

ECAJ Policy Platform Confirmed in 2008

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Preamble

As members of the First Fleet of settlement of what was to become the country of Australia, the Australian Jewish community is unique among Diaspora communities. It has always been an integral partner in the development of Australian society, not simply because of this historical fact, but also because of two more profound factors.

Firstly, it is difficult to think of another country where Jews have been as much part of the larger society as in Australia. Quite simply we are at home here, something that sadly has not always been the Jewish experience.

Secondly, and intimately connected to the first point, the Jewish community has made a remarkable and recognised contribution to the Australian way of life. Through the efforts of talented and hardworking individuals or groups, the Australian Jewish community is proud of the part it has played in the many cultural, political, social and economic achievements of this great diverse country. Not least amongst these are the Jewish men and women, many of whom paid the ultimate price, who served at home and abroad in defence of the principles for which Australia stands.

The current policy platform of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry is outlined below. These are the beliefs and values of the Australian Jewish community, which we are confident, enhance general Australian values of democracy, the rule of law, the freedom, rights and responsibilities of the individual, understanding and respect, and a fair go for all.

1. Israel

This Council:

- 1.1** APPLAUDS the efforts by successive Israeli governments to bring about a just and lasting peace and a resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict;
- 1.2** APPLAUDS the Australian Government's support for international calls for the Palestinian Authority and Hamas to recognise Israel, to renounce and prevent violence and to affirm and implement all agreements made with Israel;
- 1.3** REAFFIRMS Australian Jewry's strong and unshakeable solidarity with Israel and her people;
- 1.4** STRONGLY URGES all Jews, individually as well as communally and institutionally, to visit Israel and schedule events in Israel.

2. Jerusalem

This Council:

- 2.1** NOTES the centrality of Jerusalem historically, religiously and culturally to Jews and Judaism;
- 2.2** STRESSES the need for free access and worship for Jews at all religious sites, including The Temple Mount;

- 2.3** CALLS ON the Australian Government to recognise Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem and to transfer the Australian embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

3. Gilad Shalit

This Council:

- 3.1** ACKNOWLEDGES the efforts of many parties, to secure the release of the kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit and CALLS ON the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian Security Forces to actively assist in finding Gilad and ensuring his safe return to his family in Israel;
- 3.2** CALLS upon Hamas to unconditionally release Gilad Shalit and to publicly accept Geneva Convention responsibilities, and in particular Article 118 of the Third Geneva Convention which requires that: *"Prisoners of war shall be released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities...."*.

4. Israelis Kidnapped and Missing in Action

This Council:

- 4.1** SHARES the heartfelt concerns of all Israelis about the fate of the country's missing soldiers and citizens;
- 4.2** CALLS UPON the Australian Government to continue to make representations to the United Nations and to all relevant Middle East states, and in particular Iran, Syria and Lebanon, urging them to seek and provide information concerning missing Israelis and to expedite their prompt return home.

5. Terrorism

This Council:

- 5.1** JOINS in mourning the victims of terrorism in Israel and throughout the world, and extends condolences to the relatives and friends of those who have been murdered, and sympathy and wishes full recovery to the injured;

- 5.2** SUPPORTS efforts to prevent terrorist attacks, including the enactment of effective anti-terrorism laws, the application of resources for efficient investigative processes, and Australian participation in the international war against terrorism;
- 5.3** URGES the United Nations and all governments to take effective action against countries which have served as a haven and have provided bases and support for terrorists;
- 5.4** NOTES the importance of legislation designed to counter terrorism and to provide security properly recognising the required balance between human rights and law enforcement, and recognising that the great majority of Australian Muslims abhor terrorism;
- 5.5** CALLS ON the Federal Government to have measures in place to respond to promotion of terrorism on Satellite television services available to Australian subscribers, and applauds the efforts made to ensure that the cohesion of Australia's multicultural society is not prejudiced;
- 5.6** URGES the Australian, United States and other governments to act against Palestinian and other anti-Israeli terrorist organisations such as Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad;
- 5.7** UCALLS ON the Federal Government to proscribe all wings of Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad and the Al Aqsa Brigades, as well as organisations that fund and facilitate international terrorism.

6. Iran

This Council:

- 6.1** NOTES reports of continued human rights abuses in Iran, aimed particularly at minority religious and ethnic communities;
- 6.2** REQUESTS the Australian Government to continue to investigate reports of this nature and continue to make representations in support of the victims at all appropriate forums;
- 6.3** SUPPORTS the international condemnation of President Ahmadinejad's statements calling for Israel to be "wiped off the map" and his antisemitic Holocaust-denial statements;
- 6.4** WELCOMES the Australian Government's active support for the strongest possible international measures to ensure that Iran does not develop or gain access to nuclear weapons.

