

# Executive Council of Australian Jewry Inc.

הוועד הפרועל של  
יהודי אוסטרליה

## The Representative Organisation of Australian Jewry

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14 July 2014

### EXPRESS POST

The Hon Kevin Andrews MP  
Minister for Social Services  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

### **Submission to the Australian Federal Government: A National approach to support for Jewish survivors of Child Sexual Abuse**

The following submission has been prepared by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) with the support of Jewish Care Victoria, Jewish Care (NSW), the Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV), the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies and the Rabbinical Council of Victoria (RCV).

#### **Background**

The problem of child sexual abuse within the Jewish community is reflective of the problem in the wider Australian community. The recent conviction of three perpetrators of child sexual abuse that occurred within Jewish schools and sporting groups clearly demonstrates that child sexual abuse has been, and may continue to be, present within Jewish institutions. The suffering survivors of child sexual abuse endure is significant and the effects long lasting.

*"It is critical that the increased awareness achieved by these public hearings is matched by the provision of assistance and support, both for those participating in and for those affected across the community."* – Prof David Forbes, Director of the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health, Department of Psychiatry, University of Melbourne.

Jewish survivors of abuse who seek help within the Jewish community need to have available to them professional, community-based counselling, advocacy and other support services. For these services to be trusted and widely accessed, they need to be provided in an empathetic way, ensure confidentiality and be culturally and religiously sensitive, and provided by suitably trained professionals in the health and community services sector.

The provision of these services must also be complemented by a strong, clear, united message by Jewish communal organisations of the necessity of reporting incidents promptly to the appropriate authorities: police or the Department of Human Services (Vic), NSW Department of Family & Community Services (NSW), or the equivalent in other states.

In order to ensure that support services are provided with the highest levels of transparency and accountability, the service-provider should be an organisation that operates within the established framework of governance of the Jewish community under the umbrella of the Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV), in Victoria; the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies in NSW; and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) at the national level.

### **Proposed service model**

Approximately 90% of Australian Jewry live in Victoria or NSW, and Jewish Care in those two states are the major Jewish welfare service providers in Australia, have substantial experience in these and related service areas, and have a well-established, favourable track record with both government and the Jewish community.

The proposed service model is based on Jewish Care (Vic) and Jewish Care (NSW) delivering the services and support to Jewish survivors of child sexual abuse nationally:

- Jewish Care (Vic): Victoria
- Jewish Care (NSW): New South Wales, other states and territories

Jewish Care in both states welcome the opportunity to expand these strategically aligned services given that they are already providing such services through their social justice programs, which are currently funded through community donations.

To expand these services the most closely aligned model to Jewish Care's existing activity and service provision is the model that seeks to support individual rights and entitlements of service users. The aim of this model is to act as a resource to individuals to enable them to access entitlements that should be available to them but for a range of systemic, policy and structural reasons are limited.

The role of the Support Person in this model may include:

- Determining if the individual and family is accessing all the services they require, such as counselling, psychological services, medical services and legal advice
- The provision of any counselling and psychological services within existing counselling structures
- Assisting the individual to gather all the facts they require to tell their story in order to seek legal or other justice
- Facilitating referrals to other Jewish Care programs
- Facilitating linkages and referral to specialist agencies including legal aid.

In this model, advocacy is integrated as part of a service response necessitating the:

- Employment of qualified and experienced practitioners who have the skills and content knowledge to advise and guide individuals and, if they wish, their trusted family and other supporters;
- Implementation of response protocols with clear parameters; and
- Partnering with specialist agencies (eg partnering with Community Legal Service, or other legal body in order to provide their resources for the activity).

This model does not seek to generate community and political commitment to broader societal change, or to influence government policy and legislation reform, although commentary on trends and themes that emerge from work with individuals may warrant reports to government, publications in professional and academic journals and media commentary.

### **Costs**

The success of this support model is based on the ability to employ suitably qualified and experienced practitioners in both states and to partner with value-add specialist agencies. Additionally, and over time, as Jewish Care gathers information that may help inform a position or identify themes or trends, the ability to share these learnings will enhance the effectiveness of the advocacy service and may provide an opportunity for a community education offering.

Integrating a support component within current services can be calculated by estimating an upper limit to a "package of support".

Thus, for each client who meets the criteria for the support program, the cost of providing a Total Package of Support would be up to \$200 per hour x 20hr service = \$4,000 per person. A minimum of 95 packages of support at a total starting cost of \$380,000 pa would be required nationally in order to commence the program, calculated as follows:

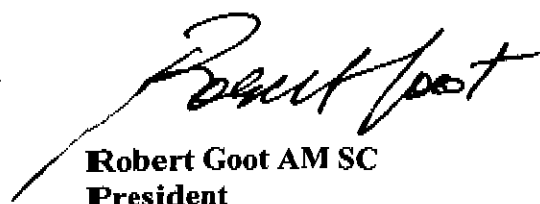
Victoria	40 packages	\$160,000 p.a.
NSW and other states	30 packages	\$120,000 p.a.
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National	70 packages	\$280,000 p.a. increasing by CPI annually

Jewish Care's efforts are focused on improving the lives of the most vulnerable in the community by focusing on individual needs and tailored responses. Expanding this support service to this endeavour will allow Jewish Care to remain true to its core responsibilities and vision.

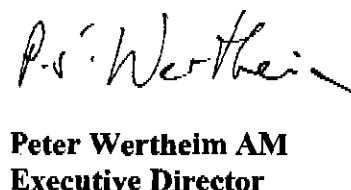
**Recommendation**

To effectively support the needs of Jewish survivors of child sexual abuse nationally (and their trusted family and other supporters), we recommend funding of \$280,000 p.a. (CPI adjusted annually) from the Australian Federal Government for a period of five years. This funding would greatly assist the survivors and their families, and prevent future healthcare and other costs that can otherwise arise from untreated issues arising from abuse, such as unemployment, family breakdown, substance abuse and psychological issues by providing culturally and religiously sensitive support.

Yours sincerely



**Robert Goot AM SC**  
**President**



**Peter Wertheim AM**  
**Executive Director**