

Senate urged to ignore “immoral” Jewish submissions

Bernard Freedman

A NSW Jewish Board of Deputies member who lodged complaints with the Sydney Beth Din in connection with Jewish gays and the Sydney Mardi Gras has urged a federal parliamentary committee to ignore “immoral” submissions from Jews or Jewish organisations.

Dr Eliana Freydel Miller has told the Senate Legal and Constitutional and References Committee in a written submission that the Anti-Genocide Bill 1999, which was presented recently in Federal Parliament, ignores the basic concepts of morality by extending the crime of genocide to cover groups defined by their gender, sexuality, political affiliations or disability.

She claims that her submission, which is accompanied by a letter signed by Rabbi Chaim Ingram, Associate Rabbi of Central Synagogue, has rabbinical endorsement and “constitutes authoritatively authentic Jewish responses” to the Bill.

In a preamble to her submission, she says: “Any submission which counters or conflicts with both the ethical and moral alignment of this submission and its inextricable binding to the teaching of the Seven Noahide Laws for all humanity and to authentic Torah teaching both given by God at Mount Sinai by any group or individual claiming to be Jewish, whether officially Jewish or not officially Jewish, or simply calling itself Jewish, cannot be considered or recognised as an authentic Jewish response to the Anti-Genocide Bill 1999 and should be disregarded.”

Rabbi Ingram’s letter commends and endorses Dr Miller’s submission “as an authentic Jewish response” to the Bill, saying: “The submission is founded upon, the principles, ethics and moral values of the Torah, which is the basis of Jewish civilisation.”

But Rabbi Ingram this week distanced himself from Dr Miller’s preamble, emphasising to the *Australian Jewish News* that his endorsement



Eliana Freydel Miller

was personal and should not be connected with the Central Synagogue or the NSW Rabbinical Council, of which he is honorary secretary.

He told the *AJN* in a letter: “My endorsement



Rabbi Chaim Ingram

not necessarily carry the implication that he recommends the consumption of sticky sweets.”

Earlier, Rabbi Ingram told the *AJN* in a tele-

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phone interview: “I can’t endorse [the preamble] because I haven’t seen any other submission. I think it would be better if you left my name out of it altogether, but if you do mention me, make it clear that I don’t endorse that preamble.

“I am not her mentor, and my approval of her submission does not mean I agree with any other actions she may have been involved in.”

In her submission, Dr Miller says Australia should not join with any states, national or international treaties, tribunals, conventions, courts, individuals or the United Nations if they in any way breach the teaching of the Seven Noahide Laws. Listing the Seven Noahide Laws, which include a prohibition of immorality, including incest, adultery, homosexuality and bestiality. Dr Miller declares: “It is a perversion of the courts of the land ... to entrench in law any legislation which goes against the laws given by God”.

She says Australia must have anti-genocide legislation to allow for extradition of those accused of war crimes, but she attacks the Bill, drafted by Australian Democrats Senator Brian Greig, saying it “threatens justice, morality and the freedom to teach morality”. She says it is “a monumental perversion of the courts of the land and misleading” because, by including a group of people based on their sexuality, it entrenches in law a restriction on the teaching of morality.

Teachers of morality would be considered to have committed genocide, attracting a penalty of up to 10 years’ imprisonment or life imprisonment, Dr Miller said.

The submission of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry addresses the extension of genocide to cover gender, sexuality, political affiliations and disability indirectly. It says the aims of the Genocide Convention “are not furthered by enumerating particular populations which may be the subject of genocide”. The B’nai B’rith Anti-Defamation Commission says the provisions of the proposed Bill are “appropriate” and submits that it should be enacted “in its current form”.

The Senate committee is due to hear submissions in Sydney and Melbourne next month.