

GROUPS UNITE

Call for climate action

AJN STAFF

THIRTEEN Jewish groups have banded together to urge the federal government to implement a national strategy and action plan "to address the climate crisis".

Noting the current bushfire disaster and referencing warnings from scientists since the 1980s about droughts, floods, diseases and species extinction, the organisations state that "everything that climate scientists, fire chiefs, economists, financial experts, environmentalists and insurance companies have long predicted ... has been proven correct".

The groups behind the call are Aleph Melbourne, Ameinu Australia, the Australian Jewish Democratic Society, Dayenu, Habonim Dror Australia, Hashomer Hatzair Australia, Inner West Chavura, J-Greens Victoria, Jewish Labour Bund Melbourne, Jewish Voices for Peace and Justice (NSW), Meretz Australia, Netzer Australia and NIF Australia.

Claiming that "many political leaders have yet to accept the need for immediate and transformative action to avert global catastrophe", they urge the government to implement a plan to address the crisis "through mitigation, adaptation and a just transition to a climate resilient economy."

They also call for more ambi-

tious targets to reduce greenhouse gases, the introduction of carbon pricing, phased out reliance on, and export of fossil fuels, a national strategy to retrain workers in fossil fuel industries and to develop Australia's renewable energy potential and to ensure Australia contributes conscientiously to global efforts to reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

The groups further call on "state governments, local and city authorities, religious, ethnic and civil society organisations, business leaders and fellow citizens, if they are not already doing so, to exert pressure on our leaders to this end".

Robin Margo, one of the organisers, told *The AJN*, "Kol hakavod to StandUp, the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, the Jewish Community Council of Victoria, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) and others collecting funds to help bushfire victims. We fully support those efforts.

"But many members of our community know we also have to do more.

"The ECAJ has a climate change policy on its website and we think raising funds for bushfire victims while avoiding mention of the urgent need for climate action is like mopping the brows of plague victims and ignoring the plague-carrying rats."

DEMONISING COMMENTS

'Jews killed Jesus' retracted

PETER KOHN

A MELBOURNE private school has apologised for comments made by its chaplaincy repeating the canard that Jews had killed Jesus.

The online comments – appearing on a Chaplain's Corner page of the Carey Baptist Grammar website dated December 5 last year – were in a Christmas message by the Carey chaplaincy to the senior school, which has since been taken down.

In his online reflection, Carey's senior-school chaplain Reverend Gerry Riviere, gave a portrayal of Judea at the time of Jesus, stating, "Whilst Rome was the dominant political power, the religious power within Judaism belong[ed] to those in leadership ... The religious leaders were intoxicated with the power their system afforded them. Thus, neither the political nor the religious systems gave the people any hope.

"Jesus entered that environment to bring a message of hope and love. He challenged the thinking and actions of the religious leaders who, rather than accepting they were wrong, constantly challenged him, and finally, in an attempt to silence him, placed him upon a cross."

Anti-Defamation Commission chair Dvir Abramovich stated, "This post unambiguously negates the teachings of the 1965 Second Vatican Council document *Nostra*



Chaplain's Corner – Senior School

05 December 2019



The Chaplain's Corner page on the Carey Baptist Grammar website.

Aetate and Pope Benedict XVI who specifically stated that the Jewish people as a whole cannot be held responsible for the death of Jesus. The chaplain also breathes new life into doctrines that demonised Jews for centuries."

He added, "Such sad episodes threaten to undermine the warm and respectful friendships that exist between Jews and Christians here, and the good work they have carried out in correcting such warped misinterpretations."

Reverend Riviere stated on the school's website, "I have reflected on my piece and would like to retract this message. I unreservedly apologise for any offence or hurt that it has caused members of the Jewish community. It was not

my intention to condemn or upset anyone with my words."

Carey's principal Jonathan Walter stated online that the school "retracts without reservation the Christmas message written by the school chaplain ... We fully acknowledge the pain these words have caused members of the Jewish community.

"The school accepts that the opinion represented was wrong. Carey does not support ideologies or commentary that are discriminatory or antisemitic."

A Carey spokesperson told *The AJN* the school is reviewing its editorial processes.

Abramovich described Carey's response as a "heartfelt apology" and "an important first step".

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