

7 August, 2024

To Whom It May Concern

Submission to the Commission of Inquiry into Antisemitism at Australian Universities

I am the daughter of a holocaust survivor. My father lost 100 members of his family at the hands of the Nazi's and came to Australia as a refugee after the war as a young man and viewed Australia as a paradise. Despite the atrocities he endured and observed he tried to spend his life with a positive attitude. He suffered greatly with mental health issues due to what had happened, but he was the most decent, kind, giving and honest man and was SO proud to be an Australian. I grew up in a home surrounded by these stories of horror, but also being told how lucky we were to live here. He was so proud of my achievements and those of my brother. We received a good public education and both went to university – my brother attended Sydney University and I attended University of NSW.

My father has passed away, but if he was here to see what was happening today with the alarming and rising levels of antisemitism, I know he would be so saddened that this kind of thing is happening again.

I am utterly devastated that a place that is supposed to educate our youth and show them how to observe the world, debate issues with respect and intelligence, is allowing lecturers, students and non-students to preach hate with extreme bias. These institutions should protect all minorities who are paying to attend and learn from any hatred or racism and the fact that there are Jewish students who feel unsafe to attend university is unacceptable. I can't help but wonder if there was a body of lecturers and/or students who were making people of colour feel this way, if that would be tolerated in this way? And the fact that there were people who were *not* students involved in the encampments and stirring up hatred and were not dealt with swiftly is unfathomable.

My stepdaughter attends the University of Sydney and has conveyed her feelings of anxiety at attending to her father and I. She wrote the below email to the University in November:

Hi,

I am a current 5th year law student and I wanted to raise my concerns with regard to the number of pro-Palestine materials being handed out around campus. There is a complete absence of any acknowledgement of the other side of the war and absolutely no support, let alone recognition, of Hamas's terrorist reign over Israel and the 220 hostages that remain in captivity.

As a Jewish student, I feel it is my duty to bring this to your attention. I am unsure if I am contacting the correct people but I am sincerely hoping this e-mail is not in vain. I have attached a link to a

letter from the Weizmann Institute appealing to academic institutions worldwide to side with humanity, enlightenment and progress.

I feel this letter is deeply informative and would extremely appreciate if it could be sent in an e-mail to all students university wide in order to eliminate any naive and biased understanding of the current conflict.

I look forward to hearing back from you.

<https://bos.etapestry.com/prod/viewEmailAsPage.do?erRef=835.0.852222&databasId=WeizmannAustralia&mailingId=45445145&jobRef=1399.0.6873271&key=b3967ae938dc2a634e258630febd5a&personaRef=835.0.852322&memberId=1141615679>

The response she received was that she should submit a formal complaint.

As a citizen of a country that is supposed to be tolerant and accepting, I implore you to establish a judicial inquiry with Royal Commission powers to investigate antisemitism on university campuses. This is not only about protecting people of Jewish faith, it is about demonstrating that we won't tolerate hate or discrimination of any kind.

I thank you for considering this submission.

Irene Deutsch