Media Release

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Historic Day as Organisations Pledge Support for LGBTIQ

On Thursday 30 August, Jewish Care Victoria and nine other faith-based organisations came together to pledge commitment to inclusivity for all LGBTIQ people who seek services.

Co-hosted by Jewish Care and Temple Beth Israel, the historic event was attended by CEOs and representatives of participating organisations, all of which are part of the Faith-Based Service Provider Network.

Victoria's Commissioner for Gender and Sexuality, Ro Allen, was also in attendance to unveil and witness the signing of a pledge stating; "We welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse and intersex (LGBTIQ) people at our services."

The pledge was signed by CEOs from Jewish Care, Anglicare Victoria, Vincent Care Victoria, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand, The Salvation Army, McAuley Community Services for Women, MacKillop Family Services, Sacred Heart Mission, Good Samaritan Inn, and the Uniting Church Victoria and Tasmania.

As part of the event, CEOs and representatives from a number of organisations discussed topics including the importance of faith-based service providers committing to the pledge, the impact the statement will have on LGBTIQ people seeking services, and potential feedback from members of faith-based communities to the pledge.

In addressing the audience, Rabbi Kim Ettlinger of Temple Beth Israel highlighted the history of the Progressive movement in campaigning for LGBTIQ rights. "For us," said Rabbi Ettlinger, "the answer is simple and begins with the very start of Torah and the creation of human beings. Ultimately, we are all created Betzelem Elohim; we are all created in the image of G-d."

"It not only makes sense for us to provide inclusive and non-discriminatory services, it is our mandate and at the core of who we are," continued Rabbi Ettlinger. "We stand by another biblical principle from Deuteronomy of Tzedek Tzedek Tirdof; Justice, Justice we must pursue."

Jewish Care CEO Bill Appleby also presented, reflecting on the Jewish Care's commitment to inclusive and accessible services for the LGBTIQ community. "We have actively used our voice as a leader within the Jewish community to help progress the discussion around LGBTIQ inclusion. We know that the onus

is on us as an organisation to actively seek diversity; to assertively reach out to members of our community and make it clear that Jewish Care is a safe space for all," said Mr Appleby.

Jewish Care is committed to developing and implementing inclusive practices for all members of the Victorian Jewish community. In addition to signing the multi-faith pledge, Jewish Care is working towards achieving Rainbow Tick accreditation.
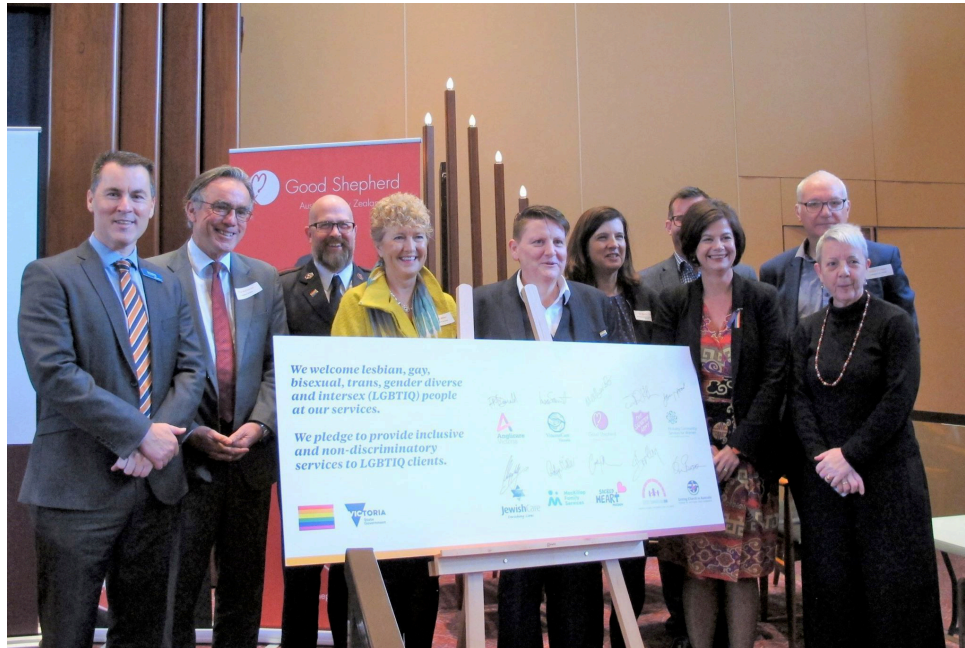
CEOs from faith-based organisations and Victorian Commissioner for Gender and Sexuality, Ro Allen, with the multi-faith pledge.

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