



**ANNUAL REPORT**

**OF THE**

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF  
AUSTRALIAN JEWRY**

**2006/5766**

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**Executive Council of Australian Jewry**

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## COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT AND COUNCILLORS – 2006

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AUJS PRESIDENT	GREG WEINSTEIN
UPJ PRESIDENT	PHYLLIS DOREY
JEWISH CARE AUSTRALIA PRESIDENT	EVA FISCHL OAM
MACCABI AUSTRALIA PRESIDENT	HARRY PROCEL
NCJW AUSTRALIA PRESIDENT	ROBYN LENN OAM
WIZO AUSTRALIA	JO GOSTIN
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ILONA LEE (NSW)  
MICHAEL LIPSHUTZ (VIC) (ret. 10/06)  
PHILIP MAYERS (VIC) (ret. 10/06)  
YAIR MILLER (NSW)  
JUDITH PERLSTEIN (VIC)  
STEPHEN ROTHMAN SC (NSW)  
RYSIA ROZEN OAM (VIC)  
ROBIN SCHUCK (NSW)  
JILLIAN SEGAL AM (NSW)

OBSERVER ORGANISATION  
PRESIDENTS

B'NAI B'RITH – JAMES ALTMAN  
ZIONIST FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA  
– DR RON WEISER (ret.04/06), PHILIP  
CHESTER  
NEW ZEALAND JEWISH COUNCIL –  
STEPHEN GOODMAN

CONSULTANTS

DR DVIR ABROMWICH (VIC)  
RABBI RAYMOND APPLE AO (NSW)  
(ret. 08/06)  
DR PAUL GARDNER (VIC)  
RABBI RALPH GENENDE (VIC)  
RABBI PHILIP HEILBRUNN (VIC)  
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ATHOL MORRIS (ACT)  
PETA JONES PELLACH (NSW)  
GAVIN QUEIT (VIC)  
IAN ROCKMAN (VIC)  
DR COLIN RUBINSTEIN AM (VIC)  
ROBIN STERN (NSW)  
PROFESSOR LOUIS WALLER AO (VIC)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GEOFFREY ZYGIER

## **ECAJ PRESIDENTS**

A. MASEL	1945 - 46
S. SYMONDS	1946 - 48
M. ASHKANASY, CMG, QC	1948 - 50 1954 - 56 1958 - 60 1962 - 64 1966 - 68
H. B. NEWMAN	1949 - 50
B. GREEN	1950 - 52
THE HON S.D. EINFELD, AO	1952 - 54 1956 - 58 1960 - 62 1964 - 66
G.Y. FALK, OBE, JP	1968 - 70
N. JACOBSON, OBE	1970 - 72 1974 - 76
L. KLEIN, CBE	1972 - 74
J. SCHNEEWEISS, AM	1976 - 78 1980 - 82
L. CAPLAN, AM	1985 - 87 1989 - 92
I.J. LEIBLER, AO, CBE	1978 - 80 1982 - 85 1987 - 89 1992 - 95
D. SHTEINMAN, AM	1996 - 98
N. BASSAT, AM	1998 – 2001
J.S. JONES, AM	2001 – 2004
G.J. LEONARD	2004 –

## **A TRIBUTE TO LESLIE CAPLAN AM**

The entire Australian Jewish community mourned together with the ECAJ family the sad loss of former President Leslie Caplan A.M on his 74<sup>th</sup> Birthday on 14<sup>th</sup> August this year.

Leslie served two Presidential terms of office 1985-87 and 1989-92 with great distinction, having acceded to the Federal leadership following many years of communal responsibility in positions such as President of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, President of Masada College, President of North Shore Synagogue and Chairman of AZYC.

His leadership style of quiet determination, attention to detail and total integrity encouraged colleagues to follow his example.

There were many ground breaking achievements during his ECAJ Presidency, such as the establishment of the Special Office of Investigation into Nazi War Criminals in Australia. In 1986 he led a Jewish delegation to meet Pope John Paul II and hosted President Herzog of Israel on historic visit to Australia. With his wife Sophie they demonstrated outstanding solidarity by visiting oppressed Jews in the Soviet Union and Ethiopia.

He is greatly missed

Diane Shteinman AM

### **Recollections of the Catholic – Jewish Reconciliation Statement 1992 and Leslie Caplan's role**

I was present at the dramatic ceremony in the crypt of St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney on 2 November 1992 when Bishop Bede Heather, the Chairman of the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, formally launched the Australian Guidelines for Catholic Jewish Relations. In their speeches at the launch, Bishop Heather and ECAJ President Leslie Caplan acknowledged the historic significance of the Catholic Jewish reconciliation process which began with the Declaration of *Nostra Aetate* initiated by Pope John XXIII.

The speakers could not avoid mention of some of the contentious doctrinal and political issues. Bishop Heather spoke of 'the mountain of Jesus of Nazareth' as the greatest of all barriers between Judaism and Christianity, and concluded 'This mountain will not be readily moved before the faith of us all is transformed by God's merciful grace'. In this context he acknowledged the 'delicate path to be walked by the Catholic here, making known to all, including Jewish people, the gospel of Jesus Christ.', while at the same time conducting open dialogue in an atmosphere of mutual respect. In another section of his speech he noted that 'the Guidelines ask the Catholic people to try to understand some of that mythology which is attached to the State of Israel in the Jewish mind.

Leslie Caplan's response on the issue of 'the mountain of Jesus of Nazareth' was dignified and firm:

“Dialogue can only be possible on the assurance that it is aimed at building bridges of understanding, love and respect for each other, and that it is not aimed at finding some path to unity. The mountain of Jesus of Nazareth must never be an issue between us. We respect your faith, but it is a condition precedent that you must not only understand our belief, but accept that we are not involved in any process of unification.”

On the “mythology” of the Land, he emphasised the “covenant binding the people of Israel to the land of Israel” as “the touchstone of the future relationship between the Jewish people and the Church”.

Josie Lacey OAM

### **The Outstanding Jewish Leader of his Time**

When Leslie Caplan became ECAJ President in 1985, he asked me to become his Executive Director. Having worked as Public Affairs Director while he was president of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, I accepted the offer and worked closely with him in that term and also when Leslie was elected to serve a second term from 1989-1992, and I was elected as Honorary Secretary.

As ECAJ President, he looked for ways the ECAJ could improve and for areas in which it could make unique contributions to Australian life and to Jewry internationally. He was responsible for asserting the ECAJ's role as the peak, representative organisation of the community in advocacy for Jews in the Soviet Union, on how Australia dealt with Nazi War Criminals who used this country to evade justice, in negotiations with the Vatican leading to the pronouncement by Pope John Paul II that antisemitism is a sin, in making community security a national project and in so many other areas.

Leslie Caplan was well-liked and highly respected internationally as well as in Australia, forming bonds of friendship which transcended national borders, cultures and generations. He was a mentor, a friend and the outstanding Jewish leader of his time.

Jeremy Jones AM

## **PRESIDENT'S OVERVIEW 5766 / 2006**

This past year, like all years, brought its own unique challenges. We would hope that the four standout “happenings” that impacted on Australia’s Jewish community will never be repeated. The four challenges, some of which impacted on the whole Jewish world were, in chronological order:

1. The tragic illness of Prime Minister Sharon which significantly impacted on the Israeli political scene and disrupted Israel’s plans for future possible peace with its neighbours. It reflects great credit on Israel’s vibrant democracy that despite this massive dislocation the relevant and proper processes were maintained throughout.
2. The ECAJ’s principled stand against the sham defamation case brought by the World Jewish Congress (WJC) against Isi Leibler. At least in part as a consequence of this Council’s actions the proceedings were eventually withdrawn but not before the deadline of 25 July 2006 nominated by the ECAJ. The superb forensic analysis prepared by Councillor Robert Goot AM SC played a major role in enabling the ECAJ to convince most in the Jewish world of the merits of our argument. At the time of writing Australia has, and remains, withdrawn from the WJC which has not as yet acknowledged our position. As stressed throughout the drawn out proceedings, Australia’s stand was based solely on our concern at serious shortcomings in the WJC’s governance as highlighted in the report of the New York Attorney General. A prerequisite to rejoining must be that the ECAJ is satisfied that the necessary processes are in place including the long promised new constitution. Detailed extracts of what transpired are included – refer page 130.
3. The outbreak of the second Israel/Lebanon war following the unprovoked attack on Israel by the Iran backed Hezbollah impacted around the world. Our own community was not excluded. Included amongst the Israeli casualties was the eighteen year old Australian Eliyahu Pinchas Asheri. The ECAJ and the Zionist Federation of Australia (ZFA) immediately formed a crisis

committee to deal with the many local issues flowing from the conflict. The priorities determined by the collective communal leadership were:

- The protection of our citizens and communal assets. This primary objective was successfully accomplished;
- Adequately briefing the key opinion shapers in Australia including politicians, bureaucrats and selected media personnel. This too I regard as successful due in part to the efforts of the Australia/ Israel Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC) whose Executive Director and ECAJ consultant Dr. Colin Rubenstein AM was a member of the crisis committee;
- The broader hasbara effort to combat the predominately negative coverage of most mainstream media outlets (with the notable exception of the positive and balanced coverage provided by *The Australian* newspaper). It must be said that we met with mixed success in this most challenging of tasks despite the ongoing very effective efforts of many Councils such as those of the State Zionist Council in Victoria. Realistically this situation is unlikely to improve significantly until there is an enduring peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.
- Ensuring our own community was equipped to confidently address questions and issues as they arose. While this was generally successful gaps identified include the lack of information about modern Israeli issues provided to Jewish school children (now being addressed through ZFA and its state councils' initiatives) and the difficulty of reaching the large number of unaffiliated Australian Jews; and
- Effectively engaging in dialogue with the many segments of the broader Australian society including the multiple faith and ethnic communities. Despite our long standing and ongoing tradition of dialogue with these groups it must be said that overall their response during the conflict was disappointing.

On balance the result was acceptable and I believe we got it right in the areas that counted most. Throughout the conflict close liaison was maintained with

the Israeli Embassy through Ambassador Nati Tamir who performed outstandingly during these testing times.

4. A separate but not unrelated phenomenon was the level of anti-Semitic incidents perpetrated over the year particularly during July 2006 when the Israel/Lebanon conflict commenced. This “spike” was nationwide but particularly so in Victoria for reasons that as yet are not clear.

Immediate Past President Jeremy Jones AM has once again coordinated the ECAJ’s annual *Report on Anti-Semitism in Australia* for the twelve months ended 30 September 2006. As usual this well regarded, well researched report is published as a separate volume. A summary is included herein – see page 93.

Nevertheless as a consequence our community has emerged even more united and with key relationships extremely healthy and secure. We are indeed fortunate to live in Australia where cultural diversity is not only permitted but actively promoted and encouraged. This wonderful freedom brings with it a responsibility to support and promote our national values most notably a positive observance of the rule of law and respect for fellow citizens. Australia’s Jewish community is at one with these values and is a major contributor to their continued strengthening. We are also blessed with the unequivocal support for Israel from the Australian, State and Territory Governments and indeed all Australia’s mainstream political parties. This support recognises Israel’s right to exist within secure boundaries and that Israel is the sole defender of western liberal democratic values in its region.

I would now like to comment on our progress against some of the Council’s other strategic objectives.

5. For many years a strategic priority has, and continues to be inter-faith dialogues. The reports covering these activities are set out herein. Peta Jones Pellach’s and Jeremy Jones’ report on their and participation in the Australian inter-faith delegation to the Philippines is well worth a read. This year a strategic objective was to broaden these dialogues and following discussions

in late 2005 with the newly elected Anglican Primate of Australia Dr. Phillip Aspinall two successful meetings have already taken place.

6. It is important that we give appropriate support and recognition to our smaller communities. With this in mind and following on the visit to Tasmania in 2005 this year I visited South Australia and Queensland. I am pleased to report that Russell Jaffe has been appointed to coordinate and facilitate the preparation of a strategic plan for the South Australian Jewish community. After discussion with the communal leadership it was felt this was the most appropriate way that ECAJ could assist with the challenges confronting our South Australian community.

The structure, size and geographic distribution of Queensland's Jewish community results in a somewhat fragmented group of semi autonomous segments. However following my visit, Harry Procel President of Maccabi Australia has instigated a programme to revitalise Maccabi as a unifying force in the Queensland community.

7. The ECAJ membership should reflect as far as possible the breadth and diversity of Australia's organised Jewish community. Discussions were commenced with organisations which do not yet have an affiliation with this Council. I am pleased to report that the Federation of Australian Jewish Ex Servicemen (FAJEX) has applied for observer status membership of the ECAJ.
8. There are fewer more important strategic objectives than ensuring continuity in communal leadership. Following on the participation of some fifty five young Australians in the Nahum Goldmann Fellowship Programme over recent years we needed to determine how best to build on this initiative. The Programme is conducted by the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture and when attending the Foundation's bi-annual conference in Jerusalem in July 2006 an agreement was reached with the Foundation's Executive Director Dr. Jerry Hochbaum for two events, the first being the Alumni Conference. The costs are shared equally between the ECAJ and the Foundation. The first

Conference is being held in Melbourne from 23 to 27 November 2006 designed to coincide with our own annual conference so there will be opportunities for our existing and future leadership groups to exchange ideas and views.

9. Maintaining communications and an effective network with Australia's federal political parties is an ongoing strategic priority. Earlier this year I led an ECAJ delegation to meet Senator Bob Brown, federal leader of the Australian Greens. We had not previously had a relationship with the Greens party at the national level and the view was that this gap needed to be remedied. The meeting was cordial and Senator Brown confirmed his and his parties support for Israel's sovereignty and a two state solution for Israel and the Palestinians as well as acknowledging the contribution to Australia of our Jewish community.
  
10. It is difficult to adequately plan for the future without the necessary information which can only be obtained through research. I have long advocated demographic research into our community, preferably nationwide. The first step is now being taken and the ECAJ is a partner to an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant Application being coordinated through the Australian Centre for the Study of Jewish Civilisation at Monash University. The project will focus on updating previous studies into the Melbourne Jewish community carried out in 1967 and 1991. The Centre's Director, Professor Andrew Markus and Senior Lecturer Dr. John Goldlust of Latrobe University will lead the project which will extend over three years. The project is entitled *Understanding Identity, Social Change and Emerging Needs in Melbourne's Jewish Community: Longitudinal Comparisons over a Forty Year Period and* will incorporate the findings of the 2006 ABS census. The study will have national applicability for other traditions in Australia as well as our own.

Other matters to which I would like to draw attention are:

11. The ECAJ administration successfully transferred from Sydney to Melbourne in early 2006 and Geoffrey Zygier was appointed as our Executive Director.

Geoffrey quickly earned the respect of all with whom he dealt and has proved to be a major communal asset. Geoffrey has been responsible for many innovations including enhancement of the ECAJ's public profile.

My thanks to the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies for their assistance and support prior to and during the transfer.

12. After many years of dedicated and distinguished service Rabbi Raymond Apple AO retired as Chief Jewish Chaplain to the Australian Defence Force. Rabbi Ralph Genende accepted the invitation to succeed Rabbi Apple and we look forward to his contribution.
13. It is with considerable sadness that we record the passing of ECAJ Past President and Life Member Leslie Caplan AM *obm*. A tribute is set out on pages 8-9.
14. There has been a changing of the guard of the Australian Ambassador to Israel. Tim George completed his tour of duty and our community hosted an informal luncheon in his and his wife Geraldine's honour in Melbourne. His tenure is universally regarded as extremely successful. Our community's gratitude was expressed and both have been inscribed in JNF's Golden Book in Israel. We wish his successor James Larsen every success and look forward to a continuing close and cooperative relationship.
15. Governance continues to be a high priority and it is expected that our drawn out incorporation process will shortly be completed by the adoption of our Constitution rewritten to conform with the ACT Incorporation Act. This will then allow us to proceed on several fronts including establishing our Community Defence Fund to which John and Pauline Gandel graciously pledged the seed funding at the cocktail reception they hosted at their magnificent home at the close of our last Conference.

I commend this and the accompanying reports. This volume illustrates the strength, depth and quality of those who lead our Community, most in a voluntary capacity.

Grahame J. Leonard

President

October 2006

## ECAJ PHOTO GALLERY



*L-R: Grahame Leonard, Andrew Robb AO MP Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs, Rabbi John Levi AM DD, John Williams DIMA Victorian State Director at meeting with Victorian based communal leaders*



*L-R: Ian Lacey, Josie Lacey, David Knoll, Dr Danny Lamm, Philip Chester, The Hon Alexander Downer Minister for Foreign Affairs, Grahame Leonard, Bill Arnold*



*L-R: Grahame Leonard, Helen Shardey MP, Sir Gustav Nossel AC at Raoul Wallenberg Award presentation to Sir Gustav at B'nai B'rith Wallenberg Unit function*



*L-R: Grahame Leonard and Rabbi Mordechai Gutnick at ORA Conference*



*Participants in 2006 Sydney Meeting of the UCA/ECAJ National Dialogue*



*ECAJ/Catholic Dialogue*



*L-R: Keith Shilkin, HE Nati Tamir, Mrs Dafna Tamir and Lord Mayor Peter Natrass*



*L-R: Grahame Leonard, Eminent Mehemet Ali Sengul and Emre Celik Honorary President & General Coordinator respectively of Australian Intercultural Society*



*L-R: Geoffrey Zygiel, Grahame Leonard and Ian Lacey at meeting with HE Nati Tamir*



*L-R: Philip Chester, David Knoll, Bill Arnold, Grahame Leonard, Josie Lacey, The Hon Malcolm Turnbull, Dr Danny Lamm and Ian Lacey meet in Canberra*

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The ECAJ by definition occupies a unique place amongst Australian Jewish communal organisations. Perhaps it is not consulted about every issue affecting Australian Jewry. Neither is it necessarily aware of all such issues. It is far from the best resourced Jewish representative body. But there is no other organisation which, by virtue of its relationship with Jewish State/Territory bodies, is so closely linked to the many groups making up the rich diversity of Australian Jewish life.

