

Seeking to contextualise antisemitic incidents in Australia. What do the data tell us?

By Graeme Walker

Key Points

- The data presented by advocacy groups show that Jewish Australians are more often victims of racist hate incidents than other racial/ethnic groups, except possibly for First Nations people in the Northern Territory.
- Gradual increases over time in hate incident reports may reflect a real rise in incidents, or an increasing propensity among the target population to report incidents, for any number of reasons.
- Data on hate incidents published by different advocacy organisations are difficult to interpret and compare because of disagreements on attribution (e.g. differing definitions of antisemitism or Islamophobia). Thus, descriptions of all hate incidents, not just summaries or selected examples, need to be made publicly available, since accuracy of incident trends is critical for assessing the effectiveness or not of anti-hate laws in Australia.
- There is universal agreement that spikes in antisemitic incidents in Australia correlate with conflicts in Palestine and media polemics around them. Spikes disappear when the trigger event stops. There is little or no published analysis of data to suggest that increasing police powers in Australia will prevent such spikes.
- Some argue that the antisemitic incident spike following 7 October 2023 is in reality caused by latent antisemitism in Australia that is activated by the trigger event in Palestine. There is possibly some logic in this, but Australia is one of the least antisemitic countries globally as measured in population surveys.

Introduction

A major part of my reaction to recent public discourse on antisemitism has been to seek data that may help me understand the situation regarding antisemitic and other hate incidents in Australia. In this article I examine data from advocacy groups and governmental sources, and draw on analyses from peer-reviewed articles, to assess trends in the numbers of such incidents in Australia before the Bondi massacre. I have not included the Bondi massacre itself because it is an extreme single event and is thus of no use for analysis of trends and correlations. Although the great majority of Australians seem supportive of them, Jewish Australians feel under attack. In the present period of tension almost any criticism of Israel can sound antisemitic to them. I will try to argue that a resolution of the conflict in Gaza and the West Bank would seem the best way to protect Jewish Australians from hate crimes. Perhaps they too are victims of the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians. As an alternate response to Oct 7 the Israeli government could have reported Hamas to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for the killing of Israeli civilians and taking hostages¹. They would have had a lot of support. The Hamas leaders might

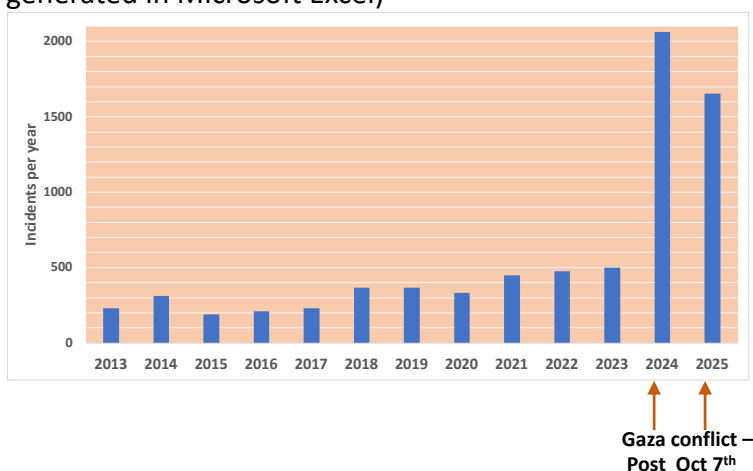
¹ The ICC did, after a year, discharge arrest warrants against three Hamas leaders, but they had already been killed by the Israeli Defence Force, so the charges can never be tested.

have been put on trial in The Hague and war crimes charges tested. Instead, the Israeli government embarked on a horrifying military destruction of a trapped population, attracted condemnation worldwide, shocked a lot of Australians at the scale of death and destruction in Gaza, and found its own leaders under arrest warrants from the ICC for war crimes.

1.The increase in antisemitic incidents reported in Australia

The departure point for this article is the graph in Figure 1 showing the trend in antisemitic incidents in Australia prior to the Bondi massacre. The key source is the data collected by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) from incident reports and published on its website www.ecaj.org.au. The ECAJ defines antisemitic hate incidents in accordance with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission of Australia’s definitions (1) shown in appendix 1. They do not include social media exchanges.

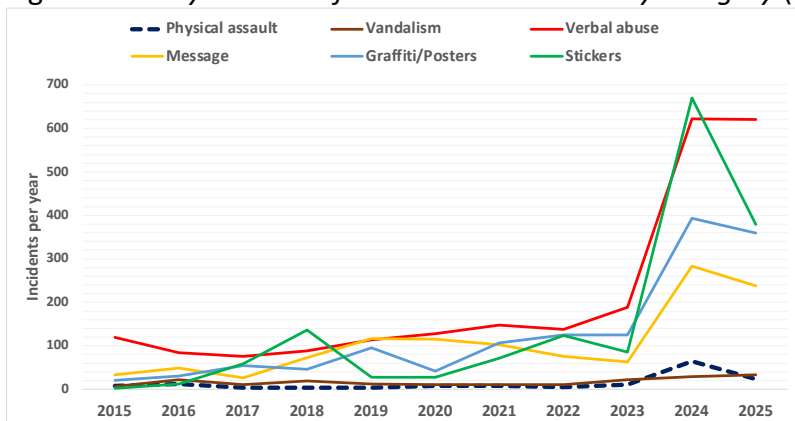
Figure 1. *Increases in antisemitic incidents in Australia.* (Source: www.ecaj.org.au, graph generated in Microsoft Excel)



One can see that the recent large increase in reported antisemitic incidents coincides with Israel’s attack on Gaza since 7 October 2023. Between 8 October and 7 November 2023, 221 antisemitic incidents were recorded, with 42 in just one week. In the preceding week, from 1 to 7 October, there was just one incident (ECAJ report). It is noteworthy that Islamophobic incidents also increased, with 133 recorded between 7 October and 6 November (Islamophobia Register of Australia), while prior to 7 October the average number of weekly incidents was 2.5. Recent media reports also suggest an uptick in anti-Islamic incidents following the Bondi massacre (2).

The ECAJ classifies incidents into the categories shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. *Yearly number of antisemitic incidents by category* (2025 ECAJ report)



Although it can be of little solace to victims - and by noting it I do not intend to diminish the significance of non-violent hate crimes - Figure 2, above, shows that the overwhelming majority antisemitic incidents prior to the Bondi massacre did not involve physical violence, but instead “stickers”, verbal abuse, graffiti/posters, and online messages (emails), which account for most of the increase following 7 October 2023. The incidents of physical violence mostly involved threatening behaviour (i.e. no physical contact), pushing a person, or throwing an object, but occasionally overt physical assault (bashing).

