

306 HAWTHORN ROAD
CAULFIELD SOUTH
VICTORIA AUSTRALIA 3162

TELEPHONE 03 9272 5566
FACSIMILE 03 9272 5560
info@jccv.org.au
www.jccv.org.au

ARN A0039459M

PATRONS
BASSAT FAMILY
BARRY & SUZI CARP
DEBBIE DADON
SIMON & LISA DE WINTER
DR ALAN FINKEL AM
ZAC FRIED
DAVID GOLDBERGER
JACK GRINGLAS
GEORGE KLINE
JUSTIN LIBERMAN
FRANK & MIRIAM TISHER
LORRAINE TOPOL

PRESIDENT
NINA BASSAT AM
VICE PRESIDENT
DR HELEN LIGHT AM
TREASURER
IAN JONES



JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF VICTORIA SUBMISSION 21ST SEPTEMBER 2012

Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Organisations

The Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV) is the roof body of Victorian Jewry, Australia's largest Jewish community. With over sixty major communal organisations as its affiliates, the JCCV represents the religious, political, cultural, welfare, educational, religious and social associations operating in Victoria, providing leadership and a voice for Victorian Jewry's 60,000 members.

The JCCV recognises its role in providing transparency, leadership and support for organisations working with children and victims of child abuse. Although we do not ourselves work with children, beneath our umbrella are schools, synagogues, youth and sporting groups, whilst a number of private operators run child care centres and other facilities.

The recent public, cases of child abuse within the community has caused wide ranging concern. These range from guilt from those who failed to protect children within their care; fear, anger and shame amongst the abused and carers; and a loss of trust in schools and other facilities to be safe environments. Child abuse has only recently emerged as endemic and there are many who do not understand the extent of the problem or are too ashamed to discuss the issue, let alone know whom to approach for help.

The Jewish community is fortunate to have existing services such as the Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence, Jewish Care and the Association of Jewish Psychologists. These groups provide education within our schools about prevention; education to the Rabbinate on family violence; counselling and support services; as well as liaison and referral to specialist groups.

The JCCV itself is not a regulator, funder or specialist body in the area of dealing with children so it is not in a position to formulate policy or services. It is however constituted to provide leadership, coordination and wellbeing for the Victorian Jewish Community. Indeed, the constitutional purpose, aims and objects are as follows:

1. To represent the Jewish community of Victoria;
2. To promote unity of endeavour and of action within the Jewish community of Victoria, and to co-ordinate the work of the various organisations of the Victorian Jewish community;
3. To secure, safeguard and further the religious, political, economic, social, civil and cultural rights, welfare and interest of Jews in Victoria and elsewhere;
4. To take such action as it considers necessary on behalf of the Victorian Jewish community in any matter that concerns Victorian Jewry or Jews elsewhere.

Given our constitutional requirements, the concern within the community and the prevalence of child abuse, it is incumbent upon the JCCV to be facilitate discussion and be aware of and promote best practice policy, standards and education to assist individuals, families and organisations.

Thus far the JCCV has implemented the following initiatives:

- **2005** conducted a public forum on child sexual abuse to raise awareness;
- **July 2011** issued a [joint statement](#) with ECAJ and RCV against child sexual abuse (view online only);
- **July 2011** published a [media release](#): JCCV Dismayed by Allegations of Sexual Abuse (attached);
- **Aug 2011** published a [joint media release](#) with the Australian Jewish Psychologists to offer support to Victims & Perpetrators of Sexual Abuse
- **Aug 2011** conducted a [parent forum](#) for parents on protecting our children with guest speakers from SECASA, social work and the Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence;
- **June 2012** issued a [statement](#) against child sexual abuse (attached); and
- **June 2012** drafted a child protection policy to be published in November 2012 once ratified by affiliates (attached).
- **Aug 2012** Circulated FCDC inquiry amongst affiliates requesting that all organisations, especially those working with children, input directly to the committee or indirectly via the JCCV.

However, the JCCV is cognisant of being more proactive in raising awareness of the issues and services for parents, carers and organisations that act to deter child abuse and support victims. There are a number of activities that we are currently investigating in order to develop a comprehensive plan.

Below is an outline of these activities:

- Form an advisory committee with key stakeholders and experts within the community to advise on future direction, community need and existing support.
- Build networks and relationships with service providers such as the police, SECASA and the Taskforce Against Family Violence to assist with the circulation of support services and information.
 - o Network with other faith and multicultural bodies to stay informed.
- Promote materials on child abuse that:
 - o Raise awareness of child abuse as an issue affecting all communities, including the Jewish community;
 - o Provide adults with materials about the nature of the issue to better equip them with skills to prevent child abuse;
 - o Communicate key prevention messages that parents can share with their children to reduce the risk of abuse;

- Ensure the community is aware of best practice in both prevention and dealing with victims of child abuse and facilitate implementation of same;
- Inform people as to support and help lines; and
- Create a communal culture and climate in which the subject can be discussed openly and with confidence that the appropriate understanding and assistance will be provided.

