



**Executive Council of
Australian Jewry**

MEDIA STATEMENT: ASIO chief sounds warning on neo-Nazi threat

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The Director-General of ASIO Mike Burgess has warned about the rapid increase in neo-Nazi activity in Australia.

“The Director General is correct to sound the alarm about the emergence of neo-Nazis as one of Australia's most challenging security threats” said ECAJ co-CEO, Peter Wertheim.

The ECAJ's annual reports on antisemitism and opinion pieces have been featuring similar warnings since 2017. “This is not to under-rate the ongoing threats from Islamist terrorist sources, but the biggest areas of increase in recorded hate-motivated activity over the last three years have come from white supremacists, Nazis, and other racists”, Wertheim said.

He pointed to the noticeable rise in expressions of antisemitic and Nazi sentiment online. “A common theme is the ‘white replacement’ myth which blames ‘the Jews’ for the supposed demise and destruction of the European races, culture and civilisation, including in Australia.”

Referring to the Christchurch massacre in March 2019, Wertheim noted that although it did not occur in Australia, it was committed by an Australian whose online ‘manifesto’ gave voice to the “white replacement” mythology.

“Many other subscribers to the theory of “white replacement” have expressed support for violence, armed action, revolution, terrorism and race war”, Wertheim said.

“The lesson of history is that if this is left unchecked, it is only a matter of time before violent words escalate into violent deeds. When Australia's top intelligence chief speaks out publicly about an issue like this, urgent and intelligent action by government is called for. Part of the solution may involve the introduction of specific laws to ban the display of Nazi symbols and crack down on the promotion of racial hatred, but the main effort needs to focus on education for students and teachers alike.”

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