

INQUIRY INTO ANTISEMITISM IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Tzedek Collective

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Committee Secretary

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 5 – JUSTICE AND COMMUNITIES

Clerk of the Parliaments, NSW Legislative Council

NSW Parliament House

6 Macquarie Street

Sydney NSW 2000

To the Committee Secretary,

We are writing this submission as a staunch Jewish group called Tzedek Collective, formed in 2021 and based in and around Gadigal, Wangal, Bidjegal, Dharawal and Dharug lands. Tzedek represents a growing number of Jewish people, including university staff and students, united in our desire to cultivate an anti-Zionist Jewish community that is rooted in the Yiddish diasporic principle of 'hereness'. Our goal is to develop a cultural, spiritual, inclusive and pluralistic Jewish community that has strong ties with the broader community. Our collective's principles are rooted in and guided by our Jewish identities, culture, customs, practices and religion.

Tzedek Collective operates from a position of shared struggle and unity. We are deeply concerned about the attempt to essentialise antisemitism and treat it as a distinct and removed form of prejudice.

As university workers and students and community members, we see daily prejudice and violence targeting Muslim, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and Palestinian people, international students, and other people from socially marginalised cultural backgrounds. These people bear the brunt of racial violence and prejudice. We know because these are our students, our colleagues, and our friends.

Tzedek Collective has been active in calling for an end to the genocide and ethnic cleansing of Palestine and for the liberation and self-determination of Palestine. As students and staff members on university campuses, we have found solidarity and camaraderie with others in this liberatory anti-racist movement calling for an end to violence inflicted in the name of Zionism (as Zionism ultimately strives for Jewish supremacy). We have felt welcomed and

hold mutual respect within the movement. We have held and participated in both multi-faith and Jewish-specific celebrations with Palestinians and Muslims.

It is clear from the Terms of Reference that this Committee is singling out antisemitism from the broader racism faced by racialized minority groups and thus not only not helping the reduction of antisemitism but perpetrating it further as then the cause of racism – white supremacy – is only reinforced.

Criticism of the State of Israel has regularly been characterised as being inherently antisemitic, and these accusations have been used to silence those who would speak out against Israel's crimes of illegal occupation and genocide. These critics have been wrongfully labelled as antisemites without evidence and without any meaningful engagement with the concerns raised in those critiques. In this way, the State of Israel fronts itself as a representative of all Jewish communities and then hides behind Judaism and Jewish communities to deflect any valid criticism of its crimes. This is evident from the very beginning of Israel's establishment with the Nakba of 1947- 48 up until and including the ongoing genocide currently being perpetrated in Gaza. In just the past two weeks, Israel has murdered more than 1,000 people in Gaza, Palestine (see UN report from 2 April 2025 <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/04/1161816>). We fear that this is the case with this inquiry as well, the result of which would be targeting other minority groups in the name of the 'supposed' safety of supporters of Israel and Zionism rather than actually combatting instances of racism.

Policing of antisemitism has mainly resulted in a reduction of academic freedom and freedom of speech generally and for our responsibilities as university workers, students and members of society to tell the truth and to support others to tell those truths. Antisemitism has been dealt with as a separate issue to other racisms and not in an anti-racism framework, and in fact, has been used to vilify academics, activists, students, and others. It has been used to stifle academic speech and freedom in Australia, as well as in the US, UK, and Canada. Even before complaints might be made, it has had a chilling effect, with staff and students around the country often already afraid to talk publicly about Israel's actions and its histories in case of receiving a vexatious complaint. We know that this is the case at Australian universities because many members of our Collective are university staff and students.



Countering rising antisemitism is a serious and important task, but the focus on policing and further security is not helpful in this regard. We, as a Jewish collective committed to anti-racism, are not in favour of addressing antisemitism in isolation from other forms of racism. No separate definition and treatment of antisemitism is needed in order to understand it or fight against it. On the contrary, the most effective way of dealing with the very real antisemitism that does exist in society is through a broader antiracist approach, which sees antisemitism as both historically specific but as deeply interlinked with other forms of discrimination and racism.

Similarly, education on the Holocaust of European Jews, which is one of the strategies proposed by this committee in the Terms of Reference (point h) for combating antisemitism, has been often removed and elevated from other genocides that have happened throughout history, such as the genocide of Herero and Nama by the Germans prior to the Holocaust, or the current genocide of Palestinians or First Nations people in this settler-colony of Australia. It also often ignores the other victims of the Holocaust, such as the Roma people, LGBTQ communities, among others. Education is very important, and we encourage it to be one that is rooted in understanding how genocides are justified and perpetrated without exceptionilising them.

We are witnessing a genocide unfold in Gaza. Israel's deliberate actions to devastate Palestinian life and all that sustains it have never been clearer. We urge the Commission of Inquiry to remember what's at stake: calling out genocide is a moral duty for every single person. With the recent ICC and ICJ proceedings into Israel's actions in Gaza and in the West Bank, there are also potential legal implications.

We urge the Commission of Inquiry to heed our concerns. If we are to undertake tangible work to address antisemitism, we need to address racism and prejudice **in all its forms**, and our actions must be rooted in solidarity rather than essentialise a very specific Jewish Zionist experience.

Tzedek Collective,