There are two important corollaries of its position. Firstly, the ECAJ is the Jewish organisation which deals with such a variety of concerns, thus giving it a singular perspective. Secondly, it would be difficult to find another organisation, Jewish or not, which has access to such talented and committed human capital as the ECAJ. These factors surely make the ECAJ the most important Jewish organisation in Australia.

As a result it is hardly surprising the ECAJ continually finds itself in the forefront of the crucial Jewish issues of the day. In his overview of 2006/5766 the ECAJ President has mentioned the most significant matters demanding our attention, in particular the work occasioned by Israel's war with Hezbollah, the growth of antisemitism both locally and overseas and the ECAJ's imbroglio with World Jewish Congress. Other contributors to this annual report further outline our activities, while 'ECAJ in action' on our website (<http://www.ecaj.org.au/>) provides a further record and the items therein will be archived for future reference.

What must also be remembered, however, is that these are not (thank G-d) the events of *daily* communal life. Rather they are the blips on the radar. Most community work is made up of myriad small tasks which rarely rate a public mention, but are nonetheless at the heart of our responsibility to the Australian Jewish community. And here as always Torah teaches us a major lesson: every mitzvah (commandment) must be performed even if inconsequential in our eyes because we don't know what is important to G-d, or what the part may add to the whole. So when the ECAJ undertakes what some may consider trivial tasks, on occasion even chores, it must be remembered their importance is inestimable.

This is illustrated by the following three examples:

Firstly, often unmentioned are the multitude of interactions ECAJ representatives participate in on behalf of the Australian Jewish community. These may be as simple as partaking in a meal to celebrate the end of Ramadam, talking to a group of evangelical Christians about Judaism or our community structure, having an informal chat with a Parliamentary staffer, drinking coffee with a reporter from a major daily newspaper, meeting the incoming Australian ambassador to Israel, hosting a lunch for the outgoing one or attending the opening of a new building. Unglamorous as they may seem, this is the stuff of our daily work which provides the building blocks of those activities that hit the headlines.

Secondly, the ECAJ again wrote to congratulate all known Jewish recipients of Federal Government honours this past year. This is a common practice, one that many organisations undertake. The letter is generally a pro forma, as is the usual response. However who knows what the results of this recognition may be? Many believe that individual Jews constitute a corpus. Each Jew's success (or failure for that matter) reflects on all of us; hence acknowledgement thereof cements the relationship between the 'body parts'. In two instances in the past year, award-winners responded to the letters, both astonished to have been recognised as Jews, yet clearly delighted. So while these people may have been distant from the Jewish community, honouring them as 'part of the team' may well have profound unforeseen consequences.

Thirdly, another less-publicised, seemingly mundane activity was the nomination of Jewish experts in a range of disciplines to various Government bodies. These are people both knowledgeable in their field and in Judaism, and hence able to provide authentic Jewish opinions on a host of medical, social and legal issues. These included the opportunity to provide input on issues as diverse as climate control, diabetes, and the ethical implications of aspects of genetic research. Why is this important? Not only because it provides representation for our community, but also because the distinctiveness of our views is evidence of the importance of cultural diversity and the contribution hence made to the larger Australian society.

In conclusion, as the incoming ECAJ Executive Director, 2006/5766 was inevitably a challenging year for me. No matter the extent of one's existing skills, knowledge and experience, any new position demands readjustment, learning and perhaps most importantly, understanding of nuance. This was made considerably easier by the Committee of Management's warm welcome and ready sharing of time and information. While all members were more than generous with these assets, special thanks must go to Grahame Leonard, Josie Lacey OAM and Sam Salcman. I also wish to thank my colleagues in the various Jewish community bodies at Beth Weizmann who so readily helped ease my transition.

Geoffrey Zygier

October 2006



JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
OF VICTORIA INC.

מועצת הקהילה היהודית בוויקטוריה  
"ירשער קהילה-ראט פון וויקטאריע"

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AFFILIATE ORGANISATIONS OF THE  
JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF  
VICTORIA INC.

ACCESS INC  
ASSOCIATION OF JEWS FROM CIS  
"SHALOM"  
ASSOCIATION OF KATZELERS, FARBAND PARTISANS  
AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY VIC  
AUSTRALIAN JEWISH PSYCHOLOGISTS INC  
AUSTRALASIAN UNION OF JEWISH STUDENTS  
(MELBOURNE BRANCH)  
AUSTRALIAN JEWISH DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY INC  
BALLARAT HEBREW CONGREGATION INC  
BIALIK COLLEGE  
BLAKE STREET HEBREW CONGREGATION INC  
BNAI BRITH VICTORIA  
BRIGHTON HEBREW CONGREGATION INC  
CAULFIELD HEBREW CONGREGATION  
COUNCIL OF ORTHODOX SYNAGOGUES  
OF VICTORIA  
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LIBRARY "KADIMAH"  
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JEWISH LABOR "BUND"  
JEWISH MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA  
KEHILAT NITZAN CONSERVATIVE [MASORTI]  
KEW HEBREW CONGREGATION  
KING DAVID SCHOOL  
KOSHER MEALS ON WHEELS ASSOCIATION OF  
VICTORIA INC  
LEIBLER YAVNEH COLLEGE  
MACCABI VICTORIA  
MAGEN DAVID ADOM  
MIRACHI ORGANISATION  
MOORABBIN HEBREW CONGREGATION  
MOUNT SCOPUS MEMORIAL COLLEGE  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN  
[VICTORIA] INC  
NORTH EASTERN JEWISH WAR MEMORIAL  
CENTRE INC  
ST KILDA HEBREW CONGREGATION INC  
THE SEPHARDI ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA INC  
SHOLEM ALEICHEM COLLEGE  
SOUTH CAULFIELD HEBREW CONGREGATION INC  
STATE ZIONIST COUNCIL OF VICTORIA  
THEODORE HERTZL SOCIAL CLUB INC  
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VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH  
EX SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN [VAJEX]  
VICTORIAN UNION OF PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM  
WINGS OF CARE [KANFEI CHESED] INC  
WIZO [WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL ZIONIST  
ORGANISATION]  
WORLD FEDERATION OF POLISH JEWS  
[AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL]  
ZIONIST YOUTH COUNCIL

## REPORT OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF VICTORIA INC.

The Jewish Community Council of Victoria ("JCCV") is the roof body of the Victorian Jewish community. It represents the Victorian Jewish community on issues that are of interest to the community as a whole. In that way, a single coordinated response is brought to matters such as security, lobbying and advocacy, inter-faith dialogue, and public celebrations and commemorations.

The **Key Objectives** that have been adopted by the JCCV for 2006, 2007 and 2008 are to:

- Improve the JCCV's financial standing;
- Further professionalise the office of the organisation by appointing an Executive Director;
- Create a Board of Governors;
- Investigate and lay the foundations for the implementation of a community appeal;
- Develop and operate a leadership program for communal lay-leaders; and
- Encourage and foster volunteerism in the community.

Some success has already been achieved in respect of these objectives. Firstly, the JCCV has paid off all loans to its bankers the ANZ as well as paid all arrears of affiliation fees to the ECAJ. The ANZ Bank and the ECAJ were the JCCV's two major creditors. The balance of the JCCV's creditors is its usual trade creditors, and now falls within the 0-30 day category. The JCCV has cash at bank, and is in a sound financial position.

Having achieved this objective, the JCCV is now well equipped to tackle its other objectives. To that end, we have:

- commissioned an external review of the operation of the JCCV office, and its requirements going forward.
- started discussions with prominent members of the community with a view to recruiting 12 people to the Board of Governors. It is intended that Board members will act in an advisory capacity only. Day to day control of the JCCV will remain with the Executive.

- met with the leaders of a number of Jewish communal organisations that conduct fundraising appeals for Victoria and have secured an ‘in principle’ agreement from each of those organisations to investigate the possibility of a community appeal from 2008;
- commissioned a leadership training program from the Australian Institute of Management which we hope will be implemented in 2007; and
- arranged the inaugural Community Recognition Awards for the recognition of volunteers in our community (to be held on 13 November 2006).

In addition to working on our key objectives, the JCCV has been busy with its regular activities to continue to meet its mission statement. I highlight some of our activities that the JCCV has and is currently engaged in.

## **1. Representation**

A key function of the JCCV is to represent the views of the Victorian Jewish community to Government and to special interest groups. The Council is the only body authorised to speak on behalf of the entire Jewish community in Victoria and is recognised by Governments and other states authorities as such.

Examples of this work over the last 12 months included:

- Lobbying the Victorian Government and the Opposition on proposed amendments to the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*. An op ed article in the Melbourne Age on this topic was well received. We also issued a press release, parts of which were adopted by Members of the Legislative Assembly and read into Hansard during the Parliamentary debates;
- Expressing concern to the Victorian Government and meeting with representatives of the Premier on the Labour candidate for the Legislative Council, Khalil Eideh, who had previously been the signatory to pro forma correspondence to the President of Syria glorifying terrorism and speaking of the “Zionist threat”. We succeeding in obtaining a comprehensive signed public statement from Mr Eideh, rejecting the views expressed in the correspondence, supporting the proscription of the military wings of Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist organisations, affirming Israel’s right to exist and to defend its territorial boundaries, and denouncing the terrorist acts of Hezbollah;
- Hosting, together with the State Zionist Council, politicians’ lunches, in which members of both sides of politics are invited to a lunch with communal leaders, to hear directly the concerns of the Jewish community in respect of issues arising both in Victoria and in Israel.
- Publicly taking leisure wear manufacturer Mambo to task over a t-shirt design that included an image of Hitler as supposed “street art”, and obtaining the withdrawal of the t-shirts from sale at David Jones department stores;

- Speaking on behalf of the community to television, radio and newspapers on the community's views and concerns during the Israel/Hezbollah war; and
- Responding to various media enquiries following an anti-Semitic attack by a busload of drunken football players upon a Jewish passer-by in October 2006.

## **2. Multi-cultural and interfaith liaison**

The JCCV promotes racial and religious tolerance by building bridges with Christian, Islamic and other communities and by actively participating as a member of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) and the Latrobe University Centre for Dialogue. Our inter-faith Executive member Simon Tisher nominated for, and was successfully elected to, the ECCV.

In addition, the JCCV has actively pursued relationships with the Islamic community and Catholic community. The JCCV maintains open communication with members of the Islamic Council of Victoria executive and is an active participant in the annual Abrahamic Conference.

This year the JCCV once again hosted a joint communal dinner with the Catholic community to which members of both the Jewish and Catholic community were invited.

## **3. Anti-Defamation**

In partnership with the Anti-Defamation Commission, the JCCV monitors anti-Semitic incidents. Where appropriate, measured responses are undertaken either by direct liaison or contact with relevant authorities and the media. The ADC is in an expansionist phase.

## **4. Security**

The JCCV is the parent body of the Community Security Group ("CSG") and is responsible for the policy development and management of the CSG. The CSG has its own advisory board, which assists the CSG in the development of policy, structure and appropriate funding models.

2006 has been a very busy year for security in our community. Even prior to the crisis in Lebanon, incidents were increasing both in number and severity, requests to protect communal functions was rising, and our installations and assets were requesting and hiring more guards and improving their physical security. While we still have a long way to go to improve our physical security, the threat profile has been raised and the community and its organizations are generally taking the threat more seriously. Although the reasons for the increase in activity are saddening, the fact that the Victorian Jewish community is taking more active steps to protect itself in a coordinated way is positive.

This has been reflected in the significant increase in the CSG budget. To this end, the advisory board has played a critical role in ensuring the continued funding and operation of the CSG. There is a growing acceptance of the need for the CSG, although funding its expanded capacity is and will continue to be a challenge.

From an internal organisational point of view, the CSG has used 2006 as a year of consolidation. A planning process was initiated to map out the coming five years. As part of this process, the CSG moved to new and larger premises.

There has been a significant increase in incidents in 2006, which should give the community cause for concern. These include:

1. Five cases of assaults on visibly Orthodox Jews. The most serious of these received substantial publicity in the mainstream Melbourne media. The level of outrage expressed by the general community at the conduct of the perpetrators was pleasing to see, even if the incident itself was unpleasant.
2. A dozen cases of eggs thrown at members of our community while walking late at night;
3. The high level of incidents aimed at the community over the period of the Lebanon crisis. These incidents included three shule desecrations in Melbourne, causing minor damage, and one of the five assaults mentioned above; and
4. A significant increase in graffiti and hate mail. One of the consequences of the JCCV taking on a more active public role (the details of which are set out above), is that those activities tend to generate a hate response, usually by email.

To counter the high level of incidents the CSG increased coverage and conducted several operations in the East St Kilda area to try to identify the perpetrators of eggings and assaults. The CSG released an information flyer to the Orthodox community on how best to avoid becoming the victim of an assault while walking on Shabbatot and Chagim.

The CSG has to date provided training to over 1000 parents of children at Jewish Day Schools and congregants of synagogues. This is in addition to the training of staff at our facilities and organizations and its training of paid security guards.

These steps have already had a measurable effect on awareness in our community. The extra eyes and ears on the street have resulted in much more and better information flow to the CSG.

The CSG protected 23 separate shule congregations during their services over Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and regularly protects 10-12 shules on normal Shabbatot. The CSG liaises with the police to provide protection for the Chagim and major functions. The CSG protected more than 60 functions in the last year.

## **5. Holocaust Remembrance**

The Council educates the Jewish and wider community about the Holocaust.

In April this year, JCCV arranged and staged the community's annual commemoration ceremony at the Robert Blackwood Hall, attended by some 1300 people. The JCCV also administered and contributed to the annual Partisan's Commemoration, held at the Holocaust Memorial at the Old Melbourne Cemetery in Carlton. Some 300 people attended this ceremony this year.

## **6. Communal Appeals**

The JCCV has continued to supervise and regulate the official calendar for authorised appeals conducted within the Victorian Jewish Community so as to minimise the overlap of fundraising activities between organisations. This year, three organisations joined the authorised appeal calendar for the first time. Rules and procedures were developed and adopted by the JCCV at Plenum to regulate the operation of authorised appeals, thereby bringing a greater sense of uniformity and predictability to the authorised appeals calendar.

Further as stated above, the JCCV is has also begun the process of laying the groundwork for a joint appeal amongst a number of organisations in our community which is intended to be held for the first time in 2008.

## **7. Social justice issues**

The Council has established a Social Justice Committee whose role is to act as a policy "think tank" for the Community Council on matters falling within the area of social action, research and advocacy. Recent projects of the Social Justice Committee have included poverty, sexual abuse and alcohol and drug abuse within the Melbourne Jewish community.

## **8. Encouraging integration**

The Integration Sub-Committee strives to assist immigrants to Australia to integrate into the Victorian Jewish Community. A particular focus of the Committee is immigrants from the Former Soviet Union. We understand that, there could be as many as 17,000 Jews in Melbourne who identify themselves as immigrants from the FSU. The Council is endeavouring to break down the barriers and facilitate integration of those members into the broader Jewish community. This year, the JCCV Executive co-opted an additional member with the specific portfolio of integration.

A working group has been formed to develop an action plan which will hopefully be published and implemented shortly.

## 9. Honouring and recognising volunteerism

This year, for the first time, the JCCV will hold a Community Awards Night, on 13 November 2006. Affiliates of the JCCV have been invited to nominate a person within their organisation who has given of themselves to that organisation for some time, to be the recipient of a volunteer award. The awards will be presented by the Governor of Victoria, Professor David de Kretser A.C.

In addition the JCCV will present an award to a member of the community who the JCCV considers has demonstrated an outstanding level of commitment and dedication to the community and is worthy such exceptional recognition. We intend to name this special award after Sir John Monash. As at the time of writing, we are in negotiation with the Monash Foundation and descendants of Sir John.

Further, the program will include a showcase of community talent. It is expected that in excess of 500 people will attend this event.

## 10. Developing communal leadership

The JCCV is in the process of developing a communal leadership program together with the Australian Institute of Management. The program will allow for members of the community (particularly younger members) to be trained in the important skill of leadership.

## 11. Communal Events

The JCCV hosts a number of communal events each year. These are described in the table below:

Event	Description
Chanukah in the City Celebration	This event is staged over the Chanukah period each year. It takes place in Melbourne's new iconic gathering place, Federation Square in the Central Business District... Each night a different organisation from the community organises an event, which includes the lighting of the Chanukah Candelabra. The highlight of the Festival is bonanza night – this year on Thursday 21 December 2006. On this night there is entertainment for children and adults alike and culminates with the lighting of the Chanukah Candelabra by Melbourne Lord Mayor John So. This event forms part of the City of Melbourne annual calendar of events, and has the strong backing of the City of Melbourne. Last year in excess of 4,000 people attended the event on the bonanza night.
Community Awards Night	Details are given above.

Holocaust Commemoration	Details are given above.
Plenum Meetings	<p>Each month, the JCCV Plenum meets. In attendance at this meeting are the leaders of the various organisations that comprise the Victorian Jewish Community. The purpose of the meeting is for policy development and the discussion of issues confronting the community.</p> <p>Often a key note speaker is invited to address the community. This year the speakers were:</p> <p>February - Marcia Pinskier, Commissioner, Victorian Multicultural Commission</p> <p>April – Elhafiz Adam, President, Darfur Community Association of Victoria</p> <p>June – Gil Hoffman, political correspondent &amp; columnist for The Jerusalem Post</p> <p>August – Steve Bracks, Premier of Victoria</p> <p>October – Helen Shardey MP, Member for Caulfield and Kevin Craig, CEO, Gawith Villa</p>
Public Fora	<p>The JCCV hosted 3 public fora this year as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gil Hoffman (Jerusalem Post journalist) on Sunday 4 June 2006;</li> <li>- Commonwealth Senator Santoro on Sunday 23 July 2006, in conjunction with the Anti-Defamation Commission, on media bias. This included a private dinner with the Senator, during which we asked the Senator to convey our thanks to the Prime Minister for the Commonwealth Government’s steadfast support of Israel; and</li> <li>- Drug &amp; Alcohol abuse forum on 27 August 2006.</li> </ul>
Yom Ha’atzmaut Cocktail Party	This year’s cocktail reception was co-hosted with the State Zionist Council of Victoria, Executive Council of Australian Jewry, and the Zionist Federation of Australia. It was held at the Windsor Hotel in the presence of the Israeli Ambassador, the Premier and the Opposition Leader.

