



Australian Federation
of Islamic Councils

AFIC Strongly Opposes Universities Australia's Adoption of Restrictive Antisemitism Definition

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The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC) expresses its grave concern over the recent decision by Universities Australia to adopt a highly politicised and restrictive definition of antisemitism. This move, which conflates legitimate criticism of the State of Israel with antisemitism, poses a concerning threat to academic freedom and stifles much-needed debate within our academic institutions.

Dr. Rateb Jneid, President of AFIC, emphasises, "This definition could restrict not only the critique of Israeli policies but also silences a broad spectrum of voices concerned with human rights. It is alarming that our places of learning could become environments where challenging discussions are limited."

AFIC joins its voice with other organisations, both Jewish and non-Jewish, that have expressed opposition to this imposition. Such a definition sends a misleading signal that all Jewish individuals globally endorse the actions of Israel, an assumption that does not reflect reality and which undermines the diverse opinions within Jewish communities.

"If universities are to remain spaces where complex global issues can be navigated safely and constructively, they must reject such restrictive definitions," states Dr. Jneid. "The inclusion of this definition is another attempt by Zionist interests to shield Israel from legitimate scrutiny and criticism, ultimately harming the academic community and broader societal cohesion."

Moreover, this policy risks exacerbating communal tensions by implying that any critical discourse on Israel is inherently antisemitic, thus alienating members of the community who wish to express solidarity with the Palestinian cause or who advocate for human rights.

The AFIC calls on Universities Australia to withdraw this definition and to foster an environment where the academic community can engage in discussions that are both challenging and necessary without fear of reprisal. We urge a return to principles that support open and honest academic inquiry, which is essential for the progress and well-being of Australian society.

Authorised by
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