7. United Nations Human Rights Agenda

This Council:

- 7.1** CONDEMNNS the way in which UN institutions and instruments have been manipulated to cast Israel as a pariah state;
- 7.2** CALLS upon the Australian Government to insist upon a UN Human Rights agenda that is genuinely focussed upon the pursuit of Human Rights in accordance with the UN Charter;
- 7.3** CALLS for the abolition of the UN "Special Committees" on Palestinian issues, and "Palestinian Units" of the UN, the sole purpose of which is to spread vicious anti-Israel propoganda and whose activities degrade the ability of the United Nations to pursue its noble human rights objectives.

8. "Durban II"

This Council:

- 8.1** NOTES that the UN World Conference Against Racism held in Durban 2001 (Durban 1 Conference) was preceded by the NGO Forum which was marred by virulent antisemitic behavior from a number of Non-Government Organisations and which was marked by abuse of process and outcomes prejudicial to genuine work to combat racism;
- 8.2** NOTES that the Durban I Government Conference produced outcome documents including the Declaration which singled out Israel (while naming no other countries) and introduced extraneous anti-Israel content under the pretext that Israel's actions are racist, which anti-Israel content overshadowed and distorted the critically important professed agenda of the conference;
- 8.3** NOTES that the Durban Review Conference (Durban II), is to be held in Geneva in April 2009 and that there is reason to believe that the worst elements from the Durban I Conference Declaration may be included or even accentuated and that new unacceptable elements are likely to be introduced. At the same time, even moderate condemnations of antisemitism may well be removed and any declaration forthcoming from Durban II will compromise and hinder any effective action to eliminate hatred and intolerance and to do justice to the victims of discrimination in all of its forms;
- 8.4** NOTES in particular that although no draft Declaration or Plan of Action has been produced, the current Draft Outcomes Document, which will be the basis of pre-conference deliberations at Intersessional meetings and the April 2009 Preparatory Committee meeting, singles out Israel as the only country named, or clearly identified, in respect of "alleged racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia or related intolerance and in particular:

- States that Israel's "occupation founded on settlements and its laws based on racial discrimination... totally contradict the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and constitutes a serious violation of international human rights and humanitarian law, a new kind of apartheid, a crime against humanity, a form of genocide and a serious threat to international peace and security."
- States that Israel's "occupation founded on settlements and its laws based on racial discrimination... totally contradict the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and constitutes a serious violation of international human rights and humanitarian law, a new kind of apartheid, a crime against humanity, a form of genocide and a serious threat to international peace and security."
- Expresses deep concern at the "plight of Palestinian refugees and displaced persons forced to leave their homes because of war and racial policies of the occupying power and who are prevented from returning to their homes and properties because of a racially based law of return....."
- Calls for "the international community to provide international protection for the Palestinian people under occupation against aggression, acts of racism, intimidation and denial of fundamental human rights, including the rights to life, liberty and self-determination"; and
- Recognises "Jerusalem as a city of reverence and religious sanctity for three major religions of the world and calls for an international effort to bring foreign occupation together with all its racial practices, to an end, especially in holy shrines dear to the three religions".

8.5 FURTHER NOTES that Regional Meetings have submitted to the Draft Outcomes Document elements which, if they are not excised, adversely impact on free speech, democratic rights and freedoms and the fight against terrorism based on the "defamation of Islam" and by so doing: attempts to import Islamic anti-blasphemy prohibitions into international human rights law; advocates censorship in Western democracies; ignores extremist incitements by radical Islamic, left-wing and other groups; calls for new laws to restrict free speech; equates national identity with racism, links counter-terrorism to racism; but omits to mention hatred that fuels terrorism; ignores forms of racism that led to the Holocaust, the Rwandan genocide and the current genocide in the Darfur province of Sudan, for example by:

- drawing attention "to the impact of counter-terrorism measures on the rise of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including the practice of racial, ethnic, national and religious profiling";
- acknowledging "that the most disturbing phenomenon is the intellectual and ideological validation of Islamophobia which when expressed in the form of defamation of religions, takes cover behind the freedom of expression and when expressed in the form of profiling, hides behind the war against terrorism";
- believing "that association of terrorism and violence with Islam or any other religion including through publication of offensive caricatures and making of hate documentaries would purposely complicate common endeavours to address several contemporary issues including fight against terrorism and occupation of foreign territories and people";
- alleging that "besides strengthening discrimination against Muslims, this insidious association is preventing Muslim communities from practicing

their religion freely or integration in the society in many countries".

