



SUBMISSION TO THE

Royal Commission on Antisemitism

Submitted by The Humanism Project (THP)

Organisation: The Humanism Project

Network: Pan-Australian, with a focus on Indian-Australian diaspora communities

Contact & Inquiries: HumanismProjectTeam@gmail.com

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1. About The Humanism Project

The Humanism Project (THP) is a social justice advocacy organisation rooted in the Indian-Australian diaspora, with a pan-Australian network of human rights activists, academics, and faith and non-faith community members. We are committed to human dignity, pluralism, and the indivisibility of rights.

Our members have direct, lived experience of racism, caste-based discrimination, Islamophobia, and religious prejudice. We do not speak as distant observers of hatred but as people for whom these struggles are personal.

We offer this submission in a spirit of solidarity across communities, grounded in humanistic principles and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. Support for the Inquiry

THP welcomes the establishment of this Royal Commission. Antisemitism is a real and serious form of hatred. Jewish Australians deserve to live, work, worship, and participate in public life free from intimidation, discrimination, and violence.

We see this inquiry as an opportunity to promote harmony and build social cohesion across all communities. Its value will be determined not only by its findings, but by whether its processes strengthen bonds between communities rather than deepening divisions.



We urge the Commission to resist narrow framing and divisive politics, and to use this opportunity to lay foundations for a genuinely inclusive anti-racism architecture.

3. Antisemitism Cannot Be Addressed in Isolation

Antisemitism is one expression of a broader pattern of racism and prejudice that cannot be effectively addressed in isolation. A narrowly scoped inquiry risks missing the systemic conditions that allow all forms of hatred to flourish.

Australia's multicultural society faces multiple overlapping forms of discrimination:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face systemic racism across law enforcement, housing, health, and education;
- Migrants and CALD communities experience structural disadvantage and everyday racism;
- Muslims face Islamophobia that has intensified since 2001;
- South Asian communities face religious and racial discrimination that is frequently under-recognised;
- Caste discrimination, a form of descent-based prejudice, is absent from Australian legal protections despite affecting significant sections of diaspora communities.

Prioritising one form of racism over others is analytically flawed and politically corrosive. It feeds the sense among marginalised communities that their experiences do not count.

The Commission must hear from the Palestinian peak body, who should be granted leave to appear and to examine expert witnesses. Palestinian Australians are a community facing what international courts and human rights bodies have characterised as genocide. Their exclusion would produce a partial and polarising account of the rise in antisemitism.

4. Definition of Antisemitism

THP recommends the Commission adopt the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA) rather than the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition.



The JDA, developed by leading scholars in Holocaust history and related fields, clearly distinguishes antisemitic hatred from legitimate political criticism of Israeli government policy. The IHRA definition dangerously blurs this distinction. It has been used to suppress lawful advocacy, silence academic inquiry, and attack civil society organisations for positions that enjoy broad international support.

Adopting the IHRA definition risks embedding those harms in Australian law and policy. The JDA offers rigorous protection against genuine antisemitism while preserving the right to free political speech.

5. Free Speech, Slogans, and the Right to Advocate

THP is concerned about moves to ban slogans associated with Palestinian solidarity. Many of these expressions are universal statements of support for human rights and the protection of civilian life.

Criminalising or suppressing these slogans has serious consequences:

- It targets activists who are speaking up for the rights of civilians, including children, women, and men facing violence;
- It creates distrust of authorities among communities that are already marginalised;
- It conflates political speech with hate speech, undermining the credibility of genuine anti-racism efforts.

We urge the Commission to re-examine whether bans on pro-Palestinian slogans are proportionate, evidence-based, and consistent with Australia's human rights obligations.

6. The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and Diaspora Antisemitism

Research consistently shows that escalations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are accompanied by spikes in antisemitic incidents worldwide. This pattern must be honestly confronted.

A key driver is the conflation of Jewish identity with Israeli state policy. When Israeli leaders claim to speak for all Jewish people, or when Israeli military action is presented as an expression



of Jewish values, diaspora Jewish communities are exposed to hostility they neither invited nor deserve. This conflation is factually wrong and itself a form of prejudice.