2.Data on racist incidents in general in Australia

How do antisemitic incident rates compare to those involving other victims of racist hate crime? To date hate incidents in Australia have been collated and publicly reported only by advocacy organisations. Any comparisons of incident numbers between target groups need to be made with caution due to different methodologies, definitions, and reporting practices. The registries rely on self-report, and a degree of under-reporting is mentioned on the websites of all advocacy organisations.

In addition to the ECAJ, there are three other main organisations in Australia that collate and publish data on racist incidents. These are:

- The Islamophobia registry (<https://islamophobia.com.au>). It was founded in 2014.
- The First Nations Racism Register, started in 2022 (www.Callitout.com.au). This was set up to record ongoing racial incidents against Indigenous Australians.
- The Asian Australian Alliance (<http://asianaustralianalliance.net>), which recorded anti-Asian incidents for just two years, 2021 and 2022. It monitored anti-Asian incidents triggered by the Covid epidemic and the blaming of Asians for the appearance of the coronavirus that caused it.

Unlike the ECAJ, the other three registries do not have a definition based on a published template, although the definitions and categories used by all four groups are roughly similar. Anti-Palestinian hate incidents too have begun to be recorded, by the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network (<https://apan.org.au>). Its data are very limited, but the reports provided to date describe, in my view, insulting and stereotyping of Palestinians of equal intensity or gravity to those towards Jewish people recorded in the ECAJ database.

Figure 3. Yearly numbers of documented hate incidents in Australia 2017-2024.

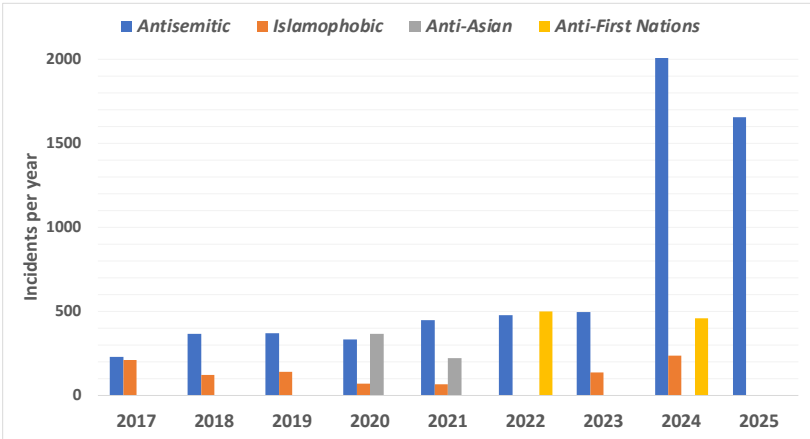
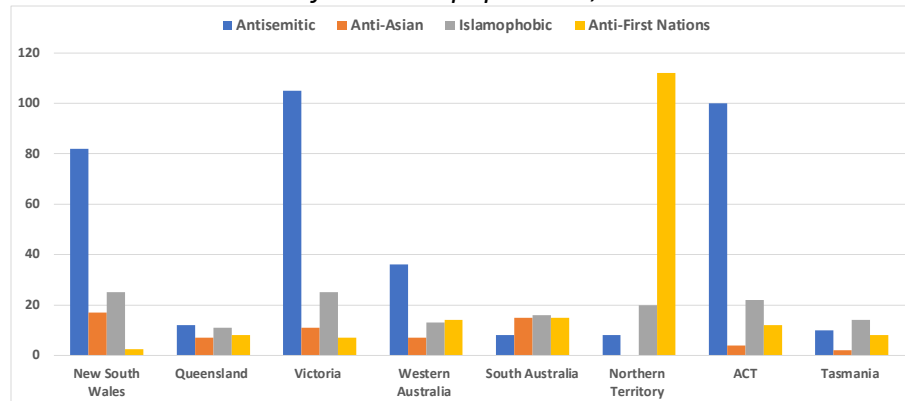


Figure 3 shows data taken from the respective registries and the graph is similar to that previously published by the ECAJ (3). Unfortunately there are some missing data for some

registries for some years, making comparisons less than ideal. The total number of antisemitic incidents is generally higher than numbers of anti-Islamic, anti-Asian, or anti-First Nations hate incidents. The relative frequencies tend to vary from year to year.

Antisemitic and anti-Islamic incidents are usually largely concentrated in certain geographical areas, mainly in Sydney and Melbourne.

Figure 4. *Geography of hate incidents in ethnic/religious groups per million of the state population, 2025*



In 2025 the number of antisemitic incidents was 738 in Victoria but only 50 in the ACT. As seen in Figure 4, above, changing the statistic to incidence per million of the state population puts a certain slant on geographical incidence rates. Clearly antisemitic events per million are very much higher in NSW, Victoria and the ACT than for other groups. In all, over 90% of antisemitic incidents were in Greater Sydney or Melbourne (ECAJ report), where over 83% of the Australian Jewish population live (4). In 2025, 23 of the 24 physical antisemitic incidents reported by the ECAJ occurred in metropolitan Sydney or Melbourne. The levels of hate crime could also depend somewhat on how many antisemitic perpetrators there may be in specific parts of Australia. Of note, the highest number of hate incidents (per million) was against First Nations people in the NT.

The four registries provide little information on the identity of offenders, so knowledge of even their age distribution is sparse. The Australian Islamophobic registry suggests that peak age of anti-Islamic perpetrators is 40 to 50. However this depends somewhat upon whether they are acting alone (these are mainly older offenders), or in groups (mainly young offenders). In the Western world generally, most perpetrators of antisemitic incidents are thought to have been from far-right groups (in the vicinity of 70%) or Muslims (5).

Based on historical US data hate crime offenders in general fall into four main motivational categories (6).

1. Thrill-seeking (prevalence ~66%): Such offenders are usually immature, seeking excitement and typically do not know their victims. They are usually young men or youths. In Canada ~40% of antisemitic perpetrators are under 17 years of age (5).
2. Defensive (~25%): These perpetrators rationalize their actions as a defence against a perceived threat to themselves, their identity, or their community.

3. Retaliatory (~8%): Such perpetrators act in response to a real or perceived crime against their own group.
4. Mission (less than 1%): These perpetrators can have elaborate premeditated plans and view their hate as a calling. They are the most likely to use extreme violence.

