Antisemitism After October 7, p 32.
 135 Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH), *Failure to Protect — how tech giants fail to act on user reports of antisemitism*, 30 July 2021, accessed 18 March 2026.

GLOBAL GUIDELINES FOR COUNTERING ANTISEMITISM

17 July 2024

Concerned states, special envoys, national coordinators, and representatives tasked by their governments to counter antisemitism, in cooperation with international bodies, offer the following best practices, which have proven to be effective guidelines in formulating public policy.

These legally non-binding guidelines, adopted in Buenos Aires, Argentina, include policies to monitor and combat antisemitism that can be implemented and adapted to a wide variety of national, regional, and cultural contexts.

We urge all states and international bodies, as well as civil society, to embrace and use these practices, many of which already form the basis of regional and country-based action plans. These guidelines can be applied everywhere, not only in societies with Jewish communities.

SPEAK OUT – Governments and political leaders should denounce antisemitism swiftly, clearly, and unequivocally, whenever and wherever it occurs. This applies to the domestic and international arenas, including regional and international organizations.

AVOID POLITICIZATION – Antisemitism can appear across the political spectrum and should be rejected without political bias and regardless of its origin.

ADOPT and IMPLEMENT – Governments and international bodies should adopt and implement strategies and action plans that engage all relevant ministries and public authorities at all levels of governance. This should be done in consultation with Jewish communities, civil society, field researchers, and other relevant stakeholders. Such policies should be assessed periodically and updated as needed.

APPOINT and EMPOWER – Governments and international bodies should consider appointing national coordinators, special envoys, or designated officials. Such officials can proactively address antisemitism as a cross-cutting public policy challenge and should be provided with the necessary authority, empowerment, and resources to be effective.

UNDERSTAND and DEFINE – In order to combat antisemitism, governments need tools to understand its various manifestations. The legally non-binding “International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism” is an important internationally recognized instrument used by over 40 U.N. member states since its adoption in 2016. In addition, hundreds of sub-national public authorities, universities, sports bodies, NGOs, and corporations rely on it.

PROTECT – There are few roles more central for governments than the security and welfare of their populations. Jewish communities are targets of physical threats and attacks from both foreign and domestic sources. Governments, working together with Jewish communities, should provide appropriate protection and security enhancements that safeguard and sustain Jewish communal life. Religious freedom and protection also encompass safeguarding unhindered religious practice.

COLLECT – Policies should be in place to support the uniform collection of data documenting incidents of antisemitism as well as the perceptions of antisemitism among Jewish communities and the broader public. Such information, drawn from community-based sources, when possible, allows for evidence-based understanding of trends and sources.

ENFORCE – Enforcement of hate crime and anti-discrimination laws is critical and should take place within legal frameworks that protect civil liberties and human rights, such as freedom of expression. Enforcement conveys the broader message that antisemitism is unacceptable, has consequences, and cannot be tolerated.

EDUCATE – Education is vital for identifying and countering antisemitism, including Holocaust remembrance and countering Holocaust denial and distortion, an especially pernicious form of antisemitism. It has also proven effective in sensitizing law enforcement. Education about Jewish culture and contributions to society demystifies Jews and Judaism. Many countries and intergovernmental organizations have linked their efforts against antisemitism to broadening appreciation of Jewish heritage and fostering Jewish life.

CULTIVATE A WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY COMMITMENT – Countering antisemitism requires a whole-of-society commitment that includes the active participation of civil society. Collaboration; bridge-building; nurturing trust among faith, civic, and cultural leaders; and fostering mutual understanding are essential, particularly since antisemitism is not solely a threat to Jews. It can endanger

