

# Executive Council of Australian Jewry Inc.

הוועד הפועל של  
יהודי אוסטרליה

## The Representative Organisation of Australian Jewry

2nd Floor  
306 Hawthorn Road  
Caulfield South Victoria  
Australia 3162  
Tel (03) 9272 5579  
Fax (03) 9272 5540  
Web [www.ecaj.org.au](http://www.ecaj.org.au)  
E-mail [info@ecaj.org.au](mailto:info@ecaj.org.au)

### PRESIDENT

Grahame J. Leonard

### DEPUTY PRESIDENT

Rabbi John Levi AM DD

### HON. TREASURER

Sam Salcman

### HON. SECRETARY

Josie Lacey OAM

### EXEC. DIRECTOR

Geoffrey Zygier

### VICE PRESIDENTS

Anton Block (VIC)

David Knoll (NSW)

Keith Shilkkin (WA)

David Paratz (QLD)

Norman Schueler (SA)

Daniel Albert (TAS)

Bill Arnold (ACT)

### CONSTITUENTS:

Jewish Community Council  
of Victoria Inc  
New South Wales Jewish  
Board of Deputies  
Jewish Community Council of  
Western Australia Inc  
Queensland Jewish Board of  
Deputies  
Jewish Community Council  
of South Australia  
Hobart Hebrew Congregation  
ACT Jewish Community Inc

### AFFILIATES:

Australasian Union of Jewish  
Students  
Australian Federation of WIZO  
Union for Progressive  
Judaism - Australia  
Federation of Australian  
JewishCare  
Maccabi Australia Inc  
National Council of Jewish  
Women of Australia



The Hon Alexander Downer MP  
PO Box 1601  
Mt Barker SA 5251

21 December 2006

Dear Mr Downer

I write on behalf of the Australian Jewish community to request that the Federal Government undertake appropriate diplomatic action to secure the freedom of Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury, due to go on trial soon in Bangladesh on sedition charges.

You will be aware that Mr Choudhury is a journalist who has undertaken a very courageous campaign in his native Bangladesh promoting understanding between followers of the Abrahamic religions and seeking to counter the demonisation of Israel. For his pains Mr Choudhury has suffered assault, imprisonment and attempts to paint him as an Israeli spy. There has been an international campaign to have these charges dropped, but as yet to no avail.

On 14 December 2003, the New York Times editorialised:

*Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury, a Muslim editor and commentator in Bangladesh, has a rare virtue — he champions dialogue and decency in a culture hemmed in by extremism and corruption.*

Rare indeed; the world needs brave and principled people such as Mr Choudhury, particularly in the battle against Islamic extremism which you discussed at our recent annual conference. The Australian Jewish community protests the charges against Mr Choudhury and urge that they be dropped in accordance with Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, namely:

*Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.*

I look forward to your positive response.

Yours truly

Grahame J. Leonard  
President