

# Pursuing the matter is an error of judgment — Shalom Institute

**Shira Sebban**

THE Sydney Beth Din has made an “error of judgment” and is inviting “communal ridicule” by pursuing the issue of Jewish participation in the Sydney Mardi Gras, communal leader John Glass charged this week.

“As president of The Shalom Institute — an organisation that enjoys broad support from the community — I’m not willing to

only if told “in advance of the precise details of Ms Miller’s complaint” against him.

Mr Glass went further: “Until we get the precise details from the Beth Din about the issues on which Ms Miller is seeking a *Din Torah*, we won’t even consider whether we will or will not accept its invitation to participate.”

Dr Immerman is believed to have been requested to appear before

While the Beth Din is “potentially a very important organisation within the community with an important leadership role, to exercise that role it must have the respect and unstinting support of a broad cross-section of the community,” he said.

Mr Glass commended the *AJN* for “taking the stance that it has and fearlessly reporting issues and events that affect the community, despite the fact that it may give



Peter Wertheim

- Letters, pages 20, 21
- “Abomination” a misunderstood word, page 23

the Beth Din in connection with the fact that The Shalom Institute hired out its premises for a Shabbat service and dinner on the eve of the Mardi Gras.

As for Mr Wertheim, he said “Ms Miller’s complaint appears to relate to the failure of several attempts she has made to prevent the hypothetical possibility of a gay group joining the Board, although none of her attempts has specifically referred to homosexuals”.

He added that he was “seeking intelligible particulars of the alleged complaint and was unable to make any meaningful comment until that occurs”.

Mr Glass urged the Beth Din to “exercise wisdom and judgment in how it responds to complaints from members of the community, some of which are clearly irresponsible. Outside Israel, the Beth Din has no means of compulsion other than moral persuasion, which is dependent on the esteem within which it is held in the community at large.”



Eliana Freydel Miller

participate in what could easily become a charade”, he told the *Australian Jewish News*.

NSW Jewish Board of Deputies member Eliana Freydel Miller recently requested the Sydney Beth Din to ask Shalom Institute chief executive officer Dr Hilton Immerman and Board of Deputies president Peter Wertheim to appear separately for a *Din Torah* (Torah judgment).

Neither The Shalom Institute nor Mr Wertheim has agreed to do so at this stage

Mr Wertheim told the *AJN* that he would appear before the Beth Din

offence to a minority”. The newspaper “clearly has its finger on the pulse of the community. The question of inclusiveness and diversity within the Jewish community is crucial, without there being a need to chastise or make value judgments about other people’s lifestyles.”

The issue was in danger of becoming one of support or opposition to homosexuality, he warned. “I don’t want to be dragged into a debate on homosexuality, which is not a public issue, but a private matter for each Jew and his or her God.”