

## Religious Leaders Gather to Support Jewish Community

Under the theme “Unity, Hope, and Light” a number of religious leaders gathered last night to support the Jewish community which has faced vitriolic abuse and acts of terror in Sydney and Melbourne in recent weeks.

The leaders gathered at Our Lady of the Rosary Cathedral, Waitara, welcomed by Most Rev Anthony Randazzo, Bishop of Broken Bay, and Federal member for Berowra, Julian Leeser MP.

Present were Rabbi Lewin from the North Shore Synagogue, David Ossip, President of the Jewish Board of Deputies, Alex Ryvchin, Co-Chief Executive Officer of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, along with leaders from the Uniting Church, Baptist Church, Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Baha’i Community.

“In these times we stand in solidarity with the Jewish community, remembering our shared history, mutual respect, and solidarity,” Bishop Randazzo said.

“We gather here with heavy hearts, deeply disturbed by the rise of anti-Semitism and all forms of hatred in our world.

“We call for peace to fill every heart, for healing to mend the divisions amongst us, and for understanding to replace the ignorance that fuels bigotry.”

The leaders and members of the Diocese of Broken Bay community acknowledged a rare intersection of the Christian and Jewish calendars where Christmas and Chanukah coincide.

“For Christians, Christmas marks the birth of Jesus Christ, the miracle of God’s love made flesh, bringing hope and light into our world,” Bishop Randazzo said.

“For our Jewish friends, Chanukah commemorates the miracle of the oil that burned for eight days in the temple, a symbol of resilience and divine providence.

“Both festivals share a deep message of hope, joy, and the power of light to overcome darkness, and we celebrate these miracles together in a spirit of unity and understanding.”

As a symbolic show of support Bishop Randazzo and Julian Leeser lit a candle together with all those attending lighting candles – a simple gesture showing they all stood together against hatred and division.

Leeser asked all those who will soon celebrate Christmas, and reject racism and prejudice, to light a candle and place it in their window as the Jewish community begin their festival of

Chanukah. This will be a clear sign of a shared commitment to unity, hope, and light in the face of rising anti-Semitism, he said.

Rabbi Lewin said he is profoundly grateful for the support from leaders and communities of other faiths in what is a deeply disturbing time for those of the Jewish faith.