

Executive Council of Australian Jewry

הוועד הפועל של
יהודי אוסטרליה

The Representative Organisation of Australian Jewry

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Jewish Community Council of
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Maccabi Australia Inc

National Council of Jewish
Women of Australia



13 September 2006

Professor Gerard Sutton
President
Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee
One Geils Crt
Deakin ACT 2600

Dear Professor Sutton,

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry is the peak representative body of Australia's Jewish community. Council's responsibilities include coordinating the security and welfare of Australian Jews and their property. In discharging this responsibility we monitor the levels and severity of anti-Semitic incidents in Australia. In recent weeks such incidents have increased alarmingly and during July 2006 we recorded the highest number of incidents ever recorded. We have been keeping records for more than sixty years.

Of particular concern are the level of harassment of Jewish students at several of our universities and the often unwillingness of security staff to properly investigate students' complaints. We note and commend the actions of Sydney University's Vice-Chancellor Brown and Melbourne University's Vice-Chancellor Davis in condemning such actions. As Gavin Brown stated: "vigorous political comment is acceptable, vilification of particular groups is totally reprehensible."

We would appreciate the opportunity to make a brief presentation on the nature and scale of the problem to the next AVCC meeting, with a view to:

- the AVCC issuing a clear policy statement condemning anti-Semitism and racial hatred;
- the AVCC developing a guideline (with which we can assist) to enable university and student union staff to comply with anti-vilification laws both state and federal (which includes avoiding hate speech that all too often opens the door to violence);
- each university instructing its security staff to respond promptly and receptively to requests for protection made by Jewish and other students who are experiencing ethnic and racial vilification; and
- each university instructing its security staff to investigate with high priority complaints lodged by Jewish and other students, where attacks have occurred.

Please note my personal email address is: president@ecaj.org.au and phone 0411 462 242.

Yours sincerely,

Grahame J. Leonard
President