

POSITION STATEMENT

We believe that in giving space to a discussion about homosexuality among Jewish men and women, on the occasion of the first ever Jewish float in the Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras, the editor of the *Australian Jewish News* has shown admirable leadership, professional responsibility and provided an important service to our community.

It is time that we all faced the fact that homosexuality is part of the human condition and that it exists within our community as it does in others.

The conspiracy of silence and denial which has surrounded this issue for so long has caused a great deal of anguish to many homosexuals and their families who have had to live with the lifelong burden of secrecy and fear of being found out.

It is time that we adopted a more realistic, enlightened and inclusive attitude instead of burying our collective heads in the sand, and pursuing prejudiced, intolerant views which have prevailed for so long. Homophobia is destructive to the entire

community. It fosters hypocrisy, engenders deceit, and destroys lives.

It is vital that we as Jews acknowledge and face all serious social issues that confront us. Denying that they exist deprives those who are affected by them of much-needed information, education and support, often with tragic consequences. Only by admitting that we share the same human issues as other communities, can we find the strength to tackle them.

Prejudice against minority groups is reprehensible, as we Jews are well aware. Having suffered so much as a result of intolerance and bigotry, we should certainly not discriminate against others, let alone members of our own community.

Our community newspaper is the logical and correct forum for the discussion of important social matters, and the editor is to be applauded for taking the lead in airing this important issue, open discussion of which is long overdue.

Diane Armstrong
Dr Michael Armstrong
Professor Peter Baume AO
Helen Bersten and Ian Bersten
Dr Dasia Black-Gutman
and Bernard Kezelman
Professor Henry Brodaty AO
Sophie Caplan OAM
Leslie Caplan AM
Professor David A Cooper
Emeritus Professor Sol Encel and Diana Encel
Emeritus Professor Graham de Vahl Davis AM
Dr Vivianne de Vahl Davis

Alan Gold
Joanna Kalowski
Josie Lacey OAM
Professor Ron Penny AO
Justice Mahla Pearlman AM
His Honour Judge Peter Rose
Dr Joachim Schneeweiss AM
Diane Shteinman AM
Alan and Anne Slade
His Honour Judge Ron Solomon
Professor Colin Tatz AO
Dr Alex Wodak
Associate Professor John Ziegler