



ALLIANCE AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA (AUSTRALIA)

Submission by the Alliance Against Islamophobia (Australia)

To the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion

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Introduction, Organisational Standing, and Summary of Key Submission Points

The Alliance Against Islamophobia (Australia) welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion. AAI supports robust action to identify, prevent, and respond to antisemitism in Australia.

The Letters Patent direct the Commission to examine the key drivers of antisemitism in Australia, including religious and ideologically motivated extremism and radicalisation; opportunities to enhance government responses to antisemitism, including best-practice approaches to de-radicalisation and strengthening social cohesion; and recommendations to counteract and prevent manifestations of antisemitism.

This submission is directed to those aspects of the Commission's work and draws on AAI's experience in addressing anti-Muslim hate speech, dehumanising narratives, and far-right Hindu extremist mobilisation in Australia.

For the purposes of this submission, dehumanisation refers to representations of a protected group as less than fully human, inherently dangerous, contaminating, criminal, or undeserving of equal dignity, protection, or belonging.

The Alliance Against Islamophobia (Australia) is a research-led, evidence-based advocacy organisation working to address anti-Muslim hatred, intimidation, and discrimination, and to strengthen social cohesion and public safety in Australia.

AAI is recognised by the Office of the Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia as one of four key organisations combating Islamophobia in Australia, and our work is grounded in a conduct-focused, context-based, and constitutionally compatible approach to harm prevention.

Our public materials also demonstrate our active engagement across legal, regulatory, and complaint forums, including matters before VCAT and the Australian Human Rights Commission, and our advocacy relating to Islamophobia in mass media and university settings.

This submission makes four central points.

First, the Commission should support a dehumanisation-based framework for identifying and addressing antisemitism, because dehumanisation provides a principled, people-centred, and analytically coherent basis for recognising hate speech and cumulative harm.

Second, the same framework can help institutions address antisemitism while strengthening fairness and consistency across responses to other forms of group-based hatred.

Third, the Commission should approach the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism with caution as a public-policy tool, given the concerns raised about vagueness, conflation, and chilling effects on legitimate human rights advocacy and criticism of states.

Fourth, the Commission should recognise that religious and ideologically motivated extremism in Australia may also include far-right Hindu extremist mobilisation, and that careful attention to such forms of extremism will be crucial to the development of a coherent, people-centred, and preventive approach to antisemitism, de-radicalisation, and the strengthening of social cohesion.

AAI therefore invites the Commission to recommend that Commonwealth, state, and institutional complaint systems adopt a dehumanisation-based standard for identifying and responding to hate and extremism-related conduct.

1. Why a Dehumanisation Framework Should Inform the Commission's Approach to Antisemitism

The AMAN policy brief¹ argues that civil complaint systems need a consistent standard for defining hate speech, and warns that using different definitions for different communities risks injustice and other rights violations.

The same brief states that its definition of dehumanising material protects humans on the basis of protected attributes and does not protect states, militaries, governments, or political ideologies. That distinction is important. It allows institutions to robustly address hatred directed at Jews as Jews, while avoiding the collapse of criticism of a state or its government into racism.

That framework is especially useful in addressing antisemitism because some of the clearest and most dangerous forms of antisemitism are dehumanising in character.

The AMAN formulation includes portrayals of a protected group as animal, insect, filth, disease or bacteria, demon-like, polluting, a homogeneous menace, inherently criminal or violent, deserving of collective punishment, or preying on children and vulnerable people.

Those indicators map closely onto recognisable forms of antisemitic hatred, including conspiracy myths, depictions of Jews as collectively dangerous, and rhetoric that strips Jewish people of equal humanity.

Operationally, a dehumanisation-based standard would assist regulators and institutions to ask a small set of threshold questions: whether the communication portrays a protected group as less than human or inherently threatening; whether it attributes collective guilt, danger, or contamination to that group; and whether it is being circulated in a context likely to normalise hostility, exclusion, or intimidation.

Where such indicators are present, complaint systems should be able to escalate the matter and adopt remedies proportionate to the harm, including removal or correction where appropriate, education, sanctions, and safeguarding measures.

¹ Australian Muslim Advocacy Network. (2025, April 27). Dehumanisation - policy brief: Combating online dehumanisation of minorities. <https://www.aman.net.au/policy-brief-combatting-online-dehumanisation-of-minorities/>

The AMAN brief also places this approach within broader human-rights reasoning. It refers to the Rabat Plan of Action's six-part threshold test, including context, speaker status, intent, content and form, extent of dissemination, and likelihood of harm. Importantly, the brief cautions against using imminence in a way that excludes action on dehumanising material, because dehumanising material is itself harmful and may amount to psychological violence.

