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Anti-Bullying Rapid Review Taskforce  
Australian Government  
Department of Education

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Dear Dr Keating and Dr Robinson AM

## Executive Council of Australian Jewry's submission to the Anti-Bullying Rapid Review

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to your Taskforce's review into bullying in Australian schools. The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (**the ECAJ**) is the peak, elected, representative body of the Australian Jewish community. It was established for that purpose in 1944 by Australian Jewish organisations and their elected leaders. The ECAJ's constituent organisations are the roof bodies of the Jewish community in each State and Territory.<sup>1</sup> Other Jewish organisations which operate nationally are Affiliates of the ECAJ.<sup>2</sup> Altogether, the ECAJ's constituent and affiliated organisations, and their respective constituent and affiliated organisations, number approximately 200 major Jewish organisations across Australia, including Jewish schools across the country.

The ECAJ has limited the focus of this submission to the problem of antisemitic bullying in schools, as this is where the organisation's experience and knowledge is relevant. It is a major thesis of this submission that prejudice-motivated bullying is different in nature to generic bullying and requires bespoke responses. Nevertheless, many of the comments and the interventions proposed in this submission will be relevant to combating other types of bullying.

### 1. Introduction: Antisemitic bullying at schools is a growing problem

The racist bullying of Jewish children at public schools in Victoria in 2019, which included a serious assault and the harassment of a child as young as 5 years old, together with similar but

<sup>1</sup> Namely, the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, the Jewish Community Council of Victoria Inc, the Jewish Community Council of Western Australia Inc, the Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies, the Jewish Community Council of South Australia, the Hobart Hebrew Congregation, the ACT Jewish Community Inc and the Northern Territory Jewish Community Association.

<sup>2</sup> Namely, Australasian Union of Jewish Students, Union for Progressive Judaism, Australian Federation of WIZO, Maccabi Australia Inc, National Council of Jewish Women of Australia, B'nai B'rith District 21 of Australia and New Zealand, Jewish National Fund of Australia Inc, Joint Distribution Committee Australia.

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Council of Progressive Rabbis  
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less well-publicised incidents in public and private schools throughout Australia, have highlighted the destructive nexus between racist attitudes and language, and acts of violence. It has been well demonstrated that physical and psychological harm is done to vulnerable children who are the targets of bullying, sometimes long term.<sup>3</sup>

Similar incidents have been reported with growing frequency affecting school children of Muslim, Hindu and Sikh backgrounds.<sup>4</sup> Children from other minority groups, including First Nations children<sup>5</sup>, have also experienced the growing scourge of bullying. In recent years in Australia, there have been reports of children who identify as Christians, and who attend school in geographical areas where people of Christian background are in a minority, being subjected to prejudice-motivated bullying.<sup>6</sup>

There are three drivers for this increased level of bullying of students of Jewish and/or Israeli background.

**(a) Prevalence of disinformation and misinformation online and in mainstream discourse**

Although prejudice-motivated bullying is not new in Australia, vulnerable communities including the Jewish community are reporting that the incidence of this kind of behaviour in schools, and in the community more widely, has become more frequent and more severe. This has coincided with the uptick in social media use by children, and the online consumption of ever-growing amounts of misinformation and disinformation, often centred around racist narratives. In Australia, there has been a pervasive infiltration of racist and other extremist ideologies and narratives into mainstream public and political discourse, often channelled through social media. As Human Rights Commissioner Lorraine Finlay noted in an opinion piece in August 2023:

“Misinformation and disinformation can have devastating effects on human rights, social cohesion and democratic processes.”<sup>7</sup>

Invariably, minority groups including the Jewish community are more likely to be exposed to serious harm as a result of misinformation or disinformation and other forms of misconduct on digital services, given that digital services’ “*incentives pull heavily toward ingroup solidarity and*

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<sup>3</sup> See for example: Dr Naomi Priest, Ms Angeline Ferdinand, Dr Ryan Perry, Professor Yin Paradies & A/Professor Margaret Kelaher, *Mental health impacts of racism and attitudes to diversity in Victorian schools – a summary of survey findings*, University of Melbourne, 2014:

[https://www.deakin.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/229469/Mental-Health-Impacts-summay-report.pdf](https://www.deakin.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/229469/Mental-Health-Impacts-summay-report.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> ‘Religious bullying in the school playground and how to combat it’, *University of Sydney*, 12 October 2022: [Religious bullying in the school playground and how to combat it - The University of Sydney](#)

<sup>5</sup> Coffin, Juli, “‘Make them stop it’: What Aboriginal children and youth in Australia are saying about bullying”, *First People’s Child and Family Review*, Vol 6 (No. 1), 2011: [“Make Them Stop it”: What Aboriginal Children and Youth in Australia Are Saying About Bullying | First Peoples Child & Family Review](#)

<sup>6</sup> See note 4.

<sup>7</sup> [Why Misinformation Bill risks Freedoms it Aims to Protect | Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

outgroup derogation”.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately the Jewish historical experience in relation to misinformation and disinformation is that in the war of ideas, truth does not always prevail.<sup>9</sup>

### **(b) Societal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic had serious societal impacts, producing rising economic pressure. With fear and economic insecurity becoming more prevalent, the atmosphere of political and social polarisation that existed even before the onset of the pandemic was deepened, and conspiracy theories and rising levels of racism - including antisemitism - followed in their wake, most noticeably online. The pandemic also resulted in the more substantial incorporation of online learning into students’ schooling, and this feature has continued<sup>10</sup>, meaning that bullying is now no longer confined to physical interactions at school, and also manifests in online interactions that form part of schools’ offerings.

### **(c) Growing normalisation of antisemitic discourse post 7 October 2023**

The 7 October 2023 massacre by Hamas and other terrorist groups in southern Israel heralded the new normalisation of anti-Israel and anti-Jewish public discourse, including online, which fuelled a massive increase in the number of reported antisemitic incidents across Australian society, including in schools. The intensity and frequency of antisemitic incidents has increased markedly<sup>11</sup>, with the overall number of reported antisemitic incidents in Australia increasing by 738% in October and November 2023, compared to the same period one year earlier.<sup>12</sup> Over the course of the year from 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024, there was a 316% increase in the number of reported antisemitic incidents compared to the previous year.<sup>13</sup>

Such increases are unprecedented in the period of more than thirty years that the ECAJ has been producing the Annual Report on Antisemitism in Australia. Dramatically elevated levels of antisemitism show every sign of continuing, and unfortunately schools are by no means protected from this trend. It is in this context that Jewish and Israeli<sup>14</sup> students and staff at some Australian schools have reported that the conditions under which they learn or work have become hostile

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<sup>8</sup> Fisher, Max, ‘Belonging is stronger than facts: the age of misinformation’, *The New York Times*, 7 May 2021: [‘Belonging Is Stronger Than Facts’: The Age of Misinformation - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/07/opinion/belonging-is-stronger-than-facts.html)

<sup>9</sup> For instance, despite several court rulings and investigative pieces that conclusively held that the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was a forgery, it remains the most widely distributed antisemitic publication of modern times, and this has only been exacerbated in the online age: [Protocols of the Elders of Zion | Holocaust Encyclopedia \(ushmm.org\)](https://www.ushmm.org/education/protocols-of-the-elders-of-zion)

<sup>10</sup> Coch, Lukas, ‘Online schooling is not just for lockdowns. Could it work for your child?’ *The Conversation*, 19 April 2024: [Online schooling is not just for lockdowns. Could it work for your child?](https://www.theconversation.com/online-schooling-is-not-just-for-lockdowns-could-it-work-for-your-child/)

<sup>11</sup> ‘Proliferation of antisemitic incidents in Australia growing increasingly violent, CAM research reveals’, *Combat Antisemitism Movement*, 23 January 2025: [Proliferation of Antisemitic Incidents in Australia Growing Increasingly Violent, CAM Research Reveals | Combat Antisemitism Movement](https://www.combatantisemitism.com/news/proliferation-of-antisemitic-incidents-in-australia-growing-increasingly-violent-cam-research-reveals/)

<sup>12</sup> Nathan, Julie, ‘Preliminary statistics concerning surge in antisemitic incidents following Hamas atrocities in Israel on 7 October 2023’ *Executive Council of Australian Jewry*, 15 December 2023: [» Preliminary statistics concerning surge in antisemitic incidents following Hamas atrocities in Israel on 7 October 2023 \(ecaj.org.au\)](https://www.ecaj.org.au/news/preliminary-statistics-concerning-surge-in-antisemitic-incidents-following-hamas-atrocities-in-israel-on-7-october-2023/)

<sup>13</sup> Julie Nathan, ‘ECAJ report on anti-Jewish incidents in Australia 2024’, *Executive Council Of Australian Jewry*, 24 November 2024.

