



Royal Commission
on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion

5 March 2026

Senator Raff Ciccone
Chair
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: pjcis@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Ciccone,

Royal Commissions Legislation Amendment (Protections for Providing Information) Bill 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Committee's review of the Royal Commissions Legislation Amendment (Protections for Providing Information) Bill 2026 (the Bill).

On 9 January 2026, the Royal Commission was established by Letters Patent issued by the Governor-General, Her Excellency the Hon Sam Mostyn AC. A copy of the Letters Patent is enclosed. Letters Patent in identical terms have now been issued by the Governors of each of the States.

The Royal Commission was consulted on the development of the Bill, and supports the proposed amendments to the *Royal Commissions Act 1902*, *Royal Commissions Regulations 2019* and *Criminal Code Act 1995*. The amendments would:

- a. enable the Royal Commission to obtain access to information that would otherwise be protected by certain secrecy provisions, and
- b. facilitate current and former staff members and agents of intelligence and law enforcement agencies engaging with the Royal Commission on a voluntary basis.

The Royal Commission has entered into intelligence and operationally sensitive information arrangements with relevant agency heads, which I understand the Attorney-General's Department will provide to the Committee. A copy of these arrangements is available on the Royal Commission's website and, subject to the passage of the Bill, will be listed on the Federal Register of Legislation as a notifiable instrument.

The Royal Commission has issued notices to produce seeking information from intelligence and law enforcement agencies, including information that is protected by secrecy provisions that limit or preclude its disclosure to the Royal Commission. This includes information protected by the *Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979* and *Surveillance Devices Act 2004*.

Access to detailed information from intelligence and law enforcement agencies is essential to effectively discharge paragraph (c) of the Royal Commission's terms of reference, concerning the circumstances surrounding the antisemitic attack that occurred at Bondi on 14 December 2025. As the first Royal Commission to investigate aspects of the National Intelligence Community's work since the Royal Commission on Intelligence and Security (1974-77) and Royal Commission on Australia's Security and Intelligence Agencies (1983-84), the ability to receive information provided by current and former staff members and agents will also assist the Commission's work.

The urgent progression of these amendments is necessary to support the Royal Commission's work. The inability to access, or further delay in accessing, information currently protected by secrecy offences is impeding the Royal Commission's work, in particular the preparation of the Interim Report that the Commission is required to deliver by 30 April 2026.

I trust this information is of assistance to the Committee.

Yours sincerely



Virginia Bell AC SC
Commissioner

ENTERED ON RECORD by me in Register of Patents No. 61, page 1, on 9 January 2027

Secretary to the Federal Executive Council



KING CHARLES THE THIRD, by the Grace of God King of Australia and His other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth

TO

The Honourable Virginia Bell AC

GREETING

ACKNOWLEDGING the antisemitic terrorist attack on Jewish Australians that took place at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025, and which resulted in the loss of 15 lives and the wounding of a further 40 individuals.

AND the determination of the Australian Government to respond to the attack, and the factors leading up to the attack, as a matter of urgency by addressing antisemitism within the Australian community, including since 7 October 2023.

AND that the Australian Government has adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism.

AND recognising that strengthening the national consensus in support of democracy, freedom and the rule of law (social cohesion) provides the strongest defence against antisemitism and other forms of religious and ideologically motivated extremism.

AND that hearing from the Jewish Australian community will be important to informing the recommendations of your inquiry and recognising concerns relating to educational and cultural institutions, and other sectors of Australian society.

AND the necessity for the inquiry to be conducted in a manner that does not occasion prejudice to current or future criminal proceedings or national security or undermine social cohesion.

