

**During the twelve months ending September 30, 2013, 657 reports were recorded of incidents defined by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (now the Australian Human Rights Commission) as "racist violence" against Jewish Australians.** These incidents included physical assault, vandalism – including through arson attacks – threatening telephone calls, hate mail, graffiti, leaflets, posters and abusive and intimidatory electronic mail. This was a twenty one per cent increase over the previous twelve month period, and sixty-nine percent above the average of the previous 23 years. It was the second highest tally on record, although **the more serious, physical attacks were at the lowest rate in eight years.**

Regarding the data in this section, it is important to note that incidents of suspicious behaviour around Jewish institutions, which do not directly relate to a physical manifestation of harassment or vandalism, while obviously important, do not appear in the database as they do not constitute racist violence. Telephone calls, letters, email or graffiti which consist of criticisms of Israel or of political stances of the Jewish community which do not include specifically antisemitic comments are also excluded, even though there is a realistic prospect that a proportion of these are motivated by antisemitism. It should also be noted that a number of activities associated with the movement to boycott Israel, Israelis or supporters of Israel have taken place which are arguably in and of themselves antisemitic but they are not included in this section of the report.

Due to the complexities involved in categorising this activity an assault on a Jewish person who is not identifiably Jewish, and which does not include any reference to the person being Jewish, would not be included. The bias is in favour of exclusion rather than inclusion, which limits the ability for distortions to appear in the statistics over time and also protects the integrity of the data base.

The context in which antisemitic violence, vandalism and harassment took place in Australia was one in which a number of issues relating to the Jewish community, and antisemitism, were matters of public discussion. These included the following, listed chronologically, during the period in review: Fredrick Toben loses defamation case taken against Jeremy Jones, broadly relating to discussion of Dr Toben's dissemination of material found to be unlawful due to its content relating to Jews (Oct. 2012); the annual gathering of far right wing groups at the Sydney Forum (Oct. 2012); the participation of known extreme right wing antisemites at the Gaza Solidarity Rally Sydney (Nov. 2012); cartoonist Leunig's defence of Nazi/Jewish comparisons (Dec. 2012); With the initial calling of the 2013 Federal Election on the Jewish Holy Day of Yom Kippur, Jews were accused of "whinging" for raising this as a concern (Jan. 2013); The tragic story of Ben Zygier, an Australia/Israeli dual citizen who died in an Israeli prison, was used as a pretext by antisemites to accuse Jews in Australia of disloyalty ( Feb. 2013); Call to "eliminate" Jews in song, in Arabic, on ABC Radio (Feb. 2013); The promotion of far left elements of Shlomo Sand's denial of Jewish peoplehood (Feb. 2013); Active promotion by extreme left-wing groups of the slur that Israel practices Apartheid (Feb. 2013); the appointment of a Jewish Australian, Mark Dreyfus, as Attorney General (Feb. 2013); Claims in "New Age" journal "Hard Evidence" that Jews were responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Mar-April 2013); Presence of Greek "Golden Dawn" in Melbourne and Sydney (Mar 2013); A Sydney lecture by anti-Jewish Muslim preacher Musa Cerantonio lecture (Mar 2013); A sermon, promoted on social media, given by an Adelaide Muslim cleric, attacking Hindus and Jews (March 2013); The Arrest of Nazi War Criminals (eg in Germany in May 2013); A speech in the NSW Parliament by an upper house ALP MP in which he rationalised extreme anti-Israel prejudice (May 2013); the broad public support by Australian politicians for the London Declaration opposing antisemitism (May 2013); Antisemitism in the newspaper of the Australian national University's religion

series (May 2013); On-going boycotts of Max Brenner coffee/chocolate outlets (May 2013); Islamic Bookstore in Sydney (Al-Risalah) gaining international attention for promotion of extremist literature (June 2013); Al Quds Day, in Sydney and Melbourne, scene of anti-Semitism on Social media and at rallies (August 2013); Former Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer's inclusion of anti-Jewish slurs in a book about his time as Australia's Ambassador to the Holy See (August 2013); The election of Tony Abbott as Prime Minister, according to some Muslim and far-right wing commentators the result of Jewish power (Sept. 2013)

### ***Reports for the Year 1 October 2012 to 30 September 2013***

**The total for reports of all incidents was twenty per cent above the previous average.** Many of the reports were of threats and abuse, primarily by email, rather than physical attacks on person or property, but the reports reveal that hundreds of Jewish individuals and organisations were targeted, some repeatedly, by persons seeking to intimidate or harass them.

**Incidents of assault, arson attacks, face-to-face harassment and vandalism which are broadly defined as "attacks" were recorded at eighteen per cent above the average of twenty four years, but at the lowest rate in eight years.** Threats, conveyed through the telephone, mail, leaflets, posters or e-mail, were recorded at a rate sixty per cent above the previous average and at the second highest total recorded. ECAJ Antisemitism Report 2013. It is not possible to give a comprehensive analysis of the motivation for most of these incidents. Nearly all of the attacks have been carried out anonymously with the perpetrators never identified and while Jews are clearly identified as targets, the reasons for this generally are not specified. While public matters with which the Australian Jewish community is identified in the public mind (e.g. advocacy of cultural diversity or events in the Middle East) appear as rationalisations in some of the hate mail or threatening telephone calls received by individual Jews and Jewish organisations, the number of reports of incidents in which the motivation is clearly expressed remained low.

The effect of incidents of antisemitism on the quality of life of individual members of the Australian Jewish community should never be minimised. The psychological impact on members of communities affected directly by harassment and intimidation can be serious, particularly as many of the threats have been directed against individual Jewish Australians in their homes, including survivors of the Nazi Holocaust.

**Prepared by**

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