

Media Release

An Australian-first school roundtable on antisemitism

Catholic Schools NSW has jointly hosted a roundtable on antisemitism in education with Jillian Segal AO, Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism in Australia.

Held at Australian Catholic University, the roundtable identified and assessed the challenge of antisemitism in schools, presented responses to antisemitism and discussed opportunities for future collaboration.

Led by a keynote address from Jillian Segal AO, covering her work as Special Envoy, the roundtable showcased successful antisemitic initiatives and programmes undertaken by Sydney Catholic Schools, led by its Director of Religious Education and Evangelisation, Anthony Cleary.

Following the presentations, Dallas McInerney, CEO of Catholic Schools NSW, moderated a discussion among the attendees, focusing on the various perspectives from the representative heads of various organisations.

In a show of unity, over 3,000 schools were represented, including all three schooling sectors, as well as Christian, Anglican and Jewish schools, and the Secretary of the NSW Department of Education, Murat Dizdar.

Comment attributable to:

Jilian Segal AO, Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism: ‘It was heartening to hear around the table strong condemnation of antisemitism in our society and acknowledgement of the essential role schools have in countering it and ensuring they educate future leaders about it. I am very grateful to Catholic Schools NSW for their strong and ongoing stand against hate and bigotry.’

Dallas McInerney, CEO of Catholic Schools NSW: ‘School leaders have a unique responsibility to ensure that our schools are welcoming and safe environments for all students; we have Jewish students in all three sectors of NSW Education, and today, we send a powerful message that antisemitism has no place in our schools and education is the best antidote to bigotry.’

‘The reason for convening this roundtable is that we don’t think we have a minute to waste in confronting and responding to this growing problem and schools are uniquely positioned to play a role – and not repeat the mistakes of some universities who have been slow with leadership on this issue.’

Murat Dizdar, Secretary of the NSW Department of Education: ‘Public schools have always played an important role in supporting and contributing to social cohesion in society. Schools take great pride in working with the values of equity and respect to build harmony and tolerance across all our diverse communities. Diversity is our strength. This will always remain of primacy to public education in NSW.’

Catholic Schools NSW represents the state’s 592 Catholic schools and their 268,000 students.

Media Contact: Josh Byrne | 0437 314 905 | Joshua.Byrne@csnsw.catholic.edu.au