**Figure 5. Brisbane -
"No Islamo-Nazism in Australia"**



I want to touch on this topic of perpetrators a little more. We are discussing the broad term "hate crimes", but perpetrators can be very different. In terms of antisemitic incidents they probably range from groups of youths (category 1) to the Bondi perpetrators (category 4) - the latter enacting mass murder. Staying only with the non-violent incidents, in Figure 5 we see graffiti (photographed by the Islamophobia Australia group) painted by a person attacking Muslims as Nazis. Perusing the graffiti examples shown in the ECAJ report one sometimes notes words not spelt properly by the perpetrators, who knows why but

certainly it is not illustrative of a high level of literacy on the subject. One wonders whether the perpetrators really understand what they are railing against. In an Australian study of nearly 1000 graffiti offenders about 70% said that they undertook defiling of property for "kicks" or because they were influenced by group dynamics with their friends (7). According to the US Anti-defamation league (ADL Antisemitism audit, 2024), "*some Americans used swastikas, in protests of COVID-19 public health measures and mask mandates; those incidents are not generally included in the Audit unless there is other evidence of antisemitic animus*". So at least for some of these graffiti incidents, there may sometimes be a "motley crew" of perpetrators in it largely for kicks. I am not defending any of this, but let's just note it.

3.Considerations regarding data collection and interpretation of trends

There are some caveats (8) to the use of self-report data which are important to consider when making inferences about long term trends and comparisons. Numbers may fluctuate for many reasons that have nothing to do with increasing or decreasing intensity of hate in the local community, or global trigger conflicts. Some considerations:

- Over time, members of the victim communities may become increasingly aware of where and how to report, or more emboldened to do so. This can apply to all hate crime self-report statistics from advocacy groups (8) and is a very much debated aspect of the area (9). Greater awareness and social campaigns encourage victims to report, and expanded definitions of hate crime over time result in more incidents that count as hate crimes (9). A rise in hate crime reporting due to an increased willingness to report is a good thing, but does not necessarily indicate an increase in incidents *per se*.
- Some hate incidents may be labelled or interpreted as racist incidents by the registries without actually being so (8).
- Some victim groups or sectors thereof may be more inclined to report than others. Under reporting is thought to be especially prevalent in lower socioeconomic groups (10). One study from the UK suggested that there is so much under reporting - perhaps ~50% of hate incidents

- that self-report data cannot be relied on for trends in hate incidents, except when there are large spikes (11).

- Police figures, although somewhat helpful in indicating trends, are generally much lower than those of self-report registries since the threshold for reporting an incident as a hate crime might be higher. Victims may be less likely to report to police than a registry, and it may be simply more trouble to report to the police, particularly for relatively minor non-violent offences (12).
- Media and social media polemics are a huge driver of hate (13), and typically used by both sides in any contested matter. Space does not permit examining the role played by them in the current Australian situation; see reference 13 for a general discussion.
- To completely understand trends, long-term data is preferable. Most hate crime in Australia has only been recorded for approximately 10 years at the most, for some registries usually much less. Prior to this there are no formal data on hate incidents in Australia (7).

However, none of the above possible sources of bias in data collection is easily testable, and reports from organisations like the ECAJ and Islamophobia Registry provide the best available current data for Australia.

4. Definitions matter - Categorising antisemitic incidents

Definitions matter in any registry's validation and classification of reported incidents. The ECAJ report identifies antisemitic hate incidents according to the definition given by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission of Australia (1, appendix 1). The most commonly used definitions of antisemitism are the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition (<https://holocaustremembrance.com>) (appendix 2), and the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA) (<https://jerusalemdeclaration.org>) (appendix 3). The latter was prepared by a group of academics and scholars in Jerusalem. It differs from the IHRA definition in that it tries not to conflate anti-Zionism or political criticism of the Israeli government with antisemitism. As much as the latter seems fairer to me, it does contain the notable clause, clause 8, "*Requiring people, because they are Jewish, publicly to condemn Israel or Zionism (e.g. at a political meeting)*". This seems fair enough. By the same token, however, I see it as totally unacceptable in media discussions to ask any interviewee defending Palestinians to publicly condemn Hamas before being allowed to speak. Yet this appears to be standard practice.

An important example of how much definitions matter comes from the USA. One re-assessment (14) of the anti-Defamation League (ADL) data on antisemitic harassment, vandalism, and assault in 2023 found that about 40% of the recorded incidents were either not antisemitic or "on the face of it" not antisemitic, according to the JDA declaration. To be fair, while the initial apparent misclassifications may have exaggerated the extent of antisemitic incidents, after correction the spike post October 7 only diminished by ~40% and was still very large. Hence it appears that the October 7 attack and/or Israel's response drove genuine antisemitic incidents as well as criticism of Israel that can be deemed acceptable in the realm of political speech under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights². Back in Australia, the NSW police collected data for "operation shelter", recording 700 antisemitic events for 2023-2024, but the figure was revised down to 367

² The JDA Declaration of antisemitism states "*Political speech does not have to be measured, proportional, or reasonable to be protected under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*".

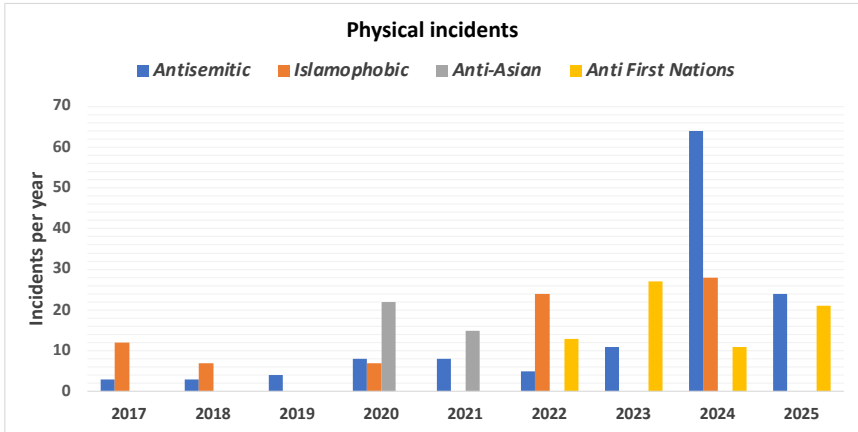
after a parliamentary enquiry, which flagged overzealous labelling of incidents as antisemitic by the police when they were not antisemitic³ (15). It seems that some degree of independent confirmation/checking may be helpful for attributing individual incidents as racist or not, given that these trend numbers are used to inform changes of law in Australia.

