



ועד הרבנים דאוסטרלאסיה

RABBINICAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALASIA

5 July 2025

## **STATEMENT ON THE ARSON ATTACK AT THE EAST MELBOURNE HEBREW CONGREGATION – A CALL FOR VIGILANCE, SUPPORT, AND UNITY**

The Rabbinical Association of Australasia is deeply shocked and outraged by the attempted arson attack on the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation during Shabbat last night. As members of the community gathered in peace and tradition for their Shabbat meal, an individual tried to set fire to the synagogue. Thankfully, due to quick action and divine protection, the fire was contained to the front door, and no one was physically harmed.

Nevertheless, this was a violent and hateful act—an attack not just on a building, but on the heart of a vibrant Jewish community and on the sacred freedom to worship in safety.

This disturbing incident follows a worrying rise in antisemitic threats, vandalism, and intimidation across the country in recent months. Jewish schools, synagogues, and individuals have increasingly found themselves targets of hostility and hate. This trend is unacceptable in any society that values respect, tolerance, and diversity.

The Torah commands us: “Do not stand idly by the blood of your fellow” (Vayikra/Leviticus 19:16). In the face of such hatred, indifference is not an option. We are grateful for the support already shown by government and law enforcement agencies, and we urge continued vigilance, responsiveness, and coordination to ensure that every Jewish community in Australia can live and worship in safety and dignity.

To the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation: you are not alone. The entire Jewish community across Australia stands beside you, with strength, solidarity, and unwavering support.

Let us turn this moment of fear into a renewed commitment to light, faith, and unity. As King Solomon wrote, “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace” (Mishlei/Proverbs 3:17). We will not be driven by fear, nor defined by hatred. We remain strong in our values, proud in our identity, and united in our hope for a more peaceful and respectful society for all.

**Rabbi Nochum Schapiro**

President, Rabbinical Association of Australasia

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Rabbi Yaakov Glasman, *Immediate Past President*

Please send all correspondence to: PO Box 7, St Ives NSW 2075 or email [rabbi@chabadhouse.org.au](mailto:rabbi@chabadhouse.org.au)