



12 March 2026

The Higher Education Standards Panel (HESP)  
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Dear Chair

**Higher Education Standards Panel**  
***Consultation on amendments to the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021***

This is a submission from ASECA to the Panel's review of the '*Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*' (the **Standards**). We are just answering Question 1 in relation to issue 1: Demonstrations and Commitment to addressing racism.

On 9 July 2024, Jillian Segal AO was appointed as Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism. The [Terms of Reference](#) of the Special Envoy's appointment include providing advice to Government to inform policy development, legislation and other measures that will combat antisemitism, and social cohesion factors that drive the behaviour.

In 2025, the Special Envoy published a [Strategic Plan](#), which has been [adopted](#) in full by the Australian Government. The central hallmark of the Plan is education concerning antisemitism, including in Australia's higher education sector.

In addition to recommendations below, we refer your attention to the submission made by the Special Envoy to the Inquiry into a *Commission of Inquiry into Antisemitism at Australian Universities Bill 2024* (No. 2) (**2024 Senate Inquiry**).<sup>1</sup> That submission details how antisemitism has become embedded into university culture, and how universities have failed to denounce or address antisemitism, leaving Australian Jewish students traumatised and unsafe on campus.<sup>2</sup> The submission also appends a collection of testimony of antisemitic incidents experienced on university campuses.<sup>3</sup>

**The Proposal: Demonstrating a commitment to addressing racism**

***Background and proposal***

In December 2025, the Australian Government adopted in full the Special Envoy's Plan to Combat Antisemitism.<sup>4</sup> The Government's response includes various measures to "*tackle antisemitism*" in universities, including:

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<sup>1</sup> See, Parliament of Australia, *Inquiry into a Commission of Inquiry into Antisemitism at Australian Universities Bill 2024* (No. 2), [Submissions](#).  
<sup>2</sup> See, Parliament of Australia, *Commission of Inquiry into Antisemitism at Australian Universities Bill 2024* (No. 2) [Submission](#) by Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, ([Submission to the 2024 Senate Inquiry](#)) p 1.  
<sup>3</sup> Submission to the 2024 Senate Inquiry, Appendix 3.  
<sup>4</sup> See, Prime Minister of Australia, Media Release, '[Special envoy's plan to combat antisemitism](#)', 18 December 2025.

*“strengthening Commonwealth higher education regulation to ensure institutions demonstrate a commitment to addressing racism, and ensuring the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency can monitor compliance”.*<sup>5</sup>

Consistent with this Recommendation, the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, requested that the Panel review the Threshold Standards and provide advice on amendments to deliver this commitment and to deal, more broadly, with systemic racism on university campuses following findings of the survey by the Australian Human Rights Commission.<sup>6</sup>

The Panel proposes to amend the Standards, to require higher education providers to demonstrate a commitment to addressing racism, as a means to clarify provider obligations around safety and inclusion, and enhance TEQSA’s regulatory capacity.<sup>7</sup> In support of this proposal, the Panel refers to evidence of “*systemic racism within the higher education sector*”, its liaison with the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), the Respect at Uni Study and the Racism@Uni Study.<sup>8</sup>

*Recommendation: The Standards must also include a bespoke focus on antisemitism*

ASECA welcomes the Panel’s commitment to address racism within the higher education sector, however recommends a refinement, namely that the Standards explicitly require higher education providers to demonstrate a commitment to addressing racism, **including antisemitism**. This is imperative to fulfil the tenor of the Australian Government’s commitment to “*tackle antisemitism*” in universities, and to ensure antisemitism is addressed adequately within the higher education sector.

As canvassed in ASECA’s submission to the 2024 Senate Inquiry, racism of any type is abhorrent, and prevents universities from fulfilling their essential role. However, antisemitism is an ancient and long standing hatred against an ethno-religious group. It is not broadly understood, and will not be addressed sufficiently by policies instituted to deal with racism more broadly.<sup>9</sup>

*Antisemitism: an ancient hatred*

Antisemitism is an ancient hatred, which is founded on false information, including antisemitic tropes that can be subtle yet extremely pervasive. These tropes have evolved through the ages, and remain prevalent on Australian university campuses today.

For instance, in late 2023, a survey found two thirds of Australian Jewish students face anti-Semitism at university.<sup>10</sup> 37 per cent of survey respondents reported antisemitism based on perceptions of “*Jewish money, power or influence*”. These perceptions are rooted in two antisemitic tropes – first, that Jewish people are thrifty, and second, the trope of ‘*global domination*’.<sup>11</sup>

Antisemitism rooted in historical and contemporary tropes, such as the trope of ‘*global domination*’, has a significant impact upon the wellbeing of Jewish students on university campuses. For instance, the above survey also reported that 67% of students who experienced antisemitism on campus have hidden their Jewish identity.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Australian Government, ‘[Eliminating Antisemitism: Australian Government response to the Special Envoy’s Plan to Combat Antisemitism](#)’, Recommendation 4, p 7.