- 8.6** COMMENDS the principled stand adopted by the Australian Government in opposing any budget allocation by the UN for Durban II;
- 8.7** RECORDS that the Governments of Canada and Israel have decided not to attend Durban II and that the USA and other countries may adopt the same approach;
- 8.8** EXPRESSES THE BELIEF that the outcomes of the Asian and African Regional Preparatory Committees, and the OIC, which produced the objectionable sections of the Draft Outcomes Document, indicate the high possibility that Durban II will constitute an unwarranted and illegitimate attack on Western democratic freedoms, international human rights law, and an attack on Israel, not only through a series of one sided and inaccurate resolutions, but also by ignoring the worst forms of racism that continue in a number of parts of the world;
- 8.9** RECALLS that Australia played a constructive, vital and courageous role at Durban I, but was unable to prevent abuses of process or to have removed all objectionable parts of the Declaration;
- 8.10** STRONGLY BELIEVES that the Australian Government, notwithstanding its best intentions, and notwithstanding its genuine and demonstrated interest in countering racism, will not be able to positively influence the outcome of Durban 11 sufficiently or at all;
- 8.11** ACCORDINGLY SUBMITS that unless the Australian Government can be completely satisfied that Durban II will:
- not single out or demonise any one State;
 - not introduce the policy of opposing defamation of religion;
 - not delete condemnation of antisemitism;
 - not remove calls for Holocaust commemoration; or
 - not construct a hierarchy of racisms
- ,
- then the Australian Government should withdraw from the Durban 11 process and not attend the Durban 11 Review Conference in April 2009.

9. President of the UN General Assembly

This Council:

- 9.1** NOTES with concern that on 24 November 2008 the President of the UN General Assembly, Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann of Nicaragua, stated in the General Assembly:

"I spoke this morning about apartheid and how Israeli policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territories appear so similar to the apartheid of an

earlier era, a continent away. I believe it is very important that we in the United Nations use this term. We must not be afraid to call something what it is. It is the United Nations after all, that pass the International Convention against the Crime of Apartheid, making clear to all the world that such practices of official discrimination must be outlawed wherever they occur...

Today, perhaps we in the United Nations should consider following the lead of a new generation of civil society, who are calling for a similar non-violent campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions to pressure Israel.";

- 9.2** RECORDS that the accusations against Israel are false and without basis;
- 9.3** NOTES that once again the United Nations: applies different standards for Israel and the Jewish people than for other countries; utterly fails to mention let alone criticise, the campaign of terror waged against innocent civilians in Israel from the territories and from Gaza from which Israel has unilaterally withdrawn; continues with its one-sided obsession with Israel especially on the part of the UN Human Rights Council and through the looming repeat of Israel bashing and antisemitism at the forthcoming UN Durban Review Conference in Geneva next year, continue to give rise to great concern;
- 9.4** NOTES that these developments continue to give rise to great concern;
- 9.5** CALLS UPON the Australian Government to continue to work towards fair and equitable treatment of Israel in all UN forums.

10. Israel Experience Programs

This Council:

- 10.1** NOTES the importance of the relationship between Israel and Australian Jewry;
- 10.2** APPLAUDS the success of many Israel experience programs operated by Australian Jewish organisations in partnership with Israel;
- 10.3** RECOGNISES the central role of the Zionist Federation of Australia in promoting and facilitating such programs;
- 10.4** APPLAUDS the establishment of the Israel Experience Fund/birthright Programme in Australia by the Zionist Federation of Australia with the support and the initiative of the United Israel Appeal.

11. University Exchange Programs with Israel

This Council:

- 11.1** NOTES that some treat exchange programs with Israeli universities less favourably than exchange programs with other Western countries' universities;
- 11.2** CALLS upon all Australian Universities to treat exchange programs with Israeli universities no less favourably than exchange programs with other Western countries' universities.

12. Jewish Education

This Council:

- 12.1** STRESSES the importance of Jewish day schools having high quality Jewish Studies and Hebrew curricula;
- 12.2** EXPRESSES support for the Zionist Federation of Australia initiated "Teaching Israel" program and CALLS ON all Jewish Day Schools and Boards of Jewish Education and Boards of Progressive Jewish Education to substantially increase the teaching of modern Israel and contemporary issues facing Israel and world and Australian Jewry in programs offered from Year 6 to Year 11;
- 12.3** RECOGNISES Australia has a proud record for provision of day school education;
- 12.4** RECONFIRMS the responsibility of leaders of Australian Jewry to seek to ensure that no Jewish child is denied full-time Jewish education due to financial considerations; and the continued responsibility of leaders of Australian Jewry to support organisations that provide Jewish education of children who are outside of the Jewish day school system to ensure Jewish continuity for all;
- 12.5** NOTES that the Jewish Community maintains a number of private day schools throughout the nation which are essential to Jewish learning and our community's continuity;
- 12.6** NOTES that the Jewish community has been treated fairly in past allocations of government support for Independent schools;
- 12.7** NOTES that the provision of Jewish education to Jewish students who do not attend Jewish day schools in some states, particularly through the NSW Board of Jewish Education in New South Wales and the United Jewish Education Board in Victoria, is essential to ensuring Jewish learning and our community's continuity for those outside of the Jewish day school

movement;

- 12.8** CALLS ON Jewish communal and fund-raising organisations to explore additional methods of alleviating financial constraints affecting Jewish day school education and the ability of Jewish day schools to provide the highest quality Jewish education;
- 12.9** CALLS ON Jewish communal and fund-raising organisations to invest in teachers and the teaching of Hebrew and Jewish studies and to see that investment as a critical contribution towards Jewish continuity in Australia;
- 12.10** CALLS UPON the Federal Government to ensure that Jewish Day schools will not be disadvantaged under any amended funding formulae.