Equally, accusations of antisemitism are sometimes used to silence legitimate criticism of Israeli policies and alleged violations of international humanitarian law. This misuse diverts attention from genuine antisemitic hatred and ultimately leaves Jewish communities less protected.

On the question of Israel's 'right to exist': we submit that it is more useful to move the focus from the abstract right of a state to exist to the concrete rights of people to exist. States are political constructs that change over time. Invoking a 'right to exist' as a conversation-stopper shuts down legitimate debate about international law, occupation, and the rights of Palestinian civilians. The rights of all people, Israeli and Palestinian alike, to live in safety and dignity must be the foundation of any serious discussion.

Addressing the root causes of the conflict, including the cessation of trade of weapon parts that are used in the bombing of civilians in Palestine, and holding Israel to account for its violations of international humanitarian law, would reduce a significant trigger for diaspora antisemitism.

7. A Comprehensive Anti-Racism Strategy

Australia needs a single, comprehensive, all-inclusive anti-racism strategy where different communities' experiences are not forced to compete for political attention. Creating a separate architecture for antisemitism alone risks reinforcing hierarchies of victimhood that undermine social cohesion.

The National Anti-Racism Framework, developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission after extensive community consultations, provides the best available strategy. THP urges the Commission to recommend its full and prompt implementation. The Framework offers:

- A comprehensive understanding of racism, encompassing structural, institutional, and interpersonal dimensions;
- Education, awareness, and media literacy programmes to build community resilience;
- Institutional accountability mechanisms across public and private sectors;



- Recognition of intersecting forms of discrimination, including racial, religious, and descent-based prejudice;
- A commitment to centring the voices of those most affected.

8. Humanism as a Guiding Framework

In a multi-polar, multi-religious, and secular society, THP believes that humanistic principles should guide the state's approach to social cohesion and anti-racism. These principles, grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, offer a framework that is inclusive of all people regardless of faith, ethnicity, or background.

We recommend a shift away from frameworks organised primarily around religious identity or communal interest, towards a humanistic approach that places universal human dignity at the centre. This is not a dismissal of religious communities, whose contributions to social life we value deeply. It is a call for the state to operate from a foundation that belongs equally to everyone.

THP, which brings together human rights activists, academics, and faith and non-faith community members, offers to work with the Commission or the Government to develop a practical framework for engagement based on these principles.

9. Summary of Recommendations

THP respectfully urges the Commission to:

- **Adopt the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism** as its definitional framework, in preference to the IHRA working definition.
- **Address antisemitism within a broader anti-racism framework**, acknowledging that it cannot be tackled effectively in isolation from other forms of racism and prejudice.
- **Grant Palestinian advocacy groups leave to appear** before the Commission and to examine expert witnesses.
- **Examine bans on pro-Palestinian slogans** and assess whether they are proportionate and consistent with human rights obligations.



- **Shift the rights discourse from 'a state's right to exist'** to the rights of all people, Israeli and Palestinian, to live in safety and dignity.
- **Hear evidence from all communities facing racism**, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Muslim Australians, and CALD communities.
- **Recommend the full implementation of the National Anti-Racism Framework** as the most comprehensive community-endorsed strategy for tackling racism across Australian institutions.
- **Include caste discrimination** within Australia's anti-racism architecture.
- **Adopt humanistic principles, grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, as the state's guiding framework for social cohesion and anti-racism engagement.
- **Engage THP** and similar organisations in developing a practical framework for humanistic, cross-community engagement.

10. Conclusion

Hatred directed at any community diminishes us all. Antisemitism is a serious evil, as are Islamophobia, racism against Aboriginal Australians, anti-CALD discrimination, and caste prejudice. These are not competing concerns. They call for a comprehensive, principled, and inclusive response.

The measure of this Commission's success will be whether it leaves Australia a fairer, more honest, and more inclusive society for everyone who calls this country home. THP stands ready to contribute to that outcome.

Submitted on behalf of The Humanism Project

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