5.A closer look at the Australian data in light of the above considerations

The ECAJ provides a sample of incident descriptions in its 2025 report on antisemitism. A few do not appear particularly antisemitic to me, although insulting, but most are at minimum cruel and nasty. However, descriptions of only 194 of the 1654 antisemitic incidents for the year 2025 are given. Although one proceeds with the assumption that the 194 are representative of all 1654, full descriptions of all incidents should be made public, and could be easily provided as an .xls or .csv file - and this should apply to all registries, of course. I have discussed and commented on a few of the ECAJ's examples in appendix 4, in order to illustrate the difficulty of judging whether some events are antisemitic. Of the 194 examples in the ECAJ report I only found 14, or 7%, where I would question somewhat whether they were antisemitic, based on the JDA declaration.

Returning to the problem of comparing the levels of racist incidents from the four main registries: in Figure 6, below, I have restricted the data to physical incidents. Given the considerations noted above, the comparisons of total incident counts are likely to be rendered problematic by different cultural attitudes and levels of under-reporting between groups, as well as differences in definitions and methodologies adopted by the registry organisations. Indeed, reading the ECAJ and anti-First Nations incident reports one notes subtle differences in characterisations and definitions of hate crimes and their perceived effects on victims. The figures on physical incidents alone may be more likely to bear comparison, since they are somewhat more straight forward, similarly characterised by all four registries, and are probably the category that is least often non-reported. Unfortunately, there are some missing years for some groups and in some cases I have inferred actual numbers because only percentages are given.

Figure 6. *Physical hate crime incidents in Australia for four religious/ethnic groups*



Physical incidents occurred in all groups, ranging from 3-24 physical incidents per year, until 2023. Antisemitic incidents peaked in 2024 at a very high level, and as in Figures 1 and 2, decreased in 2025 (before the Bondi massacre). In other years antisemitic physical incidents have not

generally been higher than those against other groups. However, the numbers are too small to make much from all these data. It seems a person with extreme views and motivations will sometimes perpetrate hate crimes against one group or another. Some act only upon racist hate for a specific group, while others, like neo-Nazi groups, may exhibit racism against all four of the above groups simultaneously (see the example in appendix 4 below).

³ According to the Israeli government I just made an antisemitic statement by mentioning this (21).

All groups report racist incidents in Australian society, sometimes exacerbated by various trends and events, especially international events, summarised in table 1. I will seek to support my interpretation of the role of international events in the next section.

Table 1. *Summary of hate incidents in Australia: a possible interpretation of trends and drivers*

Hate type	Long term trends	Intermittent spikes
Antisemitic	Gradual increase in incidents due to ongoing racism and continuing Israel-Palestine tensions.	Large spikes correlated with Israel-Palestine conflicts.
Anti-Islamic	Gradual increase in incidents due to ongoing racism, global terrorism.	Large spikes driven by international terrorism, particularly the 9/11 and 2019 Christchurch attacks.
Anti-Asian	Unknown trend, but ongoing public harassment.	Probable surge during COVID pandemic.
Anti-First Nations	Little upward trend but ongoing racism, systemic issues. Very high in NT.	Not influenced by geopolitical events.

6. Potential role of international events, especially the Israel-Palestine conflict

When considering the impact of armed conflicts on racist incidents in other countries, it is useful to examine the data from the UK, because there are many more incidents there than in Australia, hence we can better visualise numbers by month and illustrate the precise timing of triggers. The numbers come from police-reported data.

Figure 7. *Clear trigger events in UK antisemitic incidents to the end of 2024.*

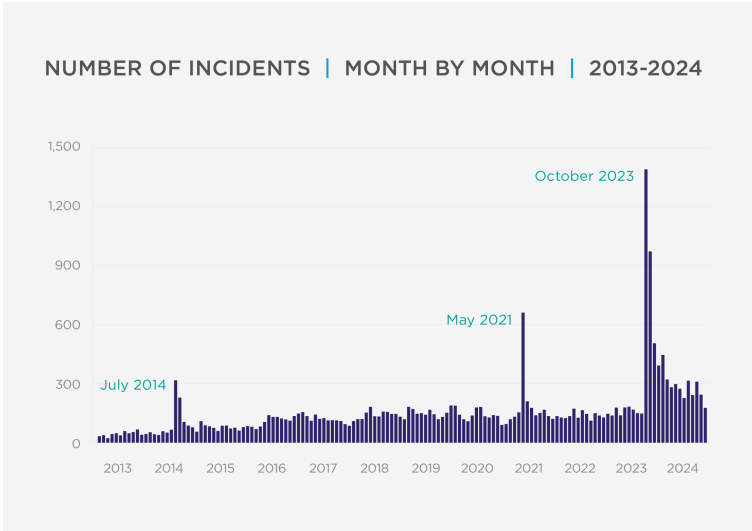
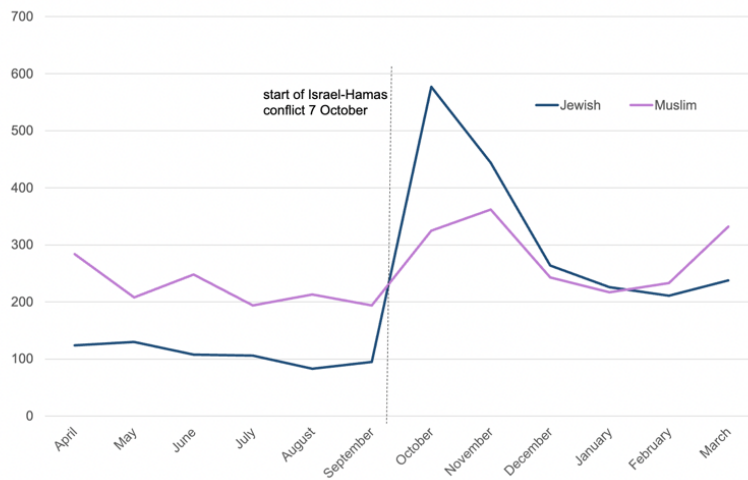


Figure 7 shows the trends in antisemitic events in the UK (Community security trust, www.cst.org.uk). There were spikes of antisemitic incidents in 2014 and 2021, and particularly after Oct 2023, each coinciding with a major escalation of Israel-Palestinian conflict. The spikes do not last long and the graph dips rapidly once the violence and media attention diminish. The trend has not decreased completely to baseline as the current Gaza trigger event has continued for over two years.

