



Executive Council of
Australian Jewry

MEDIA RELEASE
27 November 2012

Statement on Child Sex Abuse and Reporting

ECAJ President, Dr Danny Lamm, and Executive Director, Peter Wertheim, met on Friday (November 23) with Yeshivah College Principal, Rabbi Yehoshua Smukler, Rabbi of Yeshivah Shule, Rabbi Zvi Telsner, General Manager Yeshivah Centre, Mrs. Nechama Bendet and executive members of the Yeshivah Centre Committee of Management, Chaim New and Michael Goldhirsch.

"We emphasised the ECAJ's repeatedly-stated position that communal organisations are obliged to implement proper safeguards against sexual abuse of children under their care and to report allegations of sexual abuse to the relevant authorities immediately and co-operate with their investigations", Dr Lamm said. **"Yeshiva was in complete agreement. We received a comprehensive briefing about how Yeshivah is working closely with Victoria Police in relation to the two alleged cases of child sexual abuse from the 1980's and 90's that are currently before the courts."** said Dr Lamm.

"We were also given an exhaustive explanation of the policies and practices that have been developed by the College to avoid abuse and to ensure that allegations of abuse are dealt with promptly and reported to the relevant law enforcement and welfare authorities."

Among other initiatives, the College says that it has undertaken regular training sessions and workshops with students, staff and the parent body in close consultation with:

SECASA (South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Abuse)

GATEHOUSE CENTRE of THE ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

DHS (Department of Human Services / Child Protection)

JERUSALEM CRISIS CENTRE (Director, Debbie Gross)

JTAFV (Jewish Task Force Against Family Violence)

"I understand that the College's policies, processes and programs have been commended by these agencies, which is an important step forward and a hopeful sign for the future," Dr Lamm said.

Speaking more generally Dr Lamm said that the known allegations of sexual abuse and cover-ups relate to specific individuals and organisations. "Once these have been dealt with by the courts and the Royal Commission, we will have a better idea of the extent of the problem in the community. In the meantime there does not appear to be any basis for concluding that these problems are endemic throughout the Jewish community, although it is possible that other organisations might yet come under scrutiny."

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