<sup>14</sup> While our submission is focused on Australian Jewish children in light of our organisation’s mission to be the voice of the Australian Jewish community, we note that about 27% of Israel’s population is non-Jewish, and there are non-Jewish Israelis that reside in Australia and are impacted by anti-Israel racism, which is not always antisemitic in nature, including in schools.

due to the vilification they are experiencing from some of their peers, solely because they identify as Jews or Israelis<sup>15</sup>.

The growing frequency and severity of these incidents indicates that in addition to established programs such as Holocaust education and Click against Hate which have been operating for fifteen years or more, other measures are needed to target new and growing sources of prejudice directly, and from an early age. These measures need to reach both students and staff, as well as structures associated with schools such as teachers' unions.

## 2. Overview of the data of antisemitic bullying at schools

For an overview of antisemitic bullying *incidents* across Australian schools from 1 Oct. 2023 to 30 Sep. 2024 please see **Appendix 1**. We have also provided some examples of antisemitic *discourse* at Australian schools during the same period in **Appendix 2**. The ECAJ does not include antisemitic discourse in its count of antisemitic incidents, and it would be impossible to quantify the amount of antisemitic discourse in Australian schools.

The data in **Appendix 1** demonstrates that while such incidents are substantially more prevalent in Victoria and NSW - the states with the largest Jewish populations – incidents nevertheless also occur in states with much smaller Jewish populations. It is evident from previous studies of the Jewish community that many antisemitic incidents go unreported<sup>16</sup>, for a variety of reasons. Where Jewish students and staff at schools are few and far between, there may be a greater reluctance on the part of those students or staff to draw attention to their Jewish identity through the reporting of antisemitic incidents they have experienced. This may be linked to a distrust in the ability of figures of authority at schools to 'get it right', highlighting the need for a holistic approach to racist bullying.

A snapshot of the antisemitic incidents in schools set out in **Appendix 1** include the following:

1. A student held a chair against a Jewish student's neck while chanting "free, free Palestine" at a public school (8 Nov. 2023, Queensland).
2. The words 'Jew Die' were graffitied in black paint on the entrance wall of a Jewish school, Mount Scopus Memorial College (25 May 2024, Victoria).
3. A student used a voice emulator app to repeat "Heil Hitler" at an identified Jewish staff member during class in a public high school (16 Nov. 2023, Western Australia).

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<sup>15</sup> This hostility has not been limited to Jews who publicly support Israel's right to exist, and has also been experienced by a minority of Jews who identify as non-Zionist.

<sup>16</sup> For example, see Vergani, Matteo; and Goodhardt, Dan, 'We tracked antisemitic incidents in Australia over four years. This is when they are most likely to occur', *ADI Deakin University*, 2 April 2021: [We tracked antisemitic incidents in Australia over four years. This is when they are most likely to occur | The Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation](#)

4. A Jewish student's photo was posted by the student's peers on a group chat with the caption 'Gas inhaler' (August, 2024, New South Wales).
5. A Jewish student was assaulted and injured at school after he stepped in to defend his sister from an antisemitic attack which included threats to blow up her house and harm her (21 Feb. 2024, South Australia).

In February 2024, the Blueprint Institute published a report, "Antisemitism in Australian schools: An examination", on the findings of a 'YouGov' survey answered by 510 public school employees across the country (**the Blueprint Institute Report**).<sup>17</sup> The survey, designed prior to 7 October 2023 but carried out during November 2023, found widespread school employee reports of encountering antisemitism in both primary and secondary schools:

- 12% had witnessed, but not been a direct victim of antisemitism
- 20% had been informed by others of antisemitic incidents
- 1% had experienced antisemitism.<sup>18</sup>

Evidently there needs to be a more coordinated, effective and nationwide response in reporting and dealing with antisemitic bullying in schools, and this response will need to be inclusive, with a special focus on the students, the school staff, and the influences that shape their conduct at school. The responses will need to be monitored and assessed for effectiveness by relevant State and Territory Departments of Education.

### **3. Best practice in relation to preventing and responding to bullying in schools**

The bullying of one child by another as a result of personality differences or other factors which are intrinsic to the relationship between them is problematic enough. When bullying is motivated by prejudice or hatred based on race, religion or other personal attributes, it is even more difficult to deal with, because the prejudice - which may be learned from trusted figures at home or online - validates the behaviour in the eyes of the bully.

Schools and State/Territory Education Departments have well-established processes for dealing with general bullying. However, experience (and the academic literature) suggests that bullying that is motivated by prejudice or hatred is in a different category. Principals and teachers have often been at a loss when confronted with it, and when they have seen that their regular anti-bullying policies and practices, which are aimed at reconciliation and changing the bully's attitudes, have not worked in such cases.<sup>19</sup> When contacted by schools to address incidents of

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<sup>17</sup> Downey, Liana; Ouliaris, Mark; Poulton, Claire; Black, Sophie; An Tran, Minh, 'Antisemitism in Australian Schools', Blueprint Institute, 27 February 2024, available at: [An examination of antisemitism in Australian schools](#).

<sup>18</sup> The latest data from the 2021 census reports that the Australian Jewish community totals roughly 100,000 people, or just under 0.4% of the Australian population. In 2021, Jewish students constituted well under one percent of the nationwide public school student population.

<sup>19</sup> Zehavit Gross & Suzanne D. Rutland (2014) Combatting antisemitism in the school playground: an Australian case study, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 48:3, 309-330, DOI: 10.1080/0031322X.2014.918703

antisemitic bullying, the ECAJ has found that the following approaches/measures/interventions have been effective.

**(a) At the school level: Response**

- Explicit acknowledgement by the Principal in communications to staff, students and parents that the responsibility to protect the physical and psychological well-being of students overrides all other priorities, including the provision of targeted help to students with behavioural problems.
- Rejection of the culture of equivalence - do not treat perpetrators and victims as morally equivalent. Acknowledge the reality that students who do not have behavioural problems may be at risk of harm from other students who do.
- Early, direct intervention by the school Principal personally, including immediate engagement with parents of both victim(s) and offender(s).
- Clearly-explained consequences for students and staff who engage in prejudice-motivated bullying, including:
  - warnings to students and their parents about further action in the event of any recurrence of the bullying behaviour including, as a last resort, the transfer of repeat student offenders to another school.
  - the commencement of a disciplinary process in relation to staff who perpetrate racist bullying.
- Special measures to address gang-related prejudice-motivated bullying including, as a last resort, the transfer of gang members to different schools.
- In secondary schools, establish school prefects/student committees, which will remain in place (and be refreshed as students graduate) to be a focal point to address incidents of racism and racist bullying, and make such behaviour unacceptable within the culture of the school. Incidents of racist bullying should be condemned by the school Principal at school assembly, without naming the perpetrator or victim.
- Maintain a log of all incidents of prejudice-motivated misbehaviour at the school, even when the perpetrator(s) cannot be identified, and share the details with the relevant State/Territory Department of Education.

