

INQUIRY INTO ANTISEMITISM IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I am a Jewish Australian born to Holocaust survivor grandparents. My grandparents lost their families in the concentration camps, and came to Sydney, Australia to give us the privileges they were denied due to their religion.

My sister and I, their sole grandchildren became the first university graduates in the family and have excelled in our chosen careers, contributing to Australia's economy and culture.

I am now mother to three children. A son who is studying Law at UTS, a daughter studying Engineering/Medical Science at USYD and a daughter attending a Jewish day school.

It has come with great angst that my children are embarking on their university study in a climate of such overt antisemitism on campus since the atrocities committed by Hamas in Israel of October 7, 2023. They should not have to worry about disclosing their religion to peers and teachers, decide whether it is safe to wear religious symbols or mention the Jewish school they attended in fear that it may jeopardise their safety or cause antisemitic slurs.

My children share stories of antisemitic posters and t shirts around campus and some of their peers at other universities only attend online last year to the encampments and protests and having been targeted directly.

Jewish students have a right to a safe and welcoming university environment. They studied hard to earn their places and want to gain qualifications to make their way as Australian citizens.

Meanwhile, school aged child worries about wearing her school uniform in public should she be identified as Jewish and my husband and I are concerned for her safety. She is the same age my grandmother was when she was orphaned and in hiding during the holocaust and should not be living in fear in Australia.

My husband and I are horrified about the recent antisemitism events in Sydney and are questioning if we are living in the right country for the first time in our lives.

Were my grandparents still alive, they would be horrified that the "free" Australia that they fled to in order to escape the horrors of Eastern Europe has become so filled with hate towards our people. They would not believe that their great-grandchildren were dealing with some of the same challenges they faced in Poland in the Nazi era.

It is essential that there be an urgent Parliamentary Inquiry. I support the inquiry and the terms of reference as it stands.