



## **Media release**

The Union for Progressive Judaism welcomes the report of the Victorian Parliamentary inquiry into anti-vilification provisions tabled in Parliament on 3 March 2021.

Co-Presidents David Knoll and Brian Samuel said:

*“The report makes a number of sensible and practical recommendations that will improve the cohesiveness of Victorian society, and facilitate redress for those sections of the community who are experiencing vilification, of which the Jewish community is one example. We are particular pleased that our recommendations to the committee have been largely adopted.”*

These recommendations included:

- to adequately empower and fund the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission;
- to adopt a simpler effects test for the civil provision so that redress through the Commission can be achieved for vilification that was in no way intentional; and
- to simplify the criminal provisions and to enable prosecution of reckless incitement to violence.

In regard to the criminal provisions, the Report states:

*As with the civil provisions, stakeholders proposed lowering the threshold for the serious vilification provision to enhance its effectiveness. Some stakeholders proposed that Victoria emulate the recent criminal vilification reforms in NSW, or the Western Australian laws that focus on harassment as a legislative model. In the end, the Committee recommends streamlining the criminal offences into a single section that addresses incitement of hatred and threats of violence, as well as incorporate the ‘recklessness’ standard to lower the threshold. (page 19)*

Mr Samuel and Mr Knoll added: “The report emphasises the need for greatly enhanced education both at schools and in the broader community. We look forward to the implementation of these recommendations, which will lead to a much more cohesive social fabric in Victoria.”

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