



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Following a recent radio report on ABC's Radio National (PM, 16.9.2009) titled "[Jewish Leaders accused of ignoring homophobia](#)", the Union for Progressive Judaism, Australia, Asia and New Zealand reiterates its long held support for the rights of individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered (LGBT) and restates our commitment to the full inclusion of LGBT Jews within the life of the Jewish community.

"In the programme Michael Barnett of Melbourne's Aleph Gay and Bi-sexual men's group made several statements about the Jewish community's lack of clear support for GLBT Jews, particularly with respect to standing up against violence and slurs directed towards them" said the UPJ Executive director, Steve Denenberg, "As a movement the Union for Progressive Judaism takes this opportunity to restate our clear position with respect to the rights of GLBT individuals and their place in our community".

"As stated in a letter following the incident in Israel where two young people were murdered (copy attached) we consider the matter of sexual orientation to be a personal matter that does not affect a person's ability to be a good human being or their ability to be fully involved in the life of the community and its religious institutions".

"We condemn all forms of homophobia, whether it is in Israel, Australia or anywhere else. Further, we believe that any attempt to spread homophobic views, regardless of whether they originate in our community or elsewhere, should be given the same response by our communal leadership as all other forms of discrimination".

Beyond that Denenberg noted that "Our congregations and our movement willingly embrace all Jews who seek to celebrate Torah-based Judaism in a contemporary context. The Progressive Jewish movement stands alongside members of the LGBT community in calling for the protection and support of the State and the community to be extended to them. We echo their call for recognition that they are equal members of society and we remind them that they are welcome to join our movement, where they can express their Judaism in a non-judgmental environment that values them for what they contribute as a person rather than their gender or sexual orientation".

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