



Australian Muslim Women's
Centre for Human Rights
Equality without Exception



COMMUNITY COALITION CALLS FOR UNIFIED ANTI-RACISM STANDARD IN UNIVERSITIES

28 MARCH 2025

A coalition of Australian community organisations is calling on Universities Australia to adopt a unified definition that addresses racism, bigotry, and discrimination, applying one education standard for all communities, regardless of race or religion.

The coalition argues that adopting an Islamophobia definition will not address the issues with the problematic Antisemitism definition. Instead, it will perpetuate double standards and silence Palestinian voices. The Antisemitism definition, soon to be part of university education and complaint schemes, risks suppressing legitimate criticism of Israel. Developing such narrow definitions will result in gaps and a failure to protect all persons from racism, bigotry and discrimination.

The organisations fully support the **definition of Dehumanising Material**, which provides a comprehensive, clear standard to protect all groups based on race, religion, and ethnicity.

Substantiated by **extensive research** from Harvard, Oxford, and Australian scholars, including studies on atrocity prevention and hate crime data, this definition discourages hypocrisy and double standards whilst not shielding states from criticism for their abuses.

"Dehumanisation strips communities of their humanity, denying them empathy, dignity, and protection," said a coalition spokesperson. **"It has led to history's worst atrocities, including the ongoing genocide in Gaza. Palestinians are facing unique and dire forms of dehumanisation. Ignoring this and failing to include their struggle is a failure of solidarity."**

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The coalition stresses that dehumanisation often manifests as harmful stereotypes that portray certain groups based on their race or religion as a threat to society or deserving of collective punishment for the actions of a few.

“There are strong concerns, including from Palestinian leadership, that universities seek an Islamophobia definition to shield them from public criticism and continue with their plans, and we will not be complicit in this.”

"Double standards in fighting racism are dangerous," the spokesperson continued. "Allowing universities to adopt different standards for different groups is not the answer. We need one unified standard that rejects dehumanisation and promotes equality for all, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion."

The coalition urges Universities Australia to put aside the proposed Antisemitism definition, adopt the Dehumanising Material definition as a foundation and directly consult with impacted communities, anti-racism policymakers, and human rights experts to ensure the standard is fair and effective. This engagement must continue after it is implemented.

Once the standard is in place, communities can share how they experience dehumanisation, but starting with one clear standard helps keep things consistent and easy to understand, including in situations where competing claims about racism are made.

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