13. Racism in Australia

This Council:

- 13.1** DEPLORES all manifestations of racist action and speech;
- 13.2** SUPPORTS the work of the Australian Human Rights Commission and other public programs to educate Australians regarding the irrationality and evil of racism;
- 13.3** CALLS ON leaders of all mainstream political parties to consistently articulate a vision of Australia which embraces cultural diversity and in which each Australian is guaranteed dignity and rights;
- 13.4** CALLS ON all mainstream political parties to place racist divisive and extremist candidates in the last positions when allocating electoral preferences;
- 13.5** CALLS ON political, civil and religious leaders to play public, leadership roles in emphasising the unacceptability of racism;
- 13.6** Calls on the Australian Government to fund and appoint a Race Discrimination Commissioner within the Australian Human Rights Commission separate to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner.

14. Anti-Racism Legislation

This Council:

- 14.1** NOTES the activities of extremist organisations, the currency of certain racist myths and the tolerance given to racist commentary by some sections of the mainstream media;
- 14.2** NOTES that racial vilification and racial violence in Australia has intensified since September 11, 2001;
- 14.3** ACKNOWLEDGES that effective responses to racism include moral and political leadership from public figures, legislation to give victims of racism recourse, and on-going public education;
- 14.4** COMMENDS those public figures who have taken a leadership position against racism and antisemitism;
- 14.5** CALLS ON the Federal Government to strengthen the Racial Discrimination Act by providing improved access, remedies and procedures.

15. Antisemitism

This Council:

- 15.1** EXPRESSES ALARM at the escalation in acts of antisemitism throughout the world including assaults on Jewish people, attacks on Synagogues and other Jewish Institutions and businesses owned by Jews
- 15.2** NOTES that a significant number of incidents have been carried out by Islamist groups who support and engage in antisemitic violence;
- 15.3** NOTES that extremist left and right-wing organisations have encouraged their supporters to work together with extremist elements within Muslim and Arab communities;
- 15.4** CALLS ON the UN and all countries to take all necessary steps to ensure that those violent antisemitic incidents are not repeated and to protect Jewish citizens and communal property and to prevent other acts of anti-Jewish incitement;
- 15.5** CONDEMNS the prevalence of anti-Jewish rhetoric in the mass-media which hides behind criticisms of Israel.

16. Incidents of Antisemitic Violence, Vandalism and Harassment

This Council:

- 16.1** NOTES the importance of the Jewish community's national leadership having an accurate picture of the nature and extent of antisemitic violence, vandalism, intimidation and harassment in Australia;
- 16.2** NOTES that the only communal bodies which are in a position to act on behalf of the entire Jewish community in each state and territory are the constituents of the ECAJ which in Victoria is done in co-operation with ADC;
- 16.3** STRESSES the importance of state constituents making known their role in collating information relating to antisemitism;
- 16.4** REAFFIRMS that all community organisations should promptly forward reports of incidents of antisemitism to the Constituent bodies of the ECAJ.

17. Antisemitic Acts

This Council:

- 17.1** COMMENDS the steps taken by Australian police forces to provide visible protection for Jewish communal gatherings;
- 17.2** NOTES the improvement of law enforcement agencies to identify and prosecute individuals responsible for arson attacks on synagogues, assaults and harassment;
- 17.3** NOTES that still too often the perpetrators of other acts of antisemitic vandalism remain unidentified and therefore remain at large;
- 17.4** CALLS ON state and federal law enforcement agencies to urgently upgrade the capacity to pursue and apprehend the perpetrators of acts of racist violence and vandalism and to fund both public and Jewish communal strategies to achieve those ends; and
- 17.5** RECORDS WITH APPRECIATION the Federal Government's legislation this year to alleviate the costly security burden borne by Jewish communities Australia-wide by enabling donations for the purpose of the provision of security to Jewish institutions to be tax deductible.

18. Holocaust Denial

This Council:

- 18.1** NOTES that individuals and organisations in Australia continue to propagate Holocaust Denial as means of attacking the Jewish Community;

- 18.2** NOTES the deception employed by Holocaust deniers in the way they present their hatred in quasi-academic guise;
- 18.3** NOTES THAT Holocaust Denial has been found by the Federal Court of Australia to constitute unlawful behaviour;
- 18.4** CALLS ON Jewish organisations to continue the policy of not engaging Holocaust deniers in any public debate which could give credence to Holocaust Denial but to clearly and publicly identify Holocaust deniers as people engaged in antisemitism and promotion of extremist ideologies.