Israel started bombing Gaza almost immediately after the Hamas attack. Figure 8, below, shows that spikes were in antisemitic (blue line) and to a lesser extent anti-Islamic (mauve line) hate crimes in the UK post October 7, 2023 (16). Anti-Muslim hate crime was more frequent than antisemitic hate crime before October 7, 2023. The steep slopes of the graph lines before

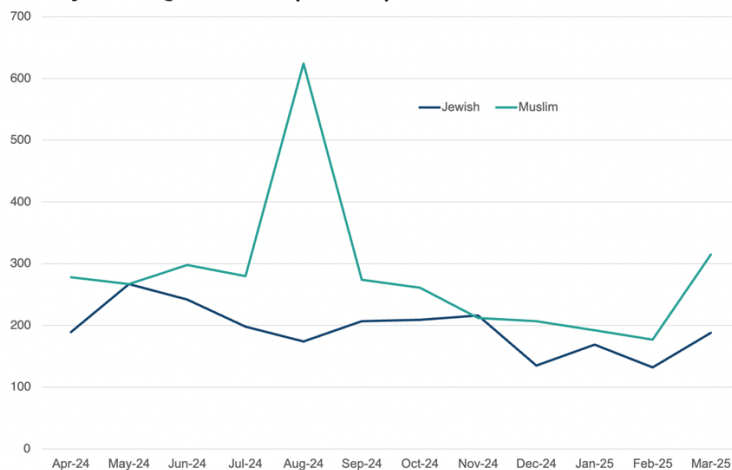
October 7 are spurious, simply due to the joining of two adjacent monthly points (September-October).

Figure 8. *October 7th a trigger for both antisemitic and anti-Muslim incidents in UK (police recorded only) to March 2024*



Of course other events can also cause spikes, as recently shown in the UK. Figure 9, below, shows a clear spike in anti-Islamic offences in August 2024. This correlates with the Southport murders on 29 July 2024 when three children were killed. The attacker’s identity was falsely identified in the media as Islamic, resulting in a spike in anti-Islamic attacks. His motive is still unknown.

Figure 9. *Number of hate crimes targeting Jews and Muslims reported to police per month in the UK.*



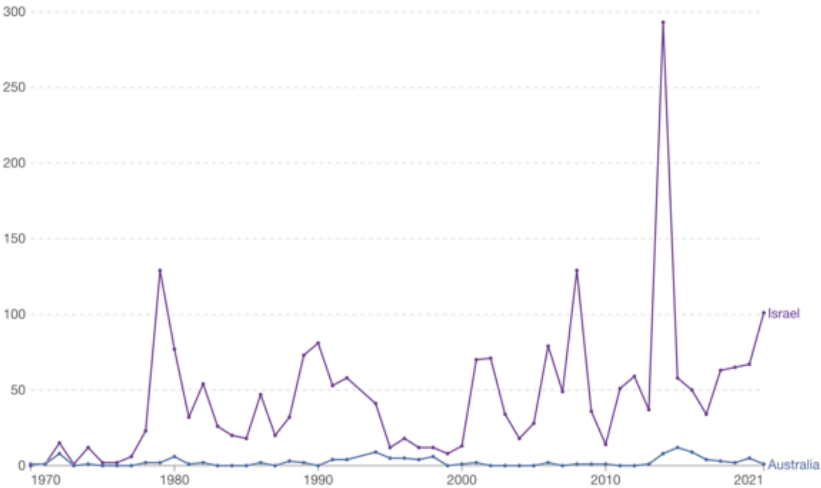
Returning to Australia, there is some formal research that supports an argument that Israel-Palestine conflicts act as a trigger for antisemitic events. Vergani et al. (8) analysed changes in rates of antisemitic incidents in Australia (from October 2013 to September 2017) after different putative trigger events. In brief, after Jewish celebrations there was no significant change in the number or type of incidents. After the formation of a neo-Nazi like group (Antipodean Resistance) in 2016 in Australia there was a small rise in incidents, which were characterised by “old-antisemitic” tropes (defined as hostility towards Jewish religion but with no mention of the Israeli state or Zionism). After the 2014 Palestine-Israel conflict (in which over 1500 Palestinians and 5 Israelis civilians were killed) incident numbers rose more significantly, but with more insults

in the form of “new antisemitism”, defined as criticising the Israeli government and Zionism. This rigorous study supports the hypothesis that rises in antisemitic events in Australia are largely due to the Israel-Palestine conflict. The article (8) is available freely online, it lays out in detail arguments about definitions and other possible weaknesses of such studies, and complexities and possible biases that I have never seen pointed out in media reports on hate crime.

Researchers have attempted to study population perceptions about Jewish people generally, as measured by surveys (based on 100 questions about attitude to Jews) across the globe. Cohen (17) found no obvious pattern across countries for why some became more antisemitic, or remained stable. At least based on available data, the level of criticism of the Israel– Hamas war did not always correlate with the level of anti-Jewish feeling in a populace (17). Countries like those in the Middle East, and Russia, show a very high and rising index of antisemitism (18). In Australia and Western Europe antisemitism survey scores are low and not increasing. Indeed the Australian populace ranks in the lowest bracket of antisemitism scores worldwide in the ADL database (18), at 7th lowest out of 103 countries surveyed in 2025, despite apparent increasing antisemitic incidents. This could be interpreted as evidence against the argument for a major effect of latent antisemitism that is activated by Israel-Palestine conflict, and perhaps underscores the idea that criticism of Israel does not necessarily amount to antisemitism. But all we really know categorically is that antisemitic incidents increase in Australia in response to Israeli military action in Palestine, and they decrease when the conflicts wane.

Trends are most informative when data are studied over long periods. However particularly in Australia we only have 10 years, usually much less, available hate crime numbers. Here I have chosen to show recorded terrorist events, perhaps the ultimate manifestation of hate, data for which go back over 50 years for Australia (Figure 10) and worldwide (19).

Figure 10. 50 years of terrorist attacks globally in Israel and Australia (number of attacks per year)



Australia has suffered only a very small number of attacks (or threats of attacks)⁴ whereas Israel has incurred more or less continuous spikes peaking in 1978 (perhaps due to events leading up to the Camp David Summit?), 2014 and the 2021 Israel-Hamas conflicts.

⁴How does the Global Terrorism Database characterize terrorism?