<sup>6</sup> Higher Education Standards Panel, [Consultation on amendments to the Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021 \(Consultation Paper\)](#), p 9.

<sup>7</sup> Consultation Paper, p 9.

<sup>8</sup> Consultation Paper, p 9.

<sup>9</sup> Submission to the 2024 Senate Inquiry, p 4 citing Hadley Freeman argues, “*Jews have always been a glitch in the binary of identity politics*”, see Freeman, Hadley, ‘Blindness: October 7 and the Left’, *The Jewish Quarterly*, Issue 256, May 2024, p. 69

<sup>10</sup> See, Zionist Federation of Australia, ‘[Survey finds two thirds of Jewish students face anti-Semitism, anti-Israel attacks at university](#)’, 15 August 2023.

<sup>11</sup> The history and development of these tropes are discussed in Alex Ryvchin, ‘*The 7 Deadly Myths: Antisemitism from the time of Christ to Kanye West*’, Academic Studies Press, 2023 (Ryvchin, ‘*The 7 Deadly Myths*’).

<sup>12</sup> See, Zionist Federation of Australia, ‘[Survey finds two thirds of Jewish students face anti-Semitism, anti-Israel attacks at university](#)’, 15 August 2023.

### Measures to address racism generally will not adequately address antisemitism

Research has demonstrated that generic anti-racism education may positively influence attitudes towards some minority racial groups, but only have a positive influence on attitudes towards other groups when prejudice against them is specifically addressed.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the practices for addressing bullying within schools are well-established. However, these practices have not been effective to address bullying that is motivated by antisemitic prejudice or hatred.<sup>14</sup> As antisemitism has morphed over the centuries, it includes a mix of hatred against Jews as a race, religion and as a people with connection to land. Whilst it is important that it is also seen as a hatred along other forms of hatred some education about the tropes is important for students to be able to recognise it.

There is a tendency in Australia to push against exclusivity or special treatment and treat all forms of racism in a “one size fits all” approach. This generates the idea that an anti-racism strategy will capture all forms of bigotry, prejudice and hatred. While this approach has the appearance of fairness – not wanting to treat one form of hatred as “special” - it only works if the approach **fully accommodates** all forms of hatred.

The problem is that antisemitism has many distinct features that are not properly addressed within contemporary approaches to addressing racism more broadly. Aside from the very specific ideological structures that underpin antisemitism (for example myths of Jewish global domination and conspiracism which set it apart from other forms), there are other distinct challenges as well.

For example, concepts such as Critical Race Theory, “white privilege” and settler colonialism which have been developed to describe and address structural and systemic racism, do not adequately deal with combatting antisemitism, and in many instances undermine efforts to do so. For example, Jews are often painted as “white” or “privileged” or “oppressors” and therefore undeserving of a place within these human rights frameworks. Concepts of Jews as “European”, “white”, “privileged” and “oppressors” is ahistorical and perversely ignores Jewish history and experience. The very structures that have been developed to assist those harmed by racism, are increasingly providing the ideological frameworks and justifications for excluding Jews from their remit. That is, if Jews are falsely cast as ‘white colonial oppressors’ (a narrative deliberately propagated in antisemitic campaigns intended to mobilise public opinion), then in contemporary theories on racism, Jews are not afforded the safety that they need and deserve.

### **Conclusion**

In view of the above, it is very important that the Standards require higher education institutions to address antisemitism specifically, in addition to racism (generally). This recommendation will direct attention appropriately toward preconceptions and tropes which are unique within this ancient hatred. This is not to provide any preferential treatment, but to facilitate the same level of awareness and accountability with regard to antisemitic discourse and incidents in tertiary settings as exists with respect to manifestations of other types of racism.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Suzanne Rutland, ‘*Racism in Australia: different streams, different responses*’, New Racisms: New Anti-Racisms, University of Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> See, eg, Zehavit Gross & Suzanne D. Rutland (2014) *Combating antisemitism in the school playground: an Australian case study*, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 48:3, 309-330, DOI: 10.1080/0031322X.2014.918703.

<sup>15</sup> See, eg, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry’s [Submission](#) to Parliament of Australia, *Commission of Inquiry into Antisemitism at Australian Universities Bill 2024 (No. 2)*.