As we are still in the process of developing our strategy and meeting with stakeholders, we request the opportunity to present our recommendations to the committee.

We commend the FCDC on the inquiry and look forward to discussing the submission with you in more detail. Please direct any queries to Nina Bassat AM on 9272 5566 or Jo Silver, Project Manager, on 9272 5642.

Nina Bassat AM
President
Jewish Community Council of Victoria

The JCCV SPEARHEADING THE COMMUNITY IN PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL ABUSE

15 August, 2011



306 HAWTHORN ROAD
CAULFIELD SOUTH
VICTORIA AUSTRALIA 3162

TELEPHONE 03 9272 5566
FACSIMILE 03 9272 5560
info@jccv.org.au
www.jccv.org.au

ARN A0039459M

PRESIDENT
JOHN SEARLE

VICE PRESIDENT
NINA BASSAT AM

TREASURER
MORY KALKOPF

Realising the need to raise awareness within our community of sexual abuse of children, the Jewish Community Council of Victoria conducted a parent forum on this issue on Sunday evening, 14 August. JCCV President John Searle said: “there is no group of people more precious, more loved, more vulnerable and therefore more in need of protection than our children. Therefore we needed this forum to raise community awareness about the prevalence of child sexual abuse and look at how parents may prevent abuse happening to their children’.

A panel of experts addressed the emerging research and how ‘stranger danger’ is not the issue for our children. The panel included Sheiny New - Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence, Mary Mass - South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault (SECASA) and Vivien Resofsky - social worker.

The panel, chaired by Searle, reported that the incidence of child sexual abuse in our community is on par with other communities and incidents are on the rise. Facts from the SECASA website show that in the overwhelming majority of instances, the perpetrator is the father, stepfather, mother's de facto partner, brother, uncle or grandfather of the Victim.

Sheiny New told parents it is critical that children know they can tell their Mummy or an adult their ‘secret’ and they must keep telling adults until they are believed and action is taken. As many children feel guilty and that their Mummy will no longer love them, Sheiny said: “Look into your child’s eye and let them know that no matter what they do or what is done to them, Mummy and Daddy will always love them”.

Mary Mass said that SECASA receives 30-50 new referrals a week from new and ‘old’ cases that have never been reported. Mary stated that belief is critical: “You must believe what you children tell you and trust that if your child is uncomfortable with an adult, then do not force them to go with that adult. Believe your child, look for warning signs and investigate”.

Vivien Resofky concluded by saying that parents must talk about it, schools must talk about it and referred parents to Wesley's World series of books, a parent/child guide to personal safety that she has authored.

Help and information can be found at:

- JTAFFV - <http://www.jewishtaskforce.com.au> / 9523 2100 during office hours
- SECASA - <http://www.secasa.com.au> / 24 hour crisis line - 1800 806 292
- Kids Helpline – a 24 hour crisis line – 1800 55 1800

For further information, please contact:

John Searle, President JCCV – (03) 9272 5566

Michelle Coleman, Executive Director JCCV – (03) 9272 5579





3.30 Child Protection

This Council:

3.30.1 AFFIRMS that all children have the right under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

3.30.2 NOTES that the Victorian Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005) establishes *inter alia* the fundamental principles that:

- i. society as a whole shares responsibility for promoting the wellbeing and safety of children; and
- ii. those who develop and provide services, as well as parents, should give the highest priority to the promotion and protection of a child's safety, health, development, education and wellbeing.

3.30.3 ITERATES Jewish values that emphasise the importance of our youth, and Jewish laws that recognise the vulnerability of children and prohibit physical, emotional, verbal and sexual abuse of children of any and all kinds from any source.

3.30.4 ACKNOWLEDGES that the Jewish community is not immune from the scourge of child abuse. It occurs in all societies, in all faiths, at all socio-economic levels and within all levels of religious observance.

3.30.5 ENCOURAGES Jewish communal groups and organisations who work with children to develop policies and procedures, and to provide educational programs to ensure the safety of those children in their care.

3.30.6 AFFIRMS its support for Recommendation 10 in the Victorian Parliamentary Enquiry into Vulnerable Children, which states:

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development should develop a wide-ranging education and information campaign for parents and caregivers of all school-aged children on the prevention of child sexual abuse.

3.30.7 CALLS UPON anyone who has knowledge or evidence of child abuse to report it to the appropriate authorities, namely the Department of Human Services or its equivalent or Victoria Police.

3.30.8 CALLS UPON the Jewish community to do its utmost to support and assist those members of the community who make disclosures of abuse and to avoid the imposition of any stigma, ridicule or discrimination against those who have reported or suffered such abuse



Statement on child abuse

For immediate release

There is a great degree of anxiety and pain within our community on the question of child abuse. Child abuse in any form whatsoever and wheresoever it happens, is horrific and beyond understanding. When child abuse occurs either within a home, or within an institution, where a child expects safety and guidance and understanding, the hurt and the bewilderment are exacerbated. The ramifications, on the victims, on their families and indeed on our entire community, are life-long and cause untold damage.