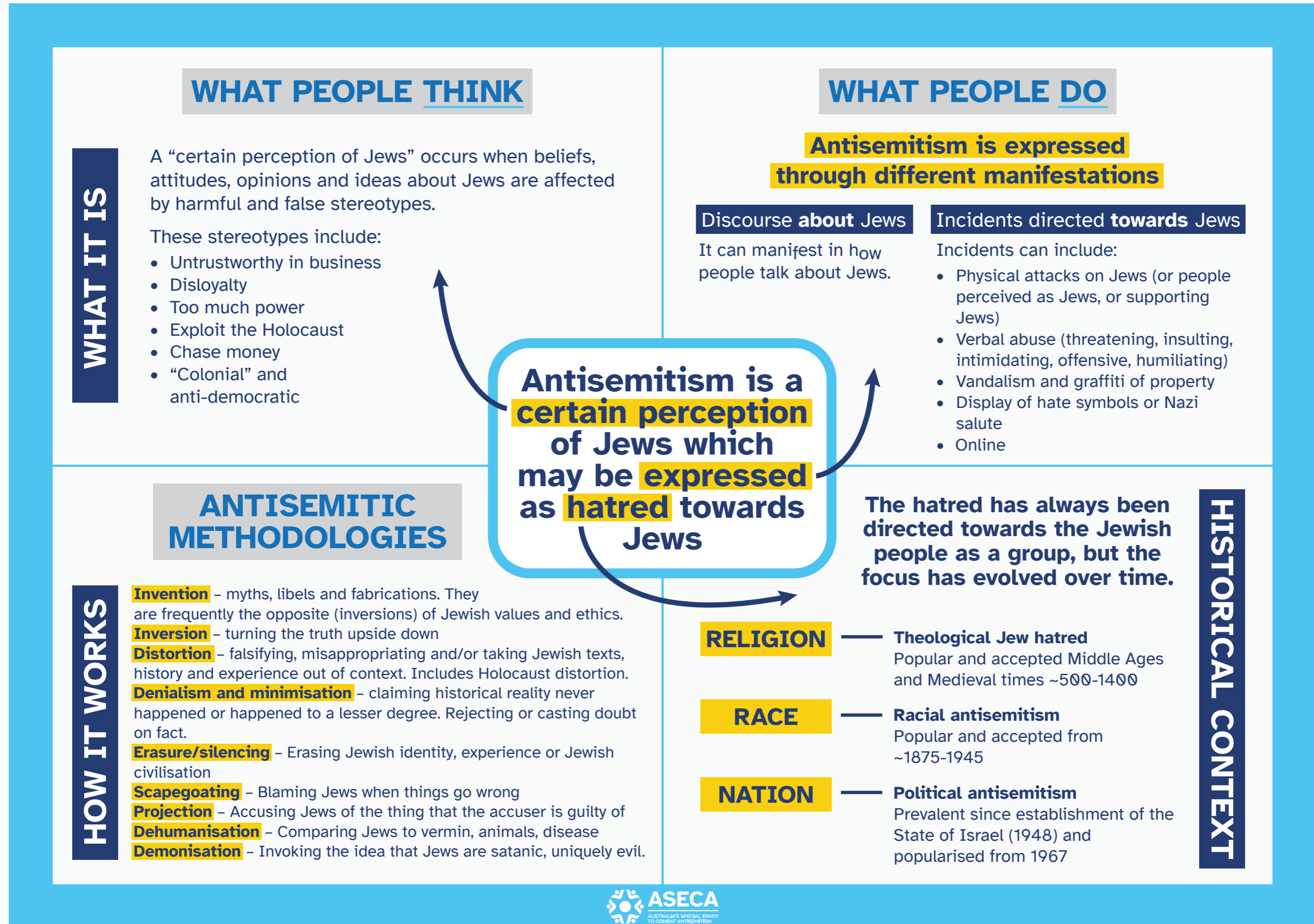


members of other minority groups, democratic values, and national security and stability.

ENGAGE SOCIAL MEDIA – Antisemitism, like other forms of group hatred and disinformation, is widespread and mutating online. It has real world consequences and can lead to radicalization to violence. Stakeholders should oppose antisemitism online, stay educated on evolving trends, increase transparency about antisemitic content, assess impacts on vulnerable communities, and find solutions, within the context of existing legal frameworks.

STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION – Coalition-building and international cooperation are paramount to effectively monitor and counter antisemitism. In an interconnected world where hate respects no borders, transnational cooperation can identify threats, raise awareness, broaden the use of best practices, and more effectively and proactively coordinate responses.





Appendix C: Addressing misconceptions about the IHRA definition

Misconception #1: The IHRA definition is overly broad and vague

This critique of the IHRA definition is grounded in misunderstandings of the definition. Those who make this critique focus only on Part 1 (the core definition), effectively ignoring the other 3 parts, including the contemporary examples.

It is true that the core definition is broad – this is intentional. Antisemitism comes in many forms and has changed constantly over the thousands of years that it has existed. The core definition needs to be broad to capture all forms of antisemitism.

Yet, the core definition is only **one of the 4 parts** that together comprise the IHRA definition. The other 3 parts are more specific and precise. Part 2 helps to explain the connection between antisemitism and conspiratorial thinking, as well as providing helpful language on the relationship between criticism of Israel and antisemitism. The contemporary examples provide 11 illustrations of common and prevalent contemporary forms of antisemitism, so that these types can be recognised. Each of these forms has a particular history.

Antisemitism continues to evolve, with a growing trend of 'Zionist' being used as cover for 'Jew' and antizionism being used as a surrogate for antisemitism. This has a deep and harmful impact on diaspora Jewry. No definition can be current for all trends and that is why the IHRA definition is a 'working' definition, designed to accommodate the evolving nature of antisemitism.

Finally, Part 4 explains how the IHRA definition is legally non-binding, and how it relates to the existing law of jurisdictions that adopt it.

Misconception #2: The IHRA definition silences criticism of Israel

This misconception about the IHRA definition is grounded in misunderstandings and misrepresentations about what it says and how it should be used. It explicitly states that **'criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic.'** In other words, criticism of Israel that is not discriminatory is specifically described as not being antisemitic under the IHRA definition.

On the other hand, the IHRA definition does explain that criticism of Israel **can** cross the line into antisemitism when it is discriminatory. Again, this does not silence criticism of Israel. Rather, it helps to foster peaceful dialogue instead of hateful expression. The IHRA definition helps to identify the boundary between valid criticism of Israel and antisemitism.

Finally, claims that the leading global definition of antisemitism – which reflects the lived experience of Jewish people worldwide – is designed to intentionally silence criticism echoes antisemitic tropes of Jewish power and control.

Misconception #3: The IHRA definition is contrary to freedom of expression

Critics of the IHRA definition have claimed that it is contrary to freedom of expression. The term 'freedom of expression' is often used as reference for the implied freedom of political communication. This implied freedom is not explicitly guaranteed by the Constitution, but it has been recognised by the High Court as essential to a representative and responsible government.¹³⁶

The critique that the IHRA definition is contrary to freedom of expression is made in the context of a broader argument that there should be lesser or no restrictions on hate speech in Australia.

The IHRA definition is not a legal instrument and does not impose any limits on freedom of expression. Rather, it serves as a tool to help identify and understand antisemitism. It does not displace existing legal standards, including those enshrined in federal, state, and territory legislation. Any decision concerning freedom of expression, or the legality of particular conduct, is made with reference to the relevant legal framework. Within that framework, the IHRA definition may assist in determining whether particular conduct was antisemitic. Whether the conduct is unlawful is a separate question determined with reference to the relevant legal framework.


Misconception #4: The lead drafter of the IHRA definition now opposes it

This critique of the IHRA definition is a simple factual inaccuracy. The definition had many drafters and contributors, and the other major drafters remain highly supportive of IHRA. Any criticism by a lead drafter is about how the IHRA definition is used rather than the definition itself; the IHRA definition has to be used in context.

