



**Executive Council of
Australian Jewry**

ECAJ backs Julian Leeser's bill to establish a judicial inquiry into antisemitism on campuses

4 June 2024

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), the peak body representing the Jewish community nationally, wholeheartedly endorses federal Liberal MP Julian Leeser's bill to establish a judicial inquiry into the surge in reports of antisemitic incidents and discourse on Australian university campuses.

Many university administrations have failed to acknowledge, let alone address, the problem. A judicial inquiry, as originally called for in May by Mr Leeser, would allow Jewish students and staff to give evidence in a closed hearing, without having to fear reprisals from the fanatical fringe of anti-Israel or Jew-hating students, or victimisation from anti-Israel and antisemitic faculty members. There would be no opportunity for political grandstanding by any party, and the sole focus would be on getting to the truth.

We have no doubt from all the reports we and other Jewish organisations have been receiving that the truth will shock the Australian public. The integrity and the quality of our world-class universities is being undermined by a relentless infusion of anti-democratic, anti-liberal and anti-western values which are completely alien to our free, peaceful and tolerant way of life.

Comments attributable to Executive Council of Australian Jewry co-CEO Peter Wertheim AM:

"Everyone in our community should be concerned about the prevalence of antisemitic acts and discourse on Australian campuses in recent weeks, which has been out of all proportion to demonstrations of other forms of racism at Australian Universities.

"A judicial inquiry into antisemitism on Australian campuses, and the adequacy or otherwise of the responses of University administrations, is urgently needed. Only a judicial inquiry can have the necessary focus on antisemitism and meet the requirements of impartiality, confidentiality and decorum that we would expect to be observed.

"Sadly, the Jewish community cannot have confidence that the inquiry to be conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission would meet these requirements. The AHRC's record of public statements and action in the face of the unprecedented surge of antisemitism that has occurred in Australia, especially since 7 October 2023, has been conspicuously deficient. The recent record of some of the people associated with the Commission has also featured a shocking level of bias. In addition, the Commission's study will have a more generic focus."