



**Executive Council of  
Australian Jewry**

## **ECAJ condemns “debasement of public discourse”**

**29 July 2021**

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (the ECAJ), the peak representative body of the Australian Jewish community, deplores and condemns the recent Twitter statement made by Julian Burnside QC, a Greens candidate at the last Federal election, which likened Israel’s measures to defend its citizens from Hamas’s rocket and arson attacks to “Germany’s treatment of the Jews during the Holocaust”.

“Burnside’s appalling and utterly false comparison of Israel to Nazi Germany not only reflects an astonishing ignorance of history but also represents a new low in public debate in Australia, a debasement of public discourse”, said ECAJ co-CEO Peter Wertheim. Referring to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism, he added: “Such comparisons are internationally recognised as an example of antisemitism”.

“Statements of this kind do nothing to enlighten or inform. The only purpose they serve is to orchestrate public hatred, an ugly and unworthy tactic regardless of the alleged target”, Wertheim said.

“This particular comment has also caused needless distress to the unusually high percentage of Australian Jews who are survivors of the Holocaust. They know from first-hand experience the mass transports of innocent men, women and children to purpose-built death camps, the gas chambers, the crematoria, the butchery of millions and the countless other horrors of the Nazi genocide. To trivialise this history with false comparisons to any contemporary conflict is beneath contempt.”

“We call upon the Greens without prevarication to disavow Burnside’s comment and to disqualify him as a Greens candidate at any future election”.

### **Contact:**

**Peter Wertheim AM | co-Chief Executive Officer**

**phone: 02 8353 8500 | m: 0408 160 904 | fax 02 9361 5888**

**e: [pwertheim@ecaj.org.au](mailto:pwertheim@ecaj.org.au) | [www.ecaj.org.au](http://www.ecaj.org.au)**