The IHRA definition was unanimously adopted by IHRA's member countries on the advice of its experts in 2016.



Appendix D: How antisemitism works across time


Antisemitic form	Description	Historic roots/examples	Modern examples
Invention	<p>Myths, lies, libels and fabrications.</p> <p>They are frequently inversions and anathema to Jewish values and ethics.</p> <p>Invention also manifests as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • false information • fake news • misinformation • disinformation, which has a wide reach online.¹³⁷ 	<p>Middle Ages</p> <p>Irrational and demonic myths, fantasies and inventions about Jews were developed in medieval times, including well-poisoning, child-killing, host-desecration, plotting against Christianity, and establishing world domination.</p> <p>In the Middle Ages, Jews were accused of ritual murder and blood libel (the lie that Jewish people ritually sacrifice Christian children and use their blood for religious purposes).</p> <p>This is the opposite of Jewish values, which prioritise the sanctity of human life ('pikuach nefesh') and Jewish law, which strictly prohibits the consumption of blood.</p> <p>As a result of these false 'ritual murder' allegations, Jews were often murdered. This is a form of inversion – false allegations of Jews being murderers resulted in the death of Jews.¹³⁸</p>	<p>'Baby killers'</p> <p>In November 2024, the wife of a rabbi in Melbourne had the words 'Jews kill babies' scrawled on her car.</p> <p>'Puppeteers'</p> <p>In Nazi-era propaganda Jews were portrayed as 'puppeteers'.</p>  <p>Figure D1: Nazi-era propaganda printing plate with giant Jewish puppeteer manipulating Churchill and Stalin</p> <p>This imagery is reworked and reused in contemporary antisemitism, including this example from Katoomba, NSW,¹³⁹ which uses the antisemitic images of Jews being 'puppeteers', controlling things from behind the scenes (Figure D2). The inclusion of horns uses imagery of demonisation (see below).</p>

¹³⁷ For example, in Australia, following the antisemitic terror attack on a Jewish celebration at Bondi Beach on the 14 December 2025, fake information and misinformation was widely circulated online. David Swan, 'Fake hero, wrong suspect: Misinformation floods social media after Bondi shooting', 16 December 2025, <https://www.smh.com.au/technology/fake-hero-wrong-suspect-misinformation-floods-social-media-after-bondi-shooting-20251216-p5nnyx.html>, accessed 16 December 2025.

¹³⁸ Anthony Julius, *Trials of the Diaspora: A history of Anti-Semitism in England*, (Oxford University Press, 2010), p.70.

¹³⁹ ECAJ, *Anti-Jewish Incident Report 2024*, p 21.