**(b) At the government level: Response**

- Explicit adoption by relevant government departments of a policy for all schools when prejudice-motivated bullying cases arise, and rejection of the culture of equivalence as between perpetrators and victims. Performance in handling such cases to be reviewed by an anti-bullying unit inside the Minister's office.
- Confirm reported cases of antisemitism by adopting and applying the Working Definition of Antisemitism published by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA),

an international body of which Australia is a full member.<sup>20</sup> (See section titled ‘Types of actions, resources and supports that are working or have the potential to work to address or prevent bullying in Australian schools’)

- Establish an independent government official (or office) as the go-to point for whistleblowers within schools in calling out racism.
- Establish a Department hotline for reporting racist and religious bullying in schools, under the scrutiny of an anti-bullying unit inside the Minister’s office. Where such bullying crosses the line into unlawfulness, it may be appropriate for it to be referred to the soon to be established national database and hotline for racist incidents and discourse.
- Provide a complaints pathway for organisations representative of protected groups, so that victims of racist bullying are able to elect to have their representative body take forward their complaint while preserving their anonymity.
- Maintain a register of all incidents of prejudice-motivated misbehavior reported by schools, and publish an annual State/Territory report of such incidents, de-identifying the relevant students or staff, but not the school.
- Establish a Community Scrutiny Panel of representatives of targeted communities to review periodically a de-identified sample of reported prejudice-motivated bullying cases, so as to identify good and bad practice in investigation and response.
- Embark on a public awareness and advertising campaign to debunk the ideology of antisemitism and undermine its appeal, particularly directed at young audiences.<sup>21</sup>
- Design and implement a restorative justice approach (see below).

### **(c) A restorative justice approach**

The ECAJ believes that the restorative justice approach adopted in some states, for example, by Youth Justice Conferencing at the Department of Communities and Justice NSW, has great potential to be utilised in school settings. At present, this process is being effectively deployed in NSW as a court diversion and focuses on repairing harm caused through restorative justice rather than being a punitive process. However, in instances where racist bullying does not rise to the level of a criminal offence, schools could nevertheless be resourced and trained to adopt this approach, with the result that perpetrators of racist bullying, including antisemitic bullying, would have the opportunity to demonstrate remorse for their actions, make amends through positive acts, and engage in further education to combat racist views. This process would necessarily involve families of students, the school psychologist and principal. The victim of such acts, which may not only be the student, but also the representative organisation of that student’s community, would have the opportunity to forgive the perpetrator, or, to determine that they had not taken adequate steps to repair the harm caused, thereby referring them on to other responsive measures. This restores some equilibrium in the power imbalance of perpetrator and victim, and also ensures a more holistic approach to education and the combating of bullying.

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<sup>20</sup> The internationally-accepted definition of antisemitism is set out by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance at: <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>

<sup>21</sup> Please refer to the ECAJ’s ‘15 Steps to Defeat Antisemitism’, 20 February 2025, available at: [15 steps to defeat antisemitism - ECAJ](#)

#### (d) Preventative measures

As noted in the Introduction section of this document, much good work continues to be done through Holocaust education and programs such as Click against Hate. However, inoculation of students against prejudice and extremism needs to start at a much younger age, as we have seen incidents of racist bullying even in early primary school.

Curricula across the disciplines should inculcate critical thinking and educate against prejudice generally, but the message will be lost unless anti-Jewish, anti-Indigenous, anti-Islam and anti-Asian prejudices in particular are expressly addressed. Generic anti-racism, human rights and citizenship education are not sufficient. The focus needs to be on identifying and counter-acting specific forms of racism, because each form of racism has its own unique history and dynamic.

This much was demonstrated in the schools environment by Professor Suzanne Rutland who conducted a study of antisemitism in government schools in south-western Sydney.<sup>22</sup> Teachers and families spoke to them in confidence. The teachers all reported a veneration of Hitler and antipathy to Jews among the students, manifested by statements such as “*Hitler did the right thing*”, “*Hitler did not go far enough*”. One student asked: “*Why do all the teachers hate Hitler. After all, he only killed Jews?*”<sup>23</sup> Common behaviour included drawing swastikas on their desks. Racism was seen as wrong conduct, but anti-Jewish prejudice was not. In research by Benjamin Kunde, a student from an Islamic high school in western Sydney is quoted as saying: “*Hitler was great! He is an excellent example of how change [for the good] can occur. That’s why I’m using Mein Kampf as a related text for the HSC.*”<sup>24</sup> Notably, these students and schools had experienced NSW Education Department anti-racism programs.

#### (e) Other measures required

- Adopt a national and consistent statement of principle which strikes an appropriate balance between freedom of expression and the exercise of unlawful, malicious, vilifying or hateful expressions. This will assist in navigating difficult situations where school staff

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<sup>22</sup> Suzanne Rutland, ‘Racism in Australia: different streams, different responses’, *New Racisms: New Anti-Racisms*, University of Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2006. “*The Department of Education and Training’s annual report on “Language Background other than English” for Term 1 2006 showed 25,946 students with Arabic-speaking background, some 12.6% of the total. 17,095 of them are enrolled in schools in South Western Sydney*”.

<sup>23</sup> Suzanne Rutland, ‘Jews and Muslims “Down under”: Emerging Dialogue and Challenges’, in Michael M. Laskier and Yaacov Lev (Eds.), *The Divergence of Judaism and Islam: Interdependence, Modernity, and Political Turmoil*, (pp. 97-121). Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2011. Note interview with a Sydney high school teacher, June 2006. Name withheld on request. In one all boys’ school, the teacher said the boys’ favourite video-clip that they watch on their phones is of American journalist Daniel Pearl saying “*I am a Jew, my mother is a Jew...*” and then watching him being decapitated. In an all girls’ school, a student came to the teacher saying, “*My friend pulled her mobile phone apart yesterday and when I asked her why, she said that the Jews control all the communications and that they could listen in to her conversations – is that true Miss?*” These students also expressed the belief common throughout the Muslim world that “the Jews” were responsible for September 11.

<sup>24</sup> Benjamin Kunde, *The Children of Abraham living apart: The psychology and sources of Muslim Youth antisemitism in Sydney*, Paper delivered to Australian Association of Jewish Studies, Monash University, Melbourne, 17-18 February 2008.

or students assert that they are exercising freedom of expression and students on the receiving end of such expression assert that they have been bullied.

- Obtain expert advice about the key stages in a child's development where issues of difference begin to harden into prejudice. Then find points in the existing curriculum where those issues can be addressed with a small but significant gloss in each case, with the aim of:
  - in primary school, developing a respectful understanding and de-stigmatising of difference (race, religion, disability)
  - from Year 7 in high school, addressing specific forms of racism, including anti-Jewish, anti-Indigenous, anti-Islam and anti-Asian; and teaching students to self-reflect about their own prejudices
  - from Year 10, focusing on the destructive effects of racism both in Australia and in other parts of the world, both historically and in contemporary society, noting that racism has predated colonialism and that some types of racism, including antisemitism, have their origin over two thousand years ago
  - in Years 11-12, reinforcing those themes in more depth in optional subjects.

Relevant high school subjects could include History, English, Legal Studies, SRE, PDHPE, Biology, Geography, Civics and Citizenship.

- Experiential learning should also be offered and could include student visits to a Jewish or Holocaust Museum; organised meetings between students from different schools who have diverse cultural and religious backgrounds; student visits to institutions (lay and religious) of organisations at which there are opportunities to engage in discussion with leaders of those communities, including youth leaders.
- Families of students should be engaged in some of these preventative measures, for example, some of the above could be organised outside working hours, so that parents and other family members could be invited to accompany students during external visits and share in the discussion, so that the learning experience is consolidated within the family unit.

#### **4. Types of actions, resources and supports that are working or have the potential to work to address or prevent bullying in Australian schools**

##### ***(a) Addressing the definitional deficit***

A fundamental gap in almost all Australian schools' frameworks for the prevention of, and response to, antisemitic conduct, is the failure to grapple with what constitutes antisemitic conduct in the first place. If a problem is undiagnosed then it cannot be adequately treated.

