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Mr Peter Wright
Chair, ACHPER
317/91 Murphy Street
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Dear Mr Wright,

Please accept the accompanying report from my independent review of ACHPER Victoria's operations and culture, conducted by HLB Mann Judd.

The review identifies the determining factors which resulted in ACHPER Victoria producing and publishing a sample assessment product that contained factually incorrect material. Based on the findings, it makes recommendations to prevent this happening again.

ACHPER Victoria acknowledges it has made a serious mistake that has hurt members of the Jewish community. However, it is clear from the review that this mistake, as serious as it is, was isolated.

Based on the evidence before me, I can confidently conclude that this mistake was not a result of systemic or deliberate anti-Semitism, or any other cultural bias, within the organisation or among its leadership.

The review, however, finds that the mistake was the result of weaknesses in internal processes; principally, inadequate research and ineffective quality controls.

Specifically, the writer did not source unbiased, sufficiently referenced material despite this being a requirement of the role. The writer exercised poor judgement and acknowledges this. In addition, the quality control process in place failed to identify or address this.

The key recommendations contained in the review are that ACHPER Victoria:

- engage a quality control specialist to perform final reviews of all products prior to publication
- update induction materials and manuals for product development to emphasise requirements for factual accuracy and substantiated references – particularly in relation to culturally, politically or otherwise sensitive issues
- invest in training to support continuous improvement across the organisation, including training and education on cultural awareness, diversity and inclusion
- share learnings with other ACHPER branches and the national office.

The review's findings are based on evidence drawn from three primary methodologies:

- interviews with key staff, including the writer and editorial team who produced the material
- a review of the product development process
- anonymous surveys of customers, employees and the board.

There are a small number of findings that represent cause for further consideration. Two respondents indicated some negative experiences relating to inclusion and diversity in the anonymous staff survey. This does not, however, undermine the finding that the organisation as a whole, does not tolerate bias or discrimination. The review recommends ACHPER Victoria act to further embed this within the organisation.

In my role as Chair of the review, I have met with and subsequently communicated with, Jeremy Leibler, President of the Zionist Federation of Australia (ZFA). The purpose of this engagement was to explain the findings of the review and consider his response as leader of the ZFA and on behalf of the Jewish community stakeholders he and his organisation represents.

Mr Leibler provided a detailed response to which I too responded in detail, clarifying the substance and intent of the review, and addressing his concerns to the fullest extent possible and to the extent they were relevant to the basis of the review.

Although acknowledging the considerable work completed, Mr Leibler has expressed dissatisfaction with ACHPER Victoria and the review: specifically, he claims it has not 'conclusively investigated a potential anti-Semitic culture within ACHPER'. This is unfortunate as it is my informed opinion that the review is comprehensive, was acquitted professionally by HLB Mann Judd, and has adequately addressed its terms of reference.

In conclusion, I am confident this review has considered all the evidence necessary to identify the cause of the mistake and make recommendations to effectively ensure such an occurrence will not happen again.

I also wish to make mention of the willingness to cooperate and transparent exchange the review team has been afforded by the board, leadership and employees of ACHPER Victoria.

It has been clear to the consultants working on this project that the organisation has undertaken a significant amount of work, at considerable time and expense, with genuine commitment to addressing the root cause of this issue, comprehensively.

Finally, I wish to encourage ACHPER Victoria to use its role as trusted advisor to Victoria's teachers to stamp out anti-Semitism and other forms of racism. The damage racism causes to children and communities can not be underestimated and will always require determined and organised action from prominent leaders and institutions in the education system.

You have the opportunity to take what you have learned from this challenging period and apply it for the benefit of all Victorians.

Mr Peter Lewinsky
Chair, Independent Review of ACHPER Victoria