Threat or use of violence to achieve a political, economic, religious or social intimidation or coercion:

-The perpetrators must be acting intentionally

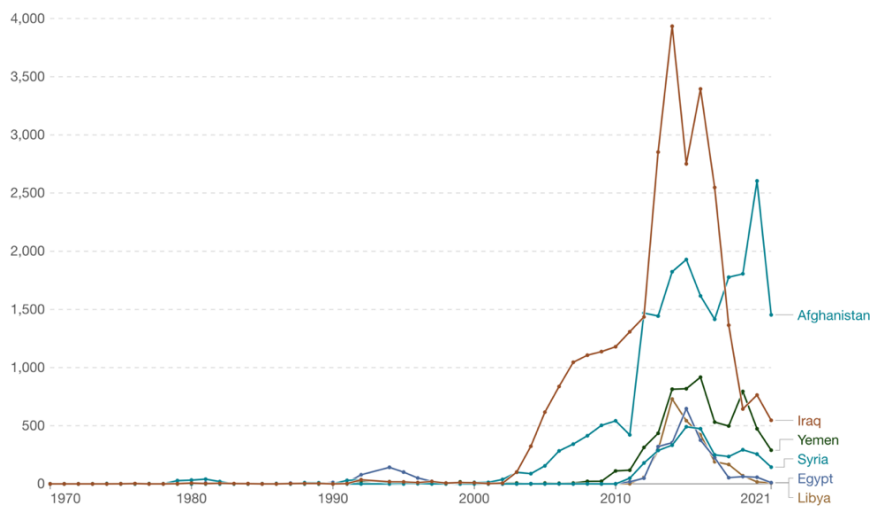
- must threaten or use violence against people or property

-must not be agents of a state

-The actions of the perpetrators are in pursuit of a political, economic, religious, or social goal-The actions target civilians

Given the centrality of the Middle East in many modern conflicts, it is illuminating to look at the number of attacks per year in several such countries (Figure 11).

Figure 11. 50 years of terrorist incidents, Middle East



Surprisingly, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Egypt, and Libya were almost devoid of terrorist attacks until the 2000s. The large rise in Iraq commenced with the beginning of the Iraq war (2003) and fell after the exit of the US forces. Yemen, Syria, Egypt, and Libya were all at extremely low levels until the onset of the Arab Spring and subsequent associated events/conflicts. It appears that terrorist attacks, perhaps like hate crime incidents, can be at an extremely low level, until spikes occur generally following violent conflicts. When conflicts end so do terrorist attacks.

The Global Index of terrorism index report, 2015 (20) found that 98% of all deaths due to terrorism between 2007 and 2024 were in countries undergoing conflict. But can such conflicts affect levels of terrorist incidents in non-conflict countries?

Figure 12. Peaks of terrorist attacks in the Middle East correlate with those in non-conflict Europe.

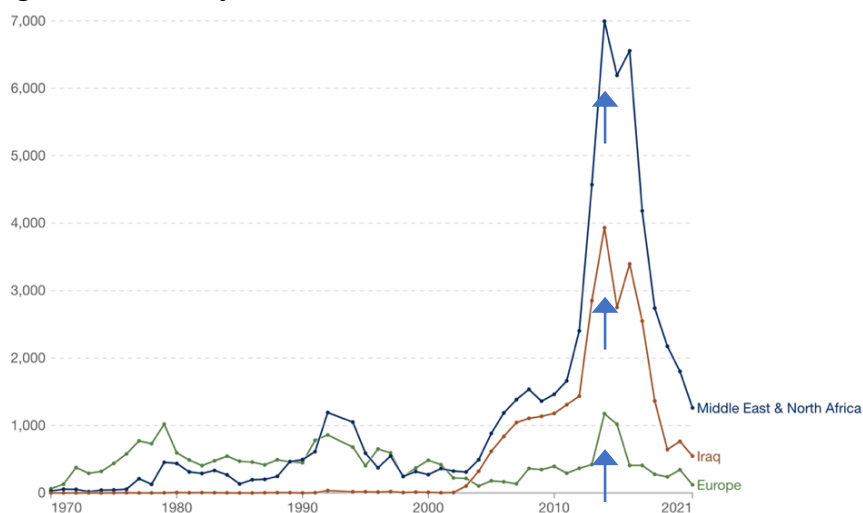


Figure 12 shows attacks in the Middle East and Iraq spiking most obviously in 2014 (blue arrows). Attacks in Europe also spiked precisely in 2014 (at blue arrow). So Middle Eastern conflicts probably affect Europe. There is also a small spike here in Australia which could not be included as the level is too small to be discerned on this y-axis scale. This is all consistent with the notion provides that wars can affect sentiment, and by inference drive hate crimes, in non-conflict countries.

10. Attributions of blame for antisemitic events in Australian public discourse

A Jewish community group, Community Security Group Australia (<https://www.csgvic.com.au>) predominantly attributes the increase in antisemitic incidents to the domestic impact of events in Palestine. However the authors do not consider this as “causal”, they state that *“the cause is and always will be the offenders who seek to perpetrate acts of hate against the local Jewish community”*. There is a logic in this, but it tends to pathologise hate perpetrators as racist and evil (which they sometimes are), avoiding the necessity to contextualise the acts in terms of society and events. It may be that there is latent or potential antisemitism in Australian society that only becomes apparent at the time of Israel-Palestine conflicts. But the conflict is the most reliable predictor of hate events in Australia, even if some want to argue that it is not the cause. And, as discussed above, hate crimes decrease rapidly after such trigger events have stopped. The government of Israel and the ECAJ refuse to countenance blaming the Israel-Palestine conflict for the downstream effects on Jewish Australians. Instead, an Israeli government publication lists the “key generators of antisemitism in Australia” (21). These are Adam Bandt, Mereen Faruqi (Australian Greens), a list of presumably all pro-Palestinian groups in Australia, and a list of individuals including Antony Loewenstein, a Jewish Australian who makes very clear that he does not deny the existence of antisemitism, while arguing that it must not be conflated with criticism of the Israeli government and military. These key people and organisations have in common a pro-Palestinian stance, or at least a critical position on the Israeli state’s and the IDF’s behaviour in Gaza and the West Bank.

The argument that Palestinian solidarity activism is responsible for antisemitism in Australia is also made in the ECAJ’s 2025 report. *“Pro-Palestinian protests exhibited anti-Jewish racism... They now distort Zionism, the defining marker of modern Jewish identity, as colonialism, apartheid and genocide... The hard political Left, including the far fringes of the Jewish left, not only opposes the existence of a Jewish state in the historic homeland of the Jewish people... The hard Left betrayed its secular and Enlightenment origins to become the handmaid of medieval Islamism... their desire to undermine any initiative that will counter anti-Jewish hatred is a case in point. When Jewish organisations raise the issue of anti-Jewish racism, or produce reports, their concerns are belittled and mocked, and even twisted to claim that it is all fabricated, that antisemitism doesn’t exist (except perhaps on the extreme right)”*.