19. Crimes Against Humanity

This Council:

- 19.1** NOTES the affirmation by the Australian Government in 1987 that Australia must not serve as a haven for individuals who participated in crimes against humanity during the course of the Nazi Genocide;
- 19.2** RECOGNISES the difficulties encountered in the trials of alleged Nazi War Criminals thus far conducted in Australia;
- 19.3** RECOGNISES that major legal and political obstacles needed to be overcome to establish extradition treaties with some of the countries which were the scene of the crimes of the Holocaust;
- 19.4** RECOGNISES that extradition of Nazi war criminals to the countries of their origin and where their crimes took place is not a substitute for effective Australian legislation but is a welcome complement to it
- 19.5** SUPPORTS the process of developing extradition treaties between Australia and all countries from which individuals involved in crimes against humanity may have participated in these crimes prior to arriving in Australia;
- 19.6** CALLS UPON the Australian Government to amend citizenship law so as to allow for individuals who concealed involvement in crimes against humanity to have their citizenship removed, regardless of the length of time they have held citizenship;
- 19.7** URGES the Australian Government to ensure, where sufficient evidence exists, that prosecutions continue to be instituted against alleged Nazi war criminals in Australia;
- 19.8** CALLS UPON the Federal Government to introduce legislation to enable persons living in Australia who are accused of ordering, committing or perpetrating any cases of genocide or crimes against humanity to be prosecuted in Australia.

20. Holocaust Rhetoric

This Council:

- 20.1** RECOGNISES that the Holocaust, the Nazi program of genocide, was a unique historical event;
- 20.2** NOTES that the Holocaust is generally recognised as the benchmark of human evil;
- 20.3** DEPLORES the inappropriate use of terminology relating to the Nazi Genocide in Australian public debate.

21. Holocaust Remembrance

This Council:

- 21.1** ENCOURAGES that all major cities and State capitals hold public remembrances of Kristallnacht and that all Constituents of the ECAJ prioritise the work of maximising public participation in Holocaust Remembrance and education; and
- 21.2** CALLS on all State Departments of School Education to ensure that all students have a basic knowledge of the events of the Holocaust, in order to gain an understanding of the fragility of human civilisation and the dangers of irrational hatred;
- 21.3** CALLS upon the National Curriculum Board to include a unit of mandatory study addressing racism, racial hatred and genocide, including the Holocaust in the study of history for all high school students in Australia.

22. Stockholm Forums

This Council:

- 22.1** NOTES the importance of Holocaust education and remembrance;
- 22.2** NOTES the importance of civil society taking a stand against human rights abuses;

22.3 APPLAUDS the decision of the Swedish Government to host the international forum on Holocaust Education and Remembrance in January 2000; the Forum on Combating Intolerance in January 2001 and the Forum on Truth, Justice and Reconciliation in April 2002 in Stockholm; and the International Forum on Genocide Prevention in 2004;

22.4 URGES the Australian government to implement relevant recommendations of the Stockholm Forums.

23. Restitution

This Council:

23.1 APPLAUDS the efforts of those who are working for the rights of survivors, their heirs and the Jewish world in the areas of restitution and restoration of property and true recording of the history of the Holocaust;

23.2 REAFFIRMS the principle that negotiations for restitution and disbursement should wherever possible include representatives of both resident communities and survivors who live outside those countries;

23.3 CALLS for the expedition of all outstanding claims with a minimum of administrative cost or delay, and for priority in the application of funds for the benefit of survivors and the heirs of victims.

24. Social Cohesion

The Council:

24.1 NOTES that it is the vision of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry to create and support a community where all Australians, including all Jewish Australians, feel valued, their differences are respected and their basic needs both physical and emotional are met, so that as citizens they are empowered in their participation and contribution;

24.2 NOTES that as Australians we take great pride in what we see as uniquely Australian values of "mateship" and a "fair go";

24.3 FURTHER NOTES that it is important and cannot be over emphasised, that the leadership of the Australian Jewish community is committed to the dignity of difference, and a belief in the equality of humankind;

24.4 RECORDS the pride taken in our ongoing commitment to reconciliation with indigenous Australians, to a multiculturalism that draws people into Australian life rather than one that separates them from Australian life, and to an Australia that is inclusive for all Australians;

- 24.5** ACKNOWLEDGES that in the Jewish community, social exclusion may emanate from a number of factors including: lack of educational or vocational opportunities; low levels of income; mental or physical disability; mental illness; or immigration without social support, and that such exclusion most often results in individuals being prevented through no fault of their own, from building a better future for themselves and their families;
- 24.6** NOTES that poverty amongst Australian Jews is no less prevalent than in other sectors of the Australian community And that aspects of inequality from which poverty stems which require further investigation and support are:
- Work opportunities particularly in the case of immigrants, families with young children, older people and people with a disability
 - Social aspects - where members of the community do not have access to contacts, groups and opportunities which empower them to access the mainstream Jewish community and the wider society. This can arise from the inability to speak English, or lack of education and information, or lack of sufficient income to participate
 - Social stigma where individuals are excluded from the community as a result of mental illness, disability, or non traditional lifestyle
- ;
- 24.7** OBSERVES that across Australia there are numerous Jewish organisations whose role is to assist members of the Jewish community redress social exclusion and ameliorate poverty. There are welfare services, aged care services, and disability services, and there are education institutions and synagogues that, inter alia, contribute to this work;
- 24.8** RECOGNISES that the role of the ECAJ is to encourage organisations across Australia to: identify and rectify gaps in services that ought to be provided; encourage such organisations to seek opportunities to reach out to and provide services for those who are marginalised, and to engage Federal government departments to assist the community to ensure that the most comprehensive services are provided;
- 24.9** RECORDS its belief that the maximum benefit across Australia will be only be achieved by the Jewish community working from both national and State perspectives;
- 24.10** SUPPORTS the development of projects which bring hope therefore encompasses a range of policy and program domains at many levels: education, training, employment, affordable childcare, assistance with housing, a range of disability and aged care services - support for care-givers; and above all - building up at community levels a network of supportive services, amenities and accessible transport facilities and social mentoring which reduce stigma and social exclusion from the networks and vibrant life of our community.

