



MEDIA RELEASE

The peak body of the international Jewish LGBT+ community is to hold its World Congress in Sydney for the first time in March 2019, bringing a global focus to Sydney and providing a space for ideas, networking and good fun.

Keynote speaker - joining a host of local and international presenters - is Australia's newly-elected Independent Member of Parliament, **DR KERRY PHELPS**. Dr Phelps (pictured below, right) and her partner celebrated the first same-sex marriage to take place at Sydney's Emanuel Synagogue – which is hosting the Congress - after Australia's historic YES vote in 2017.

World Congress - Keshet Ga'avah, the worldwide voice of Jews of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, will bring delegates from the United States, France, Holland, Italy, Latin America, New Zealand, Israel and around the globe. The Congress is hosted by *Dayenu* – Sydney's Jewish LGBT+ group, and will take place at the Emanuel Synagogue, Woollahra from 21 to 24 March.



The Congress theme “Kol Koleinu” (All Our Voices) comes from the title of the recently published World Congress book, reflecting its vision to create a space where all voices can be heard, dialogue can emerge, and insight and understanding can be nourished. The four-day conference features a host of international speakers addressing Jewish LGBT+ issues, panel discussions, a tour of the Sydney Jewish Museum, entertainment, a harbour cruise and so much more.

The interface between Jewish and LGBT+ cultures is a complex one - minorities within minorities. Conference convener, Dayenu's **Kim Gotlieb** said the Sydney community was thrilled to have attracted leading facilitators to present sessions on ways to get along with others with more understanding.

“Building bridges, developing community and moving forward towards a better world – these are all part of *Tikkun Olam*, (repairing of the world) - a classic Jewish value which we hold dear.”

The 25th World Congress also brings together and bridges the gaps between the youth and seniors, observant and secular Jews, lesbian, gay, transgender and all the other hues of the queer cultural rainbow.

Among the international speakers joining Kerry Phelps are American transgender activist **Abby Stein**, UK lesbian rabbi **Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah**, World Congress president **Frank Giaoui**, Singapore art collector **Guillaume Levy-Lambert** and **Michael Chertok**, past president of San Francisco's Gay+Lesbian synagogue.

The World Congress is timed to coincide with *Purim*, the ‘queerest festival in the Jewish calendar’! Traditionally people dress up, blurring the gender divide and perform comic shows or ‘shpiels’. The Congress is creating its own “Queerest Gender-Bending Purim Shpiel on the Planet”: *Feigle on the Roof!*

A “Welcome Home” Pride Kabbalat Shabbat (Sabbath eve) service will feature in the main sanctuary of the Emanuel Synagogue on Friday 22 March complete with music; and the NSW Jewish community's peak body, the Jewish Board of Deputies will host an LGBT+ dinner: building bridges is an important principle underscoring the whole event. **See over for full details of presenters and activities.**

The Congress will be officially launched by Dayenu at the Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras Fair Day on Sunday Feb 17. On 24 Feb Dayenu will co-host a forum at the Sydney Jewish Museum entitled: *Homophobia, Antisemitism & the Politics of Othering*. The annual Dayenu float in the Mardi Gras Parade will this year be joined by a new float promoting the World Congress.

For more information, visit www.dayenu.org.au or www.lgbtjews.org

Facebook: 25th Jewish LGBT+ World Congress

Promo trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLhasz9EFEU&feature=youtu.be>

Media inquiries: call Kim Gotlieb on 0408 652 394 or email worldcongress2019@gmail.com



SYDNEY WORLD CONGRESS PRESENTERS INCLUDE:

International speakers as well as local luminaries, will provide a global perspective on issues that matter for Jewish LGBT+ delegates from around the world. The tapestry of experience is bound to inspire more connection, inclusion, sense of community, and sense of place for those who attend. (Follow the links for more information on each)

[Professor Kerryn Phelps AM MP](#), recently elected Member of Federal Parliament for the seat of Wentworth will present a Keynote Address. Emanuel Synagogue is in her electorate and we are delighted to include her vision and narrative in the World Congress program.

[Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah](#) one of the first “out” lesbians to be ordained in Britain back in 1989, who will be celebrating 30 years in the role. Elli pioneered same-sex marriage within the British Jewish community from 1996 and is currently Rabbi at Brighton and Hove Progressive Synagogue. Their book, *Trouble-Making Judaism*, explores an inclusive and egalitarian approach to sexual ethics.

[Abby Stein](#) - a transgender woman who grew up only speaking Yiddish in an ultra-Orthodox New York community. Her story of stepping out of that culture and addressing her transgender identity is powerful; her passion and enthusiasm to make a difference in the world is an inspiration.

[Frank Giaoui](#) is the President of World Congress: Keshet Ga'avah with much experience to share in regard to this peak body for LGBT+ Jews. He is also a professional corporate advisor, fundraiser and scholar in law & economics.

[Guillaume Lévy-Lambert](#) lives in Singapore and is co-founder of MaGMA.sg which includes more than 400 original works of primarily Asian contemporary art. He has a fascinating story linked to the perennial questions of “finding our path”, and “search for meaning.”

[Robert Griew](#) - Previously CEO of ACON (Aids Council of NSW) & [Tony Fiddes](#) - highly skilled consultants with the Nous group will present an illuminated session on “Belonging and Othering” - something we all experience, but rarely have the opportunity to unpack.

[Michael Chertok](#) - Past President of Sha'ar Zahav, San Francisco's gay & lesbian synagogue. He was recently appointed as Director of Philanthropy for the Jewish Community Federation

Several international luminaries are presenting Webinars online:

[Idit Stein](#) - Executive Director of Keshet, the leading organization for LGBTQ equality and inclusion in the Jewish community.

[Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie](#) - Founding Spiritual Leader of Lab/Shul NYC and the creator of StorahTelling, Inc. An Israeli-born Jewish educator, writer, and performance artist, he received his rabbinical ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 2016.

[Dr. Joy Ladin](#) - Professor of English at Yeshiva University (New York) and author of many books including *The Soul of the Stranger* - an effort to heal the divide between traditional religious communities and the LGBTQ people who are often seen as a threat to religious traditions.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

- “Feigele on the Roof”, the Queerest, Gender-Bending Purim Shpiel on the Planet
- “Welcome Home” Pride Kabbalat Shabbat Service
- Harbour Cruise
- Queer Tour of Sydney Jewish Museum plus Gay & Lesbian Holocaust Memorial
- *L'Dor V'Dor*: Generational Narratives
- Belonging & Othering: Building Blocks of Community
- After hours visit to gay area of Oxford St
- Moving towards more Jewish LGBT+ Inclusive Spaces
- Down-under launch of World Congress book, Kol Koleinu: All Our Voices

FULL PROGRAM & REGISTRATION: WWW.DAYENU.ORG.AU
worldcongress2019@gmail.com