

Monday, 22 December 2025

## TRANSCRIPT OF PREMIER'S REMARKS – NEXT STEPS TO COMBAT ANTI-SEMITISM

### Check against delivery

I'm joined this afternoon with the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Ben Carroll, the Attorney-General Sonya Kilkenny, and Minister for Multicultural Affairs Ingrid Stitt.

I have spent this week listening to countless Jewish voices.

In person, at shules, at events, on TV, on the phone, around tables.

They have lost friends, family, partners, cousins – members of their community.

They are heartbroken and scared and sad – deeply sad – that this is happening here, in this country, in places like Sydney and Melbourne.

Places that are known the world over as a haven for Jews after the war.

Places that are famous for their peaceful and multicultural way of life.

I cannot fully, personally comprehend the unique sadness, pain and fear of Jews in this moment.

But I can share their horror that the worst massacre of Jewish lives since October 7 took place on an Australian beach in summer...

The very backdrop of our gentle, carefree way of life.

December 14 was a direct attack upon Jews – and a direct attack upon our way of life.

It demands action now, action tomorrow and every day thereafter.

It demands action from government.

It even demands action from all Australians, in their day to day lives.

It must never demand action from Jews *alone*.

This is not a Jewish problem to fix.

This is everyone's problem and everyone's responsibility.

To those who, like me, who are not Jewish, I say: this is our fight, too.

We have a profound sense of duty to stand with the Jewish community in its darkest hour.

Because they have always stood with us.

They have uplifted our nation and enriched it with their generosity.

They have filled our universities with discoveries, our hospitals with machines.

More importantly, they have filled our schools with students and our ovals with teammates and our suburbs with homes and families.

They're ordinary folks who deserve the basic promise of a peaceful life.

We must do whatever we can to restore it.

It's not something that will happen overnight.

There's no one law that can change it all.

It is as complex a challenge as we have ever faced. But its principle is straightforward: anti-hate.

Consistent, restorative action to reverse the spread of hate.

A long-term commitment, based on our values as a government and a community.

I cannot stand here today revealing a simple answer, but I do stand here making this simple, long-term commitment in the name of the Victorian people.

I take responsibility for everything that happens in this state.

I am sorry.

I stand with you for the long-term.

I will fight for you forever.

We can share a stocktake of the reforms we have already delivered to protect the community.

It is still not enough.

Today I am announcing the five next major steps to combat anti-Semitism and keep people safe.

And I am committing to the long-term.

This historic challenge needs serious, constant, accountable, long-term – multi-year – intervention.

I am committing to it.

And I am someone who sees long-term projects through.

These are our next steps, not our last steps. I will go through them.

### **1) Stronger hate speech laws**

Victoria's anti-vilification laws introduced this year are Australia's strongest.

We will make them even stronger.

Under Victoria's civil anti-vilification scheme, which starts in 2026, the speaker of a vilifying statement generally needs to be identifiable to be held accountable.

We recognise this could protect cowards who hide behind anonymous profiles to spread hate and stoke fear.

That's why Victoria will spearhead new laws to hold social media companies and their anonymous users to account – and we'll commission a respected jurist to unlock the legislative path forward.

The laws could mean, if the owner of a social media account can't be identified, then the platform could be liable for a civil claim determination.

Platforms could also be compelled to provide identifying details.

We will also bring forward the implementation of our civil anti-vilification scheme, so it starts in April.

And as a further step, we will bring these laws back to Parliament in 2026 to remove the requirement that the Director of Public Prosecutions consent to police prosecutions for criminal vilification.

That reverses a change we reluctantly made to get the Bill through the crossbench when it was denied bipartisan support.

## **2) Calm on our streets following acts of terror**

We will introduce new special police powers to allow the Chief Commissioner of Police to stop or move on a public protest within a certain time following a designated terrorist event.

These will be similar to targeted new laws proposed in NSW.

We have always defended the right to protest and we won't allow a return of undemocratic laws that aim to reduce the power of workers.

But the safety of the community is paramount. That's why we're acting.

## **3) Toughening Australia's gun laws**

At National Cabinet, we committed to strengthen gun laws. We cannot be complacent.

To look at what further work needs to be done here in Victoria – in both the context of the National Cabinet reforms and the work that is going on in New South Wales – we'll commission former Victorian Chief Commissioner of Police, Ken Lay, to help us to deliver the commitment here in full so our gun laws reflect the contemporary risks of today.

## **4) A prevention-first approach to political extremism**

We are releasing today our state's *Strategy for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism*.

It's an evidence-backed plan dealing with extremism of all kinds, including people with far-right, far-left, religious or other ideological motivations.

We will appoint a Commissioner for preventing and countering violent political extremism to implement this strategy across Government.

Our strategy found that community initiatives are the bedrock to prevent the emergence of all kinds of violent political extremists.

...initiatives such as outreach and education programs to support schools, clubs and places of worship.

Above all, the new Commissioner will ensure this community prevention approach is always solidly in place alongside traditional targeted interventions and law enforcement.

## **5) Taking long-term accountability for the pathway to normal**

In many ways, this is the most important step.

Our ultimate long-term goal is a return to a sense of normality for members of Victoria's Jewish community.

They deserve to live their lives in dignity without having to constantly defend their family, identity, dress, homes, businesses, schools and shules.

We won't ever tackle this with a series of short-term actions.

We need long-term commitment, and we – as a Government – understand we need to be held accountable to it.

We want clear goals that are up in lights for everyone to see – and for everyone in Victoria to embrace and be a part of, Jew and non-Jew alike.

We will convene a council of eminent Victorians to develop these simple, measurable goals.

We want these goals to be tracked regularly.

We want them to be positive goals, about Jewish visibility, participation and safety.

We will use them to drive and fund the long-term work – the ‘pathway to normal’.

While we undertake this long-term work, we are focused on the needs here and now.

That’s what our engagement with the Jewish Community to date has been focused on – through forums like LEAH and the Anti-Hate Taskforce.

The Special Envoy’s Plan to Combat Anti-Semitism also contains short and long-term recommendations and actions.

We are implementing them.

We have adopted the strongest and clearest definition of anti-Semitism.

We have mandated Holocaust teaching in government schools.

We have progressed significant law reform addressing anti-Semitism and racism.

We are funding VEOHRC to help workplaces fight hate.

Today, we will go further.

Victoria commits to working with the state’s cultural institutions to educate them about anti-Semitism – and establish agreed guidelines for festivals and arts organisations to respond to anti-Semitic incidents.

With this commitment, Victoria is delivering all the Special Envoy’s recommendations and actions relevant to states and directed to state governments.

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I will take your questions – but I finish by recognising Jewish voices, those who I have heard this week, and since I became Premier in the days before the terrorist attacks in Israel on October 7, 2023.

They are the voices of people who are suffering – but people who endure.

These voices ring with extra clarity following the attacks of December 14.

We must honour these voices.

By listening to them, we won’t just rebuild Australia as a place free of anti-Semitism.

We can make it safer for everyone, whoever they are, whoever they pray to, whoever they love and whatever they look like.

That was the basis of the statement of solidarity agreed in my Cabinet room last week – and signed by the leaders who represent and constitute our multicultural state.

Anti-Semitism is unique – but its solutions benefit everyone.

Multicultural Victoria knows it.

A Victoria free of anti-Semitism is a state that’s safer, kinder and gentler for all our families and communities.