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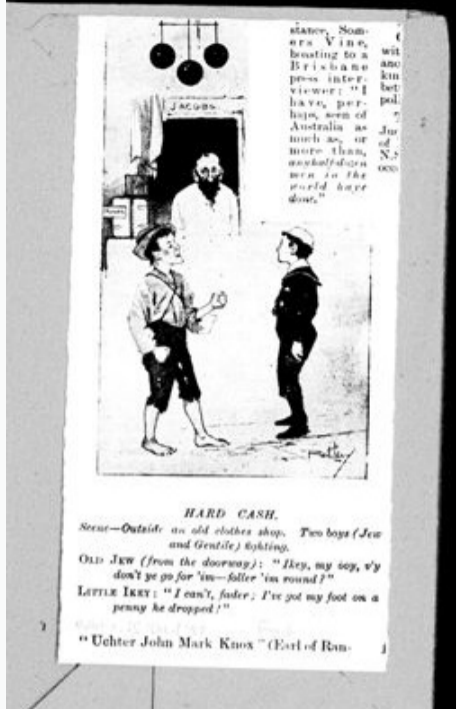
Antisemitic form	Description	Historic roots/examples	Modern examples
		<p><i>The Protocols of the Elders of Zion</i></p> <p>This notorious antisemitic fabrication was first published in Tsarist Russia in 1903 and purported to be 'documentary proof' of an ancient baseless myth of a global Jewish conspiracy for world domination. <i>The Protocols of the Elders of Zion</i> was used to justify violence against Jews. Despite being proven to be a libellous invention, the <i>Protocols of the Elders of Zion</i> continues to be believed and has widespread currency today, especially on the internet.</p>	 <p>Figure D2: antisemitic 'puppeteer' image in shop window, Katoomba, NSW, 25 May 2024 (photo courtesy ECAJ)</p>
Distortion	<p>Falsifying, misappropriating and/or taking out of context Jewish sacred texts or Jewish history and experience.</p>	<p>Association with money</p> <p>The portrayal of Jews as greedy and unscrupulous in the pursuit of profit goes back to the origins of Western-Christian culture.¹⁴⁰</p> <p>In medieval times Jews were excluded from various guilds and professions by being designated as 'unbelievers'. However, after the Third Lateran Council in 1179 when Christians were prohibited from lending money at interest (usury), Jews were permitted to perform the unpopular but necessary function of financier, banker or money-lender.¹⁴¹</p>	<p>Today's modern libels about Jews controlling the banks and/or love of money are derived from older lies, stereotypes and distortions about Jews.</p> <p>In Australia, it is a slur with which many Jews are familiar. Australian schoolchildren have experienced it as part of antisemitic bullying in state schools, with coins thrown at their feet and told 'pick it up Jew'.¹⁴²</p>

¹⁴⁰ M Bolton, A Chapelan, and C Vincent, 'Greed, Exploitation and Identification with Capitalism' in M. J. Becker et al. (eds.), *Decoding Antisemitism*, Postdisciplinary Studies in Discourse, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-49238-9_11, pp 137-144.

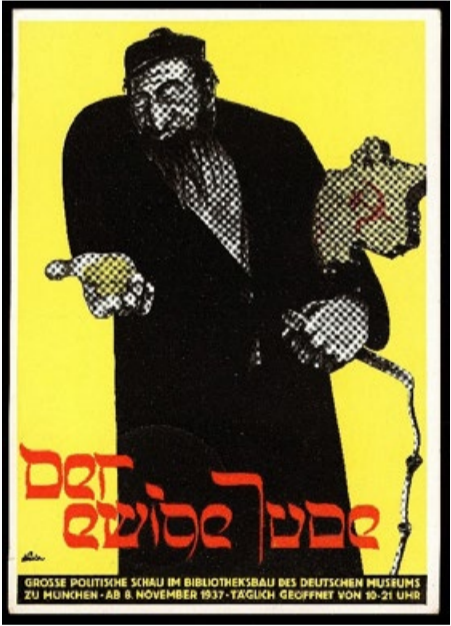
¹⁴¹ C Roth, *A Short History of the Jewish People*, East and West Library, London, 1943, pp 203-208.


¹⁴² Z Gross and SD. Rutland 'Combating antisemitism in the school playground: an Australian case study', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 2014, 48(3):309-330, DOI:10.1080/0031322X.2014.918703.

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Antisemitic form	Description	Historic roots/examples	Modern examples
		 <p>Figure D3: Medieval Jewish moneylenders, public domain</p> <p>Falsifying Jewish sacred texts</p> <p>At the end of the 17th century Heidelberg theologian Johann Andreas Eisenmenger wrote a lengthy treatise <i>Entdecktes Judentum</i> ('Jewry Unmasked'), depicting Jews as the enemy of Christianity.¹⁴³</p> <p>Borrowing from Eisenmenger, Professor August Rohling (1839–1931) published works that distorted and misrepresented the Talmud (Jewish sacred text). His work was disproved by 2 Christian professors, Noldeke and Wuensche, in the dispute between Rohling and Joseph Samuel Bloch, a Rabbi who challenged Rohling's anti-Jewish claims.</p>	 <p>Figure D4: Antisemitic cartoon appearing in <i>The Bulletin</i> (an Australian weekly publication) in 1897</p> <p>In the Nazi-era antisemitic propaganda promoted and exploited these stereotypes.</p>


143 J Katz, 'The Turning Point of Modern Jewish History: The Eighteenth Century', *Vision Confronts Reality: Historical Perspectives on the Contemporary Jewish Agenda*, Herzl Yearbook, New York, 1989, 9:40-55; B.Z Bokser, *Talmudic Forgeries: A case study in Anti-Jewish propaganda*, Synagogue Council of America, 1939.