### **Constitutional and structural matters**

At the request of the Plenum, the JCCV established a sub-committee to look at the structure of membership fees paid by affiliate organisations. In particular, there was a concern that there was a disparity between the fees paid by different organisations, and that fees were set by historical accident and not on any reasoned basis. After much debate on this issue, at the level of the sub-committee, the Executive and the

Plenum, the Plenum resolved to increase the existing membership fees by 3%, but to otherwise preserve the status quo [

This year, two new organisations joined the JCCV, being the Melbourne Jewish Male Choir and Am Echad (a roof body for Russian Jews). This is reflective of the health and vibrancy of Jewish communal life in Victoria. The JCCV now counts as its members close to sixty separate organisations within the Victorian Jewish community, including virtually all organisations of a significant size. It is pleasing to see continued interest in representation of the community as a whole.

At the time of writing this report, the members of the Council's Executive are:

Anton Block	President
Dvir Abramovich	Vice President
Laurence Slomoi	Treasurer (co-opted)
Daniel Aghion	Public Relations
Phillip Apelbaum	Community Appeal & Yom Hashoa
Fran Bergman	Leadership (co-opted)
Mervyn Cass	Community Liaison
Alon Cassuto	Youth
Paul Gardner	Anti- Defamation
Braham Goldberg	Security
Danny Lamm	Ex Officio
Tony Levy	Social Justice
Simon Tisher	Interfaith Liaison
Michael Vainer	Integration (co-opted)

Hilary McMahon is the Chief Executive Officer of the Council and continues to guide the Council through a period of change and growth. Her role and knowledge of the Council and its workings have been of immense value to the Executive.

Anton Block  
President



ועד הקהילה היהודית במערב אוסטרליה

## Jewish Community Council of Western Australia (Inc)

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### REPORT TO ECAJ NOVEMBER 2006 JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF WA (JCCWA) DECEMBER 2005-NOVEMBER 2006 KEITH SHILKIN - PRESIDENT

The past year has been an active and, generally, successful one for JCCWA. In August 2006 elections were held for the Executive resulting in several changes. I continue my 2 year term as President, Philip Samuell replaced Les Buchbinder as a Vice-President alongside Tirza Cohen. Joel Burnie became Youth representative. Otherwise the following remain:

Judy Shorrock (Hon Sec), Steven Pynt (Hon Treas), Steve Lieblich (Public relations), Hymie Touyz, Les Buchbinder, Joe Atlas, Carl Antonovsky (General Committee) and Robin Cohen (Community Service Group).

#### MAJOR EVENT:

Visit of His Excellency Mr Naphtali Tamir, Ambassador of Israel and Mrs Tamir, 24-27 July 06 - This was a scheduled State Visit co-ordinated through the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Apart from the official functions HE visited Carmel School, the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce, and met with youth leaders from all our groups. The most important event was a meeting with the community - because his visit was during the war with Hezbollah the meeting became a rally, organized by JCCWA together with the SZC and UIA, attended by nearly 1000 people.

Speakers included Michael Danby, Stephen Smith (MHR Perth - Labour) and Michael Keenan (MHR Stirling - Liberal) as well as HE. The rally and his visit altogether were considered a success.

#### OTHER ACTIVITIES:

- Formation of the WA State Parliamentary Friends of Israel - This was achieved through the help of the two co-convenors Mr Bob Kucera MLA, Member for Yokine, and Hon. Ray Halligan MLC, Member for North Metropolitan Region, and was in place for the Ambassador's visit.
- Public relations activities - The media group, led by Steve Lieblich, has been active and effective. Relations with the media (TV, Radio and Press), has developed and where there has been bias, it has been fearlessly addressed by the

group. Perhaps a measure of the effect of these activities was the positive editorials in "The West" and also more than one positive feature article during the war with Hezbollah. During the war there was one very weak anti-Israel (6-10 people only) rally near the US Consulate, and a larger pro-Hezbollah rally in the city that did not cause any trouble. Also during the war I was in touch with the leader of the local Lebanese community. Access to TV and radio has been good and numbers of interviews have been arranged to good effect (e.g. the Ambassador, Ron Prosor, Ephraim Zuroff, Ely Karmon etc).

- Visit of Ely Karmon - Apart from press interviews etc a very successful luncheon with Federal and State parliamentarians was held. There was much interest in his views on terrorism.
- Visit of Ephraim Zuroff - JCCWA arranged this visit which occurred in February 2006 during the Charles Zentai extradition hearing in Perth. There was considerable interest in the visit, and talks by Mr Zuroff at Carmel School and to the community at the Jewish Centre were organized. Zentai's appeal against the local jurisdiction has now been overturned and his extradition hearing goes back to court shortly.
- Interfaith Activities - JCCWA has encouraged participation by members of the community in the activities of the Council of Christians and Jews and other groups. There was a reasonably well-attended Kristallnacht Service in November 2005 and the Chairman, Dr Rowan Strong, spoke at a CC&J meeting at Northern Suburbs Hebrew Congregation in July 2006. Dr Strong held a RAMBAM Fellowship, 2 week visit, to Israel which was the main topic of his talk. Carl Antonovsky has been active in The Abrahamic Alliance whose activities culminated in an all day Workshop/Seminar at Government House in May 2006 at which Jewish religious personalities spoke. Our community was also represented by a number of attendees. A second Abrahamic Alliance workshop was also reasonably well attended. I met with the National Director, Keith Buxton, and the State co-ordinator of Bridges for Peace, in September 2006, and there will be further contact. Rabbi Freilich and I represented the community at St George's Cathedral for a "Prayer for Peace in the Middle-East" during the war with Hezbollah. Otherwise in Perth there are other interfaith activities - Carmel School kids have held alternate sessions with the Dianella State School and the local Islamic College, Rabbi Freilich is active as interfaith chaplain at University campuses and meets with other key clerics from time to time. I would say there is good interfaith harmony in WA.
- Jewish War Memorial Restoration - When this was damaged in August/September 2005, JCCWA assumed responsibility for the restoration. We were successful in gaining a State Government grant that will cover the repairs which should be completed by the end of 2006.
- Jewish Centre of WA - Recent refurbishments have improved the facilities and the Centre sponsors a web site [www.jewishperth.com.au](http://www.jewishperth.com.au) that is in its early stages. (The Jewish Centre of WA is a JCCWA constituent).

- Jewish Northbridge - JCCWA is represented on the group which is sponsored by the Department of Premier and Cabinet with the aim of increasing awareness of the history of old Perth's immediate northern area. An exhibition of Jewish Northbridge history and memorabilia was held for 2 weeks in October 2006.

## **REGULAR JCCWA FUNCTIONS**

- Yom Hashoah - This was again well attended in 2006 and was considered to be a success.
- Anzac Day Dawn Service - This went well this year, thanks to Les Buchbinder, Tirza Cohen and Rabbi Freilich and their willing help. The RSL as usual offered great support as did the Salvation Army who provided the bugler and drummer again.
- Community Security - Our CSG continues to provide sterling services to our community. There is good liaison between them and WA Police and the community groups. Recently a WA Police State Security Investigation Group was formed to deal with "issues" related crime. They have been in touch with me and are in touch with our CSG. In September 2006, JCCWA arranged a meeting with the SSIG and principals of major communal facilities. They will monitor antisemitic events. I do not have the figures, but like elsewhere, I suspect that there has been an increase in the past year. One person was taken to court for such activities (pleaded guilty - due for sentencing in November).

## ACT JEWISH COMMUNITY REPORT 2005-6

I have just had a quick look through the last 12 months of our magazine, Hamerkaz, and jotted down most of our activities as mentioned in the various months.

Religious Services, Orthodox and Progressive.

Cheder

Holiday Care Program

Yom Ha'Shoah

Yom Ha'atzmaut

Lag B'Omer

Beit Midrash

Pesach food sale

Community Seder

Chanukah festivities

Sunday Morning Brunch and Discussion Group

Jewish Christian Dialogue

Jewish Christian Muslim Trialogue

Multicultural Affairs

NCJWA

UIA

JCA

JCA Visit

Dr Ruth Gavison Visit

JNF

ECAJ

Hamerkaz

Historical Society

Oral History

Genealogical Society

Israeli Dancing

Talmud Shiur

Yiddisher Mommas

Grumps'r'Us

Jewish Care

Lunch'n'Lecture

Movie Nights

AUJS

Mature Jewish Singles

Food Fair

Rabbinic visits

We keep adding to the list ... this year Talmud Shiurs have been restarted ... and I am sure there are a number I have missed. When we consider our numbers I wonder how we manage to do it. An incredible amount of work from a large number of dedicated people, all of whom merit the very sincere thanks of the whole community.

School Visits

Over the past year we had 4 school groups visiting with a total of 575 pupils. A Theology Group from St Marks and 20 lay teachers from the Catholic Education Office.

What have we achieved? My feeling is that there is a positive and increasing sense amongst us of being a growing, enthusiastic and friendly community with a bright future. One of the most encouraging things to me is the increasing involvement of younger members in the affairs of the community. To have three of our youngsters on the Board this year has been wonderful. They have not learnt that there are things we can't do, that didn't work, or any of the other excuses some of us make. I am even more encouraged by the renomination of several current younger Board members, and several other "young" nominations tonight. Corporate memory is important; having new enthusiastic members is just as important.

I and other members have represented the community at various functions during the year. I have attended JCA and ECAJ meetings. We have attended Local and Federal Government, Diplomatic and multicultural functions.

Reintroduction of the Food Fair in March was, in all respects, a great success. We worked together; we had a large number of visitors. And we made a significant amount of money. John Hargreaves, Minister for Cultural Affairs was enthusiastic. Lady Jeffrey, wife of the Governor General "dropped in" with friends. A great success. Your Board has decided that we should, in alternating years, have a Food Fair, and an Information Day with a small selection of refreshments.

Several issues raised at the last AGM have not yet been adequately dealt with.

JCA have provided funding for a security upgrade, to consist of a large (1 metre high) spaced stone barrier around the premises, and behind the stones a perimeter of Eucalypts growing from seed from trees from the Memorial Grove at Golani Junction. This gives us both a link to Israel, and a war memorial element...

The subcommittee approved by the AGM last year to look at upgrading the Centre met on a number of occasions and consulted the Community members to ascertain needs.

Several architects were consulted and a number of concepts discussed. I feel we still have to resolve the issues of essential maintenance, creature comforts, and expansion issues.

The future? I believe we have to continue to provide the variety of services we currently provide.

I also believe we have national obligations. We hold the lease on the property as "The Australian Capital Territory Jewish Community Inc." We do this because the red tape meant that the lease could only be granted to an ACT entity. The reality is that the site was for the Australian Jewish Community, and we hold it on their behalf. As one of our members said recently:

*“We have a tiny community with meagre resources that is firmly committed to maintaining a diverse local Jewish community as well as fulfilling a national role. The former role is just above water, the latter is almost totally submerged. Think about it.”*

In my travels I have spoken to a number of individuals and senior figures in a number of Jewish organisations. Without any question education will be the key to our future; in five, or fifteen, or fifty years.

I have broached the subject of what my non-accounting brain believes to be what the current taxation legislation says about what is now called Donor Gift Recipient status. I think this is an organisation which can issue “tax deductible” receipts.

It appears that there are only three areas where we could qualify:

Education (a school, not a Sunday school)

Library

Museum

Any of these would probably need a new Trust to be formed which would have to apply for DGR status. I would see this as being formed by National Jewish bodies (ECAJ, JCA, NCJWA, B’nai B’rith type organisations) with a separate Board of Management but with our Community holding a significant interest and day to day administration. Such an entity would need to demonstrate an ability to ensure recurrent funding right from the outset.

And we would have the use of all the facilities outside Museum/Library hours.

I see no other way we can significantly improve our facilities. We can not find the money ourselves; donors will not give unless there is DGR status.

I have attached the document I had prepared and which I have shown to people I have visited. I have stressed that this is, at this stage, purely my own concept, and has no status other than that. I am sure there are other ideas. I hope you can suggest some, and how we proceed from here.

I thank you for having been given the opportunity to serve you as President this year, and your confidence in allowing me to continue in this role.

#### AN AUSTRALIAN JEWISH MUSEUM

Canberra is the National Capital of Australia. We are the National Jewish Memorial Centre. Our current Centre was probably appropriate in 1970 for a City with a total population of 90-100,000. It is not appropriate for 320,000, rising to 600,000

Tourism to Canberra is increasing. Nearly 200,000 schoolchildren will visit Canberra next year, plus many busloads and caravans of the grey nomads, and the many tourists who place the National Capital on their itineraries.

The addition of another Museum adds to the attractiveness of Canberra, and has both Local and Federal bipartisan political support.

We have a prime location, and we have the responsibilities that go with that.

We can include:

A history of Jewish Australia, and Jewish Australians, starting with the First Fleet.

A Holocaust Museum.

A static Courage to Care exhibit.

A Library for rare Jewish materiel.

The major Jewish philanthropists have indicated their interest. We have received offers of assistance and an indication of the next steps to be taken should we decide to proceed with a feasibility study.

The Jewish Communal Appeal has indicated support.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry has indicated support.

The Claims Commission has criteria within which some funding may be available for a Holocaust Museum.

We could include:

Auditorium (second shul)

Offices

Boardroom

Secretarial space

Library

Class/study areas

Café

Judaica/souvenir area (bigger range of kosher foods?)

Lift

Wet areas

All of which would be available to the A.C.T. Jewish Community.

We should be able to factor in an upgrade/refurbishment of current centre as part of this complex.

We may need separate funds for the mikveh (I have indications that this funding may be available).

Bill Arnold

President [farmacia@bigpond.net.au](mailto:farmacia@bigpond.net.au) +61 (0)419 491919

**TASMANIAN REPORT**  
**ECAJ ANNUAL CONFERENCE 26 – 27 NOVEMBER 2006**

In March 2006 I unexpectedly took over the presidency of the Hobart Hebrew Congregation with the sudden departure of Caroline Heard who left Tasmania to live in Melbourne. We thank her for all the hard work she has done for the community and wish her well for the future.

What I found extremely gratifying, in assuming the presidency, was the way many members of the congregation rallied around and offered support and assistance.

In addition to the support from members, I received and continue to receive a lot of encouragement and assistance from interstate, in particular, from Grahame Leonard, and Union for Progressive Judaism Executive Director, Janice Alper. The congregation also continues to receive valuable rabbinical support from Rabbis Levi and Gordon, both of whom have made visits to Tasmania to conduct services as well as offering advice.

The past year, the Hobart Hebrew Congregation's 161<sup>st</sup>, was yet another successful year and despite our small number, we continue to thrive.

Firstly and most importantly, we continue to hold regular services which is in itself an achievement given our small numbers. There is an Orthodox service every Saturday; and Progressive services are held one Friday evening a month; and on one or two Saturday mornings a month. Virtually no week goes by when the synagogue is not open at least once over Shabbat for those who want to come and pray. Both Progressive and Orthodox services were held over the High Holidays. The Progressives services were led by Janice Alper who came from Melbourne with her husband, Marvin, specifically to take the services. We also continue to hold numerous social and fundraising functions. And a small, mainly regular group, attend a study group which is held each month.

Our official reader of many years, Len Freedman was presented with a Kiddush cup for what was supposed to be his retirement as reader. However, Len has continued to help out with some services. Unfortunately, we have not yet managed to find a replacement. However this gives an opportunity for any member, who wishes, to take a service.

In January a concert was held at the synagogue at which Lenka Lichtenberg, the world renowned Yiddish singer performed. This was her only Australian concert. Lenka did not charge any fee for her participation and all funds raised were donated to the congregation.

The historic aspect of the community and the synagogue building continue to attract wide interest. Through the year many visitors, including school groups were shown around the synagogue. A successful open day was held during National Trust's Heritage Month. The open day, school group visits and the many specially arranged tours are important in showing Judaism to the general Tasmanian population as well as the many interstate visitors.

Due to a generous donation, a tribute and reburial of remains from the original Jewish cemetery was undertaken at the present Jewish cemetery at Cornelian Bay. The headstone of Bernard Walford who organised the original cemetery is part of that tribute.

With the tragic events in the Middle East this year, interfaith dialogue meetings have been put on hold.

We also saw a number of anti-Semitic instances during the year. Initially I was unhappy with the response from the state government agencies, but a letter to the Premier brought a rapid response.

Unfortunately, functions for the Israeli Ambassador, and the speaker of the Knesset had to be cancelled when events in the Middle East prevented them from visiting Tasmania.

As we move into our 162<sup>nd</sup> year I am looking forward to another successful year.

Daniel Albert  
President  
Hobart Hebrew congregation  
October 2006

## **QJBD PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2006**

### **1. Introduction**

The Queensland Jewish Community is continuing to build upon its foundations. We have enjoyed a wide range of communal activities in a relatively peaceful and supportive local environment.

The past year came to be dominated of course by concern for, and support of, Israel during the hostilities in Lebanon and the rocket attacks on Israel.

The Brisbane and Gold Coast Jewish Communal Councils have continued to organise affairs on a regional basis. As well, an informal Sunshine Coast communal organisation is operating.

### **2. Board Activity**

The Board has held regular meetings in Brisbane with representation from the Brisbane and Gold Coast Councils and, on an observer basis at this stage, from the Sunshine Coast. These meetings have been well attended, intensive, comprehensive and constructive.

We are building up a sound financial base based on the accumulation of management fees which hopefully will see the Board being secure well into the future, leading to the stage where we may be able to be self-sufficient financially and not be reliant on annual membership fees from individual organisations.