The research by Professor Rutland cited earlier helps explain why generic anti-racism education may positively influence attitudes towards some minority racial groups, but only have a positive influence on attitudes towards other groups when prejudice against them is specifically addressed. The focus should thus be squarely on counteracting the sources of specific forms of racism, namely the propagation of the kinds of preconceptions, conspiracy fantasies and other

falsehoods which fuel prejudice and prejudice-motivated behaviour, including violence. It is the propensity of racism to lead to violence, as highlighted long ago by the National Inquiry into Racist Violence and the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody that makes the effort to counteract racism so significant and overdue.

To address the specific and unique sources of antisemitism, one must begin by defining it. To date, most schools have not adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Working Definition of Antisemitism (**IHRA Working Definition**)<sup>25</sup> – the gold standard definition of antisemitism that has been adopted by the Australian Government, endorsed by the Federal Opposition<sup>26</sup>, and adopted by many other governments and tertiary institutions around the world. Despite the Department of Education recognising the IHRA Working Definition, this has not filtered down to schools, which tend to rely on the subjective and at times capricious personal opinions of members of staff or officials of their Unions who have not themselves had any lived experience of antisemitism. They have also at times been improperly influenced by a concerted political campaign from some quarters aimed at smearing the IHRA Working Definition by misrepresenting and mischaracterising its meaning and effect.

Despite false assertions to the contrary, the IHRA Working Definition is not legally binding and notes clearly that “*criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic*”. It should be obvious that this formulation does *not* automatically characterise as antisemitic any criticism of Israeli laws, policies and actions, whether on the grounds of alleged racism or otherwise. Under the IHRA Working Definition, criticism of Israel can only be characterised as antisemitic if the criticism amounts to a denial of the collective right of the Jewish people to self-determination, which is a basic right of all peoples.

As the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism noted in her recent submission to the Senate Inquiry into antisemitism at Australian universities:

*“Antisemitism is a unique type of racial hatred that is not broadly understood. It is an ancient hatred based on disinformation and misinformation, and its building blocks are antisemitic tropes<sup>27</sup> that can be subtle yet extremely pervasive. History has shown that in times of economic insecurity, antisemitism bubbles to the surface and becomes socially acceptable. Antisemitism has always been stubborn and shape-shifting, and it is not sufficiently responsive to policies instituted to deal with racism more broadly.”*

It is essential that school frameworks for the prevention of, and response to, antisemitism, are informed by an appropriate framework, sufficient expertise and training, to be able to handle complaints concerning antisemitic conduct.

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<sup>25</sup> The internationally-accepted definition of antisemitism is set out by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance at: <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>

<sup>26</sup> See statement by then Opposition leader Anthony Albanese to Executive Council of Australian Jewry on 14 July 2021: » [ECAJ hosts meeting between Federal Opposition leader Anthony Albanese and national Jewish community leadership](#) and statement of the shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator Penny Wong at Zionist Federation of Australia conference, 22 November 2020: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=exaC2wvaZCQ>,

<sup>27</sup> [ADL Publishes New Guide to Antisemitic Tropes | ADL; and Antisemitic Tropes Chart \(facinghistory.org\)](#)

Part of the necessary framework will be understanding at a definitional level what constitutes the various types of racism, abuse or other issues. For this reason we continue to urge Australian schools to adopt the IHRA Working Definition in relation to any complaints concerning antisemitic conduct at schools. The Canadian government recently published a Handbook on the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, which carefully works through the various examples in the definition and explains what they mean and what they do not mean.<sup>28</sup> It dispels the falsehoods and mischaracterisations that have been advanced about the definition. It is a most useful guide for schools seeking to anchor their policies against antisemitism in a credible definition, with guardrails against possible misuse. There are other resources available that should be drawn upon to help schools to understand when the IHRA Working Definition applies and how to apply it within existing frameworks.

***(b) Educational programming to promote critical thinking and recognition of disinformation and misinformation***

Antisemitism rests on conspiracy theories, disinformation and misinformation, and constantly adapts to fit social, political and cultural changes, so it is essential that school-age students learn to recognise false information in order to identify antisemitism. This will in turn combat antisemitic and other racist bullying.

The Australian Curriculum's General Capability of Critical and Creative Thinking is meant to embed critical thinking within learning content of all subjects. This has, to date, proven ineffective<sup>29</sup>, possibly because the key connections to learning areas are too vague, and there are inadequate resources or support to assist teachers to embed the learning continuum of critical thinking in their lessons.

The Blueprint Institute Report makes several recommendations to address antisemitism in schools, one of which is to 'stay vigilant on disinformation'. It explains that the advent and growth of AI technologies have made it cheaper and easier to create and disseminate persuasive disinformation at scale, with the detrimental effect that racist narratives become more widespread and convincing. The report recommends that:

*Education departments should consider comprehensive media literacy programs designed to equip students with critical thinking and source evaluation skills from a young age. Students who display a high level of critical thinking, deductive reasoning and self reflection are more likely to be resilient to the spread of disinformation.<sup>30</sup>*

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<sup>28</sup> See [Canadian Handbook on the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism - Canada.ca](#).

<sup>29</sup> Dr Hunter, Jane, 'The urgent need to focus on critical thinking in schools', *University of Technology, Sydney*, 28 February 2024: [The urgent need to focus on critical thinking in schools](#)

<sup>30</sup> Downey, Liana; Ouliaris, Mark; Poulton, Claire; Black, Sophie; An Tran, Minh, 'Antisemitism in Australian Schools', Blueprint Institute, 27 February 2024, available at: [An examination of antisemitism in Australian schools](#), p. 15.

Better implementation of the Australian Curriculum’s General Capability of Critical and Creative Thinking is required<sup>31</sup>, as at present resources are too theoretical and require teachers to invest significant time and learning into understanding how to embed critical thinking in their teaching. It may be necessary for any national standard responsive to bullying to involve the rollout of a distinctive critical thinking module that is delivered at the appropriate level to all students in Australia. This module – while not directly addressing the problem of bullying in its content – has the potential to reduce racist and other bullying by helping students recognise and be resilient in resisting disinformation and misinformation.

There are several contemporary working examples from other jurisdictions that the Anti-Bullying Rapid Review may wish to consider. For instance, Sweden has a Psychological Defence Agency<sup>32</sup>, which strengthens societal resilience to malign information influence, and is working to build into the Swedish educational curriculum modules that equip students to recognise disinformation and misinformation and to think critically.

**(c) A learning progression and multiple nuanced touchpoints to combat antisemitism and other types of racism**

There is a need for a nuanced approach to anti-racism education with antisemitism education included in the national curriculum. The latter must go well beyond traditional Holocaust education, as while this is important it does not offer a holistic pathway for equipping younger generations to recognise and combat antisemitism.<sup>33</sup> Multiple touchpoints for students and educators through the adoption of programs such as [Courage to Care](#), [Together for Humanity](#), [Respect Understanding and Acceptance](#) and [UNESCO’s educational resources on antisemitism](#) will help inculcate students and their teachers with the necessary knowledge to debunk racist narratives and to be upstanders in response to racist bullying. It is essential that these touchpoints are carefully curated and do not treat racism as a generic problem; or fail to address specific forms of racism directed at specific communities in Australia. Studies that focus on understanding and combatting racism generally, and building social cohesion as a general aim, are, in the ECAJ’s experience, unlikely to be successful:

- in addressing and counteracting the stark variety of causes of specific forms of racism that target particular communities; and
- at preventing racist bullying.

While the ECAJ has developed some educational resources in this area in collaboration with other organisations, we are not an education provider, and we encourage the Anti-Bullying Rapid Review to liaise with the ECAJ and other representative organisations of minority communities in

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<sup>31</sup> Murphy, K., Murphy, S. & Swain, N. Australian teachers’ adoption of critical and creative thinking as curriculum. *Aust. Educ. Res.* **52**, 275–294 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-024-00714-3>

<sup>32</sup> Psychological Defence Agency, updated 10 December 2024: [For private individuals | Psychological defence agency](#)

<sup>33</sup> Horn, Dara, ‘Is Holocaust education making antisemitism worse?’, *The Atlantic*, May 2023: [Is Holocaust Education Making Anti-Semitism Worse? - The Atlantic](#)

Australia, to develop a more standardised set of touchpoints that effectively address types of racist bullying at schools.

