



Swinburne University of Technology

Submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee Inquiry into Antisemitism at Australian Universities

At Swinburne University of Technology (Swinburne), we are proud to foster a culture that celebrates the diverse and unique backgrounds of our students, staff and community. We respect the rights of our staff and students to freedom of speech, which includes the right to protest.

Swinburne does not, and will not tolerate prejudice, racism and religious hatred of any kind. We are continuously working with staff and students to keep our community safe.

Since the events of 7 October 2023, Swinburne has offered a range of services and supports to students and staff and continues to remind our community about our culture being one of inclusivity and respect for diversity. With a future-focused atmosphere, we inspire others to select Swinburne for their educational pursuits, career advancement and impactful collaborations.

We thank the committee for the opportunity to provide additional information about the Swinburne community and how we handle complaints about discrimination, vilification and harassment in all its forms.

Swinburne educates over 65,000 students (45,000 in higher education and 20,000 in vocational education and training) on-campus through our three campuses in Melbourne and to 11,000 students undertaking online studies across Australia. We employ 2,720 staff. Together our student and staff group represent over 100 nationalities.

We recognise that our academic and professional staff, students and community have rich life experiences, orientations and backgrounds. Universities are inherently culturally rich and diverse places that attract people from all walks of life. Swinburne values this diversity and is committed to creating and strengthening an inclusive culture. We recognise the link between inclusivity and our success.

Swinburne's approach to harassment and discrimination

Swinburne's commitment to our workplace culture is outlined in our People, Culture and Integrity Policy. We are committed to providing an environment for work and study that is free from discrimination. Our Policy is complemented by organisational activities directed to the inclusion and wellbeing of students, including but not limited to our Safer Communities Team, and pro-active outreach. Our processes enable students and employees to raise concerns about their experiences at Swinburne, including antisemitism.

These policies can be found [here](#), and our complaints policy and procedures can be found [here](#).

Supporting our students

Safer Community Program

Our Safer Community team offers advice, support, intervention and risk management for students who have experienced or witnessed inappropriate, concerning or threatening behaviour. We aim to identify problem behaviour early to minimise risks to the safety and wellbeing of students and others.

Inappropriate, concerning or threatening behaviour includes any behaviour that:

- makes students feel threatened or unsafe
- causes students concerned about a person harming themselves or someone else
- makes students feel uneasy or get the sense that something is not quite right.

Swinburne's Multi Faith Centre

The Multi Faith Centre exists to support the spiritual wellbeing of Swinburne students and staff. It provides spaces for attending to spiritual practices, including a prayer room, rooms to meet with chaplains and spaces for cultural and spiritual clubs to run gatherings. As part of the chaplain service, Rabbi Bochi Broh who volunteers his time to meet with students on campus and provides culturally and religiously informed support for students. Students can book a time with the Rabbi online through the Multi Faith Centre.

Swinburne's response to on-campus student activities since 7 Oct 2023

The Swinburne student community is not one that is demonstrably politically active. Since the events of 7 October 2023 Swinburne has not experienced instances of student protest or encampments such as has been seen at other, larger universities.

There has been only one incident which took place on 9 August 2024 where Swinburne security called Victoria Police to assist with students who were exhibiting aggressive behaviour in the handing out of printed materials.

Swinburne will always intervene as appropriate - this includes a police response where reasonable requests to cease unsafe behaviours are not followed, or where the safety of our security staff is at risk.

Swinburne is committed to working with student groups to ensure a peaceful and safe presence on campus. We welcome debate and activity, provided it does not disrupt the safety and security of others.

Swinburne reached out to the Australasian Union of Jewish Students after the events of 7 October, offering support for the members and special consideration for that upcoming assessment period. Messages of support and offering of counselling services were disseminated across multiple communication channels to staff and students.

We are always evolving

Swinburne acknowledges that responses to racism and religious hatred is an area for continuous improvement. Understanding how global events impact our students and staff evolves over time and Swinburne is committed to supporting our community in an open and transparent way. Events that occur on other university campuses, like the ones triggered by 7 October, have highlighted an opportunity for policy refinement and response.

Each university has a unique student make-up that requires specific support, response and understanding. Swinburne draws many of its international students from majority Muslim and Hindu countries, while also supporting the smaller cohort of Jewish students. As such, University responses to global events are designed to make all students safe on campus, regardless of their cultural or religious background, and to promote student success and flourishing in Australia's multicultural and multifaith context.

It is Swinburne's position that the policy and response refinement process should remain the prerogative of each University.