25. Demographic Profile

This Council:

- 25.1** NOTES the importance of the Jewish community basing its decisions and planning on the most reliable information available;
- 25.2** NOTES that the data available to the community from each Australian Bureau of Statistics Census is an important resource;
- 25.3** FULLY SUPPORTS the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Survey being undertaken by the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, with the support of a range of organisations in the Australian Jewish Community and calls upon members of the community to participate in the Survey.

26. Climate Change

This Council:

- 26.1** NOTES that climate change is a major challenge facing Australia and the world. The current drought, water shortages, bush fires and record temperatures remind all Australians of our nation's vulnerability to climate change;
- 26.2** APPLAUDS the action of The Climate Institute in bringing sixteen Australian faith communities representing the world's great religious traditions to unite and to speak out on climate change;
- 26.3** DECLARES its support for the five point action plan to tackle Australia's rising greenhouse gas emissions as the basis of an effective response to climate change as issued by The Climate Institute in October 2006, viz:
- 1. Legislate to ensure Australia's greenhouse gas emissions go down and not up.
 - 2. Set a national price on greenhouse pollution.
 - 3. Implement a massive deployment of clean energy technologies.
 - 4. Deliver on energy savings and reduce Australia's energy bill.
 - 5. Provide international leadership on climate change.

27. Stem Cell Research

This Council:

- 27.1** NOTES that leading Rabbinic authorities have given their support to the use of existing embryos for stem cell research, mindful that Jewish law concerns itself that such embryos are only appropriately obtained;
- 27.2** NOTES that stem cell research offers great hope to many sufferers and contains the potential to rectify painful, debilitating and life shortening genetic conditions;
- 27.3** SUPPORTS properly conducted research into the saving of life as a part of our human mandate to act in the image of God, to heal and to be merciful;
- 27.4** CALLS ON all ECAJ Constituents, Affiliates and Observer Organisations to encourage Australian Jews to publicly support the opportunities which stem cell research provides as reinforcing and not diminishing the sanctity of life.

28. Organ Donation

This Council:

- 28.1** NOTES that Prime Minister Rudd announced funding to boost the low organ donation rate in Australia;
- 28.2** NOTES that lives can be saved by encouraging organ donation from Jews to the general population (including non-Jews) by educating them about the different halachic and medical issues concerning organ donation;
- 28.3** SUPPORTS Medicare Australia to change donor registry forms so that members of the clergy can be involved in the decision-making process if the donor family so wish;
- 28.4** ENCOURAGES Australian Jews to learn about organ donation from a medical perspective and from a halachic perspective, and to commit to organ donation processes subject to appropriate safeguards.

29. Aboriginal Reconciliation

This Council:

- 29.1** RECOGNISES Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first Australians, with unique cultures, languages and spiritual relationships to the land and seas;
- 29.2** PURSUES a vision of an Australia that provides equal rights and life chances for all;

- 29.3** AFFIRMS the fundamental importance of reconciliation as the basis of an Australian Community which respects the diversity of values, cultures, ideas and the contribution of all people
- 29.4** SUPPORTS Reconciliation Australia's National Program of Action which encourages organisations and individuals to turn their good intentions into action;
- 29.5** ACCORDINGLY the Council will develop and implement a Reconciliation Action Plan that will include actions, timeframes for implementation and performance measures.
- Areas for action may include the Council using its networks to:
- Raise Community awareness and understanding of the historic, social and economic factors which contribute to the current levels of disadvantage confronting many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.
 - Influence governments and business to address the systemic issues that keep many Aboriginal and Strait Islander people and their communities in poor health and poverty.
 - Support human rights based approaches to economic and social development programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; and
 - Lead inter-faith alliances to develop and provide targeted financial and capacity building support to selected projects which strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations' governance, management, service delivery and professional development.
- 29.6** ENCOURAGES the Jewish community in Australia to increase its knowledge and understanding of the identity and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples and reflect this awareness in our social relationships and our support for their advancement;
- 29.7** CALLS UPON the governments, business and civil communities and people of Australia to take action to reduce the relative disadvantage many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may face by improving education, health, housing, employment, governance, social and communal relationships and law and justice;
- 29.8** CALLS ON Jewish organisations around Australia to speak out in favour of reconciliation, actively participate in the annual events: Week of Prayer for Reconciliation and National Reconciliation Week.