***(d) A public awareness and advertising campaign to debunk the ideology of antisemitism and undermine its appeal, particularly directed at young audiences***

The ECAJ has urged previous governments to undertake a public awareness and advertising campaign to debunk the ideology of antisemitism and undermine its appeal, with a focus on reaching school-age audiences.<sup>34</sup> As in (c) directly above, the ECAJ believes this bespoke approach to tackling specific types of racism is necessary and will better address the problem of racist bullying. Such a campaign can be precipitated or followed by similar campaigns that debunk other types of racist ideologies. Examples of ineffective campaigns that have not achieved any positive outcomes for Jewish students and teachers include the Australian Human Rights Commission's 'Racism. It Stops With Me' campaign, which failed to give a voice to the Jewish community in self-determining what constitutes racism against them, and which provided wholly inadequate 'resources'.

The Blueprint Institute Report observes that racism can be inherited, and groups who themselves have experienced racism can also be part of the problem. Research in social psychology has stressed that changes to individual bias are best achieved through changes in group norms, via larger group experiences.<sup>35</sup> In order to achieve this, any public awareness and advertising campaign must tell human stories and create proximity to different minority groups so as to enhance empathy and breakdown prejudice that would otherwise lead to racist bullying.

***(e) Limiting and controlling online engagement for students in order to reduce exposure to racist content that is linked to racist bullying***

The ECAJ commends the passage of the *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024*, which came into law on 28 November 2024. The introduction of a mandatory minimum age of 16 for accounts on certain social media platforms by December 2025 will make a substantial impact on the problem of bullying in schools. Many incidents of antisemitic bullying in schools contain an online component which involves students interacting on social media platforms. Social media is also a key part of the spread of antisemitic tropes and conspiracy theories, and removing access by young and impressionable minds to this harmful content is a positive development.

There are various other initiatives which may be complementary to or assist in the reduction of online manifestations of racist bullying of students, including school phone bans. The Anti-Bullying Rapid Review will no doubt consult with experts to determine whether these types of interventions have the potential to be effective in preventing bullying.

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<sup>34</sup> Please refer to the ECAJ's '15 Steps to Defeat Antisemitism', 20 February 2025, available at: [15 steps to defeat antisemitism - ECAJ](#)

<sup>35</sup> Downey, Liana; Ouliaris, Mark; Poulton, Claire; Black, Sophie; An Tran, Minh, 'Antisemitism in Australian Schools', Blueprint Institute, 27 February 2024, available at: [An examination of antisemitism in Australian schools](#), p. 14.

## 5. Conclusion

The Anti-Bullying Rapid Review represents a critical moment of opportunity for a consistent and nuanced response across Australia in schools to the issue of bullying generally, and, more specifically, the issue of racist bullying. Current responses and interventions to address racist bullying are patchy, inconsistent, and generic, and they have proven ineffective to meet the challenges of this era, particularly with the growth of misinformation and disinformation online, which has had a particularly deleterious impact on minority groups. Evidently there needs to be a more coordinated, effective and nationwide response to racist bullying in schools, including antisemitic bullying, and this response will need to be tailored to the specific form of racism that needs to be addressed and focus on the students, the school staff, and the influences that shape their conduct at school.

We consent to this submission being made public and wish the Anti-Bullying Rapid Review team well in its deliberations.

Yours sincerely



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## APPENDIX 1: anti-Jewish incidents School 2023-2024

Incidents across schools in Australia from 1 Oct. 2023 to 30 Sep. 2024.

### Queensland

Verbal abuse and harassment of two 13-year-old Jewish boys over several weeks by other students through anti-Jewish hate speech against them, culminating in violence against one of the Jewish boys who had a chair held against his throat, called a “Kike” and the assailant yelled “Free Palestine” in his ear, school, Brisbane (7 Nov. 2023).

Jewish schoolboy, 13 years old, was punched in the chest, spat at, and called a Kike, at school, Brisbane (Nov. 2023).

At a cultural day at a state high school, a group of Muslim students ripped down the Israeli flag in front of a Jewish student, then replaced it with a Palestinian flag, while calling slurs out to the Jewish student, then the Muslim students pulled out water pistols and shot the Jewish student while saying “Kill the Jewish girl!” Brisbane (17 March 2024).

Harassment of two Jewish boys with shouts of “Free Palestine”, “Israel is evil” and other slogans directed at them on multiple occasions in a state high school, Brisbane (Oct. 2023).

Abuse of a female Jewish student in year 8 at a public school by other students who often give her Nazi salutes, shouts of “Heil Hitler”, and calls her “Bomber” Queensland (19 Oct. 2023).

Harassment of Jewish school students in Brisbane, between 7 October 2023 and 30 June 2024, include:

- regularly being called “dirty Jews” (at high school);
- regularly being told “You should be gassed” (at high school);
- being called a “Kike”;
- Nazi salutes done;
- being spat at;
- a swastika sewn into a student’s hat is shown regularly to Jewish students;
- text message to a Jewish student of “Gas chamber for you. I’ll take you to the station you Jew”;
- teacher at school, that has Jewish students, yelling “From the river to the sea”.

### South Australia

Physical altercation, with injuries sustained, after a boy towards a Jewish girl made antisemitic comments, swearing, threatening to blow up her house and threatening physical injuries, then her brother stepped in, at school, Adelaide (21 Feb. 2024).

Verbal abuse of Jewish student on his way home from school who was called “Murderer! Dickhead!” by group of students from year 6, primary school, Adelaide (15 Nov. 2023).

### Tasmania

None reported

## APPENDIX 1: anti-Jewish incidents School 2023-2024

### ACT

None reported

### Western Australia

During a student careers event a 15-year-old female Jewish student was verbally abused over the Israel-Hamas conflict, and then pushed over, at Perth Career's Expo, Perth (16 May 2024).

Students called out "Free Palestine!" as an identifiably Jewish staff member walked past, public high school, Perth (30 Oct. 2023).

Student shouted "Free Palestine!" at an identifiably Jewish staff member, public high school, Perth (3 Nov. 2023).

During a class taken by an identifiably Jewish staff member a student opened the door of the class and shouted "Free Palestine!", public high school, Perth (6 Nov. 2023).

Group of students chanted "Free Palestine" at an identifiably Jewish staff member as she passed them, public high school, Perth (9 Nov. 2023).

Group of male students shouted "Free Palestine" at an identifiably Jewish staff member then they ran away, public high school, Perth (10 Nov. 2023).

Student used a voice emulator app to repeat "Heil Hitler" at an identifiably Jewish staff member during class, public high school, Perth (16 Nov. 2023).

Student asked "Do you like Hitler?" to an identifiably Jewish staff member, public high school, Perth (16 Nov. 2023).

A year 8 student was told by a classmate that "Hitler should have finished the job" before doing a Nazi salute, private school, Perth (20 Nov. 2023).

A year 8 student was told by a classmate that "Hitler should have finished the job" before doing a Nazi salute, private school, Perth (20 Nov. 2023).

A Jewish student was verbally abused by a fellow student while in class, with "Jews aren't people, they're animals", "Go back to the gas chambers" and "Jews steal all the money", public school, Perth (1 Feb. 2024).

A Jewish student was verbally abused by a fellow student while in class, including "Jew, Jew, Jew", "I hope that your family dies" and "Dying a Jew is the worst way to die", public school, Perth (21 Feb. 2024).

A Jewish teacher was accosted by a parent of a student, then the parent later requested that the teacher not be allowed to teach her child because of the teacher's "background and religious beliefs", public school, Perth (25 March 2024).

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15-year-old male Jewish student was verbally harassed repeatedly with taunts including “Kill the Jews” and “Free Palestine”, by students from other schools at Perth Career’s Expo, Perth (16 May 2024).

Year 9 student said to a Jewish classmate, “I love Hitler” and Jews “will take over your business”, private school, Perth (29 July 2024).