Antisemitic form	Description	Historic roots/examples	Modern examples
			 <p>Figure D5: A travelling exhibition entitled 'The Edc,dc,dcternal Jew' opened in Munich on 8 November 1937 (image in the public domain)</p>

Antisemitic form	Description	Historic roots/examples	Modern examples
			 <p>Figure D6: Graffiti on a bridge siding on the Gold Coast, Queensland, June 2025</p> <p>Online memes known as the 'Happy Merchant' (similar to the graffiti above) foster antisemitism online.</p>
Denialism and minimisation	Claiming that historical reality never happened, or only happened to a lesser degree.	<p>The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance has a working definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion (which includes minimisation).</p> <p>Holocaust denial is 'discourse and propaganda that deny the historical reality and the extent of the extermination of the Jews by the Nazis and their accomplices during World War II, known as the Holocaust or the Shoah. Holocaust denial refers specifically to any attempt to claim that the Holocaust/Shoah did not take place.'</p>	<p>Holocaust denial and minimisation continue today as a global challenge.</p> <p>Other examples of denial include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> denial of the atrocities of 7 October 2023¹⁴⁴ denial of Jewish lived experience of antisemitism over the 'Summer of Hate' in Australia (December 2024 – February 2025) online denial, minimisation, justification, distortion and atrocity glorification following the Bondi antisemitic terror attack on 14 December 2025.¹⁴⁵



144 M Bar-Halpern and J Wolfman, 'Traumatic invalidation in the Jewish community after October 7', *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 2025, 35(8):1366–1393. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10911359.2025.2503441>.


145 OHPI, [The Bondi beach Chanukah massacre](#), OHPI, 14 January 2026, accessed 18 March 2026.

Antisemitic form	Description	Historic roots/examples	Modern examples
		<p>The working definition explains that: 'The goals of Holocaust denial often are the rehabilitation of an explicit antisemitism and the promotion of political ideologies and conditions suitable for the advent of the very type of event it denies.'</p> <p>A global campaign – #ProtectTheFacts – is designed to create awareness and combat Holocaust denial and distortion. This social media campaign is a joint initiative by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the OSCE/ODIHR, the United Nations, and UNESCO.</p>	<p>'The burning of multiple synagogues has been touted by high profile figures as false flag incidents and self-inflicted ... As a Jew, repeating patterns of discrimination over generations that are obvious to me, may not be visible to others. Violent intimidation and destruction of Jewish property is my family's history. If I see clear antisemitism and my society tells me it's my imagination, I feel my sanity is being questioned. It was painful to witness dozens of representatives of special interest and activist groups line up at the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism to redefine antisemitism in a way that denied and silenced our lived experience of hate incidents' – Tamara, NSW</p>
Inversion	<p>Turning the truth upside down.</p> <p>'Antisemitism is always a means rather than an end; it is a measure of the contradictions yet to be resolved. It is a mirror for the failings of individuals, social structures, and State systems. Tell me what you accuse Jews of—I'll tell you what you're guilty of.'</p> <p>– Vasily Grossman, <i>Life and Fate</i></p>	<p>Ritual murder libel</p> <p>As noted above, in the Middle Ages, Jews were often put to death because of invented 'ritual murder' allegations.</p> <p>Soviet-era propaganda</p> <p>Soviet-era antizionist propaganda deliberately demonised Israel and Zionism through disinformation, and the antizionist campaign was especially active from 1967.¹⁴⁶</p> <p>The lies and libels propagated through these campaigns have permeated discourse on Israel and Zionism ever since but have been largely invisible to the broader public who may think it is 'criticism of Israel'.¹⁴⁷</p>	<p>Portraying Jews as Nazis</p>  <p>Figure D7: Poster portraying Israelis/Jews as Nazis</p>

