

Our daughter is both moral and gay

WE understand that it is *Australian Jewish News* policy not to publish anonymous letters, but in light of the sensitivity of this topic, we ask you to respect our need for anonymity as we have not yet "come out".

With reference to the New South Wales Rabbinical Council's statement on homosexuality, we are shocked at the narrow-mindedness and presumptuousness of equating homosexuality with promiscuity, which is implicit in its statement (AJN 23/2/01).

Although our daughter is gay, she was brought up to lead a decent and moral Jewish life, and we are outraged that our family, and many others in the same situation, can be insulted by the rabbinate in this way.

It is well known that a large percentage of the heterosexual population is promiscuous, and a generalisation labelling the whole homosexual population as promiscuous is unfair.

It seems to us that instead of mouthing pious platitudes, the rabbinate should learn to deal on an individual and compassionate basis

with the homosexual people within their communities.

It is sad that they also do not seem to be aware of the difficulties faced by homosexual individuals who would like to remain within the communities, but are often alienated by comments and insults such as these from the rabbinate.

We are proud parents of a gay, yet highly moral, beautiful daughter.

Name withheld

Human rights

AS co-convenor of Dayenu — the Association for Jewish Gays and Lesbians — I have given five interviews to mainstream press and radio in the last few days. They have all asked me to respond to the rabbis' comments.

We are offended and concerned about the misapprehension and underlying assumptions that lump the words "homosexuality and promiscuity" into the same sentence, as if they are interchangeable activities.

Promiscuity is no more or less the domain of homosexual experience as it is of heterosexual experience. The vast majority of gays and lesbians in our group, as I would suspect in the broader Jewish community — both heterosexual and homosexual — are in long-term, committed and loyal relationships.

We also believe that the reality of Jewish gay and lesbian lives cannot be ignored. Many Jews from all sectors of the Jewish community — Reform, Conservative, Orthodox and secular — identify as gays and lesbians.

We cannot condone the belief which can be crudely described as "love the sinner, hate the sin". Jewish gays and lesbians have the same rights to, and needs for, intimacy, love, sex and human relationship as do Jewish heterosexuals.

Ultimately, it's a human rights issue.

Judy Kell
Sydney, NSW

I was there

IN response to Otto Waldman's outburst criticising Jewish involvement in a charitable activity on Easter Sunday (AJN 2/3/01):

I am one of those "crazy and insane" *kipa*-toting Temple Emanuel Jews who have been actively involved for the last eight years, along with many of my fellow *kehilla* members from Emanuel, Moriah and other shules, who responded to Rev Bill Crewes' cry for help.

The Ashfield Uniting Church feeds the homeless and street people every day of the year — yes, every day of the year — and depends on the assistance of voluntary groups. He asked if Easter Sunday was a convenient day to help out, and without hesitation we agreed.

I hope the Jewish community will always respond to a call for help, irrespective of who was asking, the cause and what day it was. I invite Mr Waldman to help feed the poor and hungry, instead of pointing his ill-informed finger at good people.

Tikkun olam — in this case, helping to feed the hungry in our Sydney community. We still need volunteers.

David Toben
Temple Emanuel

Reform's way

"THE rabbis weren't sure if Australia was ready for it [same-sex commitment ceremonies], but said they would review the law to see if they could get around it *Halachically*" (AJN 16/2/01).

Well, thank goodness Reform rabbis are making another "*Halachic*" decision. They've changed, rearranged,

sliced and diced according to their rabbis, male and female, for years. On what laws do they base their decisions? They make up their rules as they go.

Thank-you, leaders of Reform Judaism, for doing it your way. Taking God's Word and doing with it as you please. How convenient. We already know you do interfaith marriages; what's next?

I know four-year-olds who attend Orthodox dayschools who know more about Judaism than my peers who grew up with Reform education. Who do you think will pass on more to their children? For that matter, of the Jewish children (Jewish by real *Halacha*, not do-as-you-please Reform style) whom Reform educates, how many will marry Jews? My money is on the four-year-old Orthodox kid.

David Rosner
Bellevue Hill, NSW

