



ועד הרבנים דאוסטרלאסיה

RABBINICAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALASIA

4 August 2025

10 Av 5785

STATEMENT REGARDING ANTISEMITIC RALLIES IN SYDNEY AND MELBOURNE

Over the past day, many of us have felt a renewed sense of pain and unease following the deeply disturbing antisemitic rally here that took place here in Australia.

These gatherings, promoted as peaceful, were anything but. They echoed with chilling chants calling for the destruction of Israel and “death to the IDF,” displayed Nazi symbols, and celebrated terrorism — including imagery of Iran’s Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, holding a rifle. For our community, these weren’t just offensive slogans; they were painful reminders of hatred we’ve encountered throughout history. Such incitement has no place in a country built on values of respect, dignity, and inclusion.

If peace had truly been the goal, the organisers would have spoken up for the 50 innocent hostages still held by Hamas. They would have condemned a terrorist organisation that continues to inflict suffering on both Israelis and Gazans. Instead, they chose to turn a cherished national landmark — meant to unite — into a platform for division, hostility, and extremism.

What should have been a call for compassion was twisted into a rally of hate. And our community felt every word, every image, every cheer — because we know all too well where such hatred can lead. We’ve seen it before. And we will not be silent.

Let me be clear: we will not be intimidated. For thousands of years, we have stood tall — through the rise and fall of empires, through adversity and oppression. We are not only still here — we are thriving.

Yes, this hurts. It awakens painful memories. But it also awakens something deeper — our strength, our unity, and our pride in who we are.

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We are the children of Abraham and Sarah, of those who stood at Mount Sinai and heard the voice of G-d proclaim, "I am the L-rd your G-d." No rally, no chant, no act of hate can erase that eternal truth.

And this moment is not unfamiliar. Every year at the Seder table, we declare: "Vehi She'amda l'avoteinu velanu..." — in every generation, there are those who rise up to destroy us, but the Holy One, Blessed be He, saves us from their hands. These are not just words in the Haggadah — they are the living history of our people. And they reflect our present resolve.

It is particularly striking that these rallies occurred on Tisha B'Av — the 9th of Av, our national day of mourning, commemorating the destruction of our Holy Temples and countless tragedies throughout Jewish history. Yet even on this most sorrowful day, we find hope: from deep pain can come redemption. The spirit of our people remains unbroken. These events only strengthen our mission — to rebuild, to uplift, to stand tall as proud Jews.

This is not a time for fear, but for determination. Not a moment to retreat, but to reaffirm who we are. We will continue to live proudly as Jews — educating our children, celebrating Shabbat and holidays, supporting one another, and spreading light in the face of darkness.

Our sages taught: "In a place where there is no humanity, strive to be human." And we say further: in a time of hate, let us bring love. In a world of noise and confusion, let us respond with clarity and compassion.

We are also deeply grateful to the many Australians from all walks of life — government officials, neighbours, colleagues, and friends — who have stood beside us and condemned this hatred unequivocally. There is more good than evil. More light than shadow.

To those in our community who feel anxious: your concerns are real, and we are here for you. We continue to work closely with authorities to ensure safety. But above all, we refuse to be defined by fear.

Now is the time to strengthen our Jewish identity — to wrap ourselves in our heritage like a warm Tallit, with pride, dignity, and faith.

Let us respond to darkness with more mitzvot, more kindness, and greater unity. Because when light is shared, it only grows stronger.

Am Yisrael Chai — the Jewish people live. And we always will.

With blessings, hope, and unwavering resolve — and with unshakeable faith in Almighty G-d.

Rabbi Nochum Schapiro

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