

Ms Lorraine Finlay
Human Rights Commissioner
Australian Human Rights Commission

27 August 2025

Dear Commissioner Finlay,

Re: Guest Speaker at the Australian Mayors Summit Against Antisemitism

We write as Jewish Voices of Inner Sydney, a group committed to human rights, peace and justice. We note that you are listed as a speaker at the forthcoming Australian Mayors Summit Against Antisemitism, hosted by the Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM) on the Gold Coast this September.

We oppose all forms of racism, including antisemitism, but we find ourselves deeply concerned about this event and respectfully urge you to reconsider your participation.

The Summit presents itself as an anti-racism initiative, but its organisers and sponsors include individuals and groups linked to extremist politics, the Israeli military, and lobbying interests.

The event promotes the “Municipal Antisemitism Action Index,” based on the controversial IHRA definition of antisemitism. This definition conflates criticism of Israel with hatred of Jews, undermining freedom of speech and stifling legitimate debate. Even the definition’s lead drafter has warned of its widespread misuse.

Promoting the IHRA definition of antisemitism is an attempt to impose unacceptable restrictions on the rights of Australians to legitimately criticise the State of Israel’s actions. Australia already has strong anti-racism laws and frameworks. Using the IHRA definition will not reduce antisemitism; it will only facilitate bad-faith accusations of antisemitism.

Holding such a conference in the context of current events is particularly problematic. The Israeli government stands accused of grave breaches of international and humanitarian law in Gaza, including a plausible genocide. An event framed as opposing antisemitism but tied to pro-Israel lobbying risks normalising these violations and silencing criticism.

Your attendance at this Summit as Human Rights Commissioner risks legitimising a political project that undermines, rather than advances, the cause of human rights. For the sake of public trust and confidence in your office, we urge you to withdraw.