

Executive Council of Australian Jewry Inc.

הוועד הפועל של
יהודי אוסטרליה

The Representative Organisation of Australian Jewry

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Federation of Australian Jewish
Ex-Service Associations
Jewish National Fund
New Zealand Jewish Council
Zionist Federation of Australia



Ms Jackie Morris
Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
By e-mail: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

09 July 2007

Dear Ms Morris

Inquiry into the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Amendment (Terrorist Material) Bill 2007

This submission is made by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, which is the elected representative roof body of the Jewish community in Australia.

Our community strongly supports the Bill. We welcome the proposal to prohibit the publication of material which advocates terrorism, or which counsels, urges, praises or provides instructions on the doing of a terrorist act. Our co-religionists have been the victims of such terrorism in many parts of the world, and we value the important protection which would be provided by the proposed measures.

We also welcome the message which the enactment of such a law will convey – that material of this nature, promoting hatred and violence, will not be tolerated in Australia's free and open society.

On 25 May 2007 we wrote to all Australian Attorneys-General to make submissions on the Discussion Paper which had then issued in contemplation of the proposed legislation. A copy of that submission is enclosed.

We also attach a short list of incidents of violence, intimidation and racial and religious vilification suffered by our community in recent months, which illustrates the concerns which gave rise to our previous submission.

We would ask that the government might give further consideration to the recommendations which we made in our earlier submission, but which are not presently included in the Bill. In particular we would hope that the Government will take the opportunity to incorporate an additional provision in the present Bill which would prohibit the publication of

Material which incites, counsels, condones, encourages, praises or urges acts of violence against the members of any group in Australia distinguished by the race, ethnic origin or religion of that group.

We feel that such a provision would address real current concerns felt by both the Jewish community and by other ethnic and religious groups in Australia, and that it would contribute to our social harmony. It would also overcome some of the difficulties raised by any need to prove a specifically "terrorist" connection to dangerous material.

Please let us know if we can supply any further information or otherwise assist the Senate's Inquiry.

Yours truly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'GJ Leonard', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Grahame J. Leonard
President

Selected examples of antisemitic incidents in 2007

January

- Two 16 year-old Jewish men abused and assaulted by men who left vehicle in Melbourne suburb to attack them.
- Incidents of antisemitic graffiti in private home in Sydney eastern suburbs.
- Antisemitic abuse of congregants walking to synagogue in Sydney.
- Anti-Jewish comments were made to patron in bank in Sydney's north shore.
- Beer bottle thrown through the window of a Jewish girls' school in Melbourne.
- Eggs were thrown at Jewish community institution in Melbourne.
- Jewish men subjected to antisemitic abuse in Sydney's eastern suburbs.

February

- Jewish day school student abused, physically assaulted, on public bus in Sydney's eastern suburbs.
- Men walking to synagogue in Sydney's eastern suburbs had eggs thrown at them.
- Antisemitic abuse yelled by driver of passing vehicle to congregants in synagogue environs in Sydney's north shore.
- Drivers of a vehicle passing a Jewish day school in Sydney's eastern suburbs yelled out abuse including "Heil Hitler" at students.
- Three passengers in vehicle passing synagogue in Melbourne yelled abuse at congregants.
- Passengers in vehicle which made numerous circuits around Jewish institutions in Melbourne yelled antisemitic abuse at Jewish people.
- Passengers in vehicle shouted abuse at congregants walking to synagogue in Melbourne.
- Antisemitic harassment of congregants attending synagogue in Sydney's eastern suburbs.
- Antisemitic harassment of Jewish men walking to synagogue in Sydney's eastern suburbs.
- Congregants of synagogue in Sydney's north shore subjected to antisemitic abuse by passing motorist.
- Jewish men in Sydney's eastern suburbs subjected to antisemitic abuse.
- Synagogues in Sydney received threatening telephone calls.
- Threatening telephone call made to Jewish organisation in Sydney.

March

- An orthodox Jewish man was hit by eggs thrown by occupants of passing vehicle in Melbourne.
- Eggs thrown at Jewish man walking to synagogue in Sydney's eastern suburbs.
- Bricks thrown through windows of classroom of Jewish school in Melbourne.
- Vehicles parked outside synagogue on Sydney's north shore spray-painted with swastikas.

- Synagogue in Sydney vandalised with swastikas and SS symbols.
- Antisemitic graffiti “Jews go to Hell!” spray-painted in suburban Melbourne.
- Antisemitic graffiti daubed on walls and door of kindergarten in Sydney’s eastern suburbs.
- Antisemitic abuse yelled at congregants attending various synagogues in Sydney’s eastern suburbs

April

- An orthodox Jewish man was injured by a bottle hurled from a vehicle while he was walking to synagogue in Melbourne.
- Racist graffiti in urban centre in regional NSW including slogan “Die Jews Die”.
- Antisemitic abuse yelled at Jewish family walking in suburban Melbourne from car with five youths in it.
- Antisemitic abuse yelled at students of Jewish day school in Sydney.
- Antisemitic abuse yelled at Jewish individual in car park at Sydney airport.
- Orthodox Jewish man subject to verbal abuse in street in suburban Melbourne.
- Group of men in car yelled antisemitic obscenities when passing several Melbourne synagogues.
- Two men drove past a synagogue in Melbourne and shouted abuse and spat at congregants.
- A man drove past a synagogue in Melbourne shouting antisemitic abuse through a megaphone.

May

- A Jewish woman and her son walking to synagogue in Melbourne narrowly escaped injury when object was hurled at them from a passing vehicle.
- Driver of a vehicle passing Jewish school in Sydney’s eastern suburbs shouted “Heil Hitler” and “Death to Jews” at students.
- A group of men yelled anti-Jewish abuse at people leaving railway station in suburban Melbourne.
- Antisemitic harassment of congregants attending synagogues in Sydney.
- Jewish man in Sydney’s inner-west subjected to anti-Jewish abuse.
- Jewish man subjected to anti-Jewish abuse while walking in Sydney’s eastern suburbs.
- A Jewish man travelling on commuter train in Melbourne abused and assaulted.

June

- Antisemitic abuse and assault of Jewish man in Sydney CBD.
- Antisemitic graffiti in Sydney’s eastern suburbs.
- Egg thrown at Jewish man walking to synagogue in Melbourne.
- Jewish students walking in Melbourne suburban street subjected to anti-Jewish abuse and then threatened by two youths, one of whom pulled out a knife.