NOW THEREFORE We do, by these Our Letters Patent issued in Our name by Our Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia on the advice of the Federal Executive Council and under the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia, the *Royal Commissions Act 1902* and every other enabling power, appoint you to be a Commission of inquiry, and require and authorise you to inquire into the following matters:

- (a) tackling antisemitism by:
 - (i) investigating the nature and prevalence of antisemitism in institutions and society, and examining its key drivers in Australia, including religious and ideologically motivated extremism and radicalisation, including in the lead up to the antisemitic Bondi terrorist attack on 14 December 2025;
 - (ii) identifying any opportunities to enhance the responses of governments to antisemitism including, but not limited to, best practice approaches to de-radicalisation and strengthening social cohesion;
 - (iii) making recommendations to counteract and prevent manifestations of antisemitism;
 - (iv) assessing the impact of antisemitism on the daily life of Jewish Australians including with respect to security, physical and mental health and wellbeing;
- (b) making any recommendations to assist law enforcement, border control, immigration and security agencies to tackle antisemitism, including by:
 - (i) improvements to guidance and training within law enforcement, border control, immigration, and security agencies to respond to antisemitic conduct;
 - (ii) having regard to existing security arrangements for the Jewish community, improvement of protective security for Jewish places of worship, major sites, educational and cultural facilities, public events and community leaders;
 - (iii) whether these authorities have sufficient powers and resources to respond to antisemitic conduct;
- (c) examine the circumstances surrounding the antisemitic Bondi terrorist attack on 14 December 2025, including:
 - (i) lead up to and planning of the attack;
 - (ii) the interaction and information sharing between Commonwealth agencies, between Commonwealth and State and Territory agencies, and between relevant Commonwealth and State agencies with the organisers of the Chanukah event at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025;
 - (iii) security arrangements for the Chanukah event and Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025;

- (iv) the attack;
 - (v) emergency response to the attack;
 - (vi) whether relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory intelligence and law enforcement agencies performed to maximum effectiveness, including whether they had adequate powers and the right systems, processes and procedures, and whether there was an appropriate authorising environment for information sharing with other Commonwealth, State and Territory agencies;
 - (vii) whether relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory intelligence and law enforcement agencies were prevented from taking prohibitive actions by the current legislative framework and authorising environment;
 - (viii) identifying any gaps in existing legal and regulatory frameworks that impede the ability for law enforcement, border control, immigration and security agencies to prevent and respond to attacks of this nature at both the state and federal levels;
 - (ix) identifying any lessons for security and law enforcement agencies to prevent and respond to similar attacks in the future;
- (d) make any other recommendations arising out of your inquiry into the matters set out in paragraphs (a) to (c) that would contribute to strengthening social cohesion in Australia and countering the spread of ideologically and religiously motivated extremism in Australia;
 - (e) any matter reasonably incidental to a matter referred to in paragraphs (a) to (d) or that you believe is reasonably relevant to your inquiry.

AND We direct you to make any recommendations arising out of your inquiry that you consider appropriate, including recommendations about any policy, legislative, administrative or structural reforms.

AND We further declare that you are not required by these Our Letters Patent to inquire, or to continue to inquire, into a particular matter to the extent that you are satisfied that the matter has been, is being, or will be, sufficiently and appropriately dealt with by another inquiry or investigation or a criminal or civil proceeding.

AND, without limiting the scope of your inquiry or the scope of any recommendations arising out of your inquiry that you may consider appropriate, We direct you, for the purposes of your inquiry and recommendations, to consider the following matters, and We authorise you, as you consider appropriate, having regard to the date by which you are required

to submit your final report, to take (or refrain from taking) any action arising out of your consideration:

- (f) the need to establish mechanisms to facilitate the timely communication of information, or the furnishing of evidence, documents or things, in accordance with section 6P of the *Royal Commissions Act 1902* or any other relevant law, including, for example, for the purpose of enabling the timely investigation and prosecution of offences;
- (g) the need to establish appropriate arrangements in relation to current and previous inquiries, in Australia and elsewhere, for evidence and information to be shared with you in ways consistent with relevant obligations so that the work of those inquiries, including, with any necessary consents, the testimony of witnesses, can be taken into account by you in a way that avoids unnecessary duplication, improves efficiency and avoids unnecessary trauma to witnesses;
- (h) the need to recognise and appropriately protect any intelligence information or operationally sensitive information obtained by you;
- (i) the need to establish appropriate arrangements with the heads of the relevant Australian intelligence entities for obtaining, storing, accessing, using, disclosing and returning intelligence information relating to an Australian intelligence entity.

