

Bialik College throws support behind 'marriage equality'

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BIALIK College is Australia's first K-12 school to become an online supporter of Australian Marriage Equality.org, an organisation supporting same-sex marriage, with principal Jeremy Stowe-Lindner saying students will benefit from the move.

The school, which has for some time been a member of the Safe Schools Coalition Australia (SSCA), now has its logo on the website, alongside academic institutions such as

Monash and Swinburne Universities.

Bialik's public endorsement places the Jewish school among some 800 Australian businesses, corporations and public organisations which have thrown their support behind same-sex marriage.

While the move will have no practical consequences and will not affect Bialik's curriculum, it will give added impetus to the school's commitment under its membership of SSCA "to ensure that all members of our community are included",

Stowe-Lindner told *The AJN*.

He described Bialik's commitment under SSCA as "anything from curriculum to teaching about sexuality to having safe spaces for children to talk about different challenges and concepts they may be grappling with".

Stowe-Lindner said Bialik's endorsement of "marriage equality" reflects its "liberal values".

Bialik's choice was praised by Michael Barnett, convenor of Jewish gay-rights group Aleph Melbourne, who urged all Jewish schools to add

their names to the Australian Marriage Equality online list of academic supporters.

"As a former student of Bialik College, I am exceedingly proud of my first high school today. They have come a long way since I attended in the early 1980s," he stated.

While Bialik is so far the only school to endorse "marriage equality" on the Australian Marriage Equality.org website, Helen Greenberg, Sholem Aleichem College principal, said her school is "fully supportive of gender

equity in marriage", and Anne Hastings, principal of Sydney's Emanuel School, said, "We unequivocally support the concept of marriage equality."

Meanwhile, ALP leader Bill Shorten last week endorsed an SSCA teaching guidebook designed to teach years 7 and 8 students about sexuality, despite concerns the manual will politicise sexual education. The manual, *All of Us*, reportedly includes role playing that encourages children to imagine themselves living in a same-sex relationship.