146 I Tabarovsky, 'Soviet Anti-Zionism and Contemporary Left Antisemitism', *Mapping the New Left Antisemitism: The Fathom Essays*, A Johnson (ed), Routledge, London and New York, 2024, pp 109-121.


147 O Mohammed, *Antisemitism in the Arabic Speaking Sphere: Historical Roots, Contemporary Dynamics, and Global Impact*, Program on Extremism, The George Washington University, 2025.

Antisemitic form	Description	Historic roots/examples	Modern examples
Erasure	Erasing Jewish identity, experience or Jewish civilisation.	The Roman emperor Hadrian sought to erase Jewish identity from the land of Judaea (from which 'Jew' is derived) by renaming the land 'Syria Palaestina' in 135 CE. Hitler and the Nazi Party sought to destroy and erase not just Jewish people (annihilating 6 million Jews) but Jewish civilisation.	Erasing Jewish connection to the land of Israel by denying Jewish indigeneity to their ancestral homeland.
Scapegoating	Blaming Jews when things go wrong.	Jews were falsely blamed for the bubonic plague that reached England in 664 and swept across Europe in 1348–1356 CE. Jews were also falsely accused of poisoning wells.	Conspiracy theories circulated about Jews being responsible for COVID-19 pandemic.
Dehumanisation	Comparing Jews to vermin, animals, disease.	 Figure D8: Nazi-era propaganda	 Figure D9: Melbourne, 2025 (source: ECAJ)

Antisemitic form	Description	Historic roots/examples	Modern examples
Demonisation	Invoking the idea that Jews are either in league with the Devil or the Devil itself.	John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (347–407 CE), said: 'I am persuaded to call the fasting of the Jews a table of demons because they slew God. If the Jews are acting against God, must they not be serving the demons?' In medieval times Jews were accused of being satanic and linked to the Devil.	Jews/Israel cast as uniquely evil. In Iranian regime propaganda, America is called 'the Big Satan' and Israel 'the little Satan'. In Altona, Melbourne, in 2023, graffiti directly employed the language of demonisation.  Figure D10: Graffiti in Altona, 2023 (photo courtesy ECAJ)

Appendix E: Case Study: The Professional WhatsApp Chat

This hypothetical case study is based on real-life scenarios reported to ASECA.

Scenario	Analysis	Lived experience and impact: A Jewish WhatsApp member shares their reaction
<p>A member of a professional WhatsApp group posted a flyer advertising the Sydney Harbour Bridge March in August 2025 and encouraged members of the WhatsApp chat group to attend.</p> 	<p>This promotional flyer is not antisemitic. It does not invoke harmful tropes about Jews or Judaism.</p>	<p>"I do not consider this antisemitic. But I'd like to point out that this March was touted more generally as a "March for Humanity". I am all for that. But this flyer only shows just one flag. I see this as bias, but not antisemitism."</p>
<p>The flyer prompted a group chat, including professionals not of Jewish faith. One member posted, "The images coming from Gaza are heartbreaking. What is happening is so tragic. But if the weekly mass protests in Israel against the war in Gaza can't sway the Israeli Government to change things, I doubt that the March over the Sydney Harbour Bridge will help the Palestinians."</p>	<p>This post is not antisemitic. It criticises the Israeli Government. It does not invoke harmful tropes about Jews or Judaism.</p>	<p>"I felt encouraged by this post because I am pro-Palestinian and want everyone to live in safety and security, but I am not a radical pro-Palestinian activist who excludes other people's safety. This comment is a legitimate criticism of Israel but not antisemitic. It recognises the tragedy of the war and the weekly protests taking place in Israel against the war."</p>