Of course the belittling, mocking and twisting of any concern over racism is to be condemned. And it is possible that a small minority of pro-Palestinian demonstrators holds some of the views alluded to above. But some of the same questions and concerns might also apply to the anti-Muslim, anti-Asian, and anti-First Nations hate incident reports.

However, the following reflections on elements of the above quotation may merit consideration.

1. *“opposes the existence of a Jewish state in the historic homeland of the Jewish people”*. It would be interesting to know how many pro-Palestinian demonstrators do not agree with Israel’s right to exist. In a recent survey of 2270 Australians, only 6% said No to the statement “Israel has the

right to exist as a homeland for the Jewish people” (22). The problem with surveys is context, wording and the respondents’ interpretations. Possibly these 6% did not like the question as framed, and could not answer Yes without the modification to include “a homeland for Jewish people and Palestinians”⁵, hence answered No. Or maybe they really do not agree with Israel’s right to exist. One would require more questioning to be certain.

Even Hamas in its latest charter (2017) ostensibly accepts the idea of a Palestinian state comprising Gaza and the West Bank, with the 1967 borders, and states that it is “*not seeking war with the Jewish people – only with Zionism that drives the occupation of Palestine*”. Although the charter is not friendly to Israel, by inference it accepts the existence of the Israeli state. Notably, in July 2024 the Israeli Knesset passed a resolution rejecting the establishment of a Palestinian state (23). Yet based on available data, the establishment of an independent Palestinian state might dramatically lower the level of antisemitic incidents in Australia.

2. “*the historic homeland of the Jewish people*”. Genetic studies of the history of the region are particularly powerful in the age of modern genomics studies. They compare the sequence of DNA extracted from ancient human remains to that of modern humans. Despite claims based on the Bible (e.g. 24), genetic studies reveal that modern Palestinians and Jews both show genetic continuity with the ancient populations of the Levant, back to the Bronze age (~2,000-3,000 BC) and probably earlier (25, 26). Based on sequence analysis of ancient human remains and DNA samples collected to date it is not possible to say who was there first. Both peoples have a link to the same land. For a slightly less technical summary of the genetics see reference 27.

13. Strategies for combatting hate crimes in Australia.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has been blamed for doing too little to halt antisemitism in Australia. However in recent years, under Labor, the Australian government has appointed a special envoy to combat antisemitism, banned Nazi salutes/symbols, allocated \$32 million for synagogue security, criminalised hate crime, and upgraded holocaust education. Australia also has possibly the strongest anti-terrorism laws in the world (28). Hate crime expert Matteo Vergani told the ABC that “*Australia has proven mostly successful in preventing hate crimes by disrupting incidents before they happen, by monitoring people at risk of engaging in violence. Australia is actually a successful story seen from overseas in this regard*” (29). But antisemitic incidents are apparently still rising. New legislation has been brought in this year further strengthening federal laws against hate speech, antisemitism, and violent extremism. The legislation was drafted mainly by the Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Home Affairs (30). Only 3 days were given for submissions from interested parties. In the end there were 448 submissions. They encompass the most incredible range of views on the legislation one can imagine coming from every possible angle, with strong arguments either disagreeing with the laws or asking for stronger ones. You can read them all (30), it’s a real education. But one wonders what the point of the consultation process is, particularly with such an accelerated progression through parliament.

Increasing police powers might work. Or they might spur on more hate (28). Who knows? This is hugely complicated by the problem of defining exactly which incidents are hate crimes. As a note of caution, in the UK for the year between March 2024 and March 2025 there were 137,555 arrests for hate crimes (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime>). That’s 377 incidents per day acted upon by police. Only approximately 7% proceeded to charges being laid

⁵ This would be the one state shared equally (the river to the sea) as opposed to the two state solution.

and approximately 1,100 resulted in a conviction. That's a lot of police work. Hate crime is apparently going up, not down, in the UK.

For those interested, rather than relying on media reports or opinions, some of which might themselves exacerbate hate, there are plenty of published expert academic articles, government reports, and strategic papers by various human rights organisations. Prevention strategies have already been worked on in considerable depth. Try these:

- Road to eliminating racism in Australia. November 2024 (Australian Human Rights Commission).
- Beyond Laws: Regulating Online Hate Through Collective Action. A Map of Non-Government Strategies (Vergani, Breen, Link et al, (Tackinhate.org).

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APPENDIX 1.

Definition of hate incidents according to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission of Australia

Racist violence is defined as a specific act of violence, intimidation or harassment carried out against an individual, group or organisation (or their property) on the basis of: race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin; and/or support for non-racist policies.

Racist Harassment

A component of racist violence, this refers to behaviour intended to intimidate or threaten the victim, and can include physical violence, verbal abuse and damage to property.

Racist Propaganda

This term refers to written or verbal material which is based on a belief in racial superiority or hatred and is generally directed against a group of people identified by reference to race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin.

Incitement to Racial Hatred

The concept of racial hatred is also often referred to as racial vilification or racial defamation. It encompasses the use of words, writing, images or behaviour to stir up hatred in others against a group or groups of people identified by race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic.

APPENDIX 2.

IHRA definition of antisemitism which is being argued for as the definition of antisemitism in Australia.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.*
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.*
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.*
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).*
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.*
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.*

- *Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.*
- *Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.*
- *Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.*
- *Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.*
- *Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.*

APPENDIX 3.

JRA definition of antisemitism, parts B and C.

B. Israel and Palestine: examples that, on the face of it, are antisemitic.

- 1. Applying the symbols, images and negative stereotypes of classical antisemitism to the State of Israel.*
- 2. Holding Jews collectively responsible for Israel's conduct or treating Jews, simply because they are Jewish, as agents of Israel.*
- 3. Requiring people, because they are Jewish, publicly to condemn Israel or Zionism (for example, at a political meeting).*
- 4. Assuming that non-Israeli Jews, simply because they are Jews, are necessarily more loyal to Israel than to their own countries.*
- 5. Denying the right of Jews in the State of Israel to exist and flourish, collectively and individually, as Jews, in accordance with the principle of equality.*

C. Israel and Palestine: examples that, on the face of it, are not antisemitic. (whether or not one approves of the view or action).

1. Supporting the Palestinian demand for justice and the full grant of their political, national, civil and human rights, as encapsulated in international law.