The Board co-ordinated a fund-raising drive in conjunction with B'nai B'rith for victims of Cyclone Larry in North Queensland, and contributed towards the fund. All monies were donated to the Premier's relief fund.

Matters concerning the Unger Bequest, and the establishment of facilities for aged Jewish persons in Queensland, have occupied a great deal of the Board's attention and time. Steady progress is being made towards a comprehensive resolution of these matters.

### **3. Brisbane**

Paul Gould has continued as Chair of the Brisbane Council, assisted by Jason Steinberg as delegate.

The Brisbane community is becoming more diverse, with increasing participation by Israeli families.

There have been many Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, some births, and sadly a few passings. Youth activities have been well attended with large numbers at Betar camps and Shabbatons.

The communal newsletter "Shalom" has continued to be published by the JNF, and as well the UIA is circulating a monthly email newsletter. These are providing good communication of local events and affairs.

A Solidarity evening for Israel held at the Margaret Street Synagogue was well attended.

### 3. Gold Coast

Sam Miskowski has continued as Chair of the Gold Coast Council, and Mike Simons has continued as delegate.

A full range of communal activities is conducted on the Gold Coast. Both orthodox synagogues, the Progressive Synagogue and the Chabad House have held regular services and functions.

A Solidarity service for Israel during the hostilities which was held at the Hamilton Street Synagogue hall was very well attended, with representation from all congregations and nearly every organisation. It is notable that this was the first event for some years that has enjoyed such wide unity, with disregard for local differences.

### 4. Unger Bequest

I have reported in previous years on the significant bequest which the Board had received for the establishment of a home for aged Jewish persons. The board commissioned a Research Study in conjunction with B'nai B'rith in relation to the feasibility, format and location of a suitable facility.

As a result of those findings, and based upon ongoing intensive discussions with organisations and representatives in both Brisbane and the Gold Coast, we are moving towards some exciting proposals, probably involving comprehensive professional services from a commercial provider.

The funds have been maintained in investment and have provided very pleasing returns, being now in excess of \$2.4m.

Again I would like to thank our Treasurer Alf Gans as he continues to meticulously record and oversee this significant responsibility.

The Board continues to receive Management Funds from the Estate whilst we conclude these issues, however it is the very clear and stated intention of the Board to disburse the funds as soon as possible and as required.

### 5. Public Relations

Our Vice-President, Jason Steinberg continues to skilfully look after the Public Relations portfolio, providing regular news updates to organisations and representatives.

Jason was particularly involved in relations with the Media during the period of hostilities in Lebanon, devoting a great deal of time and expertise.

## 6. Security

Despite the events in the Middle East, we have fortunately again enjoyed a quiet year with few incidents of any concern.

We did experience some minor incidents of nuisance phone calls but these were not significant.

One incident of note however was the harassment of a Brisbane Jewish family by a person using SMS messaging to a mobile phone. That matter was quickly and very professionally investigated by Queensland Police resulting in the charging of a man with offences under telecommunications and threat laws. The matter is still before the Courts, so it is not appropriate to go into further detail at this stage. This is believed to be perhaps the first such prosecution anywhere in the world.

We have enjoyed exceptional co-operation and assistance from all levels of the police and security organisations, and appreciate their efforts.

Our Security group is enjoying a resurgence with a new batch of members undergoing regular training and providing supervision of communal events.

## 7. Multi-Faith

Our Multi-Faith committee, under the leadership of Garek Fysch, continues to undertake a wide array of activities and represent us at many gatherings.

The Queensland Council of Christians, Jews and Muslims, has continued to meet regularly throughout the year.

## 8. Special events

The Brisbane Hebrew Congregation celebrated the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Margaret Street Synagogue which was attended by both the Israeli Ambassador and our ECAJ President. We were pleased to be able to host them at a convivial morning function attended by Communal leaders.

## 9. ECAJ and Interstate

We have been in constant contact with the ECAJ and its officers, and appreciate their inclusiveness and the constant flow of information both ways.

I would like to make special mention of, and state appreciation for, the tireless efforts of our President, Grahame Leonard, who has guided us through some very difficult issues relating to the WJC and the hostilities in Lebanon, with dignity and skill.

## 10. Thanks

I would as always like to thank all the members of the Board mentioned already, as well as our Secretary Caroline Goldsmith, for all their efforts and dedication.

## 11. Summary

The Queensland Community is continuing to develop and to provide a full Jewish life at all levels and in all regions of major Jewish population.

Despite an international air of increasing tension and concern about antisemitism, we have continued to enjoy a relatively peaceful environment.

David Paratz  
President



## New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies

The Representative Organisation of NSW Jewry

ועד הקהילה היהודית בנס.וו.

### Introduction

Since the last annual report, there has been a change in the conversation members of our community are having with our CEO, Vic Alhadeff, with me and with members of the Board's Executive about the work of the Board.

Less and less do people ask what the Board does. They know what the Board does. They want to evaluate how we're going. The Board's brand is becoming better known. The community-wide circulation of: "At the Board" has been very well received by a community that wants to feel more secure, wants to know that Jews are welcome in the Australian social fabric and knows that it is imperative that antisemitism be socially unacceptable in this wonderful nation of Australia.

### Three critical strategic changes

The Board of Deputies has made three critical strategic changes to its operation in the past 2 years:

- it has moved from being a largely responsive organisation to one which operates according to a Strategic Plan and is now proactive, while necessarily responding to issues as they arise;
- it has professionalised its operation to shift the weight of responsibility from the corps of volunteers on whom it historically relied to a professional office in which each member of staff is allocated portfolios and works to specific areas of the Strategic Plan;
- it has recruited two highly respected professionals, including Australia's top Jewish journalist, to run its public affairs – which lie at the core of its activities – Vic Alhadeff, former editor of the Australian Jewish News, as CEO, and Candice Talberg, formerly of the BBC and Channel Nine, as Public Affairs Manager;
- it has empowered its professional staff, Vic Alhadeff, Candice Talberg, Josh Levin and Alla Pilman (and until recently, Naomi Gold) to build new programs, expand existing good programs and importantly, to jettison programs that are not achieving the Board's goals.

These changes have been imperative in terms of

- ensuring that the Jewish community has a credible, thoughtful and trusted public affairs representative when meeting the challenges presented by increasing antisemitism;
- ensuring that the conduct of public affairs on behalf of the Jewish community is intellectually rigorous and grounded in carefully thought-out positions; and
- ensuring that in operating as the representative voice of NSW Jewry, the Board of Deputies maximises communal co-ordination in all areas, from media and political relations to educational input, the speaker service and Shoah remembrance.

### The War against Hezbollah

When, under ECAJ and ZFA auspices, the Australian Jewish community moved to coordinate its public affairs work in the course of Israel's war against Hezbollah, Vic and the team in the office performed an integral role. Almost 200 interviews and backgrounders were conducted by the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies over two months.

## **What are our priorities**

It is imperative that the leaders and opinion makers of our society know the Jewish community, value its contribution, and understand our issues and concerns – first hand. It means that the mandate of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies is to make NSW a safer place in which to be Jewish. That work is not a luxury but a vital necessity.

We are placing a priority on building a community wide advocacy program with our partners in the Zionist movement so that we will have well informed and knowledgeable advocates who can speak on our behalf and the community at large. We are working from our youth up. With far-sighted support from the JCA, We are building for the future.

When Jews engage in strengthening the social fabric of our society and generate a positive perception of the Jewish people and Israel, we build a bulwark against the rising tide of antisemitism.

We see as an ongoing priority that the work we are doing to position the Board is a key player enabling school curriculums and teaching to achieve an accurate understanding of the Jewish way of life in Australia, to teach the lessons of the Holocaust, and to counteract misinformation on Israel and the Middle East.

We continue our ongoing work in building strong relationships with the media, and sponsoring studying missions to Israel of leading Australian journalists.

In order to achieve these things, the Board needs to attract communal leaders at the highest calibre to its Executive and to its committees. It is now a well entrenched reality, that when a position on the Board's Executive becomes vacant there is almost more than one person willing to take on the role and the responsibility. That is a sign of strength for the future.

## **Performance**

The appended table summarises the areas of our work, what we produce, and the impact of what we produce and the needs that are being met. I trust that you will find this format more helpful than the traditional narrative format for an annual report.

I am extremely proud of what the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies is achieving.

## **Communal Security Group**

The CSG has once again been able to improve and streamline its security coverage of the community. We recruit men and women who often go onto leadership positions in the organisation as well as other Jewish communal organisations. The CSG maintains high standards, and the amount of hard work and long hours contributed by over a 160 volunteers is a testament to the value CSG adds. I should here thank the CSG staff, Kevin Rothchild, David Rothman, Ben Livni, Simon Wiseman (who left us earlier this year for wedded bliss in England), Talia Grunstein (who took over from Simon) and Dana Dusheiko.

Their work is overseen by an advisory board that supports the Executive of the Board. The members of the advisory board in addition to myself are Yair Miller, Cely Malki Benchoam, Justice Stephen Rothman, Brian Schwartz FCA AM, Stephen Green and Harold Finger.

A separate report is presented in relation to Antisemitic Incidents, and here I go no further than to record my thanks to the outstanding work by the professionals and volunteers of the CSG.

## **JEMP (Jewish Emergency Management Plan)**

JEMP NSW falls under the auspices of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies and the CSG. JEMP is a community-based initiative to provide a coordinated management plan to deal with any major emergency, either locally or overseas, which may affect NSW Jews. JEMP is also the co-ordinating agency of the NSW Jewish community in the event of a natural disaster, medical emergency and / or terrorist-related emergency.

JEMP NSW joins an already functioning JEMP in Victoria that was launched by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in October 2001. The JEMP VIC Plan forms an official part of the Emergency Management Manual of Victoria.

JEMP NSW will implement emergency management plans utilizing the resources of all relevant Jewish communal organizations, communal infrastructure and human resources available to the Jewish community. The main organisations involved in JEMP planning and response are the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies Communal Security Group (CSG) and JewishCare. We are also working with groups such as Montefiore Homes, Hatzolah, Yeshiva Centre and the Jewish Day Schools.

### **The Executive, Committees and task forces**

Each of the Education, Interfaith and Multicultural Relations, Shoah Remembrance and Restitution, Social Justice and Youth Committees have been particularly active. I acknowledge here the outstanding leadership of the committee chairs, Susi Brieger (ably supported by Ian Lacey), Josie Lacey OAM, Dr George Foster, David Bitel and Lynda Dave.

The new Public Affairs Committee has developed a charter under the leadership of Vice-President Yair Miller, and will provide strategic support to the Board's professionals.

Yair performed brilliantly as Acting President when my mother was ill and during my bereavement after her death. He has time and time again rewarded my confidence in him, a confidence which the leadership of the New South Wales Jewish community shares, and rightly so.

This year, Vice President Jillian Segal AM, Ilona Lee our Honorary Secretary, and our Honorary Treasurer for the past six years, Cely Malki Benchoam retired as Honorary Officers. All three have made extraordinary and indeed outstanding contributions to the Board. All three have offered to continue offering their wise counsel for the benefit of the Board and the Jewish community. I know they realise that I will take up their offers.

Dr George Foster has been elected Vice-President and will serve alongside Yair Miller. Robin Margo S. C. has been elected Honorary Secretary and Sam Zweig, Honorary Treasurer. All three gentlemen have already begun to put in amount of work.

Lynda Dave has also retired as Chair of the Youth Committee and we thank her for all her hard work. We have reconfigured this committee to be a Young Adult -- Advocacy Training Committee led by Lance Kalish.

Lance is one of three members of our executive under the age of 30 who make a fantastic contribution. The other two are Yair Miller and Robin Schuck.

Naomi Gold left the Board during the year to take up a new and exciting challenge offered to her by JNF. It is indeed a compliment to her and to the Board that her work for us made her so desirable a recruitment for another highly valued communal organisation.

Alla Pilman has been confirmed in the role of Office and Information Systems Manager since Naomi's departure, and has yet again demonstrated her versatility and willingness to innovate.

The Board's staff and here I include our administrative support team, Danielle Braun, Sarita Gold and Cynthia Herman, have truly risen the occasion, meeting and sometimes surpassing the high standards expected for them by a demanding President and Executive.

### **The role of past presidents**

So much of the work of a President depends upon the support of his or her predecessors who are an integral part of the Honorary Officers team. Justice Stephen Rothman has continued to be without fail generous with his time, and unequivocally supportive.

I also want to publicly thank each of the past presidents whose active support and constant wisdom educate and strengthen the role of each new president. Graham De Vahl Davis AM, Gerry Levy AM, Robert Goot AM SC, Peter Wertheim AM and Michael Marx AM have been available to me often at incredibly short notice, and their advice and wisdom are always appreciated. I want to make particular mention of the wisdom so readily shared with me by the late Leslie Caplan AM despite his variable health in his last few years. He passed away shortly after my mother; a few rooms away at Wolper Jewish Hospital.

### **ECAJ**

I should add here also that the co-operation of the Board has received from Grahame Leonard as President of the ECAJ directly and through the ECAJ Executive Director Geoffrey Zygier, has made national-state co-operation an increasingly efficient exercise, despite the ECAJ's financial constraints.

The size of the challenge facing the ECAJ should never be underestimated. If anything it is getting bigger. It is extremely difficult for an organisation whose strengths are its consultative and representative capacities to consult and represent effectively, whilst remaining nimble in a rapidfire highly charged political environment. Nonetheless, the ECAJ must meet that challenge. Electronic communications make telephone hookups and e-mail consultation easier and less expensive than they once were. The ECAJ'S capacity to form a national Jewish consensus on any issue, within any time challenge, is second to none. We succeed in our representative role when we deliver on the combined challenges of consensus building and effective representation. And, the view from New South Wales, is that the ECAJ is getting better and better at doing so.

We are also conscious that of all the constituent organisations within the ECAJ, the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies has the best resources, due in no small part to the contribution of the Jewish Communal Appeal. We are, as ever, willing to put our resources to work for the benefit of the ECAJ; -- if only because there should never be a situation where the interests of the Board and interests of the ECAJ are different. We commend yet again to all other States the establishment and operation of an effective Jewish Communal Appeal. In our view, a JCA is the only way to ensure coherent, need-based funding of a Jewish community.

There are from time to time differences of view not only as to what position the ECAJ should take on a particular matter, but also, surprisingly, on the way in which the ECAJ should develop its consensus position. We are confident that over time these differences will reduce, and the ECAJ will be thereby strengthened.

David D. Knoll  
President

Area of activity	Board of Deputies product	Impact and need being met
Political	Utilising international dignitaries and experts to develop relationships with opinion-makers. eg JCA campaign speaker Dr Shimon Samuels, Israeli Reserve Bank Governor Stanley Fischer, Israeli General Eival Gilady, Jerusalem Post political correspondent Gil Hoffman, Friends of Hebrew University speaker, Amb. Efraim Halevy	Relations with the two major parties continues to be excellent, with the Board of Deputies enjoying access to both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition and their respective teams.
Political	The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies Luncheon Club created a successful vehicle in which opinion-makers in the media and politics engage with leaders of the Jewish community. Guest speakers this year included ABC 702 presenter Virginia Trioli, Gladys Berejiklian MP, Anthony Albanese MP, and Fairfax Director of Corporate Affairs Bruce Wolpe, Eric Roozendaal MP, Amb. Efraim Halevy.	Connects Jewish leaders with leading Parliamentarians and policy commentators in an intimate “Chatham House rules” setting. The relationships which are established and the bridges which are built are invaluable. The Luncheon Club receives sponsorship in kind from the firm which provides the premises
Political	Yom Ha’atzmaut cocktail function and follow-up networking.	Premier Morris Iemma’s speech to politicians, journalists, ethnic, faith and community representatives included a strong denunciation of antisemitism, and commendation of the Israeli Government’s commitment to taking measured risks to achieve peace.
Political	Dialogue with political party leaders and policy advisers; and with Australia’s union leaders. The CEO and Public Affairs Adviser conduct background briefings with Members of Parliament to update them on the Jewish community’s issues and concerns. These are particularly important in view of the approaching elections on March 24, 2007. Both also directly serve the JCA leadership and CEO with the JCA’s public affairs needs.	Less frequent anti-Israel policy positions and increased prospect of public positions empathetic to the Jewish community.
Political	The Board of Deputies organised Australia’s first-ever Trade Union Seder as a bridge-building exercise between the Jewish community and the union movement. The event was an extraordinary success. While we organised the entire project, we invited Unions NSW to host the event, which they did in the headquarters of Unions NSW on Sussex Street. The Haggadah was rewritten to make it relevant to the union movement, and the Trade Union Choir performed. The Board of Deputies involved representatives of numerous organisations in the event – Moriah, Masada, Emanuel, Kesser Torah College and Shalom Institute. The Board of Deputies secured donations from the Members Equity Bank and received financial support from three members of the community.	The Board is reaching out in to the traditional “Left” and broader social justice sectors to build a bulwark against “Left” antisemitism and to rebuild a positive perception of the Jewish community across the “Left”.
Political and Media	Distinguished speakers program. The Board of Deputies brought Jerusalem Post political correspondent Gil Hoffman to Sydney for a week, organising 14 speaking events and meetings for him.	Builds trust and confidence in the Board particularly and the Jewish community more broadly by connecting distinguished experts / speakers with Australian opinion –makers. Gil Hoffman gave briefings to the new managing director of the ABC, Mark Scott; the foreign editor of Fairfax, Peter Kerr, and 13 senior managers, editors and journalists at SBS. Hoffman also briefed NSW parliamentarians and addressed the UNSW School of Political Science and two public meetings.

