



**Executive Council of
Australian Jewry**

Disgraceful neo-Nazi display in Melbourne CBD **19 March 2023**

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (the ECAJ), the peak representative body of the Australian Jewish community, has condemned yesterday's demonstration in Melbourne's CBD by a group of neo-Nazis as "disgraceful", and called for tougher action by State, Territory and Federal governments against public displays of Nazi symbols and gestures.

"Neo-Nazis remain denizens of the far fringes of society, but a weak response by government has emboldened them", said ECAJ co-CEO Peter Wertheim. "They are becoming increasingly brazen in staging displays of the kind we witnessed yesterday outside the Victorian parliament".

"Thugs in black uniform, hiding behind masks, performing Nazi salutes and spewing violent and dehumanising rhetoric against entire groups of people on the basis of their race, sexuality or gender identity, should have no place anywhere in Australia, let alone outside a parliament, the symbol of democracy", he said.

Peter Wertheim also noted media reports of attempts by neo-Nazis to join the Australian defence force and state police forces in order to gain access to weapons and training.

"We welcome the Victorian government's announcement that it will ban the Nazi salute in public, after it previously outlawed the display of the Hakenkreuz. But we need something more than a piecemeal approach, and a patchwork of State laws. It's well past time for Federal, State and Territory governments to co-ordinate their efforts through intelligence sharing, tough uniform legislation, and rigorous police training and enforcement to crack down on this growing menace."

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