

Praise for JCCV over gay reference group

CONGRATULATIONS on the recent article “JCCV Group Focuses on Mental Health” (*AJN* 16/04) and to the Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV) for establishing a GLBT – gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender – reference group.

I particularly commend the article for noting the key impact of social factors, such as bullying, discrimination and social isolation, on mental health. Australian and international

research shows that the disproportionately negative health outcomes of people who are same-sex attracted, gender-questioning and/or who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex are clearly associated with experience of exclusion and discrimination. Unfortunately, we know that homophobia and transphobia exist within Jewish communities, just as within other communities.

Roy Freeman from Dayenu referred to the National LGBT Health Alliance in the article. The alliance is a new peak body for organisations and individuals across Australia, working to improve the health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and other sexuality, sex and gender-diverse people (www.lgbthealth.org.au).

The alliance welcomes the establishment of a JCCV GLBT reference group and the partnership approach taken, with sexuality, sex and gender-diverse people at its core. The maxim “not about us without us” is not only a principle of social justice, but also crucial to ensuring that work done is actually effective.

We wish the JCCV well in this work and look forward to seeing the good intentions translated into effective actions to raise awareness of the issues and to increase inclusion and combat homophobia and transphobia among all sectors of the diverse Jewish community.

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