Media	Active engagement with journalists; workshops and consultations, including with senior editors, subeditors and journalists at the Sydney Morning Herald. <sup>1</sup>	The Sydney Morning Herald has adopted policies reflecting a far greater degree of balance than it did 2-3 three years ago. Approx. 100 favourable inclusions in print media. Approx. 30 radio and television inclusions on Channels 10, 7, Sky, SBS and the ABC.
Media	Active backgrounding of ABC Radio News and Current Affairs and SBS Television producers, presenters and journalists.	ABC Radio News and Current Affairs and SBS Television beginning to air points of view favourable to the Jewish community and Israel's concerns
Media	The Journalists Mission to Israel.	The 2005 participants - chief political correspondent of the Sydney Morning Herald, supervising producer of SBS TV News and Current Affairs, a senior reporter on Channel Ten and a senior presenter on Sky News. All three are showing increased openness to points of view favourable to the Jewish community and Israel's concerns.
Media	Monitoring antisemitism in ethnic, religious and campus media. By way of example: a scurrilous article was published on the front page of The Western Onion, the student newspaper of the University of Western Sydney, which comprises 40,000 students on six campuses. The most offensive paragraph began: "Not all Jews are money-grabbers and thieves, but if Jews want to be treated like human beings rather than criminals, why do they refuse to condemn bankers and money-lenders...?" By raising the issue with the university and with contacts, which the Board of Deputies has developed in the Muslim and Christian educational sectors, the Board achieved broad university and community wide condemnation of the article and reinforced the public perception that antisemitism must be socially unacceptable. <sup>2</sup>	Responding where appropriate to incidents of antisemitism in the ethnic media.
Social Justice	Policy statements were developed and launched in respect of members of the community with disabilities and those affected by poverty. A plenum meeting was devoted to disabilities in the community, resulting in a register being set up of businesses which could offer jobs to people with disabilities.	Practical improvement to the lives of members of the community who suffer from mental and/or physical disabilities. Generates positive perceptions of the Jewish community. The initiative received positive press.
Social Justice	The Board of Deputies Social Justice Committee conducted a day-long forum on "Poverty in the Jewish community: developing projects for hope", on August 6, 2006. The aim is to mobilise communal bodies, individuals and businesses to initiate	Practical improvement to the lives of members of the community who suffer from mental and/or physical disabilities. Positive perception of Jewish community as being concerned to improve the lot of people with disabilities.

<sup>1</sup> Many national media organisations are headquartered in Sydney, and the Board of Deputies plays the principal role on behalf of the Jewish community in developing healthier media relations.

<sup>2</sup> For example:

- a 400-word condemnation of the article by the University Vice-Chancellor, published in The Western Onion
- the use of an email address which goes to all 40,000 students – and is used only for emergencies – to distribute the Vice-Chancellor's condemnation
- a 350-word condemnation by the Principal of one of Sydney's biggest Muslim schools, published in The Western Onion
- A condemnation by the executive director of the Christian Schools Association, published in The Western Onion.

	new projects that will make a difference to the economically-disadvantaged. Four working groups addressing poverty alleviation are now active.	
Social Justice	The Board of Deputies played a key facilitating role in the inaugural group of Jewish university students who went to Toomelah and Boggebilla for a week – disadvantaged Aboriginal communities in north-west NSW – to assist them with grassroots projects, claims for government grants and run camps for schoolchildren. As a direct result of a claim which was lodged, the Federal Government awarded the Aboriginal community in the area a \$50,000 grant, which will buy it a million litres of water per year.	Practical improvement to the lives of the Aboriginal communities of two severely disadvantaged towns. Positive perception of Jewish community as significant contributors to improving the Australian social fabric, and specifically the lot of the indigenous community.
Community development (High Schools students)	<p>Hamasbir – advocacy <b>(joint program with SZC)</b></p> <p>Five years of violence in Israel has been mirrored by aggressive sentiment towards Israel and the Jewish people in the media, on university campuses and in the workplace. The goals of the programme are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• train Jewish young adults to become active advocates for Israel and the Jewish experience</li> <li>• provide participants with the skills to do so</li> <li>• empower participants to further develop their skills and knowledge.</li> <li>• work within a specifically Australian context.</li> </ul> <p>The following modules are taught: Use of Language; Public Speaking; Non-verbal and Media Response / FAQ Sheets / Posters / Letters; Coalition Building – joint events with non-Jewish groups (including Muslim groups); Disagreeing With Israeli Policy; Scenario Session/Putting Together A Complete Campaign.</p> <p>The programme has been run successfully for students at Masada, Emanuel and AUJS/ZYC. Moriah is scheduled to take part this year for the first time.</p> <p>On completion of the 2006 course at Masada, students ran two successful Jerusalem Day stalls at the University of NSW and the University of Sydney.</p>	Quantum leap forward in Strengthening the ability of young Jews to speak up for Israel and their Jewish community. Youth frequently find themselves obliged to defend Judaism and/or Israel. However, they tend to lack the tools to deal with this confronting reality. This advocacy programme combats both of these issues.
Community development (University students)	The Board of Deputies offers a Political Training Seminar for student activists and politicians. The objective is to get beyond “myths and facts” and to more sophisticated advocacy. The content of the programme includes political involvement and public relations, including running campaigns, political debating, effective networking, meeting and election procedure.	Develops a new generation of Jewish activists equipped to represent the community in public relations tasks. Almost 40 participants attended the 2006 seminar, which was expanded to two days for the first time. It included campaign design and execution and interacting with Minister for Roads Eric Roozendaal, Opposition Leader Peter Debnam, Sydney Morning Herald journalist Jonathan Pearlman and political staffers.
Interfaith and Multicultural Relations	Faith Based Schools Symposium at Sydney University which brought together leading educators from the Muslim, Christian and	Increases prospects of faith and ethnic leaders taking public positions empathetic to the Jewish community. This happened when

	Jewish sectors.	Muslim and Christian participants at the symposium agreed to publicly condemn an antisemitic statement in a university newspaper two weeks later.
Interfaith and Multicultural Relations	5 <sup>th</sup> Annual Abrahamic Conference – University of Sydney.	In addition to the foregoing, the president's address was subsequently published in the 50th anniversary issue of Quadrant magazine.
Interfaith and Multicultural Relations / Youth	Youth Encounters - a two month interfaith dialogue programme for Jewish, Muslim and Christian Year 11 students. The programme began in 2004 with 60 students and three schools, and this year will comprise 240 students and 12 schools (Christian, Jewish and Muslim). The students take part in a preparation programme where they learn communication skills, conflict transformation skills and information about the three faiths. They then take part in a day-long dialogue. Premier Morris Iemma was the keynote speaker at the recent programme.	Promotes mutual respect among Jewish, Christian and Muslim students. Combats antisemitism in schools. Receives extensive positive coverage in the mainstream media. Youth Encounters has grown exponentially since 2004 when the programme was conceived with 60 students and three schools. In 2006 we will involve 240 students and 12 educational institutions, including: Moriah, Masada, Emanuel, the Board of Progressive Jewish Education, Noor al-Houda Islamic College, Sule College, Malek Fahd, Kincoppal Rose Bay, Shore, Kambala and MLC. The programme attracted positive reports in the Sydney Morning Herald and Daily Telegraph, and on the ABC. Premier Morris Iemma was the keynote speaker in November 2005. Virginia Judge MP, Member for Strathfield, one of Australia's most multicultural electorates will be the keynote Speaker in 2006.
Education Sector	Lobbying to incorporate positive perceptions of Jews and Judaism into NSW curricula.	Minimising the impact of biased texts; increasing sensitivity to Jewish issues; increasing the amount of balanced Israel content in school curricula.
Education Sector	Sponsorship of a Judaism edition of a Studies of Religion Association Newsletter, to be distributed to over 1000 teachers across NSW.	Disseminating a positive perception of Judaism in the Studies of Religion syllabus.
Education Sector	Co-ordination of the response of the day schools and Academy BJE to the reviews of Prescriptions in the Stage 6 Classical Hebrew Continuers Syllabus. This included the development of a submission representing the views of the various stakeholders.	Ensures continuity of Classical Hebrew as an HSC program.
Education Sector	Work with Associate Professor Suzanne Rutland in regard to enhancing the status of the teaching methods course in Judaic Studies at Sydney University. Sponsorship was secured for a booklet on 'Jews and the Arab World', to be published by the History Teachers Association for teachers and students electing the Arab-Israel option in the Stage 6 Modern History Syllabus. This will be distributed to 1000 history teachers across NSW. The Education Manager co-ordinates the Speaker Service. Speakers from Jewish education institutions, including Academy BJE, the Sydney Jewish Museum and the Board of Progressive Jewish Education, are provided to schools and organisations on request. Quality controls ensure that content and delivery are of the highest standard. Through the <a href="http://www.ijs.org.au">www.ijs.org.au</a> website, the Education Committee provides state-of-the-art resource materials to assist teachers and students in the following syllabus topics: Creation of Israel; Arab Israel Conflict; National Study of Germany; Conflict in	Contributes to training of Jewish Studies teachers of the future.  Ensures accurate information is utilised in the education sector on matters concerning the Jewish people and Israel.  Delivers a coordination Jewish community approach to educational speaker visits.  Provides state-of-the-art resource materials to assist teachers and students in prescribed syllabus topics.

	Europe 1935-1945; Golda Meir; Zionism; Judaism as a religious tradition. The website is being expanded in response to need, and additional content is being developed.	
Education Sector	The Board of Deputies sponsored a Judaism edition of the Studies of Religion Association Newsletter. The Education Committee Chair co-ordinated contributions from Jewish educators and with Ian Lacey AM (a member of the Education Committee) edited the 100-page document. Co-ordinated the Jewish education participation in the Faith Based Symposium - a conference of the three monotheistic faith based schools, Islamic, Christian and Jewish.	Ensures that the teaching of Judaism in schools that the Board cannot reach is accurate.  Builds positive relationships with Christian and Muslim teachers.
Education Sector	Secured agreement from the Department of Education that an anti-Israel programme running at government schools would be scrapped. The Board of Deputies monitors school texts which have Jewish and/or Israel content and in several instances secured agreement from publishers to make amendments.	Ensures that antisemitism continues to be socially and educationally unacceptable in NSW high schools.
Shoah Remembrance and Restitution	The Board of Deputies has the responsibility of organising Holocaust remembrance on behalf of the community. A dozen events to mark Shoah Awareness Week.	Wider knowledge and appreciation of the Shoah, and a unified approach to the core community wide commemorations of the Shoah, where no one constituent could deliver the breadth and diversity that successful commemorations require.
Youth	Immunisation of Jewish youth against Jews for Jesus. Informs non-Jews about the need for honesty in interfaith dialogue.	Combats theological antisemitism and increases self-confidence of young Jews (ages 12+) in standing up for themselves and for Judaism.
Youth	The Geshet programme brings young Jewish leaders together in a think-tank which tackles issues in our community and brainstorms ideas for the future. Twenty university-aged students attended the programme in 2006, representing all five youth movements and the university campuses on which AUJS has a presence.	Enhances young adults' leadership and political skills.
Information provision	"Weekly News Review"	Provides immediate accessible information about the Jewish world (that has not appeared in mainstream news media) to all subscribers, and relevant contacts. Distributed electronically.
Information provision	The Board of Deputies recently released an updated wallet brochure: "Dispelling the Myths", designed to give people user-friendly facts on Israel and the Middle East.	A handy ready-reckoner that builds confidence in members of the Jewish community to advocate for Israel and Jewish interests.
Information provision	Introduction of "At The Board"	The introduction of "At The Board" in 2006 has been an unqualified success. Parliamentarians, public servants and NGO representatives are also asking for and referring to the publication, and it further strengthens the broader communities' perception of the Jewish community as an engaging, valuable contributor to the Australian social fabric.
Information provision	The Board of Deputies' speaker service provides Jewish speakers to political party branches and other community organisations throughout NSW.	Combats antisemitism and promotes a positive perception of Jews particularly in rural NSW. Conducted in co-ordination with other community organisations, such as Sydney Jewish Museum and Academy BJE.
Information provision	The Board of Deputies CEO is a frequent guest speaker at community events, including: three speeches at The Shalom Institute's Limmud-Oz; two speeches at the	Ensures that the Board supports other communal organisations in the fight against antisemitism, and disseminates information of value to the community.

	AUJS Winter Conference; and keynote speaker at a JCA North Shore Information Night, an NCJW Israel Night and numerous other communal functions.	
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## **WIZO AUSTRALIA'S 2006 REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY**

WIZO Australia has had a very successful year under the direction of its President, Jo Gostin, and Marlis Cohen as Honorary Treasurer.

The State Presidents are Gilla Liberman (NSW), Paulette Cherny (Victoria), Miriam Millingen (South Australia), Anne Topelberg OAM (Western Australia), and Myrna Freed (Queensland). All State Presidents are also Vice Presidents of the Federation. Rony Bognar is the Immediate Past President.

### **WIZO Worldwide**

WIZO, one of the longest lasting Women's International Zionist Organisations in the world, derives its strength and longevity from its Federations and volunteers worldwide, whom we call members and Chaverot (friends). They are the movement's ground force and backbone.

WIZO was founded in London on 11 July, 1920 by Rebecca Sieff, Dr. Vera Weizmann, Edith Eder, Romana Goodman and Henrietta Irwell - all proud, independent minded Zionist women with the goal of serving the needs of women and children in Israel. Having visited Palestine-Eretz Israel with their husbands, and seeing the conditions, or lack thereof in which people were living, these women decided to take action. They addressed the urgent necessities of women and children in Palestine Eretz-Israel and established social, welfare and educational services and institutions, that later became the foundation for the infrastructure of the Israeli society as we know it today.

Today, WIZO is as essential, innovative and relevant as ever and is always ready to deal with new challenges, safe in the knowledge that its membership worldwide will always be there to support this vital work. Looking at the modern technology we have at our fingertips, we can only look in awe at the triumphs of the previous generations that were achieved by far less, if sometimes impossible circumstances.

WIZO has grown as a non-party, world-wide movement of 250,000 women in 50 Federations world-wide, with headquarters in Israel. WIZO has had consultative status at the UN from the year 1959 with ECOSOC (Economic and Social Commission), and from 1960 with UNICEF (United Nations Children's Education Fund). As a non-Governmental Organisation, this special status gives us unique and special opportunities to be part of the United Nations family. World WIZO has been very active and well represented during previous UN Women's conferences and World WIZO has permanent representatives at the UN – in New York, Geneva and Vienna. WIZO is represented at all meetings of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women giving Jewish women a voice in this largely hostile forum.

Today, WIZO in Israel maintains a comprehensive network of services and projects for the care of children, youth, families and the elderly from all sections of the community. All of WIZO's services fulfill urgent social welfare needs and many of WIZO's facilities are specifically designed to assist in the integration of the vast numbers of immigrants who have come to Israel during the past 58 years.

WIZO is an acknowledged leader in the field of child care and maintains 164 projects for children of pre-school age. Over 14,000 toddlers attend WIZO's day care centres.

For teenagers, WIZO conducts eleven secondary agricultural and vocational schools, at which 6,600 pupils prepare for careers ranging from agriculture to computer technology and from electronics to secretarial skills. WIZO also maintains a community college for post-high school studies.

In 54 youth clubs throughout Israel, some 22,000 youngsters between the ages of eight and eighteen years find opportunities for supervised study, recreation, sport and friendship.

WIZO's work for the women of Israel is centred around two hundred women's clubs, amongst which are several catering especially for Arab, Druze, Bedouin and Caucasian women. WIZO is actively involved in advancing the status of women, with a committee for the advancement of women in politics and four information centres on women's rights. WIZO also provides vocational training and advancement for women. WIZO has established Schools for Political Leadership in Jerusalem, Be'er Sheva and Haifa to train women for political office.

WIZO provides a wide range of services for families, including shelters and a hotline services for battered women, centres for the prevention and treatment of domestic violence, summer camps for needy mothers of large families, legal advice bureaux on family matters, centres and groups for single parent families, and a computerised information centre for single-parent families.

WIZO's services extend through to the Third Age, with 100 social clubs and sheltered employment clubs, a parents' home and a phone-in assistance service.

### **WIZO Australia's Activities during the past year**

#### **Aviv Retreat – 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> May**

On the weekend of the 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> May, WIZO Victoria hosted a National WIZO Aviv Retreat for young WIZO women. Over 50 enthusiastic participants from all over Australia attended the Retreat that was held in Melbourne. These dedicated WIZO women came together to demonstrate their steadfast commitment and passion for WIZO.

The Retreat began on the Saturday night at the home of Mervyn and Laurine Kark, where participants took a "Walk on the Wild Side". African drummers, WIZO games, a gourmet dinner and a relaxed atmosphere set the tone for the weekend.

Sunday included a series of stimulating talks by several dynamic and interesting people who reinforced the participants' passion for Israel.

The WIZO Aviv Retreat which has become an annual event was a resounding success.

## **Taylor Hogge**

Taylor Hogge, a WIZO member who lives in the USA, volunteers and lives in Israel for 6 months of the year. She spends 3 months, twice a year, at the WIZO Hadassim Youth Village where she becomes a “mother” to the children.

Taylor was in Australia with her husband, Bob Spivak, Past President of Maccabi International. On Wednesday, July 5<sup>th</sup> she had morning tea with WIZO members at a private home in Sydney and in the evening a select group of major donors were invited to the home of Shirley and Frank Lowy.

She then traveled to Melbourne where a luncheon was held on July 11<sup>th</sup>. The focus was on our Sponsor A Child campaign.

She then returned to Sydney and attended the National AUJS Winter Conference held in Liverpool, where she was once again a huge success. This was evident in the report that was given at our Plenary by Romy Braitberg who attended the Conference.

Taylor Hogge represents the epitome of volunteerism and truly inspired and moved anyone who had the privilege of meeting her.

## **Plenary**

WIZO Australia held its Plenary in Melbourne on the weekend of the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> August at the Beth Weizmann Community Centre. This was attended by State Presidents and WIZO members from all over Australia.

A dinner, followed by a video tape greeting from Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, began the proceedings. Jo Gostin presented the Federal Report and introduced Philip Chester, President of the Zionist Federation of Australia, who brought greetings on behalf of the Australian Zionist Movements. The Melbourne Aviv delegates who attended the International Aviv Seminar in Israel last year, gave a power point presentation of their experiences and Lisa Farber, Federal Aviv Chairperson, gave an Aviv Report.

