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## **We Cannot Step Back from Holocaust Education in Challenging Times**

At the Melbourne Holocaust Museum, we see every day what happens when young people are given the opportunity to engage with difficult histories thoughtfully and respectfully.

The suggestion that Holocaust education is becoming too difficult to teach gets one thing right: these are difficult conversations. Holocaust education always has been. It asks students and teachers to confront some of the darkest chapters in human history and to grapple with questions of prejudice, discrimination, moral courage and the consequences of hatred.

But difficulty is not a reason to avoid these conversations. It is precisely why they matter.

Every year, the Melbourne Holocaust Museum educates tens of thousands of students from schools across Australia, the overwhelming majority from non-Jewish backgrounds. What we see is not a generation unwilling to engage with challenging subjects, but one eager to understand them.

When young people are given the opportunity to engage with difficult histories in a respectful and structured environment, they rise to the occasion. Holocaust education helps build the critical thinking, empathy and historical understanding needed to navigate an increasingly complex world.

The impact of this work is measurable. In 2025, 97% of students who participated in Melbourne Holocaust Museum programs indicated that they would change their behaviour positively after their visit, alongside reporting growth in the character strengths at the heart of our pedagogy: hope, bravery, kindness, perspective, fairness and good judgement. Students are not leaving these conversations disengaged or overwhelmed. They are leaving with enhanced skills, deeper understanding of the consequences of prejudice and discrimination and a stronger sense of their responsibility to others.

Teachers should not have to do this work alone. The Melbourne Holocaust Museum works alongside educators every day, providing expertise, professional learning, curriculum resources and survivor testimony to support the teaching of difficult histories with confidence and care.

**To any teacher, parent, caregiver, school, or workplace feeling the weight of these conversations, our message is simple: we are here to help. Whether you are looking for resources, professional development, guidance on teaching difficult histories or opportunities for your students to engage directly with Holocaust education, please get in touch.**

The Melbourne Holocaust Museum was built for moments like this. When difficult histories are contested and we see increasing challenges in having meaningful dialogue, the answer is not to step back from Holocaust education; it is to deepen our commitment to it.

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