

From the Editor

A SOLIDARITY rally has been organised to demonstrate support for the 13 Iranian Jews who are due to stand trial on charges of espionage. There are great fears for the well-being of the 13 — who include a teenager — particularly if the trial is not open to the public. About 17 Jews have been executed in Iran in the past 20 years, and the louder the protests, the greater the possibility of helping to save the 13 (*page 7*).

A number of rabbis used their Shabbat sermons to weigh in to the debate on the Jewish-gay issue and the *Australian Jewish News'* coverage of it. Some of those who discussed the issue from the pulpit declined to tell us what they had said — despite the fact that a sermon, by definition, is designed for public consumption. We have summarised the comments of two of the rabbis who spoke out.

In the meantime, the Sydney Beth Din has released a statement on the matter, which we

have reproduced in full. Both items appear on page 6.

Writing from the United States, Rabbi Shmuley Boteach has put together a thought-provoking article about a gay member of his family, and about what he regards as appropriate and inappropriate use of the word "abomination" (*page 23*). And letters have continued to stream in, bringing the total on this issue to more than 100 in the space of three weeks. We have printed another two pages of letters, offering a diverse range of opinions (*pages 20, 21*).

On a different matter, the Pope's visit to Israel is over, leaving the Jewish world analysing the import of his visit. As inter-faith negotiator Rabbi David Rosen summed it up, the significance of the event was that it happened. Some of the expectations were in the realm of unreality, he suggested (*page 16*).

Vic Allhadeff