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I have spent the past few days reflecting on the horrific attack at Bondi.

Innocent people lost their lives. Families have been shattered. A sense of safety that we take for granted was violently breached.

Moments like this call for sobriety – not panic, not slogans, and not political theatre.

They demand clear thinking, and an honest assessment of what went wrong and what will actually keep Australians safe.

One point is troubling. It beggars belief that a public Jewish event, in the current global climate, was not afforded heightened security.

This is not hindsight talking. Protecting potentially vulnerable communities is one of the most basic responsibilities of the state.

Prevention begins there, not after the fact with press conferences and policy announcements.

Whatever one's take on Gaza, a two-state solution, or similar (all of which, really, are beyond AFC's scope) is irrelevant. The Jewish community is hurting right now, and I feel for them deeply.

I've met some wonderful, dedicated pro-life and pro-family voices in the Jewish community, both in Australia and abroad.

I'm thinking of them as I write this email.

## **A familiar pattern**

Unfortunately, in the days since the attack, we have seen a familiar pattern emerge.

Governments and commentators rush to reassure, to legislate, and above all to be seen to be "doing something". Too often, that something is symbolic, or knee-jerk, rather than effective.

Australians at large do not need to be lectured about racism. Australians overwhelmingly reject it. Indeed, they refused to be divided by race at the 2023 'Voice' referendum

Nor do they need to be reminded that violence is wrong. We instinctively know this. Our country remains, at heart, a decent and peace-loving place.

On the other hand, those few who are willing to commit violence and acts of terror are hardly likely to be swayed by billboards, hashtags, or carefully crafted slogans.

Don't get me wrong: I'm not necessarily against the intent of such campaigns, but they risk missing the mark.

The same applies to the push to clamp down further on guns, machetes, or whatever object happens to feature in the most recent tragedy.

We have seen vehicles used for mass murder, including by terrorists, yet no one proposes banning cars.

The uncomfortable truth is also the simple one: it is not the object that poses the danger. It is the person who uses it, and the intent they carry.

When policy responses focus on implements rather than individuals, ideology, warning signs, and enforcement failures, they risk becoming little more than political theatre – gestures designed to convey action rather than deliver safety.

We should also be concerned about Mr Albanese’s proposed expansions of speech regulation.

Incitement to violence is and must remain illegal. No one disputes that. But broader “hate speech” frameworks raise legitimate concerns, particularly when they appear vague, selectively enforced, or used to shift attention away from failures in security and prevention.

A free, confident society does not respond to violence by narrowing lawful debate among its own citizens.

We’ve seen many times how such laws have been abused.

### **A debate which must be had**

There’s another angle to this that Australians have already voiced concern about.

Record levels of migration have placed undeniable pressure on housing, infrastructure, and the cost of living.

But beyond economics, there is also a serious conversation to be had about social cohesion – about whether current immigration policy strengthens the shared norms, trust, and mutual responsibility that make any society work.

This is not a new concern. It’s been raised repeatedly. It deserves to be addressed seriously, not dismissed or caricatured by writing people off as racists.

As former Prime Minister John Howard once put it, way back in 2001, “*we decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come.*” That principle speaks not to exclusion, but to responsibility.

In the wake of Bondi, Australians deserve better than shallow fixes, blame-shifting, or moral posturing. They deserve competent security, honest analysis, and policies aimed at prevention rather than optics. They deserve leaders willing to deal with causes, not just symptoms.

AFC supports the dignity of human life, the safety of families, and a society marked by responsibility, cohesion, and freedom.

We reject denial, evasion, and symbolism dressed up as solutions.

Now is the time for calm, courage, and seriousness – and for leadership equal to the moment.

God bless,

**Damian Wyld**

Director

Australian Family Coalition