AND We declare that you are a relevant Commission for the purposes of sections 4 and 5 of the *Royal Commissions Act 1902*.

AND We declare that you are a Royal Commission to which item 5 of the table in subsection 355-70(1) in Schedule 1 to the *Taxation Administration Act 1953* applies.

AND We declare that you are authorised to conduct your inquiry into any matter under these Our Letters Patent in combination with any inquiry into the same matter, or a matter related to that matter, that you are directed or authorised to conduct by any Commission, or under any order or appointment, made by any of Our Governors of the States or by the Government of any of Our Territories.

AND We declare that in these Our Letters Patent:

Australian Defence Force has the same meaning as in the *Defence Act 1903*.

Australian intelligence entity means:

- (a) the Australian Secret Intelligence Service; or
- (b) the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation; or
- (c) the Australian Geospatial-Intelligence Organisation; or

- (d) the Defence Intelligence Organisation; or
- (e) the Australian Signals Directorate; or
- (f) the Office of National Intelligence.

Department of Defence means the Department administered by the Minister administering the *Defence Force Discipline Act 1982*.

head, of an Australian intelligence entity, means:

- (a) in relation to the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation—the Director-General of Security; or
- (b) in relation to the Australian Secret Intelligence Service—the Director-General of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service; or
- (c) in relation to the Australian Signals Directorate—the Director-General of the Australian Signals Directorate; or
- (d) in relation to the part of the Department of Defence known as the Australian Geospatial-Intelligence Organisation—the Director of that part of the Department; or
- (e) in relation to the part of the Department of Defence known as the Defence Intelligence Organisation—the Director of that part of the Department; or
- (f) in relation to the Office of National Intelligence—the Director-General of National Intelligence.

intelligence information means information:

- (a) that was acquired or prepared by or on behalf of an Australian intelligence entity in connection with its functions; or
- (b) that relates to the performance by an Australian intelligence entity of its functions; or
- (c) that identifies a person as being, or having been, a staff member (within the meaning of the *Intelligence Services Act 2001*) or agent of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service or the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation.

law enforcement or security agency means any of the following agencies:

- (a) the Australian Defence Force;
- (b) the Australian Federal Police;
- (c) the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission;
- (d) the Department administered by the Minister administering the *Australian Border Force Act 2015*;
- (e) the Office of the Special Investigator;
- (f) the police force of a State or Territory.

operationally sensitive information means:

- (a) information about information sources or operational activities or methods available to a law enforcement or security agency; or
- (b) information about particular operations that have been, are being or are proposed to be undertaken by a law enforcement or security agency, or about proceedings relating to those operations; or
- (c) information provided by a foreign government, or by an agency of a foreign government, where that government does not consent to the public disclosure of the information.

AND We:

- (j) require you to begin your inquiry as soon as practicable; and
- (k) require you to make your inquiry as expeditiously as possible; and
- (l) require you to ensure the inquiry is conducted in a professional, impartial, respectful and courteous manner, including appropriately managing any actual or perceived conflicts of interest; and
- (m) require you to submit to Our Governor-General an interim report that you consider appropriate not later than 30 April 2026, focusing on:
 - (i) the matters mentioned in paragraph (c); and
 - (ii) any other issues requiring urgent or immediate action; and
- (n) require you to submit to Our Governor-General a report of the results of your inquiry, and your recommendations, not later than 14 December 2026.

IN WITNESS, We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent.

WITNESS the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General
of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Dated 9 January 2026



Governor-General



By Her Excellency's Command



Attorney-General