

REJECT THE IHRA DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

Its author opposes it. Jewish organisations oppose it. Australian courts have rejected its logic. It contradicts international law.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) “working definition of antisemitism” is being pushed on Australian councils, unions, and institutions.

It must be rejected – not because fighting antisemitism isn’t important, but because the definition doesn’t do that. It conflates political criticism with racial hatred, threatening free speech while failing to address real threats to Jewish safety.

The IHRA definition’s core text is vague, but its eleven **“illustrative examples”** do the real work – and **seven** of them relate to criticism of Israel.

REJECTED BY ITS OWN AUTHOR

Kenneth Stern, who drafted the definition, now opposes its adoption. He says **“it was never intended to be a campus hate speech code”** and that **“rightwing Jewish groups took the ‘working definition’... and decided to weaponize it”**.

He warns that this has a **“chilling effect”** on free speech, and that the definition is being used to **“hunt political speech with which they disagree”**.

OPPOSED BY JEWISH ORGANISATIONS

Nine Australian Jewish groups – including the Jewish Council of Australia and the Australian Jewish Democratic Society – signed a November 2025 open letter urging the government to **“not adopt the divisive IHRA definition of antisemitism, which conflates antisemitism with criticism of the State of Israel and the Palestinian struggle for justice and self-determination.”**

They warned that it **“risks exacerbating instead of combating antisemitism.”**

Over 1,300 Jewish scholars petitioned against enshrining it in US law.
Over 40 Jewish organisations worldwide oppose it.

CONTRADICTS INTERNATIONAL LAW

One of the definition’s “illustrative examples” deems it antisemitic to call Israel “a racist endeavour”. But the **International Court of Justice** (July 2024) found Israel in breach of the convention prohibiting **racial segregation and apartheid**.

Professor Ben Saul, UN Special Rapporteur on Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights, says the IHRA definition is **“inappropriate... vague and overbroad”** and **“clearly a contradiction with well-accepted international human rights standards”**.

REJECTED BY AUSTRALIAN COURTS

In *Wertheim v Haddad* (July 2025), **Federal Court Justice Angus Stewart** ruled that criticising Israel, Zionism, and the Israeli military **is not antisemitic**.

Associate Professor Noam Peleg (UNSW) says this ruling **“essentially debunks”** the IHRA definition, and that institutions considering adoption **“should now think twice.”**

EMBRACED BY ACTUAL ANTISEMITES

Netanyahu has praised Hungary’s Viktor Orbán for adopting the IHRA definition – the same Orbán whose government runs campaigns against George Soros using classic antisemitic conspiracy tropes.

USES JEWS AS HUMAN SHIELDS FOR GENOCIDE

By conflating Judaism with Zionism, the IHRA makes “Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel” – **an “example” of antisemitism by its own definition**.

By treating state criticism as ethnic hatred, it makes Israel immune to accountability.

Weaponising Jewish identity to shield a state committing a UN-recognised genocide **invites the very backlash it claims to prevent**.

Furthermore, exploiting the Holocaust as “prosthetic trauma” to legitimise genocide is an **obscene perversion of “Never Again”**.

WHAT YOUR ORGANISATION SHOULD DO

1. **Reject the IHRA definition.**
It is unnecessary, legally problematic, and counterproductive.
2. **Support comprehensive anti-racism.**
The Australian Human Rights Commission’s National Anti-Racism Framework addresses all discrimination – including antisemitism – without suppressing political speech.
3. **Use existing law.**
The Racial Discrimination Act already prohibits racial vilification.

Sources: AntiZionismAustralia.org/IHRA