

Anti-Jewish jock's tour sparks fury

EXCLUSIVE

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Polish community leaders have expressed outrage at the Australian speaking tour of an "extremist" radio presenter who claims Jewish Holocaust victims are "outmanoeuvring and stealing" \$65 billion from the Polish people.

Stanisław Michalkiewicz's tour of mostly Polish churches and communal halls around Australia and New Zealand is organised by Nasza Polonia, a conservative Polish diaspora group that its organisers say has received money from the Polish government in the past.

Aleksander Gancarz, president of the Australian Institute of Polish Affairs, who has sent a letter to Polish community groups urging them to denounce Michalkiewicz, told *The Australian* his organisation was shocked and alarmed at the "highly provocative" visit.

"Michalkiewicz's past public statements breach the boundaries of the common moral code and civility. They are extreme and offensive, especially to the Jewish community," Mr Gancarz said.

Michalkiewicz is facing legal action in Poland for equating a sexual abuse victim, who was raped by a Catholic priest when she was 13, to a prostitute for being awarded 1 million zloty (\$365,000) in compensation, to be paid by the Catholic Church.

Radio Maryja, the Polish Catholic-owned station for which Michalkiewicz works, has drawn condemnation from the Vatican over his comments on Jewish compensation claims.

A shock jock and political figure affiliated with the Congress of the New Right party, Michalkiewicz has accused Holocaust victims seeking restitution or compensation for property and belongings seized during World War II of "stealing money from Poles".

He has claimed that Poland is being "outmanoeuvred by Jews" who are trying to force our

government to pay extortion money". Michalkiewicz has also said the Auschwitz Nazi extermination camp is only "temporarily" closed, ahead of Israeli politicians visiting the site.

With Michalkiewicz speaking only in Polish, his comments have not been criticised widely outside Poland. It is unclear whether his entry into Australia was subject to further scrutiny, and a Home Affairs Department spokesman said it did not comment on individual cases.

Adam Gajkowski, honorary president of Nasza Polonia Australia, the group responsible for paying for Michalkiewicz's flights, said condemnation of him was the result of "the very strong Jewish lobby" and that the group was "proud of the visit".

Executive Council of Australian Jewry co-chief executive Peter Wertheim said "the nonsense spouted by Michalkiewicz is symptomatic of the recent rise in the political fortunes of ultra-nationalist, anti-Semitic parties in Europe".

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