



Executive Council  
of Australian Jewry Inc.

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **ECAJ annual Report on Antisemitism in Australia**

**26 November 2017**

The 12 month period ending 30 September 2017 saw a 9.5% increase over the previous year in total antisemitic incidents in Australia involving threats or acts of violence, according to the annual Report on Antisemitism in Australia published by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ).

The ECAJ, Jewish community roof bodies in each State, and other Jewish community groups logged a total of 230 antisemitic incidents during the period, including physical assaults, abuse and harassment, vandalism, graffiti, hate and threats communicated directly by email, letters, telephone calls, and leaflets. This compares to a total of 210 such incidents logged by the same sources over the preceding 12 month period.

Attacks (assault, abuse, vandalism, and graffiti) accounted for 63% of the total number of incidents, with 145 incidents. Threats (email, letters, telephone, leaflets) accounted for 37% of the total number of incidents, with 85 incidents. There is also much anecdotal evidence of incidents which go unreported.

Overall, the number of ‘attacks’ remained relatively unchanged, while ‘threats’ increased by 39%, between 2016 and 2017. There was a marked increase in antisemitic graffiti and posters; and a decrease in assault, and vandalism, and a slight decrease in harassment.

The report’s author, the ECAJ Research Officer, Julie Nathan, said “The most prominent change over the last twelve months in Australia has been the rise in extreme right-wing activity. This new development has predominantly been through the activities of a small neo-Nazi group, Antipodean Resistance, formed in October 2016. It originated in Melbourne but now has chapters in most other states. So far, their activities have involved putting up thousands of Nazi stickers and thousands of anti-Jewish, anti-homosexual and pro-Nazi posters, especially at universities and other places visible to the public. This has caused great concern especially within the Jewish and gay communities. Some of the Antipodean Resistance posters express support for violence and murder, calling to “Legalise the execution of Jews” and for the killing of homosexuals, by shooting Jews and homosexuals in the head.

Antisemitic posters and stickers put up by Antipodean Resistance accounted for 22% of the total number of incidents. At this stage, Antipodean Resistance is a serious concern rather than a solid threat to the safety and security of Jews, homosexuals, and non-white immigrants. However, it remains to be seen what direction Antipodean Resistance will take in their future activities.”

Although Australia remains a stable, vibrant and tolerant democracy, where Jews face no official discrimination, and are free to observe their faith and traditions, antisemitism persists. There are segments of Australian society which are not only hostile towards Jews, but actively and publicly express that hatred with words and threatened or actual violent acts. As a result, and by necessity, physical security remains a prime concern for the Jewish community.

Nathan said “The Jewish community is the only community within Australia whose places of worship, schools, communal organisations and community centres need, for security reasons, to operate under the protection of high fences, armed guards, metal detectors, CCTV cameras and the like. The necessity is recognised by Australia's law enforcement agencies and arises from the entrenched and protean nature of antisemitism in western and Muslim culture, resulting in a high incidence of physical attacks against Jews and Jewish communal buildings over the last three decades, and continuing threats.”

For a diverse society such as Australia's to be socially cohesive, it is imperative that those in positions of influence within Australia publicly condemn antisemitism and other forms of racism, and support legal and other measures to counter all forms of racism, especially those which involve violence or advocacy of violence.

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