

Jewish float rejoins Mardi Gras

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A JEWISH contingent will reclaim its place in this year's Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras after opting out last year due to a lack of interest.

But thanks to a surge in membership, Dayenu, Sydney's Jewish gay-and-lesbian support and social group, will don T-shirts adorned with a Magen David, gay-pride colours and the word "dayenu" in Hebrew for this year's parade on March 3.

Dayenu co-founder Malcolm Davidowitz said he was glad the group was rejoining the parade "to show that Dayenu has not lost its momentum".

Davidowitz said the group now boasts a "new wave of people coming on board, who are younger and involved". He said groups from Habonim Dror and Netzer may also join the Dayenu contingent.

Dayenu, which now has around 100 members, made its controversial debut at the 2000 Mardi Gras with around 70 marchers. Last year was the first time since its inception that the group did not participate.

Float organiser Roy Freeman said the importance of Jewish participation in the parade was twofold: "It's important for both communities, the gay and lesbian [community] to know about the Jewish presence and vice versa."

Dayenu raised around \$2000 to fund the float from Shabbat dinners and other social events, as well as a concert at Temple Emanuel Woolahra. Dayenu does not receive any



Members of the next generation of Dayenu. They will march in the 2007 Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras parade.

financial support from Jewish community roof bodies or funds.

Dayenu's participation in the 2000 event prompted widespread condemnation from the Orthodox rabbinate.

Rabbi Chaim Ingram of the Rabbinical Council of NSW this week said: "Our position on this year's float is what it has always been: we do not support any exhibitionists acts of this nature.

"Any displays of this nature are contrary to Jewish and Torah values."

Last month, Aleph, Melbourne's Jewish gay and lesbian network group, took part in the city's annual Pride March with an Indonesian Muslim.

Dayenu has also been approached to host the 2009 International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews in Sydney.