

Caulfield Labor



26 October 2022

Michael Barnett
Co-Convenor
Aleph Melbourne

Dear Michael,

It was a pleasure catching up with you some weeks ago to better understand the work of Aleph Melbourne as a social, support and advocacy group for LGBTIQ+ persons who identify as Jewish or who have a Jewish heritage.

As we discussed, I remember first meeting you when you came to speak to a group of the Australasian Union of Jewish Students at a Winter Conference in 1999. Your longstanding advocacy for the LGBTIQ+ community is to be commended.

I am extremely proud that the current Andrews Government was the first government in the world to formally apologise to people convicted under historical laws against homosexual sex. Since its election in 2014, this Government has introduced a raft of reforms to better the lives of the LGBTIQ+ community. Some of these reforms have included:

- Expunging old criminal convictions for homosexual activity
- Establishing a Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ communities
- Allowing couples to adopt regardless of their sex or gender identity
- Banning practices that seek to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation or gender identity

I am especially proud of the release, earlier this year, of a landmark 10-year plan to drive inclusion for LGBTIQ+ communities, which was coupled with a \$6.5m investment to make organisations safer and more inclusive for LGBTIQ+ Victorians, support the health and wellbeing of people with an intersex variation and continue peer support for trans and gender diverse Victorians. It is important that LGBTIQ+ Victorians have access to specialist and mainstream services that meets their needs, including healthcare services and mental health services.

The Victorian Pride Centre, opened in July last year, is exemplary of the current Andrews Government's commitment to celebrate and honour all parts of the diverse Victorian community.

Whilst I do not wish to comment in any detail on the position of our political opponents on these matters, I note for the record my great disappointment at the Victorian Opposition's recent policy pledge to wind back protections from discrimination in religious schools. I see this as an alarming step backwards for all Victorians.

As we discussed, I would be interested in hearing more about where the LGBTIQ+ community believes further funding and advocacy is needed, particularly in the healthcare space. It is my hope that if elected I can be part of an Andrews Government that leads the way in LGBTIQ+ equality, and the celebration of LGBTIQ+ culture and community.

I look forward to catching up again soon!

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lior Harel', is centered on a light-colored rectangular background.

Lior Harel
ALP Candidate for Caulfield