



## Attorney-General

Reference: MS24-001346

Mr Josh Burns MP  
Chair  
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email: [human.rights@aph.gov.au](mailto:human.rights@aph.gov.au)

Dear Chair

I am writing to you pursuant to section 7(c) of the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011* to ask the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights to inquire into, and report on, antisemitism at Australian universities.

On 4 July 2024, the Senate referred the Commission of Inquiry into Antisemitism at Australian Universities Bill 2024 (No. 2) to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee (Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee) for inquiry and report.

On 1 October 2024, the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee released its report. The committee found there has been a rise in antisemitism in Australia, including on Australian university campuses. It also found the university response to incidents of antisemitism was inadequate, and that further action is needed to address the tensions on university campuses and protect the safety of students and staff. The Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee was deeply troubled by the experiences of hostility, abuse and discrimination it heard from Jewish students and staff at Australian universities, and their concerns about the lack of support that they received from their university when reporting incidents.

The Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee was concerned that a commission of inquiry would not be able to respond in an agile and timely manner and recommended that the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights inquire into antisemitism at Australian universities.

The Australian Government recognises, and is committed to addressing, the significant increase in incidences of antisemitism at Australian universities. This inquiry forms part of the Government's multifaceted approach to addressing Australians' complex experiences of racism. In line with this commitment, I ask the Committee to consider:

- the prevalence, nature and experiences of antisemitic activity at universities;
- university frameworks for the prevention of, and responses to, antisemitism at universities, including rules, policies and other measures introduced to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students, staff and academics;
- the effectiveness and adequacy of these frameworks;
- the support provided to students, staff and academics experiencing antisemitism at universities;
- international experiences and best practices in dealing with antisemitic activity at universities;
- what policy or regulatory changes are required to better address and prevent antisemitism at universities; and

- any other relevant matters.

I ask that the Committee hold public hearings and consider making use of its full range of powers in the exercise of its inquiry function, including, as the Committee considers necessary, the powers to:

- receive evidence by private or in-camera hearings to protect witnesses;
- compel witnesses to attend a committee meeting to give evidence;
- protect witnesses from improper interference (including from any acts aimed at punishing them for having given such evidence); and
- require the production of documents or records relevant to the Committee's inquiry.

I ask that the Committee conduct its inquiry and report to both Houses of the Parliament by 31 March 2025. I look forward to receiving your report in due course.

I have copied this letter to the Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, and also to the Minister for Education, the Hon Jason Clare MP, and the Minister for Home Affairs, the Hon Tony Burke MP, given their responsibilities for education and social cohesion.

Yours sincerely

**THE HON MARK DREYFUS KC MP**

29 /10 /2024

CC. The Hon Anthony Albanese, Prime Minister  
The Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education  
The Hon Tony Burke MP, Minister for Home Affairs