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## Actor to Challenge Nazi Salute Charge with Arm Angle Mathematics

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Former *Neighbours* actor Damien Richardson is set to contest allegations of performing a Nazi salute by scrutinizing the “mathematical formula” of the gesture’s arm angle, as his legal team prepares for a two-day hearing in November 2025. The case, unfolding in Victoria, raises questions about the legal definition of the salute and the enforcement of Australia’s anti-Nazi symbol laws under the Labor government.

Richardson, 55, faces charges for allegedly performing a Nazi salute at Urban St restaurant in McKinnon, Melbourne, in September 2024. Appearing at Moorabbin Magistrates Court, he was charged with intentionally displaying “a Nazi gesture whilst knowing that the symbol is associated with Nazi ideology,” according to court documents. His defence lawyer, Peter Monagle, told *The Canberra Times*, “We would spend extensive time if an expert was called in regards to mathematical formula” of the salute, focusing on arm angle and finger positioning. Monagle argues Richardson’s gesture was not a deliberate Nazi salute but a thoughtless act, potentially exempt under the Summary Offences Act 1966 (SOA) for “genuine artistic purpose.” A two-hour livestream of the incident may be presented as evidence, though Monagle seeks to exclude remarks by another speaker at the event to avoid prejudice.

The case highlights Australia’s strict laws banning public Nazi salutes, except for religious, academic, or artistic purposes, with penalties up to \$23,000 or 12 months’ imprisonment. Magistrate Luisa Bazzani noted two key issues: whether Richardson’s gesture constitutes a Nazi salute and if an artistic exemption applies. Critics argue the Labor government’s enforcement risks overreach, potentially stifling free expression under vague legal definitions. The prosecution’s rejection of Richardson’s request for a diversion to avoid a criminal record underscores this hardline stance, drawing scrutiny from free-speech advocates.

Richardson’s defence, leveraging the precise mechanics of a Nazi salute, described as a right arm extended at a 45-degree angle with a straightened hand aims to challenge the charge’s specificity. As the first Victorian convicted for this offence, far-right figure Jacob Hersant, faced jail, the case tests the boundaries of legal and cultural sensitivities.

Richardson's hearing on November 5 and 6 will probe whether mathematics can redefine justice in this contentious debate.