

# Dayenu's Mardi Gras decade

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A DECADE ago, the founding members of Sydney's Jewish gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) group Dayenu had a float in the Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras for the very first time.

Next week, at the 2010 parade, the group will celebrate the 10th anniversary of that milestone event.

"A lot has improved for the Jewish GLBT community in those 10 years," Dayenu committee member Roy Freeman told *The AJN*. "Whereas our first float in the parade in 2000 caused a bit of controversy, 10 years on we now have same-sex commitment ceremonies being performed in Australian Progressive synagogues. That is a profound change in how the Jewish GLBT community is perceived, but obviously there is still a long way to go."

Freeman said it is still important for the group to have a visible presence in the parade.

"Despite the general perception being that it is easy 'coming out' of the closet, there are still Jewish GLBT teenagers who live in fear of ostracism by their families due to their sexuality."

This year, in celebration of its 10th anniversary, Dayenu's float will feature a large triple-layer rainbow-coloured birthday cake and reflect the Jewish celebration of Purim, which falls on the same day as the Mardi Gras parade.

"Purim is very much about overcoming great adversaries and finding



**Above: Dayenu members in the lead-up to Mardi Gras, where they will celebrate 10 years since first participating in the festival.**

**Right: Dayenu's first Mardi Gras float as reported in the March 10, 2000 edition of *The AJN*.**

ways to address the views of those that would condemn us," long-time Dayenu member Kim Gotlieb said. "Purim is a celebration of that in the Jewish context and Mardi Gras is a celebration of that in a gay context."

The Jewish group will take part in a number of events held over the two-week festival, including Fair Day at Victoria Park on February 21. Emanuel Synagogue has collaborated with Dayenu to present a special Mardi Gras Shabbat service on Friday, February 26, followed by a Shabbat dinner with entertainment provided by Israeli pop star Ivri Lider.

This year, for the first time, Dayenu



has also teamed up with the Israeli embassy to promote Tel Aviv as a holiday destination at Fair Day.

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Israeli singer on his way to Oz: 30