That is highly relevant to antisemitism. Antisemitic harm often escalates through cumulative dehumanisation long before overt violence occurs. A framework that recognises those earlier stages is therefore more preventive and more protective.

AAI respectfully submits that the Commission should endorse a dehumanisation framework as a best-practice tool for complaint handling, education, media standards, prevention work, and institutional guidance.

Such a framework is stronger than impressionistic or politically contingent approaches because it is anchored in whether human beings are being portrayed as less than human, rather than in whether particular states, ideologies, or political projects are being criticised.

2. Why a Dehumanisation Framework Also Strengthens Fairness, Consistency, and Social Cohesion

AAI has previously submitted that dehumanisation is a central early-warning indicator in extremism-prevention analysis because it reduces empathy, normalises hostility, and lowers social barriers to intimidation and harm.

In its earlier annexures, AAI explained that extremist risk often develops cumulatively through repeated portrayals of out-groups as inherently violent, morally inferior, culturally incompatible, demographically threatening, or undeserving of equal rights and protections.

Those materials applied that analytical framework to far-right Hindu extremist mobilisation in New South Wales, including its impacts on Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, caste-oppressed Hindus, dissenting voices, children, and young people.

That same logic applies to antisemitism.

A framework that can identify anti-Jewish dehumanisation is also capable of identifying anti-Muslim dehumanisation, anti-Palestinian collective blame, caste-based degradation, and other forms of identity-based hatred. AAI submits that this consistency is a strength, not a weakness.

A people-centred standard enhances legitimacy, reduces perceptions of double standards, and helps institutions respond to hatred without creating hierarchies of protection between communities.

AAI's prior materials also document harms caused when dehumanising narratives are normalised in institutional and networked settings. Those materials describe intimidation, harassment, silencing of dissent, grievance-based recruitment, youth exposure, caste-hierarchical narratives, and the role of institutional proximity or public funding in legitimising harmful networks.

AAI's previous materials ² likewise raise concerns about foreign linkages, anti-Muslim hate speech, caste discrimination, communal polarisation, and the risks posed when publicly funded organisations are able to present themselves as benign multicultural bodies despite publicly available evidence of social harm.

For the Commission, the practical lesson is that social cohesion is best protected when hate is recognised at the level of dehumanising conduct and cumulative harm, rather than only once a community has already been subjected to open violence or acute intimidation.

A dehumanisation standard offers a coherent way to do that while remaining fair across communities.

3. Concerns About the IHRA Working Definition as a Public-Policy Tool

AAI also wishes to draw the Commission's attention to concerns set out in an APAN factsheet regarding the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism.

The factsheet states that discrimination against Jews must be identified and challenged, but argues that the IHRA definition should not be used as a public-policy tool because its language is vague and open to interpretation, invites conflation of criticism of Israel with antisemitism, and risks stifling legitimate criticism of Israeli government policy.

It also notes that some institutions have adopted the definition only with clarifications intended to protect freedom of speech.

The same factsheet records that concerns about the IHRA framework have been raised by legal experts, Jewish and Holocaust academics, human-rights groups, progressive Jewish

² Alliance Against Islamophobia (Australia). (2026, January 21). Submission to the NSW Parliament Committee on Law and Safety: Measures to combat right-wing extremism in New South Wales (Submission No. 7). Parliament of New South Wales. [https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/ladocs/submissions/94293/Submission%207%20-%20Alliance%20Against%20Islamaphobia%20\(Australia\).pdf](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/ladocs/submissions/94293/Submission%207%20-%20Alliance%20Against%20Islamaphobia%20(Australia).pdf)

organisations, Palestinian academics, and Kenneth Stern,^{3 4} identified there as a key drafter of the definition.

The factsheet says Stern has warned that the definition is being used to restrict academic freedom and punish political speech, and separately quotes concern that anti-Zionist expressions have been treated as inherently antisemitic and suppressed.

Whether or not one agrees with every criticism made of IHRA, those concerns are substantial and relevant when considering its use as an operational or complaint-handling standard.

AAI's concern is not that antisemitism should be defined weakly. Quite the opposite.

Our concern is that public policy should define antisemitism clearly and robustly, in a way that targets hatred toward Jews as Jews, anti-Jewish conspiracy myths, Holocaust denial or trivialisation, collective blame, and dehumanising portrayals of Jewish people, while preserving space for lawful criticism of states, governments, military action, and political ideologies.

A standard that blurs those categories risks weakening both fairness and the credibility of genuine antisemitism responses.

The Commission's Letters Patent note that the Australian Government has adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism, while also framing the inquiry in terms of strengthening social cohesion and responding to religious and ideologically motivated extremism.