### NSW

Physical assault of a Jewish male student, 16 year old in Year 10, who was grabbed by the neck twice, very forcefully by a Year 11 boy, who called him a Jew and a Juden as he was doing it, the Jewish boy has scratches on his neck, St Ives High School, St Ives, Sydney (Fri. 3 Nov. 2023).

Two boys were arguing at the school bus stop after school, one said something about Jews to the Jewish boy, who then got on the bus, then the other boy got onto the bus and hit the Jewish boy in the jaw, Killara High School, Killara, Sydney (27 Nov. 2023).

Harassment of Jewish boys in Year 7, in class by a boy who sprayed his deodorant can at the two Jewish boys and told them "Go back to the gas chambers", this led to a physical altercation after class, and one of the Jewish boys hit the offending boy. This type of harassment of Jewish students has been going on all year involving other kids too. South Sydney High School, Maroubra, Sydney (30 Aug. 2024).

...

Nazi swastika engraved into a school desk where a Jewish girl usually sits, high school, regional NSW, (7 Nov. 2023).

Vandalism of large tree with Nazi swastika carved into it, Lindfield Learning Village, Lindfield, Sydney (Aug. 2024).

...

Harassment by occupants of car making a 'Sieg Heil' gesture of people outside Jewish school, Sydney (Sat. 14 Oct. 2023).

Abuse of people outside a Jewish school when passenger of passing vehicle pointed his middle finger and shouted “Fuck you”, Sydney (16 Oct. 2023).

Abuse of people outside a Jewish school when passenger of passing vehicle yelled “Fuck you”, Sydney (19 Oct. 2023).

Jewish female student told how “It was disappointing to see them (a Jewish family) come back and didn’t get killed” St Ives High School, Sydney (20 Oct. 2023).

Verbal abuse of a Jewish school student while on a bus and as the student exited the bus, including “Jews are all murderers” and “you are responsible for the deaths in Gaza”, Sydney (20 Oct. 2023).

## APPENDIX 1: anti-Jewish incidents School 2023-2024

Abuse and shouts of “Free Palestine” directed towards a Jewish school by passenger of passing vehicle including, Sydney (23 Oct. 2023).

Jewish male student harassed with coins thrown on the ground near him and comments such as “The greedy Jew can smell money”, Randwick Boys High School, Randwick, Sydney (24 Oct. 2023).

Jewish boy, in Year 5, subjected to racist remarks, threats to kill him and his family, a Nazi swastika drawn in his book, told that Jews are stupid, Coogee Public School, Coogee, Sydney (25 Oct. 2023).

Harassment of Jewish students at a school sports outing with students making antisemitic remarks, drawing Nazi swastikas and other symbols, Sydney (26 Oct. 2023).

Verbal abuse of group of Jewish students standing in line at a shop; two students from another school called them “Fucking nigger Jews”, Bondi Junction, Sydney (Fri. 27 Oct. 2023).

Occupant of a passing vehicle gave the middle finger towards people outside a Jewish day school, Sydney (29 Oct. 2023).

Driver of passing car shouted “Free Palestine” while driving past Jewish school, Sydney (8 Nov. 2023).

Abuse of people outside Jewish school by driver who yelled “Arseholes” and gave the middle finger, Sydney (Nov. 2023).

‘Sieg Heil’ gesture made towards a Jewish individual at a high school, Sydney (10 Nov. 2023).

Abuse of a group of seven students from a Jewish school exiting a bus, as a woman on the street yelled “You are all monsters” and “I wish you were bombed instead”, Maroubra, Sydney (10 Nov. 2023).

Passenger in vehicle yelled “Free Palestine” three times towards a Jewish school, Sydney (14 Nov. 2023).

Jewish school enquired about booking four items eg Giant Scrabble, Giant Jenga etc, from a games equipment business, Western Sydney Jump (WSJ) for an event in December, but WSJ refused on the grounds that “There’s no way I’m taking a Zionist booking. I don’t want your blood money. Free Palestine”, Sydney (14 Nov. 2023).

Occupant of passing vehicle yelled “Fuck you Jewish Cunt” and raised his middle finger towards people at a Jewish school, Sydney (17 Nov. 2023).

Occupant of vehicle yelled “Karma is coming” at two different places of Jewish school, Sydney (21 Nov. 2023).

Driver of passing vehicle yelled “Fuck you” towards people at Jewish school, Sydney (23 Nov. 2023).

Driver of passing vehicle yelled abuse towards people at Jewish school, Sydney (23 Nov. 2023).

## APPENDIX 1: anti-Jewish incidents School 2023-2024

A year 7 boy did multiple Nazi salutes on the oval at school, a College, teachers interviewed the boy and he was suspended immediately, Sydney (28 Nov. 2023).

A student performed a Sieg Heil at a Jewish teacher during class, school in the Hills District, Sydney (1 Dec. 2023).

Occupant of a vehicle yelled "Fuck the Jews" at people outside a Jewish school, Sydney (4 Dec. 2023).

Verbal abuse by a school teacher towards a Jewish school teacher after the former had heard the latter mention the NSW Teachers Federation's stance on Israel and Gaza, the teacher told the Jew that Israel is committing a genocide and shouted him down, when the Jew asked him about October 7 he said it was an unfortunate response to Israel's 75 year occupation, then when the Jew asked him if Israel had a right to exist, the teacher said Israel has no right to exist, thus justified terrorism and advocated for the destruction of Israel, Sydney (13 Dec. 2023).

Middle finger directed at students entering a Jewish day school by passing driver, Sydney (19 Jan. 2024).

Driver yelled "You dirty scabs" towards people standing outside a Jewish day school, Sydney (19 Jan. 2024).

Verbal abuse and harassment and physical assault of a Jewish student in Year 10 in the History class which has been studying WW2 and the Holocaust, another student in his class told the Jewish student to "go back to the gas chambers", said "Heil Hitler" in his face, performed a Nazi salute in class, cheered during a video when it stated that Hitler sent Jews to the gas chambers, used Hitler and Nazi swastika symbols on Google classroom, and shoved the Jewish student; the school has said that these are not antisemitic, Sydney (5 Feb. 2024).

Passenger of passing vehicle made a gun gesture towards people outside Jewish school, Sydney (6 Feb. 2024).

Driver of vehicle shouted "You fucking asshole" and "you cunt" outside two different places of a Jewish school, and also raised his middle finger, Sydney (13 Feb. 2024).

Verbal abuse and harassment and physical assault of a Jewish student at school of escalating antisemitic verbal abuse, Nazi salutes in his direction followed by claims of it being an "accident" or a "joke", and physical pushing and jostling, over several weeks, Killara High School, Killara, Sydney (16 Feb. 2024).

Male student asked a female Jewish student in Year 7, after making rude comments to her, asked "Is that the Jewish symbol or the Satan symbol [you're wearing]?", she walked away and ignored, he said "Oh, it's the Satan symbol", she said "No, it's the Jewish symbol", he said "Right, so the Satan symbol" thus inferring that Jews are Satanic, St Ives High School, St Ives, Sydney (20 Feb. 2024).

Verbal abuse and harassment of a Jewish student at school ongoing since April 2023 onwards with repeated shouting of "HEIL HITLER", repeatedly being told to "Go kill yourself", and threats that they know where the Jewish student lives, naming the student's home address, as well as inappropriate comments made by teachers, Sydney (24 Feb. 2024).

## APPENDIX 1: anti-Jewish incidents School 2023-2024

“Fuck the Jews” yelled towards Jewish school students by occupant of passing vehicle, Sydney (18 Mar. 2024).

Two scooter riders yelled “Free Palestine” at Jewish school students, Dover Heights, Sydney (19 Mar. 2024).

Occupants of vehicle yelled “Free Palestine” at people outside Jewish school, Sydney (11 Apr. 2024).

Verbal abuse of “You fucking Jews” towards Jewish school children crossing a road, Queens Park, Sydney (10 Apr. 2024).

