

Jewish Board adopts new policy

Brendan Bolger

Jewish lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgenders in Sydney are set to benefit from a new policy of anti-homophobia and -transphobia that has been described as a “huge symbolic step forward”.

Dayenu co-organiser Roy Freeman put the policy forward this month to the Jewish Board of Deputies where he is a member.

The board has 75 individual

members and 75 members from various groups and organisations and the policy was “very well supported”.

“I was expecting a little bit of opposition, [but] no-one chose to speak against the policy,” which was passed with near unanimous support, Freeman told *SX*.

“Within the religious context it’s a lot more difficult for gays to come out. I’m hoping to build on this and get some better support services for gay Jews coming to terms with their

sexuality,” he said.

“In some circles it’s still deemed shameful” and there are misconceptions that not being in a heterosexual relationship leads to a life of “loneliness and solitude” within Judaism, he said.

On the issue of same-sex marriage, Freeman said progressive rabbis are already able to perform same-sex commitment ceremonies but “orthodox Judaism is not going to go in that direction”.