



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY Inc.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 25th January 2008

1. David Burnett

We were all shocked at the death of David, an outstanding Jewish student leader and a young man who in time would undoubtedly have continued to add great lustre to our communal endeavours. I have written to his family expressing our condolences.

2. ADC

Anton Block and I met with Michael Lipshutz and John Searle (the Chair and Deputy Chair of ADC) in Melbourne on Wednesday 23 January. The meeting was cordial and productive. I hope to be in a position to report more fully on future arrangements between the ECAJ and the ADC shortly.

3. Durban 2

The Durban 2 sub committee and the Executive approved the terms of the following a letter that was sent to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Steve Smith, on 21 January 2008.

4. Meeting with Minister for Foreign Affairs

A meeting has been tentatively arranged for 11 February given that the Minister will be in Canberra and a number of the Executive will be there on that date. It appears likely the issue of Durban 2 will also be on the agenda.

5. Sydney Morning Herald

Most disturbingly, the SMH has recently published 2 adverse editorials and a spate of hostile letters and has not published letters in support of Israel that we now have been submitted in relation to the current events in Gaza. This despite an Press Council ruling adverse to the SMH on similar issues in 2003 and commitments previously given to the NSW Board. I am informed by the NSW Board that they have arranged to meet with the editor of the SMH on 29th January. The Board is keeping us informed and we are monitoring the position closely.

6. WJC Governing Board Meeting

I have been encouraged to attend the meeting in Jerusalem on 29th January 2008 and propose to do so. I have been invited to address the Governing Board, which I will do highlighting the issues we face and within Australia and in the region. The ECAJ will pay my return economy class airfare. I will remain in Israel until 6 February so that I can meet with as many people as possible. The Embassy, Sam Salcman and Isi Leibler have been most helpful in arranging meetings. David Knoll will be acting President in my absence.

7. CoM Meeting

As previously advised the next meeting of the CoM will be in Sydney on Wednesday 13 February 2008 at 7.30 pm. Teleconference arrangements will be notified shortly. In the meantime please send any agenda items to Robin Margo by 5 February.

8. Welfare subcommittee

The Working party established at the AGM to consider the issue of a reinvigorated Welfare Federation will conduct a teleconference meeting on 1 February to consider a draft Business Case, prepared by Robyne Schwartz, David Brous and Bruce Salvin. In my absence Peter Wertheim will represent me at that conference. Once a recommendation emerges it will be circulated to the CoM.

9. Church Mission To Middle East Follow Up

A meeting with the church leaders who recently travelled to the middle east will be held in Sydney on 4 March 2008. The ECAJ delegation will be decided at the next CoM meeting.

10. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism

Dr Gregg Rickman the US Congress' Special Envoy, met with representatives of the ECAJ and the NSW Board today and will be meeting with representatives of the JCCV and ADC in Melbourne tomorrow. The meeting was most useful and the information will be reported by him to Congress in February ahead of the publication by Congress of a comprehensive report on the subject. We will shortly be preparing a strategy for combating antisemitism for presentation at a future meeting of the CoM.

11. Interfaith

Jeremy Jones will represent the ECAJ at the next meeting of the Australian Partnership of Religious Organisations, on January 30. The main agenda items are a review of the 2007 Heads of Faith forum, and a discussion of the 2009 Parliament of World Religions (Nina Bassett is on the advisory committee, which is based in Melbourne).

The Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims & Jews, meeting in Sydney on February 7th for the second part of a discussion on transmitting values. The ECAJ delegation at the first part of the discussion, in November, was Jeremy, Josie Lacey (representing Grahame Leonard), Yair Miller, Rabbi Kamins, Peta Pellach and Slava Inberg and Leanne Donde (nominated by AUJS). I propose that the same group with the addition of Peter Wertheim if available, attend on 7 February.

The Uniting Church Dialogue will take place on April 8 and the composition of the ECAJ representatives will be discussed at the next CoM meeting.

12. Litigation

The Grigor-Scott appeal proceedings are listed for directions on February 8; and the Toben contempt proceedings are listed for directions on February 28.