



## Press Release

# Shining a light on Global Jewish LGBT+ community, collaboration and creativity

Sydney, Australia will be host to the [25th World Congress Jewish LGBT+ Conference](#) to be held from 21 – 24 March 2019. This is the first time the [World Congress - Keshet Ga'avah](#) has held its Conference *in Australia*. As a peak body, their mission is to be the worldwide *voice* of Jews of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. They recently published a book, *Kol Koleinu (All Our Voices)* which highlights the excellent work that they do. Delegates will be attending the conference from the United States, France, Amsterdam, Italy, Latin America, New Zealand, Israel and around the globe.

“Celebrating the Light” is the central theme woven through the [program](#). It begins with the Jewish festival of Purim, in which tradition has it that people dress-up, blur the lines of gender and generally have a lot of fun! What a wonderful context to enter into a weekend of LGBT+ discussion, collaboration, workshops, presentations and creativity.

### **Light in Me: individual Perspectives**

Each of us has a story to tell and this Conference is an opportunity to engage in the range of issues affecting Jewish LGBT+ communities around the globe. It also provides a platform to strengthen networks and promote solidarity – to ensure that people feel supported and inspired to participate in the ongoing conversation from a personal, communal and international perspective.

### **Light in Us: Our Diverse Community**

From the sightseeing tour of Bondi Beach and the iconic [Sydney Opera House](#) to the *Queerest Gender-Bending Purim Shpiel Play on the Planet* on Opening Night, there is something for everyone. Our LGBT+ inspired Kabbalat Shabbat service on the Friday Night is sure to be a moving experience, followed by a dinner focused on *Building Bridges* sponsored by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies. Shabbat includes a range of workshops

and presentations happening concurrently and Sunday will be based at the Sydney Jewish Museum, including a ceremony at the [Gay & Lesbian Holocaust Memorial](#) in Green Park. We are sure delegates will be satisfied and fulfilled by our extensive [program](#).

While we are pleased to have secured some presenters and facilitators, we continue to negotiate in this area. However, you can be assured they will include representations across gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, religious observance, activism and more. While most of the Conference will take place at Emanuel Synagogue in Woollahra, the final day will be held at the Sydney Jewish Museum, close to the gay hub of Oxford St, Darlinghurst.

## **Sharing our Light: the Power of Collaboration**

As the Conference unfolds, the focus moves to connectivity. The principles of participation, collaboration, networking and community have shaped the vision of a dedicated organising committee, who have been enthusiastically working to present a stimulating and engaging program of events.

Regardless of peoples' engagement with both the Jewish and LGBT+ communities, there will be many opportunities to relate to similar and differing viewpoints which will provide a tapestry of possibility that can both enrich an individual sense of self, as well as inspire a deepening engagement with the communities in which we find ourselves.

## **Insights illuminated**

The Committee is currently negotiating with a range of luminaries of the Jewish LGBT+ world. The Conference will include presenters who can inspire, illuminate, and entertain from a range of perspectives. We are also delighted to bring together a team of highly trained and engaging facilitators, who will offer creative, challenging and rewarding approaches, to drive conversations across diverse viewpoints and lived experience. And you can be sure of a few wonderful surprises along the way – watch this space!

From its inception, this Conference has been enthusiastically supported by [Emanuel Synagogue](#), [Sydney Jewish Museum](#) and the [NSW Jewish Board of Deputies](#). The Conference will be primarily held at Emanuel Synagogue, which has recently completed a state-of-the-art new Sanctuary, with all the technical requirements to live stream and provide coverage across the globe. However, your real time attendance at the Conference will glean the greatest benefits – for you and the communities with which you are involved.

[Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras](#) kicks off with a Festival from 15 February 2019, concluding with the parade on Saturday 2 March 2019. World Congress, in collaboration with the Sydney Jewish Museum is presenting a forum: [Homophobia, Antisemitism & the Politics of Othering](#) on Sunday 17 February 2019. There will also be a World Congress entry in the [Mardi Gras Parade](#) and a float for [Dayenu – Sydney's Jewish LGBT+ Group](#). If you are able to come early, you are welcome to participate in the Mardi Gras float.

**Ready to get involved?**



Your presence will add to the Ruach (spirit), Koach (strength) and success of this Conference. Come and engage in the best of Jewish LGBT+ shmoozing and stay for some Fair Dinkum Ozzie hospitality.

**Link to Program:** <http://gltjews.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/AAAfinaformatprogram.pdf>

**Link to Register is:** <https://goo.gl/forms/gGKGIJ5BUEGgF1Ch2>

**Link to Mardi Gras Festival Forum :**  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pARbRBWrRnXa-sXI-CMzTtjuiyNaVave/view?usp=sharing>

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