In AAI's respectful view, a dehumanisation-based framework would better support the Commission's work by providing a more analytically precise and suitable basis for complaint systems, public institutions, and prevention work.

This submission does not require the Commission to repudiate the Government's stated reliance on the IHRA Working Definition. Rather, AAI submits that a dehumanisation-based framework could operate as the more precise operational tool for complaint handling, public institutions, and prevention work, even where IHRA remains a high-level reference point.

³ Stern, K. (2019, December 13). I drafted the definition of antisemitism. Rightwing Jews are weaponizing it. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/dec/13/antisemitism-executive-order-trump-chilling-effect>

⁴ Stern, K. S. (2024, September 17). Written testimony of Kenneth S. Stern, director, Bard Center for the Study of Hate, before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee: "A threat to justice everywhere: Stemming the tide of hate crimes in America" Hearing testimony. United States Senate Judiciary Committee. https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2024-09-17_-testimony-_stern.pdf

On that approach, antisemitism would continue to be recognised and condemned robustly, while frontline decision-makers would be guided by a clearer, people-centred standard focused on dehumanising conduct and cumulative harm.

4. Religious and Ideologically Motivated Extremism, Including Far-Right Hindu Extremism

AAI respectfully submits that careful attention to religious and ideologically motivated extremism beyond narrow or conventional categories will be crucial to the development of a coherent, people-centred, and preventive approach to antisemitism, de-radicalisation, and the strengthening of social cohesion.

This is relevant to the Commission's work because the same dehumanising frames that cast minorities as threats, contaminants, invaders, or demographic dangers can fuel conspiracy thinking, intensify anti-Muslim hatred, and contribute to broader inter-communal hostility, including hostility that may spill into antisemitic narratives.

AAI's earlier submissions⁵ argue that far-right Hindu extremist mobilisation in Australia should be understood as part of the broader extremist landscape where it manifests through cumulative dehumanisation, threat construction, exclusionary mobilisation, youth exposure, network amplification, and institutional legitimacy laundering.

AAI's NSW parliamentary materials⁶ explain that this form of extremism may affect Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, caste-oppressed Hindus, dissenting voices, and young people, and that such harm may arise not only through overt violence, but through intimidation, dehumanisation, exclusionary narratives, grievance-based identity formation, and the embedding of supremacist or hierarchical worldviews in cultural, religious, or educational settings.

Those same materials emphasise the importance of assessing extremist risk at network level, especially where apparently benign or neutral institutions may lend legitimacy, access, or amplification to exclusionary actors and narratives.

⁵ Alliance Against Islamophobia (Australia). (2026, January 21). Submission to the NSW Parliament Committee on Law and Safety: Measures to combat right-wing extremism in New South Wales (Submission No. 7). Parliament of New South Wales. [https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/ladocs/submissions/94293/Submission%207%20-%20Alliance%20Against%20Islamaphobia%20\(Australia\).pdf](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/ladocs/submissions/94293/Submission%207%20-%20Alliance%20Against%20Islamaphobia%20(Australia).pdf)

⁶ New South Wales Parliament, Legislative Assembly, Committee on Law and Safety. (2026, February 18). Measures to combat right-wing extremism in New South Wales: Public hearing transcript (pp. 50-55). Parliament of New South Wales. <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/ladocs/transcripts/3679/Transcript%20-%20Measures%20to%20combat%20right-wing%20extremism%20in%20NSW%20-%2018%20February%202026.pdf>

Concern about this threat is reinforced by a convergence of academic, governmental, and research-based materials.

Pal, Thapliyal and Gandbhir ⁷ identify an Australian branch of the transnational Hindu far-right and assess it through material organisational ties, legitimacy-building functions, and funding pathways, including formal links to organisations in India, shared personnel, and inter-organisational collaboration across Australia and India.

Dutta's analysis ⁸ is also relevant because it demonstrates how Hindutva-linked digital infrastructures seed, circulate, and amplify Islamophobic hate, connect diaspora spaces with India, and create an uninterrupted communicative infrastructure around the frame of the "Hindu in danger", with implications for social cohesion and de-radicalisation.

DFAT's 2023 Country Information Report on India ⁹ separately notes that the RSS has overseas affiliates in Australia called the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, and that the VHP also has branches in Australia.

Western Sydney University's 2023 ¹⁰ report further records that Hindutva-aligned mis/disinformation in Australia is contributing to communal polarisation, that such campaigns are on the rise, and that their transnational impact poses serious challenges to Australia's social cohesion and inclusivity.

These concerns are sharpened by the documented scale of India-origin anti-Muslim digital hate: Islamophobia in the Digital Age ¹¹ found that more than 85 per cent of geolocated anti-Muslim posts originated in India, the United States, and the United Kingdom, and that 55.12 per cent originated in India alone.

