



UPJ and ARZA Australia Joint Press Release on Australia's adoption of the IHRA Antisemitism Definition

The Union for Progressive Judaism and ARZA Australia (the Australian Reform/Progressive Zionist Association) join together in warmly welcoming the Australian Government's adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of Antisemitism.

David Knoll and Brian Samuel, Co-Presidents of the Union for Progressive Judaism (UPJ), with Helen Shardey, President the Australian Reform Zionist Association (ARZA) Australia, warmly welcomed the announcement today by Prime Minister Scott Morrison that the Australian Government, people and nation will embrace the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism. The decision, importantly, is bipartisan, with Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese having earlier indicated his public support for the adoption of the IHRA definition.

According to the Jewish community's peak body, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, reported antisemitic incidents in Australia in May 2021 were two to three times higher than in May 2020.

Australian Jews should not be made to feel ashamed of their traditions or religious beliefs. Nor should they be made the butt of cruel jokes about their identity as Jews. This behaviour is un-Australian and racist. It reflects poorly on the Australian belief in "a fair go for all".

David Knoll and Brian Samuel said: "We have become aware of a growing concern among Jewish students on Australian campuses about displaying their Jewishness. As a result, many have stopped wearing their recognisable kippot (head coverings) and other Jewish symbols, on campuses. However, it is a relief that light has now been shone on this matter and we encourage all institutions, including schools and universities to adopt the definition of Antisemitism and be prepared to discuss its implications with students. All Australians are entitled to fair go, free from racism, and education based on the IHRA definition will enable a better understanding of Antisemitism, which is racism against Jewish people."

Helen Shardey, who is the President of the Progressive Jewish Zionist organisation for Australia, also expressed the view that "while Australians should be able to disagree with the government of Israel on elements of its policies, there is a point at which such criticism is blatantly Antisemitic. It is to be hoped that there will be a better understanding of what Antisemitism is and an acceptance of its racist intent."

The definition is accompanied by 11 illustrative examples, seven of which relate to Israel, but which explain the way in which Antisemitism occurs in our daily lives

The definition has been accepted by the European Parliament, the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, South Korea and many other countries. Australia was made a full member of the IHRA in 2019, so it is fitting that the adoption of its working definition be accepted by the Australian Government at this time.

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