

# Australian Jewish Democratic Society

*A Jewish Voice among Progressives • A Progressive Voice among Jews*

## OUR COMMITMENT

The Australian Jewish Democratic Society is committed to:

- Social justice and human rights
- Opposition to the vilification and mandatory detention of asylum seekers
- The struggle against all forms of racism, including anti-Semitism.
- Non-violent paths to conflict resolution
- The search for a negotiated solution to the Israel/Arab conflict.
- Equal rights, including land rights, for Indigenous Australians.

Since its founding in 1984, the AJDS has been active in promoting independent views within the Jewish and general community. We have organised symposia, debates and lectures on a wide variety of social issues. In keeping with our motto of a "*Jewish Voice among the progressives*, *A progressive voice among the Jews*" we have organised symposia, debates and lectures, reflecting the diversity and pluralism in the Jewish community. We disseminate a broad range of political views and ideas in articles, letters to the media and opinion pieces in our Newsletter.

## HEAL THE WORLD

AJDS appeals particularly to Jews who want to explore outside the square, whilst at the same time maintaining their Jewish identity and commitment to the security and wellbeing of Israel.

We support legislation prohibiting incitement to hatred and violence and regard any racial intolerance and discrimination as core Jewish concern. The AJDS believes that a strong commitment to education is a vital element in the continuing campaign for a more tolerant society. The AJDS encourages a critical and realistic assessment of the problems facing Israel and the Palestinians, and supports those who seek a just peaceful solution to the tragic and long-standing conflict. We believe that such a solution will have beneficial effects far beyond the region.

We believe that Jews have a special obligation to social justice and human rights, as expressed in the traditional concept of Tikkun Olam, "*heal the world*". We therefore regard the situation of Indigenous Australians as a national and international disgrace. The AJDS has sponsored a number of public meetings with Indigenous speakers.

The AJDS is a member of the Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV) and actively participates in debates and discussions at its plenum meetings.

## ACTIVITIES

Recent activities include:

- Hosting visits by peace activists and other speakers from Israel, the Palestinian Territories and elsewhere
- Taking a leading role in building the Victorian Peace Network and the opposition to the war on Iraq.
- Participating in the campaign for the rights of asylum seekers
- Promoting peace and reconciliation between Jewish and Arab youth and students
- Facilitating regular meetings between Palestinian and Jewish students
- Publishing articles and letters in the general media supporting the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
- Sponsoring a Middle East News Service that reaches thousands of people around the world daily with alternative information, chiefly from Israeli sources
- Assisting in campaigns for the people of East Timor, West Papua, the Naga people and many others
- Arranging meetings in support of justice for Indigenous Australian
- Facilitating regular meetings between Islamic and Jewish women