

30 May 2007

JBD STATEMENT TO MARK RECONCILIATION WEEK

The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies this week threw its weight behind the ongoing quest for reconciliation between the nation's indigenous community and all other Australians.

In a statement to mark Reconciliation Week, the Board of Deputies noted that the Jewish community "has been at the forefront of promoting reconciliation".

"Reconciliation between Australia's indigenous population and other Australians is of the utmost importance for Australia and for humanity," it said. "In the context of Jewish moral and religious teachings, we commit ourselves to the principles of reconciliation in all aspects of our lives.

"Just as the Jewish people have demanded and received apologies from many of those who have persecuted us through the ages, Australia's indigenous population is entitled to receive a similar apology both from governments which are the successors of those responsible for past suffering and injustice, and from the present generation in the collective name of our forebears.

"We express profound sorrow at the suffering and injustice experienced by indigenous Australians. We are conscious of the tragedies of the past as we strive to be part of a way forward.

"We recognise the commonality of experience that brings Australia's indigenous peoples together and, given our unique history of confronting racism, the special bond of understanding between our peoples.

"We commit to the creation of partnerships with Australia's indigenous population based on mutual respect. We commit ourselves to the education that must play a fundamental role. "The Board will continue to disseminate the principles enunciated in this statement to Jewish Australians and to the wider community.

"Australia's indigenous community is entitled to the fullest recognition of their human rights. Just as we abhor racism, xenophobia, discrimination, persecution and all forms of intolerance, we will work within our community and with the community at large and in partnership with Australia's indigenous peoples to remove these evils, especially as they affect them."

The Board of Deputies commended the dayschools which had conducted activities to highlight reconciliation, and North Shore Temple Emanuel for holding a function on Sunday evening to mark the 40th anniversary of the referendum which included Aborigines in the Australian population for the first time.

The above statement was based on the Board of Deputies' policy on reconciliation.

Released by: Vic Alhadeff, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Jewish Board of Deputies.