



Executive Council of Australian Jewry

MEDIA RELEASE

ECAJ/ZFA DELEGATION RECEIVES POSITIVE RECEPTION IN CANBERRA

Grahame Leonard, President, Executive Council of Australian Jewry and Zionist Federation of Australia President, Philip Chester led a joint delegation to Australia's capital on 29th May 2006 to meet separately with Israel's Ambassador, Mr Nati Tamir, and Federal politicians, the Hon Alexander Downer and the Hon Malcolm Turnbull.

Delegates included Bill Arnold (President, Australian Capital Territory Jewish Community), David Knoll (President, New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies), Ian Lacey AM (ECAJ New South Wales Councillor), Josie Lacey OAM (ECAJ Honorary Secretary), Dr Danny Lamm (President, State Zionist Council of Victoria and ECAJ Victorian Councillor) and Geoffrey Zygiel (ECAJ Executive Director).

The meeting with the Ambassador covered a wide range of issues including concerns about Iran's nuclear ambitions, Israel's relationship with New Zealand and potential visits to Australia by Israeli dignitaries in the coming months. Mr Tamir described the Australia/Israel relationship as "excellent" and praised the Australian Jewish community's contribution to this positive situation.



L-R: Ian Lacey, Josie Lacey, David Knoll, Danny Lamm, Philip Chester,
The Hon Alexander Downer, Grahame Leonard, Bill Arnold.

Foreign Minister Downer welcomed the group and discussion centred on two key questions, once again on Iran, and about growing antisemitism in Europe accompanied by the growth of radical Islam on that continent. In regard to the former, Mr Downer and delegates agreed Iran is a concern for all of its neighbours, not merely Israel, and indeed for the entire world. As for the European situation, Mr Downer noted that many of its governments were less supportive of Israel and of local Jewish communities than they might be. The discussion was frank and helped cement an already warm relationship with Minister Downer.



L-R: Philip Chester, David Knoll, Bill Arnold, Grahame Leonard, Josie Lacey, The Hon Malcolm Turnbull, Danny Lamm, Ian Lacey

As the Member for Wentworth, Mr Turnbull is well acquainted with the Jewish Community and for that matter, some delegation members. The affable conversation focused largely on security concerns and the direction of reform of sedition laws. The ECAJ has been invited to make submissions on sedition law reform and will do so.

As Grahame Leonard stated to Mr Downer, "...the Australian Jewish Community is very appreciative of the opportunity to present its views in such an open manner, and particularly of the Government's fulsome support, continuing a tradition of many previous Australian Governments".

Further information: Geoffrey Zygiar

Mobile: 0413 731 545

Email: info@ecaj.org.au