2. Criticizing or opposing Zionism as a form of nationalism, or arguing for a variety of constitutional arrangements for Jews and Palestinians in the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean. It is not antisemitic to support arrangements that accord full equality to all inhabitants "between the river and the sea," whether in two states, a binational state, unitary democratic state, federal state, or in whatever form.

2. Evidence-based criticism of Israel as a state. This includes its institutions and founding principles. It also includes its policies and practices, domestic and abroad, such as the conduct of Israel in the West Bank and Gaza, the role Israel plays in the region, or any other way in which, as a state, it influences events in the world. It is not antisemitic to point out systematic racial discrimination. In general, the same norms of debate that apply to other states and to other conflicts over national self-determination apply in the case of Israel and Palestine. Thus, even if contentious, it is not antisemitic, in and of itself, to compare Israel with other historical cases, including settler-colonialism or apartheid.

3. Boycott, divestment and sanctions are commonplace, non-violent forms of political protest against states. In the Israeli case they are not, in and of themselves, antisemitic.

4. *Political speech does not have to be measured, proportional, tempered, or reasonable to be protected under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and other human rights instruments. Criticism that some may see as excessive or contentious, or as reflecting a “double standard,” is not, in and of itself, antisemitic. In general, the line between antisemitic and non-antisemitic speech is different from the line between unreasonable and reasonable speech.*

Appendix 4.

Antisemitic acts listed (in italics) as examples by the ECAJ with accompanying comments as to how one might imagine they could be challenged in a court of law.

I have tried to judge the 194 examples of incidents in the 2025 ECAJ report according to the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA), shown in appendix 3.

-Nazi swastikas carved into 3 gum trees in Veale Park, Adelaide Parklands, Adelaide (30 Sep. 2025). Comment: We don't know for sure who it was aimed at. But carving a swastika is generally an illegal act and it is suggested that the swastika is a unique symbol that can traumatise Jews even if they are not the target. We don't know whether this incident was antisemitic.

-Vandalism: Arson of Lewis' Continental Kitchen, a Jewish-owned eatery, destroying the business, Bondi, Sydney (20 Oct. 2024).

Comment: Antisemitic, unless there is another explanation.

-Vandalism with glass window smashed at an Israeli-Jewish owned cafe, Adelaide Street, Fremantle, WA (4 Nov. 2024).

Comment: Antisemitic, unless there is another explanation.

-Vandalism via smashed window of kosher café, Jesse's Café, Rose Bay, Sydney (1 March 2025)

Comment: Antisemitic, unless there is another explanation.

-Chants of “There is only one solution, intifada revolution”, at anti-Israel protest Melbourne (6 Oct. 2024). Comment. Intifada apparently means resistance to occupation (which is the situation in Gaza). Some terms have a variety of different meanings for different people, making it hard to strictly infer intent (see legal analysis here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=WK8ZluRFxNw).

Girl, aged 7-10yo, shouted “Say it loud, say it clear, we don't want no Zionists here” into microphone at anti-Israel protest, Hyde Park, Sydney (20 Oct. 2024). Comment: Children can be cruel. The JDA declaration states that it is not antisemitic to criticise Zionism. It is questionable whether this is antisemitic.

Leaflets by neo-Nazis in residential letterboxes, Corowa, regional NSW (25 Oct. 2024). Comment. Lack of information. If they had antisemitic content the incident was probably antisemitic.

-Shirt with “From the river to sea Palestine will be free” worn by Nasser Mashni, APAN president at anti-Israel protest, Melbourne (6 Oct. 2024). Comment: According to the JDA declaration,

point 12, this would be on the face of it not antisemitic. It could mean abolish the Israeli state, or it could mean the right of return of Palestinians to the land in modern Israel from which they were removed during the last 70 years, or it could mean support for a one state solution where Israel and Palestinians share the land of the river to the sea. The first might be antisemitic.

-Sticker yellow BDS on kosher bottle of wine, at Dan Murphys, Brighton, Melbourne (10 Nov. 2024). Comment. Point 14 of the JDA declaration states that on the face of it this is not antisemitic. One is permitted to disagree with Israel's behaviour *vis a vis* the Palestinians and this is a peaceful way to do it. On their website BDS do not seem to advocate any sort of antisemitism, only adherence to UN rules.

-Stickers yellow BDS placed on Obela dips, kosher food, at Coles, Yokine, Perth (10 Jan. 2025).
See above.

-Nazi posters of "ANZACS died for a White Australia. Jews, Chinks, Arabs & Blacks Fuck off" by National Socialist Network (NSN), on traffic poles, Milton, Brisbane (7 Feb. 2025). **Yes, you could argue that this might be a special kind of antisemitism. The offender is a white supremacist, they are anti-immigration.**

-Jenny Leong, Greens state MP, draped in keffiyeh addressing protest outside NSW Parliament on footpath stated "... Long Live Palestine. Free free Palestine, from the river to the sea." Sydney CBD (18 March 2025). Comment: see "river to the sea" possible explanations above.

Sheikh Wesam Cherkawi described the 7th of October as an "act of resistance", adding "this is the beginning of the end of Zionism", at Hizbut-Tahrir organised rally outside Lakemba Mosque, Lakemba, Sydney (7 Oct. 2024). Comment: According to section C of the JDA declaration this would be political polemic and on the face of it not antisemitic. What would one define the Oct 7th attack as? Unprovoked attack? Maybe. But Gaza has been under occupation for years. It may be an act of resistance but it is a war crime to kill civilians just as has been the killing of Palestinian civilians by the IDF. This could have been tested by the International criminal court.

Sticker of "Boycott Divest Sanction. Free Palestine. Smash Colonial Apartheid Brick by brick, Wall by wall" on a traffic light pole, Northbridge, CBD Perth (15 May 2025). Comment. According to point the JDA declaration is this is on the face of it not antisemitic, rather just provocative political speech.

A woman member of the audience stood up and informed the 400 people present that they and the speakers were missing "the elephant in the room" namely the "tentacles" of Australia's Jewish lobby, which she asserted controls our society, Sydney Writers Festival, Redfern, Sydney (23 May 2025). Comment. In essence this could be provocative political speech, according to point 14 of the JDA declaration. "Controls society" is an unfortunate term perhaps, but it could also be construed that the Jewish lobby (and lobbies for other minority groups) is trying to influence society to introduce new laws and other protections against Australian hate crime. That could be construed as a form of control of society, however large or small.

Having summarised these incidents above, most or all other 170 or so examples presented by the ECAJ report I agree are antisemitic. I just wanted to comment on these fifteen to illustrate

how complex defining these events can be. There were over 1,500 incidents logged in the data that I could not judge there is no public access to them.