

Part M. Suggestions from the Himalayas

I OFFER these suggestions from a wintry abode. They reflect my practical experience of living and working in and with varied cultures – [Australian, Indian, Chinese, Russian, Vietnamese, Levantine, Arab, Jewish, South Pacific and Southeast Asia](#). These are addressed as much to the Australian Federal and State Governments, educational institutions, and community organisations that touch the daily lives of Australians as to you, the Royal Commission.

On framing the problem

1. **Reject the premise that antisemitism is the principal threat to social cohesion in Australia.** It is one strand among many — alongside Islamophobia, Indophobia, Palestinophobia, racism, homophobia, misogyny and the unresolved disenfranchisement of First Nations peoples — all of which must be addressed within a single, coherent framework. [Part B](#), [Part D](#)
2. **Find that antisemitism, Jewophobia and anti-Zionism** are distinct in motivation, and that conflating them produces both bad policy and bad faith. Hatred of Jews as Jews is real and must be quelled. Jewish Australians suffer blame for decisions they did not make; branding critics of Israel cheapens the value of antisemitism. [Part D](#), [Part E](#), [Part F](#)
3. **Adopt a conduct-based definition of antisemitism.** A definition anchored in hostility towards Jews as Jews protects Jewish Australians without silencing lawful debate. The Commission should decline to adopt - or to apply - any definition that treats criticism of Israel or of Zionism as inherently antisemitic, including the IHRA working definition where it is used to that effect. [Part I](#)
4. **Reject the bans on phrases such as “From the River to the Sea” enacted in some Australian jurisdictions.** A bare phrase, divorced from intent and context, is a poor object of the criminal law, and risks codifying one side of a contested political claim as national orthodoxy. [Part G](#)
5. **Reaffirm** the democratic right of the Australian people to protest for social causes, including Human rights, without fear. [Part C](#)
6. **Expunge all false evidence** rendered to it under oath, explaining why. [Part C](#)

On the Envoy’s plan

7. **Recommend against embedding specifically Jewish historical curricula in public schools.** Holocaust education has its place within history and civics, but a dedicated antisemitism curriculum taught in isolation from the histories of other communities will breed resentment, not cohesion. Exceptionalising antisemitism while ignoring broader racism and structural injustice may itself damage social cohesion. [Part H](#)

On the way forward

8. **Make interfaith and intercultural engagement a condition of government support** for independent religious schools and community centres of every faith. Public money should buy public goods. [Part K](#)

9. **Safeguard the secular, pluralist character of Australia's public institutions.** Curriculum and the public service should be kept at arm's length from the agenda of any single faith or its lobby, and alert to foreign interference in schools, the public service and other official bodies. [Part D](#), [Part H](#)

10. **Recommend re-evaluation of multiculturalism** as Australia's organising principle for diversity. [Its use-by date is fast approaching.](#)

11. **Recommend introducing Cultural Intelligence (CQ) units across the full range of institutions** - schools, universities, community centres, the public service, and workplaces - to address every driver of incohesion, not antisemitism alone. The CQ curriculum should set Australian civilisational values - a fair go, egalitarianism and collective responsibility - alongside the values of the cultures that now share this country. It should begin with a pilot CQ centre to develop and test the format, drawing on proven international models such as Denmark's empathy curriculum. [Part K](#)

12. **Recommend placing First Nations history and culture at the centre of any cohesion curriculum.** A programme that teaches children about distant persecutions while leaving them ignorant of the oldest continuous culture on Earth, on their own soil, will not produce a cohesive society. [Part K](#)

13. **Recommend establishing a standing, evidence-based mechanism to hear from all affected communities** - Palestinian, Muslim, First Nations, Hindu and others, alongside Jewish. Such a body would replace the ad hoc, band-aid appointment of single-issue Envoys - for Antisemitism, for Islamophobia - whose very existence and sectional pronouncements have themselves sown division, as recent events have shown. It could also replace other government instrumentalities that have a role in suppressing discrimination and promoting social cohesion. [Part H](#)

Best wishes in your efforts to enhance Social Cohesion in Australia.

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