



**Executive Council of
Australian Jewry**

New Federal law to criminalise public displays of, and trade in, Nazi hate symbols

7 June 2023

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), the peak representative body of the Australian Jewish community, has welcomed the Federal government's announcement that it will introduce legislation to criminalise public displays of the Nazi Hakenkreuz and the Schutzstaffel hate symbols and ban the trade in these items.

"This legislation will implement recommendations made by the ECAJ to the recent parliamentary Inquiry into the display of Nazi symbols", said ECAJ co-CEO Peter Wertheim. "We appreciate the government moving on this issue, and heeding the voice of our community."

"We especially welcome the proposals to ban the trade in items featuring certain Nazi symbols, and to empower the police to issue directions to remove Nazi symbols from public display, as advocated expressly in the ECAJ's submission to parliament", Mr Wertheim said.

The ECAJ has also expressed concern directly to the Attorney-General that the prohibitions will be limited only to the hakenkreuz and Schutzstaffel symbols (SS lightning bolts).

"Our concern is that neo-Nazi groups will circumvent the legislation simply by using the Totenkopf (death's head), sonnenrad (sun wheel) and other well-known Nazi symbols instead of the two prohibited symbols. We have urged the government to review the legislation periodically so that if our concerns are borne out, the prohibitions may in due course be extended to the display of other Nazi symbols."

Another concern expressed by the ECAJ is the absence of any prohibitions on the performance of Nazi gestures such as the Nazi salute. "This will leave a gap that will need to be filled by State and Territory legislation," Mr Wertheim concluded.

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