Laurence Joseph, Executive Director of the Gandel Charitable Trust and Wendy Brooks, Executive Director of the Royal Women’s Hospital Foundation presented a most informative session on Fundraising on Sunday morning.

Anat Bogaty, who was on the AUJS Atid Programme in Israel, gave a moving account of the group’s visit to WIZO Ahuzat Yeladim, and Romy Braitberg, who attended the AUJS Winter Camp, spoke about Taylor Hogge’s visit to the seminar.

Susan Katz, Chairperson Education, presented an Education Report and workshops designed by Jo Gostin and Rachel Caplan, were held.

Andrew Rajcher spoke about Fundraising, Membership and the WIZO website and Gilla Liberman, President, WIZO New South Wales, spoke about Volunteerism and Major Functions.

The Plenary ended on Sunday afternoon and proved to be a productive and motivating weekend for all delegates.

### **Emergency Campaign**

At the outbreak of war in Israel, WIZO Israel approached all international WIZO Federations for assistance in meeting the urgent needs created by the crisis. WIZO Australia immediately responded to the call and an Emergency Campaign was launched to ease the burden faced by the WIZO Head Office. Over 2,000 evacuees from the north of the country were housed in WIZO Youth Villages, WIZO projects and members' homes. WIZO spared no effort in providing whatever was needed to the evacuees and to whoever needed our help. This is the 'raison d'être' of WIZO - to extend a helping hand, and at this time, our 'hands' are sorely needed.

The war may be over, but WIZO's work for the North of Israel is not, and the coming few months will continue to call for our joint and continuous effort.

### **Membership Campaign**

The Membership Campaign which was launched in Australia at Yom Ha'atzmaut last year, is still continuing. As a result, our membership has increased but the campaign is ongoing.

### **AGM – January 16-19, 2006**

The AGM in Israel was attended by WIZO Australia President, Jo Gostin, and WIZO Victorian President, Paulette Cherny. Delegates from around the world attended the enlightening and informative meeting. Lectures were given by leading Israeli dignitaries and members of the World WIZO Executive. A highlight of the AGM was a visit to the President's Residence who marked the celebration of WIZO's 85 years with a cocktail reception.

Jo and Paulette spent two days visiting Australian WIZO projects in order to evaluate the needs and priorities for the forthcoming year.

### **International Aviv Seminar**

The International Aviv Seminar held in Israel last November attracted 10 delegates from Australia. This was a record attendance from Australia of which we are very proud. As a result of the calibre of the delegates and the enthusiasm generated by their experience, an increased interest and commitment has been shown by our Aviv groups. WIZO Australia is currently working to encourage as many members as possible to attend the Seminar which will be held this year from November 19-23 in Tel Aviv. Australian delegates will also have the opportunity to tour the Australian WIZO projects prior to and after the Seminar.

These are but a few examples of the highlights and activities of WIZO in Australia during the last year. In parallel to these events, we continue with our regular fundraising activities in order to maintain and support the Australian WIZO projects in Israel.

We are proud of the role of WIZO in Israel and are proud of our WIZO members and supporters in Australia. Together we ensure that WIZO continues  
**“Making it all Possible”.**

Jo Gostin  
President, WIZO Australia

## 2006 REPORT B'NAI B'RITH AUSTRALIA / NEW ZEALAND

### Introduction

I am very pleased to present this report on the activities of B'nai B'rith Australia / New Zealand (BBANZ) for inclusion in the ECAJ 2006 Annual Report. While BBANZ is active on both sides of the Tasman, this report focuses principally on activities in Australia.

### Courage to Care

B'nai B'rith's racial tolerance education program *Courage to Care* continues its successful showings, travelling to a range of regional and rural locations throughout Australia.

*Courage to Care* is a travelling exhibition and associated education program, developed as a major community outreach program for the benefit of Australian communities, aimed at promoting racial tolerance, harmony and understanding. Separate programs are run from NSW and Victoria. The main activity is mounting and running an exhibition directed at school students as well as the community at large. The exhibition education program includes "Living in Harmony" workshops which help students identify areas of prejudice and discrimination within their schools and communities, teaching young Australians students about the importance of tolerance, acceptance and respect for all members of our community and standing up against racism, prejudice and discrimination based on race, religion, colour or national origin.

Now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year in Victoria and its 8<sup>th</sup> year in NSW, *Courage to Care* has been seen overall by an estimated 170,000 people including 70,000 students since its inception in this form. In the past year showings were held in Ballarat, Bendigo, Griffith, Grafton, Shepparton, and the Plenty Valley. During the Commonwealth Games, the exhibition was on display at the Holocaust Museum and Research Centre in Melbourne, and it was also shown at the annual conference of the History Teachers Association of Victoria.

The major success of *Courage to Care* in NSW in attracting school groups from outlying areas is undoubtedly the subsidy of the costs of transport for school groups to and from each exhibition venue, particularly in the areas outside the regional centres.

### Anti-Defamation Commission (ADC)

Highlights of the year were the ADC Gandel Orations, given in Sydney and Adelaide by The Hon. Gareth Evans on the subject *Crimes against Humanity – overcoming global indifference*, and in Melbourne by Dr John Yu on *Failing the World's Children*. Both Orations were very well received, and generated considerable media exposure.

Action by ADC resulted in the closure of a Hamas website registered with a Melbourne internet service provider.

ADC and BBANZ jointly sponsored the annual multi-faith Abraham Conference, at which Rabbi Melchior was the outstanding keynote speaker.

The Building Bridges project, funded by a DIMIA Living in Harmony grant was launched in September 2004 and completed a year later. This was a joint project with a Turkish Muslim group, the Australian Intercultural Society. Several successful events were held, with some of these receiving widespread favourable publicity in the mainstream press and ABC radio. In 2005, DIMA announced that ADC and AIS had been awarded another for a project titled *Embracing Youth*, a similar project focusing on students in Jewish and Islamic schools.

### **Tax deductibility**

As a result of initiatives begun by BBANZ in August 2002, B'nai B'rith Courage to Care (NSW) and ADC both finally gained tax deductibility through recognition as harm prevention charities, Courage to Care after 2½ years, ADC after 4 years.

### **Submission on Human Rights Bill**

BBANZ co-ordinated responses to public enquiries, consisting of submissions on a proposed Charities Bill, and on a proposed Human Rights Act. This was the first time that BBANZ had developed positions on issues of public policy outside the specific area of anti-defamation.

### **Gold Medal Awards**

B'nai B'rith International presented its Presidential Gold Medal to Australian Prime Minister John Howard in Washington DC in May this year. I had the opportunity of proposing a toast to Mr Howard on this occasion, and in doing so referred to the resolutions condemning antisemitism which were passed by the Australian parliament in 2004 as a result of groundwork done by B'nai B'rith's Anti-Defamation Commission. I noted that the Parliament had resolved to encourage Australian ambassadors and other officials engaged in bilateral contacts with other countries to use their influence to oppose and counter antisemitic expressions and to promote all possible efforts at fostering tolerance and community harmony. I made the point that this sets a sterling example to the nations of the world in being seen to express a stand against antisemitism whenever and wherever it occurs.

A BBANZ Gold medal was presented to Roger Corbett AM, CEO of Woolworths Ltd, in recognition of an outstanding contribution in creating co-operative ventures between business and disadvantaged groups in Australia.

### **Support for Israel**

The Israel Commission has continued to promote a range of causes to assist disadvantaged people in Israel; in addition to valuable support from individual members, significant funds have been contributed by particular Constituents including Sydney Lodge and Shalom Unit, as well as a major bequest from a member of Sydney Chapter towards the Shikma Home in Ra'anana.

## **Harmony Day 2006**

To celebrate Harmony Day (21<sup>st</sup> March 2006), a Poster Competition again was sponsored and organised in schools in NSW and ACT by the ADC Education Committee, this time in conjunction with the Chinese Australian Forum, on themes of community harmony and understanding. The competition attracted nearly 3,600 entries, with the winning entry for senior schools coming from a student from Malek Fahd Islamic School in Greenacre, NSW, and the winning Junior schools entry coming from a student of St. Paul of the Cross School, Dulwich Hill, NSW. The announcement of winners was held at a ceremony at which the keynote speaker was the NSW Governor, Prof. Marie Bashir AC.

## **Aged-care initiative in Queensland**

Following a call for submissions by the Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies (QJBD) for proposals to assist in the development of aged-care facilities in Queensland, a submission was prepared by BBANZ and accepted by QJBD as the preferred option from among several proposals. B'nai B'rith has now been asked to work with the Queensland community to develop detailed proposals. I am hopeful that this will become the springboard for the re-establishment of a B'nai B'rith presence in Queensland.

## **Cyclone Larry response**

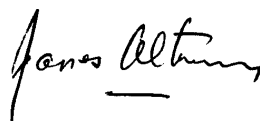
Following the model used to co-ordinate the Jewish Community's response to the 2004 tsunami, BBANZ together with the Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies conducted a community-wide appeal for victims of Cyclone Larry.

## **Anniversaries**

This year marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of B'nai B'rith in Australia. Celebratory events were held in both Sydney and Melbourne to mark this important occasion.

## **Conclusion**

After two successive two-year terms as President of BBANZ, I will be stepping down from this position at our Convention in Canberra later this month. I have personally gained a great deal during my term in office, and have enjoyed working and sharing views with the honorary officers and staff of ECAJ. I have every expectation that my successor will maintain and enhance this productive relationship.



James Altman  
President, B'nai B'rith Australia / New Zealand  
October 2006



## **Executive Council of Australian Jewry AGM 2006**

### **Report on the activities of the Australasian Union of Jewish Students**

**Compiled by Greg Weinstein, National President 2005 and 2006**

Our mission is to unite Jewish students throughout Australasia, promote Jewish identity, support the needs and interests of all Jewish students, and foster a positive relationship with Israel.

The Australasian Union of Jewish Students (AUJS) is the federal body for Jewish student societies at universities, colleges and TAFEs across Australia and New Zealand, and caters for a broad spectrum of Jewish students, as well as the wider community. AUJS provides a wide variety of activities including cultural, social, educational, political and religious forums, national conferences and Israel programs. AUJS services more than 3000 students at a campus, regional and federal level.

AUJS was founded in 1948 at Sydney University and is now established across eight regions and numerous campuses throughout Australia and New Zealand. AUJS is also affiliated with WUJS, the World Union of Jewish Students. AUJS is administered by a student executive elected at AUJS National Assembly which is held in September each year. Campus and regional executives are also elected. The many executives, together with the administrative and educational staff are responsible for organising the many AUJS activities.

The activities of the Union this year are far too numerous to mention in this report, so I will mention the major highlights and outline some key areas of concern. Over the past few years, AUJS has experienced a rollercoaster ride, but I can proudly state that today, November 2005, we are at a better place than we have been in a long time.

#### **1. Major National Campaigns**

##### **Orientation Weeks**

To help prepare for the introduction of Voluntary Student Unionism, which will likely see funding of AUJS executives dry up, AUJS increased financial membership for 2006 from \$5 to \$10. To help justify the increase, each new member received an AUJS-branded USB memory stick in addition to the standard membership pack. As expected, memberships were slightly down across the board. Orientation camps were held in three states – NSW, Victoria and WA – the first time this has happened in a while, with over 250 people in attendance.

## **Iran – “What are they really up to?”**

Coinciding with the Orientation Week campaign, AUJS produced a series of stickers and flyers raising awareness of the Iranian nuclear threat. The campaign received limited attention at the time, but it is no doubt an issue that will continue to be a focus for AUJS and other student groups in 2007.

## **Holocaust Awareness Week**

Based around Yom Hashoah each year, this campaign aims to educate both Jews and non-Jews about the atrocities of the Shoah. The 2006 campaign focussed on making the Shoah personal through victims’ stories and through linking it to other genocides. Various other clubs and societies on campus were invited to, and participated in, the commemoration ceremonies.

## **Support Israel – ‘hamatsav’ response**

When the Executive sat down in July to discuss how we were going to respond to the kidnapping of Gilad Shalit, we never imagined that just a few days later Israel would be at war with Hezbollah.

Our response was swift, powerful and diverse. Information stalls were set up on campuses and AUJS members began distributing posters, selected from a series designed by the National Executive, flyers and booklets entitled “Combating Hezbollah: Understanding Israel’s Actions.” These colourful booklets were an impressive educational resource and received resoundingly positive feedback from students and staff on campus, and we’re appreciative to both Hillel NSW and the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies for support on this project.

A large focus of this campaign was internal education and we sent regular email updates to members and designed a comprehensive online resource, as well as running a number of hasbara training sessions with the support of the community. Most impressive was the synergy between AUJS and the youth movements, in both Sydney and Melbourne.

AUJS endorsed the policy statement released by the ECAJ and the ZFA on behalf of the community. Many AUJS members wrote impressive articles for student publications and made speeches at communal functions. These functions were heavily promoted to our own members.

A week into the conflict, a joint statement calling for calm in Australia and expressing hope for a peaceful resolution was signed by the heads of AUJS, the Muslim Students Association of Australia, the Australian Catholic Students Association and the National Baha’i Youth Committee. This received fantastic feedback from within the community and I gave a number of radio interviews as a result.

Towards the end I gave an interview with Gemma Jones from The Daily Telegraph about my opinions on the current campus situation, and spoke about the incidents at Sydney University where three students were spat on and one pushed. The Monday 21 August edition ran a front page story called “City’s New Race Wars”.

This was followed by live radio interviews with Alan Jones and Stan Zemanek, pre-recorded interviews with ABC radio, TripleJ and TV's Channel 9. In all of these interviews I spoke predominantly about Australian values and the ignorance and racism stemming from extremist groups on both the right and left. I spoke against all forms of racism, specifically those against Jews and Muslims.

As a result, along with the President and CEO of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, we were able to meet with the Sydney Uni Vice-Chancellor, Prof Gavin Brown on the Tuesday. On the Wednesday, in an unprecedented response, he issued a public statement condemning anti-Semitism to all staff and students. We thank Melbourne Uni's Vice-Chancellor Davis for doing the same thing.

One of the interviews was a radio panel with five Jewish students and four Lebanese Muslim students, including a member of the federal Muslim Students Association executive and the two co-deputy chairs of the Arabic Council of Australia. Being able to debate the issues in a civil manner during a one hour radio show was seen as a significant milestone in interfaith relations and these contacts need to be nurtured.

And finally, in a true sign of the times, AUJS leaders on the mainland were left to marvel at the initiative and creativity shown by AUJS New Zealand. All around the country leaflets were dropped from tall buildings on campus which said "If Hezbollah dropped this, it would be a missile. You would be dead" on one side and "If Israel dropped this, it would be a pamphlet. You would be safe."

I was impressed with the way information and resources were shared between regions and this campaign was the perfect example of how well AUJS operates as a national organisation. Ultimately, the 'Support Israel' campaign motivated a new group of activists but it also exposed the fact that as an organisation our advocacy skills are not as high as they could be.

### **Israel Week**

Questions were asked about whether to proceed with the campaign or not, given its proximity to the Israel-Hezbollah conflict. The Executive decided that this would in fact be a perfect time to explain why 'Israel is a country worth defending'. Now in its fourth year, this proactive Israel campaign focuses on Israel's cultural, scientific and agricultural stories. In 2006 this campaign was run on every active campus in Australia and New Zealand. Major highlights in the past include a world-record attempt to create the world's biggest pita, a dove release involving the heads of 50 campus organisations, and Israeli dancing on campus. This year the campaign was boosted by a visit to Australia from Guy Spiegelman, an ex-Australian IDF spokesperson.

### **Derech Eretz – The Jewish / Aboriginal Partnership**

Derech Eretz is a joint initiative by AUJS, Hillel and B'nai B'rith Youth Organisation. For the second consecutive year, ten Jewish students travelled to the Queensland-New South Wales border to volunteer in the Aboriginal communities of Toomelah and Boggabilla. The group spent a week living in the community, running programs for children and helping to fill out grant applications. A committee of program graduates

from the past two years has since been created as various follow-ups projects are being developed.

### **AIPAC Fellowship**

This successful 2005 innovation saw two AUJS leaders, Merav Bloch and Michael Gubieski, work over the Australian Summer in the AIPAC office in Washington, DC, gaining an incredible insight into the operations of one of the most powerful lobby groups in the world. We're now talking with AIPAC about expanding the fellowship to four students rather than two and even potential stipends.

### **AUJS Alumni Association**

We are now closer than ever before to launching a project that has been spoken about for years but for various reasons has never eventuated. Sir Zelman Cowan, former Governor-General of Australia, has kindly agreed to patron an AUJS Alumni Association, and Peter Costello MP has agreed to speak at its launch. We have access to AUJS executive databases going back to the 1980s and have been in contact with 22 past National Presidents who all support the idea wholeheartedly. The project has stalled for a number of reasons, but is likely to launch in the first half of 2007.

### **Interfaith**

Over the past year there has been a growing "multifaith ethos" and willingness of executive members on all levels to engage in interfaith activities. AUJS was a key stakeholder in a number of exciting projects such as the DIMIA backed Embracing Youth Project and the Multicultural Youth Forum, a project jointly funded by a number of Government Departments. Relationships were formed with a number of faith-based student groups, most notably the Centre of Melbourne Multifaith and Others Network (COMMON) and the Islamic Girls' and Women's Group (IWGW).

My personal highlight was an ongoing dialogue between myself and the federal heads of the Muslim, Catholic and Baha'i student groups - Kaled El-Hassan, Aaron Russel and Faya Hayati. This began with a joint peace message from AUJS and the Australian Catholic Association during Pesach/Easter and then the historic 'National Prayer Chain for Peace' in July between all four organisations.

Our National Interfaith Officer Jess Taft was appropriately awarded a UNESCO Community Services Award in August, for her work throughout the year.

## **2. Major National Conferences**

### **Executive Conference – February**

Held in country Victoria, this week-long conference attracts executive members from all three levels around the country to network, share ideas and plan for the year ahead. The focus of this year's conference was on "skills" and participants attended a number of skills workshops.