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Scenario	Analysis	Lived experience and impact: A Jewish WhatsApp member shares their reaction
<p>In response, the group member who posted the flyer promoting the Harbour Bridge March, posted: "But what about the genocidal, racist Zionist project that has oppressed the Palestinians? Zionism is a supremacist ideology invented by Theodore Herzl. They've done this through apartheid and ethnic cleansing."</p>	<p>This is antisemitic.</p> <p>Even though it does not mention Jews or Judaism, it invokes generalisations and ascribes to Zionism essentialised accusations that invoke and repeat libels disseminated by Soviet-era antizionist propaganda that deliberately demonised Israel and Zionism through disinformation.</p> <p>These libels have permeated discourse on Israel and Zionism ever since but have been largely invisible to the broader public who think it is 'criticism of Israel'.</p> <p>The massive Soviet antizionist campaign was especially active from 1967:</p> <p>"Designed by the KGB and overseen by chief Communist Party ideologues, the campaign had achieved numerous successes. For a significant portion of domestic and some foreign audiences, it succeeded at emptying Zionism of its meaning as a national liberation movement of the Jewish people and associating it instead with racism, Fascism, Nazism, genocide, imperialism, colonialism, militarism and apartheid. It contributed to the adoption of the notorious 1975 UN General Assembly Resolution 3379, which held Zionism to be a form of racism and paved the way for the demonisation of Israel within that organisation."¹⁴⁸</p>	<p>"Unfortunately, what followed the earlier post was a response which was antisemitic because it included statements that accused Israel of apartheid, oppression, racism and genocide. It also misrepresented Zionism as a project that was invented by Theodore Herzl and stated it was an ideology of supremacy. This fundamentally misunderstands and twists Zionism."</p>

148 I Tabarovsky, 'Soviet Anti-Zionism and Contemporary Left Antisemitism', *Mapping the New Left Antisemitism: The Fathom Essays*, A Johnson (ed), Routledge, London and New York, 2024, pp 109-121 at p.110.

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Scenario	Analysis	Lived experience and impact: A Jewish WhatsApp member shares their reaction
	<p>"In modern times, particularly after the October 7th, 2023 attack on Israel by Hamas, much of the discourse among protesters worldwide and within pro-Palestinian and Arabic-speaking circles aligns with this Soviet-influenced narrative....Today, as during the Cold War, this narrative continues to perpetuate antisemitism by portraying Israel as a product of Western colonial ambitions, reinforcing harmful stereotypes under the guise of anti-imperialist and anti-colonial discourse."¹⁴⁹</p> <p>Trying to separate "antisemitism" from "antizionism" ignores the history of misinformation, disinformation and antisemitic propaganda that has shaped narratives about Israel and Zionism. It also ignores the lived and practical reality that wherever these antizionist narratives have been propagated, it has resulted in discrimination, harassment, vilification, hate and harm towards Jews. For example, Poland's 1968 antizionist campaign resulted in expulsions and forced emigration of thousands of Jewish Poles.¹⁵⁰</p> <p>Antisemitism and antizionism are both expressions of hatred towards Jews.</p>	

149 O Mohammed, *Antisemitism in the Arabic Speaking Sphere Historical Roots, Contemporary Dynamics, and Global Impact, Program on Extremism, The George Washington University, 2025, p15.*

150 I Tabarovsky, 'Soviet Anti-Zionism and Contemporary Left Antisemitism', *Mapping the New Left Antisemitism: The Fathom Essays*, A Johnson (ed), Routledge, London and New York, 2024, pp 109-121 at p 119; S Gansinger, 'Communists Against Jews: the Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland in 1968', *Mapping the New Left Antisemitism: The Fathom Essays*, A Johnson (ed), Routledge, London and New York, 2024, pp 122-130.



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