



Executive Council of Australian Jewry

MEDIA RELEASE

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Historic Interfaith Meeting in Sydney

Representatives of Anglicanism and Judaism, two faiths present in Australia since the arrival of the First Fleet, held an inaugural national dialogue in Sydney this week.

Delegates from the National Synod of the Anglican Church and of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) met at Sydney's historic Great Synagogue in an effort "to learn about and from each other, strengthen understanding and cooperation and explore collaboration in the interests of a more just Australia", Grahame Leonard, president of the ECAJ said.

"The meeting was held in an atmosphere of respect, honesty and a genuine desire to learn, which augurs well for the future", Dr Ray Cleary, head of the Anglican delegation, added.

After representatives of each group outlined the organisational structure of their communities and introduced themselves, the delegations reflected on two significant subjects, "A Jew called Jesus" and "Theological consequences of the Holocaust". The first topic led to a discussion on the way in which Jews understand Christian teaching, how the Christian Testament can be read to reflect the realities of the time of the birth of Christianity, and the offensiveness to Jews of groups which use deception as a means of proselytising.

The question of the Holocaust was very topical, as the dialogue took place during the week in which Jewish communities around the world commemorate the victims of the Nazis' Genocide.

The Anglican delegates were Reverend Dr Ray Cleary, Reverend Ray Barraclough, Archdeacon Philip Newman and Reverend Dr Gregory Jenks. The ECAJ delegates were ECAJ president Grahame Leonard, ECAJ Deputy President Rabbi John Levi, Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence and ECAJ Immediate Past President Jeremy Jones.

The next meeting of the group, which will be known as the Anglican Jewish Australian Dialogue (AJAD,) is scheduled to take place in Melbourne in August.

For further information or to arrange interviews, contact:

Grahame Leonard on 0411 462 242 or Dr Ray Cleary on 03 9321 6133.