### **Winter Conference – July**

AUJS' largest national gathering of students attracted 140 this year at Hunts Conference Centre in Liverpool, just south of Sydney. Highlights included a live hypnosis show, a fascinating discussion with WIZO guest Taylor Hogge, a social welfare activist from Israel, and a hotly contested debate on the future of Judaism with Rabbi Feldman (Orthodox) and Rabbi Robuck (Reform).

### **Political Training Seminar – August**

A delegation of 50 students spent three days at Parliament House in Canberra learning valuable skills and then meeting with federal MPs including Peter Costello, Alexander Downer, Dr Brendan Nelson, Kevin Rudd, Julia Gillard and Michael Danby. The future of tertiary education in Australia, counter-terrorism and Australia – Israel relations, were high on the agenda.

### **National Elections – September**

The National body meets every year at its Annual General Meeting (in Sydney in 2006) to elect its Executive for the following year. A variety of portfolio holders (publications, theme week coordinators etc.) are then appointed by the Executive. Regional and campus elections follow shortly after.

Discussions resulted in various resolutions, such as expanding our professional infrastructure and developing a Responsible Service of Alcohol policy for social events. The 2006 and 2007 Executives are:

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
<b>President</b>	Greg Weinstein (WA/NSW)	Joel Burnie (WA/VIC)
<b>Vice-President</b>	Alon Cassuto (VIC)	Dave Burnett (NSW)
<b>Treasurer</b>	Daniel Wyner (VIC)	Brodie Same (WA/VIC)
<b>Education Officer</b>	Brendan Bensky (WA)	Jo-Anne Hurwitz (NSW)
<b>Political Officer</b>	Merav Bloch (VIC)	Michael Weiss (NSW)
<b>Small Regions Officer</b>	Sam Sakker (QLD)	
<b>NSW President</b>	Dave Burnett	Isobel Nemirovsky
<b>VIC President</b>	Deon Kamien	
<b>WA President</b>	Joel Burnie	
<b>NZ President</b>	Deb Levy	

### **3. AUJS Israel Programs**

Thanks to the support and initiative of the Zionist Federation of Australia, the United Israel Appeal, and the unbelievable generosity of Taglit – birthright Israel, AUJS has been able to send over 600 students to Israel in the past two years!

## **Academy and Achshav**

The 2005/06 group was the largest in AUJS history, with 326 participants from five Achshav and three Academy groups. It is in our interests to send more people on the six week Academy program than on the three week Achshav program – from both an organisational and educational point of view.

Initiatives in the 2006 advertising campaign included a) a focus on Academy as the original AUJS program and still the best way to see Israel, b) getting past Academy participants to speak at schools and information evenings, and c) offering a \$20,000 subsidy fund for Academy participants.

At the time of writing this report, we have approximately 240 people signed up to Academy and Achshav, with approximately even numbers signing up for each program. If not for the Israeli-Lebanon conflict, which began one week before the application period opened, we would have had no difficulty filling the 320 places on offer. It is important to remember that despite the decrease in numbers from last year, this will still be the second biggest delegation AUJS has ever sent!

Around 40 of these will choose to participate in the Poland Heritage Tour which includes a week-long visit to Poland to explore pre-Holocaust Europe, and then return to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem for a two day seminar.

## **Aviv**

I am delighted to report that after a two year break, AUJS Aviv is back! This five month journey through Israel includes a week in Poland and participants are eligible for the new MASA scholarship.

We had experimented with Israel By Choice in 2005 and then decided to create a new program, AUJS Atid, which would run in 2006. Unfortunately sign-ups weren't as expected, and we decided to merge Atid with IBC in January 2006. The merge was done without enough consultation with participants and their families, and the relationship between AUJS and Yeladim Netivot, the group that runs IBC, was strained from the beginning.

I visited the Atid-IBC group during both my May and June Israel trips, and received mixed feedback about the program. Citing Yeladim Netivot's significant lack of organisation and communication skills as the primary reason, the AUJS Ltd. Board, in consultation with the Executive, made a unanimous decision to return to Israel Experience, the company that runs Academy, Achshav and the Poland Heritage Tour.

At the time of writing it is expected that a group of at least 20 participants will leave Australia in February 2007 to begin what we hope is a new beginning for the Aviv program.

## **Leadership Development Program**

The LDP is AUJS' investment in the future. It aims to equip a select group of 15-20 student leaders with the skills and knowledge they will require to become community

leaders in the coming years. This year the group will be hosted in the USA by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and Hillel International, and partake in a seminar in Mexico City organised by the United Israel Appeal. Whilst in Mexico City, the group will investigate a thriving community that has continued to flourish, with the aim of importing successful new initiatives back to Australia. They will then be based in Israel, where they will meet with prominent Jewish, Israeli, Palestinian and Arab leaders to investigate contemporary Israeli issues. Participants will also attend the annual World Union of Jewish Students Congress.

### **Student Leadership Program**

I am delighted that we are now able to add last year's successful new initiative to our annual calendar. This project would not be possible without the support of AIJAC, and in particular Dr Colin Rubenstein AM, and Board of the Rambam Fellowship, who generously commit a majority of the necessary project funding, and the World Union of Jewish Students, who coordinate our logistics in Israel.

The program takes nine non-Jewish student politicians on a week-long educational mission to Israel. These students are leaders of various student political parties from around the country, and upon return continue to support AUJS on campus.

### **Conclusion**

If not for the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict, we could be sending over 400 Jewish students between all of our programs. As a sign of how big the programs have become, it still looks like we will send over 300 students, which is a mark that until last year, previous executives could only dream of.

As always, I thank the ZFA for their guidance and continued support, and Tali Azulay and the Israel Experience, who continue to provide AUJS with professional and friendly service. They are a pleasure to work with. I also thank Vicky Gonda and Nicky Stranix from Jetset Rose Bay who have assisted with flights for AUJS Israel Programs for over ten years.

And finally, I would like to thank Tanya Cawthorne, who will be leaving us to make aliyah and 'return home' at the end of this year. Tanya brought with her a sense of professionalism and creativity to the role, and she has taken AUJS Israel Programs to a new level.

#### **4. State of the regions**

##### **New South Wales**

The resurgent region continues to go from strength to strength as both the quantity and quality of events organised for the membership of over 1000 continue to increase. AUJS is active at the University of New South Wales, Sydney University (Camperdown and Cumberland campuses), Macquarie University, Wollongong University, University of Technology of Sydney (UTS) at is in the process of establishing itself at the University of Western Sydney. Students at all campuses have noticed the increased AUJS presence with regular stalls and forums (with international guests such as Hirsh Goodman, Gil Hoffman and Guy Spiegelman), theme weeks and kosher barbeques.

Regional highlights include the Cocktail Party in September and the Black, White party in June, and the two new events on the calendar, NSW PTS in May and the return of the AUJS Revue - *Diaspora Housewives*.

AUJS NSW is grateful for the support and assistance it receives from the Jewish Communal Appeal, The Shalom Institute (which hosts AUJS at Shalom College) and especially it's CEO, Dr Hilton Immerman OAM, Hillel Jewish Student Services, the State Zionist Council, the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, and Mandelbaum House (at Sydney University).

##### **Victoria**

AUJS in Victoria continued its trend of pioneering new portfolios when it created the religious portfolio towards the end of last year, and we saw a number of successful initiatives stem from this portfolio. Other highlights included the huge Yom Ha'atzmaut function, 420 people attending the AUJS Ball in September - a sell-out, and the success of AUJS in campus elections at Melbourne University and Monash Clayton.

AUJS is active at Melbourne University, Monash University (Clayton and Caulfield), Deakin University, Latrobe University, RMIT, Swinburne University, William Angliss College, and this year, for the first time at Ballarat University.

A large part of AUJS' success is thanks to the support it receives from the community and in particular the State Zionist Council (which hosts AUJS at Beth Weizmann), the Jewish Community Council of Victoria, Hagshama and the Young UIA.

After many years of uncertainty, AUJS finally seems to be on the verge of forging a meaningful and mutually beneficial relationship with Hillel Victoria. There is huge potential and this relationship needs to be developed as a priority in 2007.

##### **Western Australia**

Western Australia continues to produce strong leaders, evidenced by the fact that it has produced four of the past five National Presidents and that in 2007 there will be three Western Australian representatives on the National Executive – a record.

Highlights for 2006 include a powerful and moving Holocaust Awareness Week ceremony at the University of Western Australia, a sell-out Pub Crawl in August and an AUJS-led communal 'Jew Years Eve' function in September. A Leadership Dinner is planned for October.

AUJS at the University of Western Australia continues to enjoy a positive relationship with the student guild, and is one of only a handful of AUJS groups around the country with its own 'common room' on campus. AUJS is also active at Curtin, Edith Cowan, Murdoch and Notre Dame Universities.

It is encouraging to see the strengthening of relationships between AUJS and other communal organisations, most notably the Jewish Community Council of Western Australia, the State Zionist Council of Western Australia, Hagshama, the Young UIA and Perth's two youth movements, Habonim and Bnei Akiva.

### **New Zealand**

After a visit to Auckland late last year I remarked that New Zealand has unique issues which only a visit to the country can help one understand. The community in Auckland has the most potential, I believe, to become a large Jewish centre and energies are currently being put in both by AUJS NZ and by AUJS National to create activities and projects in Auckland and Wellington for youth. In New Zealand youth extends from 18 to 30 and this, as well as other New Zealand idiosyncrasies, should not be overlooked.

AUJS in New Zealand has continued to redefine itself this year, becoming more politically active on a campus level. It is now active on a number of campuses in Auckland and is in the process of establishing AUJS in Wellington and Otago. The highlight of their year would no doubt be the annual ski trip, and there is potential for this to be more heavily promoted to Australians. The huge delegation of Kiwis to Winter Conference made a big impact on the conference.

Deb Levy, the outgoing President after serving two terms, has ensured that AUJS New Zealand's seat on the National Executive should not be a temporary one.

### **Australian Capital Territory**

Sadly after a boom over the previous three years which saw membership numbers grow to over 100, AUJS in Canberra has been relatively inactive this year. They received limited support from the National Executive, but didn't genuinely ask for it either. Canberra participants on past AUJS Israel Programs have always become heavily involved in the community upon their return, and perhaps a reason for the lack of activity in 2006 is that there were no Canberra participants on the 2005/06 programs. This year there will be at least two and this will hopefully lead to resurgence in the region.

### **Queensland**

An AUJS presence was established in Brisbane in 2005, focusing on the University of Queensland and Griffith University. But no-one can deny that the real potential in

Queensland is yet to be realised. Membership has decreased in 2006 and the promise seen at Bond University on the Gold Coast wasn't acted upon. We need to continue to connect young Jews from Queensland with the rest of Australia through national conferences and Israel Programs.

I commented last year that sadly, AUJS in Queensland was yet to receive the same level of communal support (from either the SZC or the JCC) as it does elsewhere around the country. This is yet to come, and as a national organisation, we need to focus on developing this region.

### **South Australia**

I am delighted that after a quiet past few years, AUJS is starting to develop a strong presence in Adelaide, specifically at Adelaide University, under the leadership of Misha Saloukvadze. His job is made easier by the fantastic support offered by the Jewish Community Council and the State Zionist Council.

## **5. Communal Relations**

Throughout this report I've made mention of the continued generous support that we receive from a number of organisations on a state and federal level, but it would be remiss of me not to reiterate how grateful AUJS is for the unconditional support that it receives from Australian Jewry's two federal roof bodies, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, in particular Graeme Leonard, Geoffrey Zygier and Jeremy Jones, and the Zionist Federation of Australia and in particular Phil Chester, Lorraine Abrahams, Sima Guttman, Frank Stein and Dara Podjarski.

The ZFA relationship has expanded to the shlichim of the youth movements, who have all offered their unconditional support to AUJS.

The Shalom Institute has been, and will continue to be, a great friend to AUJS. Ilona Lee and Hilton Immerman OAM at the Institute are among the finest members of the Jewish community and great supporters of AUJS. The resources provided in terms of a national office, a meeting and seminar facility and for the ongoing professional support, leadership development and educational consultancy provided by Hillel Student Services. Tahlia Berger and Gary Samowitz have been a vital resource for AUJS in NSW.

Thank you to those who continue to provide AUJS with friendly and helpful service – our lawyers, Arnold Bloch Leibler; our accountant, Harry Wrublewski; and our auditors, HLB Mann Judd.

With the rebirth of the Student Leadership Program, AUJS is being seen as a serious political player and the relationship between AUJS and the National Union of Students and various other student organisations has continued to flourish.

It has been an honour to serve on the Executive of the World Union of Jewish Students for the past two years, and to have worked with three different Chairs – Peleg Resehf, Viktoria Dolburd and Daniel Translateur. AUJS is held in high esteem

by Jewish student unions around the world and through constant communication with UJS (Britain) and SAUJS (South Africa) in particular, we have been able to bring new ideas to Australia and export successful projects around the world.

We have begun to make our mark on the world scene through relationships with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, Hillel International, the American Jewish Committee, the World Zionist Organisation and the Jewish Agency for Israel and in addition to a number of joint projects mentioned above, AUJS leaders have been invited to represent Australian Jewish students at major international conferences in Jerusalem and Washington.

Cooperation agreements signed last year with the Jewish National Fund, United Israel Appeal, Women's International Zionist Organisation and Australian Zionist Youth Council have all been acted upon, and our working relationship with almost all other communal organisations has strengthened throughout the year.

Most of what we have achieved this year would not be possible without these relationships and we need to continue to cultivate these and explore others.

## **6. Conclusion**

AUJS has developed in leaps and bounds in the three years that I have had the honour of serving on the National Executive –

- The quality and quantity of our events on all three levels has increased;
- We've launched a number of successful new and innovative projects which have survived a second year in the Student Leadership Program, Derech Eretz and the AIPAC Fellowship;
- We haven't been afraid to push the boundaries, most notably with the now infamous condom campaign of 2005;
- We've worked hard to strengthen our relationships with communal organisations and form new connections that hadn't previously existed, most notably with the AZYC and the six youth movements;
- We have a constitution that is relevant and easy to read;
- We've expanded our activity base to include more social welfare and awareness events, whilst at the same time strengthening our core activities;
- We've expanded into the area of multifaith and formed meaningful and lasting relationships with the future leaders of other communities;
- We've caught up on a five year backlog and our financial audits are now up to date; and
- We're sending numbers of students to Israel that previous executives could only dream of.

Importantly, AUJS realises that the current leadership group will not be around for these activities, projects and relationships to grow and strengthen in the long-term, and therefore a large focus in the past two years has been on leadership training and development. Leadership components have been written into all of AUJS' Israel Programs, and there are a number of events on both a state and federal level which aim at training the next group of Jewish student leaders.

On a personal note, this is one of my final tasks as National President. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve in this role for as long as I have and I am thankful for the opportunity to have been granted such an intimate insight into the workings of the community. I have met many amazing individuals, all passionate about bettering the Jewish community, and I am looking forward to remaining actively involved for as long as possible.

I've said before though, that my legacy will be where the organisation goes from here, and I am confident that the future is in good hands.

Greg Weinstein  
AUJS National President 2005 and 2006  
president@aujs.com.au



## Report to ECAJ Annual General Meeting November 2006

### Introduction

The Union for Progressive Judaism is the roof-body that resources 23 grass-roots organisations, throughout Australia, New Zealand and Asia. The Union's role is to support and develop Progressive Judaism in the region so that our congregations and affiliates are best able to maintain and increase their strength and vitality.

### Congregations and Affiliated Organisations

#### 1. Australia

##### *New South Wales:*

Central Coast - Shalom Progressive Jewish Congregation Inc

Chatswood - North Shore Temple Emanuel

Woollahra - The Congregation of the Temple Emanuel

##### *Queensland:*

Brisbane - Beit Knesset Shalom

Gold Coast - Temple Shalom

*South Australia:* Adelaide - Beit Shalom Synagogue

*Tasmania:* Hobart - Tasmanian Union for Progressive Judaism

##### *Victoria:*

Armadale: Kehillat David Hamelech (Kedem) Inc

Bentleigh Progressive Synagogue

Kew: Leo Baeck Centre for Progressive Judaism, Inc.

St Kilda: Temple Beth Israel, Inc

*Western Australia:* Perth - Temple David Congregation Inc.

#### 2. Asia

*Hong Kong:* The United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong

*India:* Jewish Religious Union – Rodef Shalom

*Singapore:* United Hebrew Congregation

#### 3. New Zealand

*Auckland:* Beth Shalom

*Dunedin:* Dunedin Jewish Congregation

*Wellington:* Temple Sinai

#### **4. Affiliates**

ARZA Australia Inc.  
Emanuel School, Randwick, NSW  
The King David School, Armadale, VIC  
Netzer Australia  
ACT Jewish Community Inc.

#### **Vision, direction and governance**

The Executive Committee continues to provide strong leadership, transparency and accountability in terms of governance, management and operational matters.

The major focuses resulting from last year's conference deliberations continue to inform our vision and direction: enhanced and timely communication; marketing – internal and external; skills development; Jewish learning and leadership development. We are implementing programs identified as priorities by the constituents as part of the strategic plan, and moving the organisation in new directions.

Meetings, held every six weeks, are successfully conducted utilising computer based technology to link members of the Executive Committee across the region: from Perth to Auckland. Twice this year, the Executive Committee has met with the Presidents of our constituents - for one day in May and over a weekend in November – to share our vision, to work towards a better understanding of who we are, what we stand for, and what we can achieve as equal partners in all our endeavours. Members of the Moetzah met twice this year, in April in Perth and in November in Point Lonsdale, Victoria, which was also the venue for a meeting of the Progressive Jewish Professionals Network.

Our Executive Director, Janice Alper and I have visited and facilitated programs for our constituents across the region. I have been privileged to share in a number of celebrations with them – award presentations, rabbinic inductions and congregational anniversaries. Janice has facilitated learning, development activities and service leadership, and run region wide programs, as well as enhancing networking and partnership opportunities.

