



New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies

The Representative Organisation of NSW Jewry
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NSWJBD -- Anti-racism Policy -- July 2004

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BASIC PRINCIPLES

The concept of *Tikkun Olam* (mending the world) is a basic tenet of Judaism and commits Jews to work for the betterment of their community and all of humanity.

Australia's ethnic, religious and cultural diversity enriches our society. The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies (NSWJBD) regards this diversity as an essential part of our heritage and a source of pride.

The International Convention on the *Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (ICERD) provides that signatories "undertake to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and promoting understanding among races." Australia is one of the many signatories.

The NSWJBD adopts the principles underlying the ICERD.¹

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Racism is morally wrong and public expressions of racial hatred are against the law.

NSWJBD member organisations and individuals will comply with all current anti-racism and anti-discrimination legislation including the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 and the Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act 1975 [link 2b added](#). The NSWJBD commits to ensure that the Jewish community actively participates in all related legislative review.

¹ The ICERD is signed by member states, including Australia. However, non-Government organisations such as the NSWJBD can adopt its principles.

What is racism?

“The international definition of **racial discrimination** is contained in Article 1 of the ICERD. It states that the term 'racial discrimination' shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.” (*Source: HREOC 2001*)

Racism is based on false beliefs. Individuals, groups, systems, and institutions may behave in racist ways.

Racism targets many groups in our society. Antisemitism is the name for such acts against Jews.

Racism has existed in many forms in all societies over many centuries.

“Racism is not just an aberration of some small collection of people. To end racism, policies must change, racist behaviour must stop, the injustices from racism must be redressed, and all people must recover from the damage done to them by racism.” (*Source: United to End Racism*)

The Jewish community is committed to eliminating racism in NSW, Australia, and internationally.

NSWJBD will oppose racism both as it is reflected in personal attitudes and behaviours, and in relation to social, economic, political and cultural institutions that often reflect systematic disadvantage towards specific groups within society.

Education is crucial to preventing and combating racism.

For children, young people and adults in the Jewish and other communities, the NSWJBD will encourage and support educational efforts designed to:

- ◆ foster an understanding of the nature, history and effects of racism;
- ◆ foster respect, celebration, awareness and understanding of racial, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity;
- ◆ foster an awareness of different cultural practices and beliefs and the teaching of the value of diversity;
- ◆ dispel cultural myths and stereotypes about all people targeted by racism; and
- ◆ show that words and language have the power to diffuse or inflame racism.

Legal redress against racism is a last resort.

The Jewish community will continue to build strong relationships with other religious and ethnic communities.

The Jewish community has experience, skills and resources capable of monitoring racism and enabling the analysis of such information through communal organisations. The NSWJBD will encourage the sharing of resources and expertise with other communities. The NSWJBD will offer support to communities targeted by racism.

The NSWJBD recognises that Indigenous Australians have faced particular disadvantage through racism and dispossession, and will continue its efforts towards reconciliation with Aboriginal people and other activities to redress all forms of racism towards Indigenous people. (*See the NSWJBD statement on reconciliation.*) [link 2b added](#)

Attacks on refugees may be forms of racism. The NSWJBD will challenge treatment of refugees and asylum seekers that fail to meet internationally accepted standards, and will assist other groups in their efforts to bring about effective change in order to ensure compliance with such standards. (*See the NSWJBD statement on refugees.*) [link 2b added](#)

When a single group is targeted by racism, we are all targeted.²

The NSWJBD will support efforts to counter antisemitism and all other forms of prejudice and racism in the Australian community and internationally.

National and international events can trigger the targeting of specific communities at any one time. Examples are the recent increase in racism towards Jewish, Arab and Muslim communities, and the continuing hostility towards the Romany. Asians and Africans also continue to be the targets of racism in Australia.

Like all communities, racist attitudes and discrimination against others exist within the Jewish community.

The NSWJBD will provide leadership, resources and support for the Jewish community to counteract any manifestation of individual and institutionalised racism within the Jewish community.

The NSWJBD will encourage and facilitate opportunities for Jewish community members to participate in cross-cultural programs, reconciliation events and interfaith activities.

The media can have positive and negative impacts on racism within all communities.

The NSWJBD will continue to develop partnerships with the media, including the Jewish media. The media will be encouraged to:

- ◆ represent cultural diversity truthfully and fairly;
- ◆ reduce negative stereotyping of cultural groups; and
- ◆ combat rather than encourage racism.

The NSWJBD is committed to supporting efforts to end racism.

The NSWJBD's commitment to eliminating racism and racial discrimination will be reflected by concrete goals in its strategic planning process.

APPENDIX: USEFUL WEBSITES

- ◆ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC)
www.atsic.gov.au
- ◆ Community Relations Commission
www.crc.nsw.gov.au
- ◆ Courage to Care
www.couragetocare.com.au/frameset.asp
- ◆ Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
www.dimia.gov.au → Living in Harmony Initiative
- ◆ Fair Go Australia
www.fairgo.net
- ◆ Federation of Ethnic Community Councils of Australia (FECCA)
www.fecca.org.au
- ◆ Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)
www.hreoc.gov.au
- ◆ Racial Respect Inc.
www.racialrespect.org.au

² "Whoever destroys one life it is as though he has destroyed the entire world and whoever saves a single life it is as if he has saved the whole world." (Source: *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 4:5.)

- ◆ Racism No Way!
www.racismnoway.com.au/
- ◆ Reconciliation Australia
www.reconciliationaustralia.org
- ◆ The Australian Community action kit on racism
www.alhr.asn.au
- ◆ The Ethnic Community Council of NSW
www.eccnsw.of.au
- ◆ The World Conference Against Racism
www.un.org/WCAR/
- ◆ United Nations
www.un.org/english/
- ◆ United to End Racism
www.rc.org/uer
- ◆ Universal Declaration of Human Rights
www.unhchr.ch/udhr/