



JOINT STATEMENT

VICTORIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP BACKS NEW HATE SPEECH LAWS

The Victorian Jewish community unites to support the hate laws that are being proposed by the Victorian Government.

The Government has today listened to Victoria's faith communities, and calls by the Opposition, in amending the bill to remove the 'political purpose' defence.

We have observed reports that notwithstanding these amendments by the Government, the Victorian Opposition is proposing to vote against the bill.

We recognise that the Opposition has over a long time taken consistently strong positions against antisemitism and hatred in Victoria.

However, we are deeply disappointed by these reports.

We intend to work with the Opposition to convey our views that it should support the bill in its current form on a bipartisan basis.

That is because we are facing a crisis of hate speech. There has been an explosion of hatred in our communities in recent years. Hatred is fuelled by hate speech – that is why the most extreme forms of incitement must be outlawed.

But our hate speech laws are broken – there has been only one successful prosecution for serious vilification in 25 years.

Now, with this amended bill, Victorians will have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fix our hate speech laws.

The bill will make the evidentiary thresholds for hate speech fairly and reasonably attainable, and it will protect free speech. It follows the recommendations of a bipartisan report issued by the Legal and Social Issues Committee.

And it will send an important message – that inciting hatred or revulsion of another person on the basis of who they are has no place in Victoria.

There is no time to waste.

18 February 2025

Elyse Schachna
President, Zionism Victoria

Philip Zajac
President, Jewish Community Council of Victoria

Jeremy Leibler
President, Zionist Federation of Australia

Daniel Aghion
President, Executive Council of Australian Jewry

Media contact:

Naomi Levin: naomi.levin@jccv.org.au | 0419 826 500