Shouts of “Fuck the Jews” towards Jewish day school from a vehicle, Sydney (16 Apr. 2024).

Verbal abuse of people outside Jewish day school by passenger of car, Sydney (1 May 2024).

“Free Palestine” shouted towards Jewish student outside Jewish school, Sydney (3 May 2024).

Swearing and abuse shouted from vehicle to people outside Jewish school, Sydney (17 May 2024).

Occupant of vehicle shouted “scumbag” at people outside Jewish day school, Sydney (23 May 2024).

Verbal abuse and honking of vehicle at Jewish individual outside Jewish school, car had large Palestinian flag attached to the rear, Sydney (28 May 2024).

“Free Palestine” shouted towards people outside Jewish school by occupants of known vehicle, Sydney (28 May 2024).

“Allahu Akbar” and other shouting in Arabic at people outside Jewish day school by driver of vehicle, Sydney (31 May 2024).

Harassment of Jewish student at her high school including kids giving her a Hitler salute or making jokes about the Holocaust, regional NSW (Oct. 2023 to May 2024).

Jewish student in Year 11 was waiting at the bus stop after school when a Year 10 boy, from Scots College, standing next to him put a plastic cap over his head mocking the Jewish skullcap and then shouting at the Jewish boy and his friends “You fucking Jews should be gassed like the rest of them” eastern suburbs, Sydney (4 June 2024).

Verbal harassment towards Jewish individual exiting public school, shouting “Jews should not be in the school”, police were contacted, Coogee, Sydney (1 Jul. 2024).

Harassment of Jewish student in Year 7, ongoing antisemitic comments, Nazi swastikas drawn in her notebook, St Ives High School, St Ives, Sydney (6 Aug. 2024).

Nazi salute towards Jewish girl, state primary school, northern suburbs, Sydney (Aug. 2024).

“Free Palestine” shouted towards people outside Jewish day school by driver of passing vehicle, Sydney (21 Aug. 2024).

## APPENDIX 1: anti-Jewish incidents School 2023-2024

Occupant of vehicle shouted “Jewish, Jew” towards students outside Jewish school, Sydney (30 Aug. 2024).

Waving of Palestinian flag towards Jewish school students outside their school by passenger of vehicle, Sydney (9. Sep. 2024).

Verbal abuse “Fuck youse” towards people outside Jewish school by occupant of vehicle, Sydney (10 Sep. 2024).

Three boys in Years 9 and 10 gave a Nazi salute to a Jewish girl in Year 8, at a Grammar School, regional NSW (18 Sep. 2024).

Jewish student in year 7, then Year 8, has been subjected to antisemitic bullying and harassment from students, incidents have included many Nazi salutes, comments that “Hitler should have finished the job”, “Heil Hitler”, a Nazi swastika graffitied onto a desk she uses, Grammar School, regional NSW (Oct 2023 to Sept 2024).

Middle finger given to people outside Jewish day school, Sydney (26 Sep. 2024).

Two students rearranged the desks in a classroom to form a Nazi swastika, Grammar School, regional NSW (27 Sep. 2024).

...

Message via Instagram message of “You’re school is nothing but a disgrace and I hope all the children, parents & staff who spend a cent to support the devil get cancer and die a slow painful death. Just as you should. Enjoy your day. I hope it’s your last x” and “Praise hitler, if only he was here to continue the mass destruction of your blood line” to Jewish school, Sydney (18 Oct. 2023).

Bomb threat emailed by “itheboogiemann” to Jewish school saying “There is a bomb in the building it will go at any time I press the button [bomb emoji] I’m the son of a great rabbi and you treated me as shit I’m a jew to and I’m shit this is over now”, Sydney (29 Feb. 2024).

Nazi salute by a school student at a private school, which was videoed and shared online, Marcellin College, Randwick, Sydney (6 Aug. 2024).

...

Graffiti of “JEW”, Randwick Girls High School, Randwick, Sydney (26 Oct. 2023).

Graffiti of “From the river to the sea Palestine will be free” on toilet door, Randwick Girls High School, Randwick, Sydney (22 Mar. 2024).

“Free Palestine” graffitied window at Jewish school, Sydney (26 May 2024).

Graffiti of a Nazi swastika and “kill the Jews” in the school bathroom; a student was told that “All Jews deserve to die”; other anti-Jewish incidents, Lindfield Learning Village, Lindfield, Sydney (7 June 2024).

## APPENDIX 1: anti-Jewish incidents School 2023-2024

Nazi swastika made of plastic coloured push-pins on a board in a classroom wall, Lindfield Learning Village, a co-educational school from Kindergarten to Year 12, Lindfield, Sydney (Aug. 2024).

### Victoria

Physical assault and verbal abuse of two Jewish schoolboys, from an Orthodox Jewish high school, by 8-10 youths of Middle Eastern background, who racially abused them including “Fucking Jews!” before one of the Jews, a 15yo, was punched in the jaw causing blood to gush from his mouth, train station, Caulfield, Melbourne (1 Sep. 2024).

...

Nazi swastika and two SS bolts were engraved into the Tooronga Road Bus stop, outside a Jewish school, Hawthorn, Melbourne (2 April 2024).

...

A student from a public school coughed “Fucking Jews” and did a Hitler salute towards students from a Jewish school who were also at the same venue, TAFE, Chadstone, Melbourne (17 Oct. 2023).

Driver of a vehicle yelled “Free Palestine” twice at two staff members of a Jewish school talking near the school, Melbourne (18 Oct. 2023).

Passenger in a vehicle wound the window down and yelled “Free Palestine!” outside a Jewish school towards a group consisting of a staff member, a student, and his father, Melbourne (19 Oct. 2023).

Occupants of a vehicle yelled “Free Palestine!” towards identifiably Jewish students were walking towards the nearby 7/11, St Kilda, Melbourne (19 Oct. 2023).

Occupant of a vehicle yelled “Fucking Jewish bastards!” towards security outside the front of the Jewish school, Melbourne (20 Oct. 2023).

The driver of a vehicle shouted “Free Palestine, you fucking Jew” out the window toward an identifiably Jewish father and son outside the front of a Jewish school, St Kilda, Melbourne (27 Oct. 2023).

The driver of a vehicle yelled “fucking Jews” at a people outside Jewish school, Melbourne (1 Nov. 2023).

A student subjected a Jewish student at the same school to numerous incidents of antisemitic abuse including screaming “Free Palestine” at him, accused that Jews “rape Muslims”, threatened that he “knew where [the Jew] lived”, “would bomb [the Jew]” and that the Jew “should sleep with one eye open”, Sandringham, Melbourne (1 Nov. 2023).

The driver of a vehicle started banging on the roof while yelling “Palestine Palestine” in Arabic (pronounced Filastina) repeatedly towards identifiably Jewish community members outside the Jewish school, Melbourne, 7 Nov. 2023

## APPENDIX 1: anti-Jewish incidents School 2023-2024

The occupants of a vehicle yelled “Free Palestine, fuck the Jews, fuck your country, everybody hates the Jews” towards an identifiably Jewish school child. An occupant yelled “we have tonnes of gas”, Jewish school, Melbourne, 10 Nov. 2023.

A male riding a bike yelled "fucking Jews" at two identifiably Jews walking past the Jewish school, Melbourne, 4 Jan. 2024.

The passenger of a vehicle pulled a “Heil Hitler” salute and pointed his fingers over his mouth, in what was described as a “Hitler moustache” towards people outside the Jewish school, Melbourne, 26 Feb. 2024.

The driver of a vehicle yelled out Seig Heil towards community members outside the Jewish school before the occupants of the vehicle started laughing, Melbourne 24 March 2024.

The passenger of a vehicle pulled a “Heil Hitler” gesture and loudly said “Heil Hitler” towards an identifiably Jewish student of the Jewish school, Melbourne 14 Aug. 2024.

After noticing the school uniforms of a group of identifiably Jewish students, a female asked them, if they go to a “Jewish school”, which school they go to and if they were “fucking Jews”. The female persisted to confront and question the students, physically touching one of the children on their chest, Prahran, Melbourne 11 Sep. 2024.