In July 2011, the JCCV issued a strong and unequivocal statement about its stance on child abuse, asked all those with knowledge of alleged abuse to contact the police and offered assistance. This was followed by a joint statement from the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the Jewish Community Council of Victoria, the Organisation of Rabbis of Australia and the Rabbinical Council of Victoria.

There seems to be a lack of clarity in the community about the JCCV position. Let me re-iterate it in the strongest possible terms.

Last year, the JCCV condemned all manner of child abuse - sexual, emotional, psychological, physical in the strongest possible terms. I repeat that condemnation and again offer support to any member of our community, either by way of referral to the appropriate authorities or services, or by way of advocacy.

The time has come when we need to go beyond statements. We must all talk and seek a resolution to the problem. The JCCV proposes to bring together schools, Rabbis and organisational leaders to discuss how we can not only support victims of prior events, but how we can best put in place methodology which will prevent future victims. My hope is that all those who are invited will attend and my further hope is that from this, will come a stronger and better community.

For further information call 9272 5566

JCCV DISMAYED BY ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE
13 July 2011



JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL
OF VICTORIA INC
מועצת הקהילה היהודית בוויקטוריה
ידישער קהילה-ראט פון וויקטאריע

306 HAWTHORN ROAD
CAULFIELD SOUTH
VICTORIA AUSTRALIA 3162

TELEPHONE 03 9272 5566
FACSIMILE 03 9272 5560
info@jccv.org.au
www.jccv.org.au

ARN A0039459M

PRESIDENT
JOHN SEARLE

VICE PRESIDENT
NINA BASSAT AM

TREASURER
MORY KALKOPF

The Jewish Community Council of Victoria is disturbed by the recent allegations of sexual abuse at Yeshivah College. JCCV President, John Searle said, “we abhor the abuse of children in any way, be it physical, sexual, emotional or psychological, and particularly when it is perpetrated by those in positions of trust and authority at our communal institutions”.

Searle went on to say: “we strongly encourage anybody with information about the alleged abuse to contact the police so that justice can be achieved for all. If anybody is in any way reluctant to come forward, I would ask them to contact either the JCCV or the Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence for assistance and support. The JCCV has already made offers of support to both the Yeshivah Centre and victims, and will continue to do so as long as is necessary. We are able to facilitate with access to appropriate counselling and support services, as well as mediate with police”.

Searle continued, “we take these complaints very seriously and encourage all organisations – whether JCCV affiliate members or not – to constantly review the steps they have in place to ensure the safety and security of our children. It is hard to imagine anything more important than the welfare of our children.”

Searle concluded by saying “the victims of this abuse need support and assistance from every avenue in our community and the JCCV will do whatever it can to assist all of the victims.”

For further information, please contact:
John Searle, President JCCV – (03) 9272 5566



JCCV and AJP partner to offer support to victims and perpetrators of sexual abuse

1st August, 2011



JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL
OF VICTORIA INC
מועצת הקהילה היהודית בוויקטוריה
ידישער קהילה-ראט פון וויקטאריע

The Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV) and Australian Jewish Psychologists Inc (AJP) have partnered to offer support to those who have been affected by the latest child abuse scandal.

This support extends to victims, perpetrators and their families, all of whom may have been deeply affected by the alleged abuse, media coverage of the matter and reactions in the community.

“As professionals we are trained to treat trauma regardless of whether it is associated with the alleged perpetrator, victim, or associated family and friends,” said AJP President Dr Nicky Jacobs.

Anyone requiring counselling by experienced Jewish psychologists should call the JCCV on (03) 9272 5566 and your number will be passed on to AJP. Callers are not required to provide their names to ensure anonymity, however should they wish to provide them, their call will be kept strictly confidential.

JCCV President John Searle said: “As the voice of Victorian Jewry, we are pleased to be able to assist in ensuring that those in our community who are in need of counselling receive the support they require. As AJP is an affiliate of the JCCV and does not have a reception facility, we are more than happy to be able to offer our services to ensure this important work is done”.

“The JCCV will also be hosting a community education evening on 14th August that focuses on empowering our children to be safe from child sexual assault. A number of experts will be presenting.”

AJP was established in 2000 in response to the Maccabiah bridge disaster in Israel. The organisation aims to make a professional contribution to the Jewish community and provide a forum for discussion of issues relevant to Jewish psychologists.

AJP members are all volunteers and are registered psychologists, many of whom speak Yiddish, Hebrew and other languages.

For further information, please contact:

John Searle, President JCCV – (03) 9272 5566

Michelle Coleman, Executive Director JCCV – (03) 9272 5579

306 HAWTHORN ROAD
CAULFIELD SOUTH
VICTORIA AUSTRALIA 3162

TELEPHONE 03 9272 5566
FACSIMILE 03 9272 5560
info@jccv.org.au
www.jccv.org.au

ARN A0039459M

PRESIDENT
JOHN SEARLE

VICE PRESIDENT
NINA BASSAT AM

TREASURER
MORY KALKOPF