Taken together, these materials support concern not only about harmful rhetoric, but also about transnational organisational ties, cross-border narrative flows, and the scale of India-origin anti-Muslim hate.

⁷ Pal, F., Thapliyal, N., & Gandbhir, G. (2025). Taking ideology out: finding the diasporic Hindu far-right down under. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 79(5), 691–708. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2025.2519395>

⁸ Dutta, M. J. (2025). Digital platforms, Hindutva, and disinformation: Communicative strategies and the Leicester violence. *Communication Monographs*, 92(1), 20–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2024.2339799>

⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2023, September 29). DFAT country information report: India. Australian Government. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/country-information-report-india.pdf>

¹⁰ Jasbeer Musthafa Mamalipurath, *Examining the Problem of Misinformation among the Indian Diaspora in Australia* (Western Sydney University, 2023)

¹¹ Butler, U. (2022). Islamophobia in the digital age: A study of anti-Muslim tweets. Islamic Council of Victoria. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4227488

In Australian settings, these dynamics may manifest through campus harassment, digitally amplified diaspora tensions, and the normalisation of exclusionary narratives in community and public discourse, each of which undermines trust, safety, and social cohesion.

Recognition of this threat is especially important in the Australian context. India-born people are now the second largest migrant community in Australia, numbering 916,300 at the end of June 2024.¹²

Given the scale and significance of this diaspora community, careful recognition of transnational extremist mobilisation and hate narratives is important not only for affected minorities within the diaspora, but also for de-radicalisation and the strengthening of social cohesion more broadly.

AAI does not raise these matters to distract from antisemitism.

Rather, AAI raises them because a Commission concerned with antisemitism, religious and ideologically motivated extremism, de-radicalisation, and social cohesion will be better placed if it adopts a framework capable of recognising multiple forms of dehumanising and extremist mobilisation consistently.

In AAI's respectful submission, that consistency is crucial. A framework that clearly identifies antisemitism while also remaining capable of recognising other forms of dehumanising extremism will be more principled, more credible, and more preventive in effect.

¹² Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2025, April 29). Australia's population by country of birth, June 2024 (Catalogue No. 3412.0). <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/australias-population-country-birth/latest-release>

Recommendations

AAI respectfully recommends that the Royal Commission support a dehumanisation-based framework for identifying and responding to antisemitism in complaint systems, educational guidance, media standards, and prevention work, including recognition of dehumanisation as an early-warning indicator of escalating harm.

AAI further recommends that the Commission affirm a single, people-centred standard for hate and dehumanisation across protected communities, so that Jewish, Muslim, Palestinian, Sikh, caste-oppressed, and other vulnerable communities are protected through fair and consistent principles rather than fragmented or politicised approaches.

AAI further submits that a single people-centred standard would reduce administrative complexity for regulators and institutions that might otherwise be required to navigate multiple overlapping definitions for different communities.

AAI recommends that standards for addressing antisemitism protect people, not states or ideologies, so that hatred toward Jews is robustly addressed without conflating lawful criticism of governments, military conduct, or political doctrines with racism.

AAI recommends that the Commission approach the IHRA Working Definition with caution in public policy and complaint handling, particularly where its use may chill academic freedom, human rights advocacy, or legitimate criticism of Israeli state policy, and that it consider whether clearer people-centred alternatives would better serve the Commission's aims.

AAI also recommends that the Commission recognise cumulative dehumanisation, threat construction, and network amplification as relevant to extremist risk, including in relation to far-right Hindu extremist mobilisation and other ideologically motivated forms of hatred that affect Australian social cohesion.

Finally, AAI recommends preventive, governance-focused responses, including stronger guidance for institutions, improved complaint-handling standards, safeguards in youth and educational settings, and due-diligence mechanisms to reduce the risk of public legitimacy or funding being extended to networks that propagate dehumanising material.

Conclusion

AAI submits that the strongest and fairest way to address antisemitism is through a clear, principled focus on dehumanisation.

A dehumanisation framework is capable of identifying the core harms of antisemitism while also strengthening consistency, fairness, and trust across institutions. It protects people on protected attributes.

It allows earlier recognition of cumulative harm. And it avoids turning public policy into a field in which criticism of states is confused with hatred toward human beings.

AAI therefore respectfully urges the Royal Commission to support a dehumanisation-centred approach to antisemitism and social cohesion, to approach the IHRA framework with care as a policy instrument, and to recognise that careful attention to other forms of religious and ideologically motivated extremism, including far-right Hindu extremist mobilisation, will be crucial to de-radicalisation and strengthening social cohesion in Australia.