...

Graffiti of “JEW DIE” on front entrance wall of a Jewish school, Burwood, Melbourne (24 May 2024).

Graffiti of “Jew” on the glass at a tram stop near a Jewish school, St Kilda, Melbourne (6 July 2024).

...

Placards of “Stop the Holocaust in Gaza”

Placard of “from the river to the sea Palestine will be free”

From river to sea in chalk on pavement

Sticker of boycott star David

Organised by Teachers for Palestine, Outside Meadows Primary School, Broadmeadow, Melbourne, (24 April 2024).

And outside Footscray High School, Footscray, Melbourne (2 May 2024).

...

## APPENDIX 2: Examples of antisemitic discourse in schools

The NSW Teachers Federation has on several occasions gone beyond its remit to make statements on the Gaza war, including supporting ACTU statements that disproportionately target Israel for criticism. Some of these criticisms are couched in terms that evoke ancient antisemitic blood libels, such as the false insinuation that Jews intentionally kill children and other innocents. For instance, a statement on 8 November 2023, only weeks after 7 October attacks, was titled “How many more children?”, implied that such killing was deliberate, and included a link to the Palestine Action Group Sydney protest.” In addition, Jewish teachers are often made to feel that the union does not represent them, and some of its actions have had the effect of excluding and ostracising Jewish teachers.

On 1 July 2024, a teacher at Davidson High School in Frenchs Forest, Sydney, Bendeguz Devenyi-Botos, “showed his Year 10 commerce class a 16-minute video titled ‘Why doesn’t international law apply to the West?’ as part of a lesson on international law. The video repeatedly calls the war in Gaza a ‘genocide’, refers to Israel as a ‘genocidal, apartheid regime’ whose snipers ‘execute’ children and accuses the ‘pro-Israel lobby’ of ‘weaponising the Holocaust’. [The video] also expresses sympathy for the terror organisation Hamas, referring to it as the ‘Palestinian resistance’.” “The video was sourced from YouTube channel ‘Second Thought’, which describes itself as ‘devoted to education and analysis of current events from a socialist perspective’. It is also listed on Mr Devenyi-Botos’ public YouTube page under a playlist titled ‘School Resources.’” The teacher indicated he would “be showing another YouTube video the next day titled “Gaza: A Clear Case of Genocide” and sent students a link and worksheet with questions such as ‘How is [Israel’s] bombing campaign legally an act of genocide?’ and ‘Who is guilty... of Genocide in Gaza?’. As a result of all this, a Jewish student left the school.

The Teachers and School Staff for Palestine NSW social media pages contain a number of posts encouraging teachers to wear keffiyehs and other pro-Palestine paraphernalia in the classroom, to take group photos with placards, and to hold events such as ‘Watermelon Wednesday’. (<https://www.facebook.com/T4PNSW>)

On 25 November 2023, following the Teachers Federation State Council, T4PNSW encouraged the politicisation of classrooms, stating, “From today teachers can proudly and safely wear Keffiyeh to work with backing of the NSW Teachers Federation. Our week of action has been extended for a week, please take photos at work teachers wearing Keffiyeh or with signs calling to end the siege and bombing of Gaza and send to us. If any principal tries to stop you, get the NSWTF to speak to your principal. We congratulate the NSWTF and the teachers at State Council for the historic stand they have taken.” <https://www.skynews.com.au/australia-news/nsw-teachers-federation-under-fire-for-encouraging-staff-to-engage-in-political-protest-in-support-of-palestine/news-story/21290128cb77335c2ce089eac9048152>

## APPENDIX 2: Examples of antisemitic discourse in schools

Teachers for Palestine held a public “organising meeting” on 24 November 2023 in Parramatta and on zoom. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1018603646075649/> During the meeting, Miro Sandev, an English teacher at Bradfield Senior College, a secondary school in St Leonards, Sydney, asserted that support for Hamas, a listed terrorist organisation, should not be considered to be extremist, and expressed support for all forms of Palestinian resistance. He stated:

- "...aw do you support Hamas? Do you support Hamas? All this sort of stuff. You know, I think, we should be really firm in saying that Palestinians have a right to resist, and that means by any means necessary. That's what national liberation movements have always done. That's how you actually get decolonisation, historically. And so we shouldn't take a step back when we're accused of saying these sorts of things as though if you support the resistance, you're somehow found out to be an extremist, you have to be silenced..."

The following is a small selection of comments evincing malice and/or racism from the Teachers for Palestine (T4P General Discussion) WhatsApp group chat:

1. “What about private Jewish schools are they not in breach of code of conduct by supporting genercde?” (sic) (29 Nov. 2023)
2. “They [Jewish schools] all have ex IDF security detail who are armed ... When really like its not a visible marginalised identity like if security was the biggest issue you could send them to any public school and theyd blend right in? I get they have a right to cultural identity but it really does instill that self appointed perpetual Zionist victimhood status in young kids...” (29 Nov. 2023)
3. “It’s a clear cut case of genocide... Committed by an illegal and brutal occupation which peddles racist ideologies and is heavily indoctrinated with racial supremacy for generations. Openly. For the world to see. Kinda exactly like the Nazis. Do you really want to force teachers to remain neutral about an event similar to the Holocaust?!” (29 Nov. 2023)
4. Videos glorifying Hamas terrorism were also shared in the T4P General Discussion WhatsApp group. (4 Dec. 2023)
5. A photo was shared of IDF soldiers with the comment “Disgusting filthy people” and three vomit emojis.” (5 Dec. 2023)
6. “Allah (SWT) (God) is the greatest of planners and the murderers will respectfully get what by golly deserve. Cannot wait for that day to come!!!” (8 Dec. 2023)

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On 17 December 2023, Jason Wong, a teacher at Prahran High School in Melbourne publicly stated “ Hamas was doing exactly what they have to do ” referring to the October 7 massacre committed by Hamas, at an anti-Israel protest. He was later stood down by the Department of Education, which led to a threatened protest by a group of supporters of Wong. <https://www.australianjewishnews.com/protests-at-school-averted/>

In January 2024, “A Teachers and School Staff for Palestine [open letter](#) in support of Wong signed by hundreds of teachers and unionists said: “The Department of Education is trying to silence the widespread critical discussion and debate in schools and classrooms of Israel's deliberate bombing of schools and hospitals and the killing of thousands of children in Gaza.” In addition, the letter laid the blame “We note that a small group of Zionist agitators are conducting a targeted campaign to get Jason fired.”

<https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/protesters-stand-teacher-who-spoke-out-palestine>

Victorian Teachers and School Staff for Palestine held an event on 22 January 2024 titled, “Why there’s no ‘Neutrality’ on Genocide” featuring Samah Sabawi and Tasnim Sammak, and a ‘teacher panel’. The same group has advocated for adding ‘pro-Palestine’ content to the school curriculum, with one teacher saying at the forum, “I’ve got a year 10 history elective and that includes rights and freedoms units, can guess what I’ll be bringing in.”

Several strikes for Palestine have been held and attended by school students during school time since 7 October 2023, in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and elsewhere. At a strike held in Brisbane on 18 April 2024, there were chants of “Intifada” and “Israel is a terror state”. One of the organisers, Will Assim, commended the students for skipping school and attending the protest. When asked by a reporter, “Do you also condemn what Hamas did?” he replied, “I don’t – I think those questions are actually just, you know, distractions from the real genocide that’s happening in Gaza right now.”

**APPENDIX 2: Examples of antisemitic discourse in schools**



Nazi swastika, Lindfield Learning Village school, Lindfield, Sydney, Aug. 2024



Nazi swastika, Lindfield Learning Village school, Lindfield, Sydney, Aug. 2024



School teacher wearing Palestinian keffiyeh in a classroom,  
Melbourne, 1 May 2024



Teachers for Palestine WhatsApp group on 4 Dec. 2023 shared this video from Instagram by 'arwaabousamra' which featured Hamas terrorists, posted <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C0YhkTySEqM/>