

Never Again is Now: Brisbane.

by Christina McIntosh

On Sunday afternoon I attended the rally Stop the Hate: A Brisbane Call to Action organised by [Never Again is Now Australia](#)

There was a warm-up concert that began at 1.30 and went till 2.30 and then the main part with the full-length speeches and prayers went from 2.30 to 4.30.



It was gorgeous weather – not too cold, not too hot; very much of a 'family picnic atmosphere. I arrived early so had a good view of the chosen venue to get an idea of potential seating capacity; and asked one of the official people about attendance – they said about 1800 people had registered (you had to register in order to be allowed in) and I think about

that number turned up, because about halfway through I was looking at the amphitheatre and doing back-of-envelope sums – four segments, about 20 ‘steps’ in each, and approximately 25 people sitting along each ‘step’; I was in the uppermost ‘row’, right at the back but in the middle, looking directly at centre stage. There were marshals in ‘never again is now’ yellow jackets checking people’s tickets/ registration; also about 4 sets of police officers spaced out around the perimeter... they didn’t have anything to do, so far as I could see, other than enjoy the music and listen to the speeches!!



A good mix of ages – elderly, middle-aged and twenty/thirty-somethings, some families with youngish children; a mix of ethnic backgrounds (including among the presenters and speakers); Jewish and non-Jewish (bearing in mind that Brisbane’s Jewish community is very small compared to that of Sydney and Melbourne; I think there are perhaps 3 synagogues, with another synagogue or two on the Gold Coast. Mostly Christians. I saw both Israeli and Aussie flags being flown; and three of the non-Islamic Persian flags (the yellow one

with the lion); a Persian supporter of Israel was one of the speakers.



I didn't see or hear any evidence of the anti-Israel hate mob anywhere in the vicinity; and I arrived a couple of hours early, around 11.50. I did a wildlife-and-flower-spotting stroll all around the Roma St Parklands and saw only normal residents and tourists also strolling and smelling the flowers

We had some state and federal politicians speaking: all LNP (Liberal-National-Party); politicians of other stripes had been invited but had chosen not to come. Those who did come spoke well. I should add that at the very beginning there was a rousing speech by an indigenous (Aboriginal) friend of Israel, who (like some others, such as the impressive former Olympic athlete Nova Peris-Kneebone) has had the wit to recognise that Jews are the indigenous people/ traditional owners of Eretz Israel and that their regaining of sovereignty within their ancestral homeland should be celebrated by indigenous persons everywhere... and sets an example, too, of gracious treatment of non-indigenous persons within their borders. He had a big model boomerang which he was getting people to sign; this was then going to be presented to the Israeli ambassador in Australia as a sign of hope for the hostages (because boomerangs return).

There were speeches by representatives of the Queensland Jewish community, both secular and religious; and by a young woman who is currently a student at the University of Sydney and told us that the atmosphere there right now, thanks to one of those horrid 'encampments' that has squatted in the main quad, is simply poisonous for any visibly-Jewish faculty and students (similar situations obtain in most of our other universities, I gather).

A rabbi recited a prayer for the hostages who remain in durance vile under Hamas, and Psalm 91, divided into five portions, was read in five languages: first portion in Spanish, second in Portuguese, third in an African language, fourth in Tongan (many small Pacific countries are consistently friendly to Israel), and the final four or five verses in Hebrew. (I had brought my own Bible and could focus on each section while this was being done, as they mentioned which verses they were reading; I am thinking of suggesting to the organisers that if their sponsors could manage it (or else just pass round the hat among attendees!), a portable digital screen allowing people to follow the text of any such presentation line by line, would be helpful; not everybody has a i-phone!). We sang the Aussie national anthem and, at the very end of proceedings, Ha-Tikvah (again, a digital screen showing transliterated Hebrew and English translation would have been useful!).



I have resolved that this week I will be writing letters to my Premier and Prime Minister and to my state and federal MPs on the subject of the absolute EXPLOSION in outright antisemitism in Australia in the period from 7th October 2023 onward, and requesting a much stronger public response to and rebuke of same. Will also be writing stiff letters to the Vice-Chancellors of two Universities of which I am a (not-recent) graduate to tell of my shame and fury that two universities of which I have many happy memories, have trashed that memory by spinelessly permitting hotbeds of vile exterminatory hatred to fester on campus and make Jewish students and faculty afraid to step foot there.

It might be a good thing if ALL supporters of Israel and opponents of antisemitism who happen to be graduates of the various universities that are currently hosting jihad encampments were to communicate, loud and clear, to their

assorted alma maters, that they consider the tolerance of such encampments to be perfectly disgraceful.



The very striking artwork in indigenous style is by an Aboriginal person, with the Star of David and a Southern Cross; really spectacular.

The sky above was in the Israeli flag colours and full of ethereal cloud angels... very atmospheric,