30. Accommodation of Religious Practices

This Council:

- 30.1** NOTES decisions by a number of instrumentalities which recognise and support the right of all staff to meet their religious and ceremonial obligations, regardless of religious, ethnic or cultural background;
- 30.2** RECOGNISES the right of all Australians to observe religious and ceremonial obligations;
- 30.3** SUPPORTS the work of the Australian Human Rights Commission in enhancing religious freedom in Australia;
- 30.4** CALLS UPON government and employers organisations to respect and support, as a matter of policy, the right of employees to meet the obligations of their faiths; and
- 30.5** CALLS UPON the Australian Government to make provision in its Fair Work Bill to ensure that religious and ceremonial obligations can be observed without attracting the threat of loss of employment.

31. Relations with Other Ethnic, Religious, Ethno-Religious or Cultural Communities

This Council:

- 31.1** RECOGNISES the distinctive character of the Australian Jewish community as part of the Jewish people, with a shared history, tradition and linguistic and religious heritage, and as a vital and vibrant component of multicultural Australia;
- 31.2** RECOGNISES the pluralistic nature of Australian Jewry and the complex nature of the various ethnicities of Australian Jewry due to diverse language, cultural origin and national background;
- 31.3** ACKNOWLEDGES the right of any Jewish organisation to identify as an ethnic, religious, ethno-religious or cultural organisation due to the choice of the membership of that organisation or due to specific aims, objectives and programs consistent with policies and programs of the government relating to ethnic affairs;
- 31.4** VALUES the friendly cooperation and cordial relationship between Australian Jewry and other ethnic, religious, ethno-religious or cultural groups and roof bodies within Australia;
- 31.5** ENCOURAGES close liaison between Jewish organisations, ethnic communities councils and other Australian groups in the pursuit of common policies in the best interests of the total Australian community.

32. Multiculturalism

This Council:

- 32.1** AFFIRMS its support for Australia's policy of multiculturalism, which has served Australia well as a basis for the social harmony which we all enjoy;
- 32.2** CALLS ON the Australian Government to confirm its commitment to multiculturalism as a policy which respects the right of all Australians to express their individual cultural identity, and to maintain and share their cultural heritage, within an overriding commitment to Australia and the basic values of Australian democracy and the rule of law; and
- 32.3** COMMENDS the Government's policy of ensuring access and equity in the provision of government services, including the provision of mechanisms to address the barriers faced by immigrants who are not yet familiar with Australian culture and language;
- 32.4** COMMENDS the review of the Citizenship Test recently undertaken by the Australian Government.

33. Interfaith Relations

This Council:

- 33.1** CONGRATULATES members of the Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims and Jews, the Anglican Jewish Australian Dialogue, The National Dialogue of the Uniting Church in Australia/ECAJ and Australian Catholic Bishops Committee/ECAJ Annual Conversation on the conduct and outcome of their meetings;
- 33.2** APPLAUDS the development in Sydney of the Women's Interfaith Network which now has four branches;
- 33.3** WELCOMES the development of multi-faith events and contacts between bodies representing many diverse faith groups;
- 33.4** APPLAUDS activities which improve the basis for dialogue between Jews and Christians;
- 33.5** NOTES past efforts at improving Jewish-Muslim relations, particularly those which have recognised common concerns in areas such as religious liberty, racial tolerance and recognition of religious rights;
- 33.6** SUPPORTS dialogue and cooperation between representatives of the Jewish community and all the Faith communities with a view to common action for communal tolerance and inter-community cooperation;

33.7 CALLS on all religious groups to respect the dignity and right of all people to maintain their own religious traditions;

33.8 APPLAUDS the work of APRO, The Australian Partnership of Religious Organisations;

33.9 SUPPORTS the expansion of the dialogue process to include other partner organisations representing religious communities.

34. The Vatican

This Council:

34.1 RECOGNISES the importance of the work of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee and its joint declarations of November 4-7 2006 and November 2008;

34.2 NOTES the importance of working together and the need to expand and intensify co-operation between our communities, to condemn and respond to resurgent antisemitism, bigotry and terrorism.

35. On-Line Services and the Internet

This Council:

35.1 NOTES that the Internet is increasingly being used by individuals and organisations to propagate antisemitism;

35.2 RECOGNISES the complexities involved in any system of regulation of on-line services;

35.3 AFFIRMS the view that any act which is illegal or unlawful in traditional means of communication should be illegal if it is committed through on-line services;

35.4 SUPPORTS moves to bring in a Code of Practice for Australian Internet Service Providers and other regulatory measures for the Internet based on the principles that:

- Nothing that is unlawful to print or broadcast should be able to escape the intention of the law due to being published or communicated through on-line services.
- No person, entity or organisation should be punished for an act they could not reasonably know has been committed.
- The right to freedom of speech must be respected, bearing in mind that in democratic societies this right is conditional and, for example, is not extended to allow for the commission or promotion of unlawful acts, or

other behaviour contrary to the public good.

