

JCCV TO WORK TOGETHER WITH JEWISH GLBT COMMUNITY

24 December 2009

Jewish Community Council of Victoria President John Searle stated today:

"One of my main ambitions on assuming the presidency of the JCCV last year was to bring disconnected Jews back to our community, a difficult task by definition.

As the ground-breaking Gen08 survey demonstrated, this is not a large percentage of our community. Ninety-four percent of Australian Jews feel at least some connection to the Jewish community, no matter how slight. While there are some in the minority who have deliberately opted out, there are also those who wish to belong to the community but who may be excluded or vilified for various reasons. What must also be remembered, as Gen08 has further demonstrated, Jews simply don't like losing other Jews, hence the importance of maintaining ties and providing support when appropriate.

It was in this context that JCCV Immediate Past President Anton Block and I met with members of the Jewish Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender (GLBT) community on 16 December 2009.

Following a frank and wide-ranging discussion, participants took a historic step forward in agreeing to establish a GLBT Reference Group, under the Auspices of the JCCV, to address issues of vilification and discrimination against GLBT Jews as well as mental health issues occasioned by exclusion.

Anton and I will be part of this group as will those members of the Jewish GLBT community who were present at our meeting. Other members may be added as agreed over a period of time.

Commencing in early 2010 this Reference Group will explore and develop strategies to address these issues as they relate to the GLBT community with a view to bringing together appropriate partnerships with service providers in our community. In due course we will be seeking input from these service providers in the Jewish Community

The vilification of *any* members of the Victorian Jewish community is intolerable. The JCCV recognises that its role extends beyond the so-called mainstream and intends to work with all its members in ways that are acceptable to the entire community. I look forward to widespread support."

For further information contact John Searle or Geoffrey Zygiel on 03 9272 5566



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