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SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 2010

## ➤ JCCV looking for problems?

### JCCV seeks guidance on gay issues

AJN STAFF

THE Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV) is to establish a reference group to better understand the needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender members of the community.

The announcement follows a meeting last month between senior members of the JCCV and a number of people who identify themselves as gay or lesbians.

Describing the discussions as "frank and wide ranging", council president John Searle said participants agreed to set up the

roundtable to address issues of vilification and discrimination against gay or lesbian Jews, and to look at the mental health implications of exclusion based on sexual preference.

"Commencing in early 2010 this reference group will explore and develop strategies to address these issues as they relate to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community, with a view to bringing together appropriate partnerships with service providers in the community."

While the make-up of the reference group has not been finalised,

Michael Barnett, the head of Aleph, a Jewish group for gay men, said it was his understanding he would not be included in the group.

"John Searle does not want to talk to Aleph," he claimed.

Barnett, who has been engaged in ongoing dialogue with the JCCV president as well as other members of the Jewish community, public office holders and leaders in the gay and lesbian community, has repeatedly accused some communal organisations and individuals of homophobia. Searle, however, reiterated his commitment to fighting prejudice and

discrimination, whatever its form.

"The vilification of any members of the Victorian Jewish community is intolerable," he said. "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."

As to gay or lesbian Jews who may feel alienated from communal organisations, he added: "One of my main ambitions on assuming the presidency of the JCCV was to bring disconnected Jews back to our community, a difficult task by definition."

Hasn't the JCCV learned from the past that pandering to the noisy - and miniscule - gay lobby is a recipe for another debacle?

Have they already forgotten the warnings of the late and lamented Rabbi Chaim Gutnick z"l about this matter?

Do they really again wish to alienate the rabbis, the orthodox Shuls and the traditional and even irreligious members of the Victoria Jewish community who are either totally opposed to giving this group of individuals a voice on the community's official forum or are bored and disinterested with the bleating of a few troublemakers?

Reading the AJN article, the question that comes to mind is, how soon can we expect the JCCV to "establish a reference group to better understand" Jewish chazzir-fressers, Jewish Shabbos-violators, Jewish thieves and Jewish Hindus?

And isn't this an opening for "Jews for Jesus", who in the eyes of



#### About Me

AJN WATCH

Melbourne, Australia  
AJN WATCH observes & comments (mainly) on prejudice, misrepresentation and monopolistic abuse of power in the pages of the Australian Jewish News - especially regarding the observant community. The AJN is the main source of information to and about Australian Jewry and aims to set the agenda and influence attitudes. It is this blog's mission to spotlight errors, expose misrepresentations and vigorously respond to items that malign or defame the Orthodox community. AJN WATCH also posts and comments on a variety of topics of interest to its readership. We invite Guest Posts as well as post suggestions.

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many, are no less worthy than practicing 'proud' homosexuals. (And then how far will we be before the JCCV looks into "Gay Jews for Jesus"...?)

John Searle should be VERY wary of trying to act "politically-correct" by engaging with such persons in the name of the JCCV.

We understand that they may need help with health and mental issues, suicide prevention, discrimination or any other matter. Let them go to any of the dozens of organizations that have been established for homosexuals specifically for this purpose. After all, Jewish and non-Jewish homosexuals generally have the same problems and issues. And should a specific "Jewish" matter arise, they can visit a rabbi in private and advice will surely be forthcoming.

We sincerely hope that Searle will come to his senses. Otherwise the other members of the executive should take steps to remove him from the presidency. It simply is not worth destroying the community's main representative group for the sake of a few troubled people.

Searle should understand that the orthodox communities - together with those who do not believe that homosexuality is a specific Jewish problem - are by far the largest proportion of the Jewish population. It makes no sense to upset them needlessly.

at [2:45 AM](#) 

Labels: [homosexuals](#), [john searle](#)

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