- Governments have a responsibility to counter the activities of those who promote contempt and hatred for its citizens.
- The Internet should not be regarded differently to other means by which speech and ideas are disseminated.

36. SBS

This Council:

36.1 NOTES that SBS Television and Radio continues to be a cause of concern to the Australian Jewish community with regards to anti-Israel bias and that common fairness standards are not applied to material broadcast in languages other than English;

36.2 NOTES the continuing absence of any independent complaints mechanism for SBS and the decision of SBS not to comply with the Australian Standard on Complaints Handling in issuing its 2006 revised Codes of Practice;

36.3 DEPLORES the failure of SBS to address these issues in the course of its review of its Codes of Practice;

36.4 CALLS ON the Federal Government to implement an immediate and effective review mechanism, at the very least to require SBS to comply with the Australian Standard on Complaints Handling and implement an independent complaint resolution tribunal.

37. Religious Broadcasting on the ABC

This Council:

37.1 EXPRESSES its concern at the reduction in religious programming on ABC Radio National;

37.2 URGES the ABC to maintain the resourcing of religious programming, so as to provide insights into religion and the place of religious movements in public life and to provide Australia with an informative and stimulating religious programming mix including in its move to successful digital growth, and to commit publicly to those objectives.

38. National Ceremonies

This Council:

38.1 CALLS ON the State and Federal Governments to recognise that national ceremonies, celebrations and memorials should be inclusive and not make use of religious words and symbols that may effectively exclude some Australian citizens.

39. Immigration and Settlement**This Council:**

39.1 NOTES that the Jewish Community now includes large numbers of Jewish immigrants who are on the fringes of the organised community structure;

39.2 RESOLVES THAT Constituent organisations take more active steps to devise and implement innovative programs specifically designed to absorb and integrate these immigrants into our Jewish community's communal core;

39.3 ENCOURAGES Affiliate and Constituent organisations to foster the establishment of a national group of representatives of Jewish immigrants from the Former Soviet Union, to assist in developing Jewish continuity within the Russian-speaking communities and building better relationships between this sector of the community and established Jewish organisations.

40. Young Adults Representation**This Council:**

40.1 RECOGNISES that the involvement of younger community members is of vital importance to the success of Jewish continuity;

40.2 NOTES with concern the lack of youth and young adult representation on some key communal bodies;

40.3 CALLS UPON AUJS and Zionist youth representatives and other interested parties to prepare an action plan to develop strategies to encourage youth participation on communal bodies.

41. Jewish Burial Rights

This Council:

- 41.1** NOTES reports that cemetery authorities in a number of jurisdictions are reviewing policies on permanent tenure of graves;
- 41.2** NOTES Jewish law and tradition require burial in perpetuity;
- 41.3** NOTES that a grave containing human remains is demarcated as the final resting place of the person concerned and the integrity of the grave must not be altered without explicit Rabbinic authority;
- 41.4** REAFFIRMS the need to maintain arrangements for Jewish burials in perpetuity and calls on cemetery authorities to respect this requirement; and
- 41.5** CALLS UPON State Governments to plan for and ensure sufficient land is allocated for Jewish communities to bury their dead in accordance with Jewish religious requirements.

42. Gett Refusal**This Council:**

- 42.1** RECALLS the concern expressed by the ECAJ at the need for remedies to alleviate the plight of victims of wilful Gett refusal;
- 42.2** APPLAUDS the efforts over some years by the Joint Task Force of the ECAJ and the Organisation of Rabbis of Australasia to develop useful proposals;
- 42.3** NOTES that the British Parliament has now joined the legislatures of Canada, South Africa and New York in passing laws to provide remedies aimed at releasing those spouses who are "chained" by wilful Gett refusal;
- 42.3** URGES the Australian Government to legislate in the terms of the Report of The Family Law Council of Australia which recommends to the Attorney-General that the joint legislative proposal of the ECAJ and ORA should be enacted as Australian law.

43. APRID**This Council:**

- 43.1** NOTES the contribution to international understanding and dialogue between peoples of the Asia Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogues in Indonesia in 2004, Philippines in 2006, New Zealand in 2007 and Cambodia in 2008;
- 43.2** NOTES the unique and vital role played by representatives of the ECAJ's interfaith dialogues to this process and also to the inaugural Youth Interfaith Forum in Perth in 2007;
- 43.3** RECOGNISES the importance of members of Australia's delegations being engaged with representative bodies and being able to keep the broader community informed of the outcomes of the APRID processes and to properly represent communities' views;
- 43.4** URGES the Australian Government to include a representative from the ECAJ in all future Asia Pacific Interfaith Dialogues, as occurred except in 2008.

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