Standing against hate

By Christina McIntosh.

Something heartening from Australian Jewish News; a report on the 'Never Again Is Now' (Australia) rally that was held in Canberra – our national capital – on 7th October. Numbers were probably somewhat low (some hundreds) partly because most of our population is in Sydney Melbourne and Brisbane and it costs quite significantly to travel to Canberra from those locations.. let alone from any further afield. Parliament is sitting at the moment; the rally was on a Sunday and I understand (it isn't mentioned in the article) that all federal MPs were invited to attend… sadly, most did not…therefore those that DID are to be congratulated, and their names borne in mind (NAIN presumably has a list of who turned up). A friend from church was going to attend; I haven't yet found out what he thought of the rally.

This is the [Australian Jewish News](#)

Former political opponents Tony Abbott and Mike Kelly stood shoulder to shoulder in support of the Jewish community and Israel at the Never Again is Now (NAIN) rally in Canberra on Monday.

Held on the Federation Mall lawns in front of Parliament House, the event marked one year since the Hamas-led atrocities last October 7.

Addressing the several hundred present, Abbott, who is the patron of NAIN, made special mention of Kelly's presence.

"He and I were on the other side of the aisle in Parliament, but on this issue, [he is] a brave man whose voice deserves to echo right around our country and beyond," Abbott said.

"You've shown real moral courage to be here, Mike, and I very

much admire you for it."

Introduced by NAIN co-founder Freya Leach as "somebody who has shown immense courage", a modest Abbott said, "All I've done is stand up for what I think is almost self-evident, and that is the decency of the Jewish people, the right of Israel to exist, to defend itself and the importance of democracy, standing together at an incredibly difficult time."

Persian community representative Daniel Taghaddos, from the MehrEran Foundation, said he wanted to convey "our message of solidarity and peace with the Jewish community". "We are faced with barbarism and savagery, and we have been for 45 years. With our first-hand experience of facing such ideology and in being victims of terrorism and hostage taking, we could not remain silent," he said.

Less happily: a very nasty incident at the University of Melbourne (which alongside the University of Sydney is our oldest 'historic' university, i.e. it is not a TAFE / tech college boosted up to a university, but is a 19th-century

foundation). A bunch of masked student thugs invaded the office of a Jewish academic and vandalised it and showered the academic — a physics professor — with verbal abuse and all the usual nonsensical accusations of genocide, etc. It's a pity nobody at the university was smart enough to move fast, LOCK THE EXITS from the relevant building/s, then let in the police (who were called) to make arrests at leisure. I found two reports — one from the [Jerusalem Post](#) and the other from the [Australian Jewish News.](#)

Jewish academic's office occupied by demonstrators

The incident, which occurred when Prof Prawer arrived at his office around 12:30 pm on Wednesday, saw approximately 20 students putting up posters.

"Stephen Prawer, you can't hide. You're guilty of genocide," they shouted as he attempted to enter.

Prof Prawer, who oversees a joint PhD programme between the University of Melbourne and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, believes the students should face severe consequences.

"I think they should be expelled," he stated firmly. "They're guilty of criminal trespass. It's chilling that they would actually invade the private office of an academic," he said. "The professor emphasised the distinction between this incident and previous protests in public spaces. "There's a huge difference between occupying public spaces and occupying the spaces of individual academics," he explained. "The occupation has forced Prof Prawer to abandon his 35-year-old open-door policy. "Now, of course, the doors are locked and I am behind swipe card access. "

Itis utterly disgraceful that our academy and our politicians are letting this happen to a Jewish-Aussie academic. I totally agree with Prof. Prawer, that the students involved, when

identified, should be expelled.

*Prof Prawer expressed disappointment in the students'
behaviour and their calls for the university to sever ties
with Israeli academic institutions.*

*"I think that's short-sighted, counterproductive, outrageous,
uneducated [and] ignorant," he said.*

*Prawer said he has received literally hundreds of emails and
calls, and each and every one of them has expressed both
support and outrage.*

*"Outrage because I've been targeted as an individual who has
been performing the task that I've been tasked with by the
University. And the fact that the students have targeted me,
I think, is recognised by many of my colleagues as a
consequence of the fact that I'm Jewish and I wear a kippa,"
he said.*

*University of Melbourne vice-chancellor Duncan Maskell has
criticised the protesters and promised "full disciplinary*

actions" against them.