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Commissioner Demands National Strategy Against Racism and Antisemitism

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Australia's Race Discrimination Commissioner, Girdharan Sivaraman, has urged a unified national strategy to combat all forms of racism, including antisemitism, to ensure safety and dignity for all communities. This article examines his call for action, the Australian Human Rights Commission's (AHRC) initiatives, and the challenges posed by rising hate amid the Labour government's inconsistent approach to social cohesion.

On July 17, 2025, Commissioner Sivaraman emphasized the need for a cohesive national response to racism, spotlighting a surge in antisemitic incidents since October 2023. Speaking to Mirage News, he endorsed the Australian Human Rights Commission's (AHRC) National Anti-Racism Framework, launched in November 2024, which outlines 63 recommendations for systemic reform across education, media, and workplaces. "Antisemitism is an insidious form of racism with no place in Australia," Sivaraman stated, aligning his stance with Special Envoy Jillian Segal's report on combating antisemitism, delivered to the government in July 2025. He also noted the upcoming report from Special Envoy Aftab Malik on Islamophobia, due in August, as critical to addressing interconnected forms of hate.

The AHRC is actively tackling racism through projects like the Racism@Uni study, set for release in December 2025, which investigates discrimination in universities. Sivaraman's framework proposes amending the Racial Discrimination Act (RDA) to impose a "positive duty" on employers and service providers to prevent discrimination proactively. However, concerns linger about Segal's proposals, which some academics fear could curb free speech by targeting funding for universities and arts groups. "We must balance safety with fundamental rights," Sivaraman told The Guardian, urging dialogue to refine these measures. X posts reflect public unease, with users criticizing the Labour government for prioritizing symbolic gestures over robust enforcement against hate crimes.

Rising incidents, including synagogue attacks in New South Wales, underscore the urgency of Sivaraman's call. The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) has flagged antisemitism as a top

security threat, with Director-General Mike Burgess noting its unprecedented priority. While the Labour government supports anti-racism rhetoric, critics argue it lacks decisive action. Sivaraman's push for a coordinated, community-led strategy offers a path to restore Australia's promise of a fair go, ensuring no group faces hatred alone.