

Executive Council of Australian Jewry Inc.

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MEDIA RELEASE
22 December 2006

ECAJ President criticises David Irving's release

Grahame Leonard, the President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the peak body of the Australian Jewish community, said today:

“The timing of the Vienna Regional High Court’s decision to convert the remainder of the sentence of Holocaust denier David Irving to probation is unfortunate to say the least, coming as it did on the heels of Iran’s disgraceful Holocaust conference.

The Court may well have had good legal reasons for deciding as it did. However Holocaust denial is invariably tied up with vilification of Jews in general and attacks on Israel; it is a hate crime pure and simple. Thus this decision has sent the very dangerous message that while antisemitism may be criminal, perhaps it’s just not *that* bad.

Further, this may well have the effect of vindicating Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s anti-Jewish activities in his own mind and even embolden him regarding Iran’s development of nuclear weapons. In a year that has witnessed very high levels of anti-Jewish activity around the world, there is an ever greater need for social institutions and individuals to take a firm stand in declaring it unacceptable. This is not just an issue for the Jewish people, but for civilised, decent people in general”

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