

## School textbook 'fuels anti- Semitism'

**Anna Patty, Education Editor | The Sydney Morning Herald | 27 October**

The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies has asked for the immediate withdrawal of a book that schools use as an HSC text, which it says contains anti-Semitic slurs.

The Board of Deputies said it had also asked for a chapter on Judaism to be rewritten and reissued to all schools that have bought the book, its chief executive, Vic Alhadeff, said.

He said senior staff members from a Jewish school had alerted the board to the book after they had begun using it in class.

"We have requested Cambridge University Press to withdraw the book immediately, given that every additional copy that is distributed means more teachers and more students are using it," Mr Alhadeff said.

The 2009 edition of *Cambridge Studies of Religion Stage 6* has offended the Jewish group with its publication of statements including: "Much modern conflict in the world is related to the reactions of other groups to the Jewish people."

The Board of Deputies says this statement has the potential to incite racial hatred because it "directly blames Jews for the existence of much of the conflict in the world".

The book also refers to the Passover festival as involving "slaughtering lambs, smearing the lintel on the front door with blood and eating unleavened breads for seven days".

While it is mentioned in the Bible as an ancient tradition, Mr Alhadeff said there was no longer any "slaughtering of any animal at Passover".

The book also says polygamy is commonly practised in Israel.

"The implication is that it is practised among Jews," Mr Alhadeff said. "In fact, it is outlawed for Jews in Israel, but Muslims are permitted to carry it out because of the freedom of religion afforded to them ...

"It is alarming that a book which is widely used in schools across NSW could contain so many inaccuracies and such appalling statements - one of which is in the realm of racial vilification.

"Our concern is that thousands of students are being seriously misinformed ...

"Some of the statements could perpetuate myths and inaccurate stereotypes about Judaism and the Jewish people and fuel anti-Semitism."

Mr Alhadeff said Cambridge University Press had said it would "review" the board's concerns.

A spokeswoman for the NSW Board of Studies said it did not endorse any teaching resources except those it had developed.

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/school-textbook-fuels-anti-semitism-20091026-hgpp.html>