

# Dayenu calls for community policy similar to JCCV

**PETER KOHN**

ROY Freeman, of the Sydney-based Jewish gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) group Dayenu, has hailed the work of a Jewish Community Council of Victoria's (JCCV) reference group. He said he hoped a similar group could be established within the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies (JBD).

The JCCV subcommittee, which was formed last year, recently decided

to consult with Victoria's Jewish Care and Jewish psychologists to ensure that the correct services are provided to the Jewish GLBT community.

"It's good to see that finally the JCCV is acknowledging that there are issues," Freeman said of the GLBT reference group.

"It would be good to see [the JCCV] working with some other GLBT organisations as well, such as LGBT Health, which is an Australia-wide organisation," he said.

Dayenu is currently in the process of applying for JBD membership and Freeman is urging the NSW roof body to formulate a policy on Sydney's Jewish GLBT community.

He quoted statistics on suicide prevention, which show that GLBT Australians are 12-14 times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual counterparts and that some 14 per cent of transgender youth have attempted suicide.

"Unfortunately, there hasn't been

any similar research within the Jewish community specifically, but there's no reason to believe those statistics would be any better.

"I believe those mental health issues are connected to the attitude towards homosexuality from certain parts of the Jewish community," Freeman said.

JCCV president John Searle said that "Research suggests that issues of depression, mental health disease and suicide are higher among people in

the GLBT community. There is also evidence to suggest there are still serious issues of vilification and discrimination faced by people in this community.

"We need to come to grips with these matters, and ascertain the extent to which these problems are experienced within the Jewish GLBT community. The critical work of the reference group will then address these issues as they exist in our community," Searle added.