#### **Programming**

The Union for Progressive Judaism offers a range of activities, programs and services specifically tailored to the needs of our constituents and their membership. These include, but are not limited to:

- Special interest seminars,
- Skills development (e.g. service leaders)
- Board development,
- Leadership training and development programs,
- Support for formal and informal learning opportunities and professional development,
- Regular regional conferences,
- Online access to timely and relevant news services and newsletters.

There has been a consolidation of successful programs such as the UPJ *Zera'im* Leadership Institute: this year another 10 participants successfully graduated from their course that was held on the Central Coast, NSW earlier in the year.

The UPJ supports qualified Jewish educators with professional development opportunities to attend local, federal and international conferences, such as Limmud Oz, Zionist Federation of Australia (ZFA) Educators Conference and the Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education (CAJE), among others.

A Progressive Jewish Educators' Seminar is held annually in conjunction with a federal conference. It brings together educational leaders and teachers to share ideas and learn about the latest trends in Jewish education.

New programs and models of delivery are constantly developed and refined in response to requests and feedback from constituents. These are offered in a number of different locations around the region and at different times throughout the year. This year a highly successful music seminar, which focused on the weekly Shabbat service was led by Cantor Joseph Toltz (from Temple Emanuel Woollahra, NSW), and held in Adelaide with 20 participants. Participants brought back new tunes and new ways of conducting services in their home congregations. A number of different music clinics and seminar options will be offered next year

### **Marketing and Communications**

A monthly online newsletter *Kesher* is sent to all constituents, providing them with minutes of committee meetings, news about activities in communities around the region and notice of upcoming events.

*ProjeNews*, the online subscriber newsletter designed to provide news and views from the region, Israel and the Jewish world, particularly the progressive Jewish world, is widely read throughout the region and abroad. Articles come from local and international press, both Jewish and non-Jewish, as well as from other Jewish organisations, such as the WUPJ (the World Union for Progressive Judaism), IRAC (the Israel Religious Action Centre) and the Anti-Defamation Committee of B'nai B'rith.

There is also a weekly drasha about the Torah portion written by one of the rabbis of the Moetzah (the Rabbinic Council) or a member of the Progressive Jewish Professionals' Network. These drashot are intended to give a perspective of the Torah in our modern lives and serve as starting points for discussions on Shabbat or at key times in the Jewish calendar.

Throughout the year, the UPJ has placed prominent advertisements in the Australian Jewish News Supplements including Pesach, Yom Ha'atzmaut, Weddings and Rosh Hashanah; as well as in the Jewish press within the region, to showcase the principles and practices of Progressive Judaism in our region.

At Rosh Hashanah, the UPJ launched its new website: <http://www.upj.org.au>  
We encourage you to visit this site and hope that you find it easy to navigate and that the material is useful and informative!

## **Israel**

ARZA, the Australian Reform Zionist Organisation affiliated with the UPJ promotes Progressive Zionist activities to the Australian Jewish community and helps to foster understanding between Israel and Australia with the aim of closer links between the two countries. ARZA is a member of ARZENU, the international Reform Zionist organisation, which represents the interests of Reform and Progressive Judaism worldwide in the governing bodies of the WZO.

One of the major focuses of ARZA's activities this year was the organisation of the registration and voting for the 35<sup>th</sup> World Zionist Congress, for the Progressive Jewish community in Australia. After a highly successful election campaign, five ARZA members were elected to represent the progressive community out of a total of 12 Australian delegates. Additionally, Philip Bliss, the World Union for Progressive Judaism Vice Chair also represented us at the congress as part of the ARZENU delegation. Ian Samuel and Philip Bliss were elected to the Va'ad Ha'Poel of the Jewish Agency with Philip being elected to the Presidium of the World Zionist Organisation.

The UPJ was active in our support of the Australian Jewish community's emergency relief efforts during the recent vicious attacks on Israel by Hezbollah and the unfortunate loss of lives on both sides of the war. Our leaders encouraged our members to financially support relief campaigns through the UIA and other agencies; wrote letters, rang media outlets and ran hasbara forums; provided regular online updates on the latest developments and circulated resources to assist communities counter public criticism of and attacks on Israel. We were particularly proud of the work of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism in Israel, which took on the provision of social welfare activities for whole communities in the north, especially running summer camps to occupy displaced children, in shelters during the heaviest rocket attacks.

Again this year, there was an increase in support from our membership for refugee relief programs in Israel, through the UIA/Progressive Trust campaign. In particular, our thanks go to Ian Samuel for his untiring coordination of our annual campaigns and for the support he receives from our communities around Australia, especially from the rabbis and lay leaders in Sydney and the other major cities.

In March 2007, the World Union for Progressive Judaism is holding its 33<sup>rd</sup> International convention in Israel. The UPJ is planning to take a 'mission' to attend the convention as well as the pre and post convention tours. Interested people are encouraged to contact Penny Jakobovits through the UPJ office.

## **Personnel Changes**

This year we were thrilled to welcome three new rabbis and their families to our region: Rabbi Johanna Hershenson took up her position as rabbi of Temple Sinai, Wellington at the end of July; Rabbi Paul Jacobson took up his position as Assistant Rabbi at Temple Emanuel Woollahra in early September, and Rabbi Shoshana Kaminsky took up her position as Rabbi of Beit Shalom, Adelaide just in time to officiate at the services over the Yamim Nora'im. Rabbis David and Patti Kopstein,

who had previously served as rabbis of Beit Shalom Adelaide, have taken up positions in another one of our congregations – the United Jewish Community of Hong Kong. There are now 16 members of the Moetzah – the Progressive Rabbinic Council of the UPJ.

Our Netzer Schlichim – Yossi Cohen in Melbourne and Sharon Shteinbock in Sydney - have proved to be wonderful assets not just to Netzer, but also to the Progressive and wider Jewish communities throughout Australia and New Zealand. They are enthusiastic mentors and motivated leaders and we are blessed to have them with us. Our gratitude goes to the ZFA for their efforts to ensure that all youth groups have a full contingent of shlichim.

Sadly, our Executive Director's contract period ends in June 2007. Janice Alper, the first full time professional leader employed by the UPJ has indicated her intention to return to the US to spend more time with her family. Her impact on our community has been immeasurable and we have grown and developed as a result of her work with and for us. A recruitment process has been initiated to search for her replacement.

### **New Directions for 2007**

Next year will see a strengthening and consolidation of the directions set. In addition, there will be an emphasis on:

- Broadening the participation of leaders and individual members of congregations and affiliates, through special interest committees and projects
- Increasing our visibility and branding in the wider Jewish community
- Improved means of communication
- Professionalisation and consolidation of Office of UPJ

On behalf of the Executive Committee and constituents of the Union for Progressive Judaism, I would like to extend our gratitude to and support for the wonderful work undertaken by the ECAJ on behalf of the Jewish community, especially Grahame and Geoffrey with whom I have had the pleasure of working closely. May we continue to work together with energy and determination and harmony to strengthen our community and may all our undertakings be successful.

Phyllis Dorey  
President  
Union for Progressive Judaism.  
October 2006.

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED**  
**ABN 60 117 655 839**



National Council of Jewish Women of Australia Limited is a national organisation for Australian Jewish women of all ages who wish to serve the Jewish and general community.

NCJWA has branches in eight areas, in seven states of Australia, and works to promote social justice, human welfare and the advancement of women locally, nationally and internationally.

NCJWA's niche in the Australian and the Jewish communities is unique: a women's organisation formed in 1923, retaining its original aims while continuing to evolve and meet the needs of today's society.

NCJWA incorporates community service, fundraising and status of women awareness and education into its ongoing programs across the country.

Since its inception more than eighty years ago, the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia Ltd has raised money to support projects in Israel. Currently its five major projects in Israel reflect Council's concern for

- \* Immigrant women's education (Ethiopian Women's Scholarship Fund at Haifa University)
- \* Immigrant youths' and abused children's safety (two projects at Haifa Rape Crisis Centre)
- \* Disabled children and adults (education and equipment at Ilan Foundation for Disabled Children, Tel Aviv)
- \* Environmental / educational project next to the Yarkon River, Tel Aviv (JNF Environment)

At the Section level, functions and meetings reflect each Section's involvement in issues such as human rights/ women's rights, mentoring and training, support for immigrant families, elderly and sick women, international women's day, women's health, women's and children's safety in families.

Across Australia there are many NCJWA volunteers working in Community Services within the community.

A few examples include:

NCJWA Gold Coast which works in partnership with Gold Coast Jewish Community Services Inc. Their joint program includes:

Visiting aged care facilities, home visits, referrals to ACAT (Aged Care Assessment Team), Providers for Care Packages and Aged Care Facilities, assisting families in need.

NCJWA NSW: The Miriam Stein group is concentrating its efforts this year in continuing the relationship with La Perouse Public school where four and five year old children, many of them indigenous, take part in the HIPPY program which is a home based instruction program to help parents with limited formal education to assist their children with highly structured activities to improve their language and cognitive skills.

NSW Division continues its successful Mentoring program and this year offered a three night Business for Yourself seminar for all women setting up their own businesses.

NCJWA Victoria continues to take an active part in training and encouraging women to take leadership roles in the community. The graduates of last year's Leadership Training courses and other women were offered the opportunity to undertake a Public Speaking Course, with outstanding results.

NCJWA Victoria also ran 3 focus groups in March and April this year for women from different cultural backgrounds, as the first stage in a program 'Empowering Ethnic Women', which is supported by the Victorian Multicultural Commission. Sudanese and Syrian women were among those participating.

NCJWA Vic continues to run three Senior Citizens' Clubs, Three Golden age Clubs, the NCJWA Community bus and an Opportunity Shop.

NCJWA WA continues to man the kiosk daily at the Maurice Zeffert Old Age home.

Every NCJWA Section fundraises to make annual donations to Australian charities, often regional branches in need of community support. This is a strong priority and part of the original NCJW platform, namely, that all members work in support of the general community.

NCJWA's ongoing intercultural and interfaith work has forged links between Jewish women and women from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Our membership of the federally funded Secretariat, the Australian Women's Coalition, at the national level has broadened relationships with fellow organisations like the Muslim, Catholic, Australian Churchwomen, Salvation Army faiths, also Aboriginal women and those represented by Pan Pacific South East Asian women's association.

The NCJWA National President organised the first Australian Women's Coalition Cultural Harmony Day event held in each capital city during March 2006. All NCJWA Sections had the opportunity to participate in AWC Cultural Harmony events around Australia.

In Sydney NCJWA and the Muslim Women's National Network co-hosted a Meet and Greet evening at Council House on March 21, Harmony Day, with women from many different cultural backgrounds speaking on the role of women in their culture. Following the success of these events NCJWA Ltd has set up a Transcultural Writing and Media Discussion Group in which works from Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist and Baha'i groups will be studied and discussed by participants from many

cultures. This is being piloted in Sydney and will be offered to all NCJWA Sections to run.

NCJWA Vic President Di Hirsh has attended two Australian Jewish Christian Muslim Conferences, and spoken at the Women's Dinner. She was honoured by the Premier with a Victorian Multicultural Commission Medal.

NCJWA Victoria co-hosted a Jewish Catholic dinner in October 2005, together with the Jewish Community Council of Victoria and the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. 100 Jews and Catholics came together to share a meal in peace and friendship at Beth Weizmann, with Bishop Prowse and Rabbi Ralph Genende as guest speakers.

In February 2006 NCJWA Vic accepted an invitation from the Australian Intercultural Society to celebrate the Muslim feast of Ashura, with about 50 Jews and Muslims sharing Noah's Pudding.

NCJWA Vic 'Empowering Ethnic Women' program includes Sudanese and Assyrian women and other ethnic groups in Leadership training and writing workshops.

NCJWA WA took part in an intercultural and interfaith seminar last September at Perth Town Hall. Twelve groups spoke on Divinity Within Women and Spirituality with 2 NCJWA speakers included.

NCJWA's affiliation to the International Council of Jewish Women, comprising almost 50 affiliated countries, ensures that our platforms are globally based, through ICJW's consultative status at the UN with ECOSOC and UNICEF, and permanent representation at the UN in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Paris.

Seven members of National Council of Jewish Women of Australia attended the 20<sup>th</sup> Convention of the International Council of Jewish Women in Montevideo, Uruguay, in May 2006, the first ICJW Convention to be held in South America. Uruguayan Dr Sara Winkowski completed her 4 year term as International President and incoming President, Israeli Leah Aharonov was installed.

Jewish women from 27 countries attended the Convention which was hosted by the Uruguayan Council of Jewish Women who turned up in force to also attend the parallel Latin American Regional meeting.

NCJWA delegates were thrilled at the awarding of an International Council of Jewish Women Life Membership to NCJWA Past National President Malvina Malinek OAM, a well-deserved honour recognising Malvina's years of dedication to the work of ICJW.

Along with Malvina, several members of NCJWA have accepted positions on the new ICJW Executive including Dr Geulah Solomon OAM who becomes ICJW Vice President for Australia, and Robyn Lenn OAM who becomes ICJW Community Service Coordinator.

The theme of the convention was '*Jewish women in the contemporary world – a time to think, a time to act*'

Sessions dealt with social issues such as emerging family structures in C21st; gender equality, rights and commitments for the new millennium; trafficking and slavery; younger generation and institutional leadership; strengthening the future of our organisations; advances and setbacks in the fight against anti-Semitism; women in Jewish law. Useful workshops included those discussing cultural diversity and working with young people.

NCJWA Limited became an incorporated organisation in December 2005, our hardworking Honorary Solicitor and the NCJWA Constitution Committee finally achieving National incorporation. Since 2003 four Sections of NCJWA have been incorporated, preparatory to the national incorporation of all seven Sections.

In October 2005 NCJWA NSW launched a new Jewish Women's Breast Cancer Network in support of the many Jewish women who have fallen victim to this disease. The walk, specialist talk and planting of named pink silhouettes took place near Council House, in Centennial Park. The event was both a fundraiser for research and an awareness raising function. All NCJWA Sections around Australia have been encouraged to set up their own affiliate JWBC Network as an extension of Council's support programmes for women. Currently we are registering for BCN October 2006 events.

On November 29, 2005 '*Celebrating Israel*', a new initiative of NCJWA's Israel PR and Information Chair, was placed in each NCJWA Section's annual calendar of organisational events. In keeping with our organisational support for the State of Israel and its number one place in NCJWA's platform, '*Celebrating Israel*' commemorates the date in 1947 that the United Nations General Assembly passed the resolution establishing Israel as a Jewish State.

*Celebrating Israel* was observed in three NCJWA Sections, NCJWA South Australia, NCJWA Victoria and NCJWA NSW, the latter holding a major event including the Leader of NSW Liberal Party, Peter Debnam, and CEO NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, Vic Alhadeff, as speakers. The topic '*David and Goliath – Israel and the UN*' raised much interest in the large audience which included co-organisers HaMoadom Ha Israeli, members of JNF/KKL, the State Zionist Council and NSW Jewish Board of Deputies. The 40 voice B'nai B'rith choir and a 5 part Christian nuns ensemble contributed to the musical exuberance which concluded with a wonderful Israeli supper.

*NCJWA Founders Day* is observed around Australia during early December, linked to UN Human Rights Day on December 10. In 2005 NCJWA held speaker sessions relating to Women's Human Rights, marking the close of the Sixteen Days of Activism against Gender Violence.

In South Australia NCJWA members joined with Zonta members in an informative meeting about problematic new laws within the Australian Family Court. In NCJWA Victoria a psychologist from Relationships Australia spoke on '*Domestic Violence: a Human Rights Issue*'.

In NCJWA NSW the Director of the Domestic Violence Clearinghouse and a representative from the NSW Women's Refuge Resource Centre spoke on 'How the Family Law Courts are dealing with Domestic Violence cases'. The audience included representation from National Council of Women Australia.

In late November 2005 the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hobart Hebrew Congregation in Tasmania was supported by NCJWA members from NSW, Victoria and Tasmania. Along with a Reception at Government House, Synagogue services and a wonderful concert based on music played at the original opening ceremony in 1845, a successful NCJWA meeting introduced three new members from a northern area of the island, expanding this small new Group of NCJWA. A plaque in the board room upstairs in the synagogue was dedicated to NCJWA Vic and NSW who had contributed to the refurbishment.

All NCJWA members were delighted when two senior Council members were honoured in the 2006 Queen's Birthday honours – Zara Young OAM, NCJWA Life Vice President and Barbara Stewart Kann OAM, NCJWA National Vice President. Functions in their honour were held in NSW and Gold Coast respectively. NCJWA's oldest and most senior member, Ray Ginsburg AM, was honoured at her 98<sup>th</sup> birthday party in Council House, Sydney on August 1.

Robyn Lenn OAM  
National President  
NCJWA Ltd

**REPORT OF THE ZFA PRESIDENT, PHILIP CHESTER  
TO THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY 2006**

The Zionist Federation of Australia is proud to present you with our 2006 report, my first as ZFA President.

In the past year, we have expanded our programmes in keeping with our mandate to bring innovative, relevant and cutting edge programmes to the Australian Jewish community and in line with our commitment to strengthening the ties between Israel and the Australian Jewish community in all spheres.

We look forward to another fruitful and productive year in 2007.

### **1. EDUCATION – NETWORKS**

The Zionist Federation of Australia facilitates Early Childhood networks in Melbourne and Sydney. The Early Childhood Network comprises the directors and teachers of the early childhood centres of all the Jewish Day schools. The ZFA brings these educators together for professional development at least once a term.

March - Over 50 Early Childhood teachers from the seven Jewish day schools in Melbourne met to participate in a professional development video conference session with an Early Childhood expert at Yad Vashem.

October – video conference in Sydney and Melbourne with the Early Childhood expert of the Jewish Agency to introduce an innovative Hebrew language programme for kinder children, Chalav Ud'vash.

### **2. EDUCATION – NATIONAL BIENNIAL JEWISH EDUCATORS CONFERENCE**

The 5th Australian Jewish Educators Conference being took place on the **13-14 August 2006** at Mount Scopus College, Melbourne. Over 350 school lay leadership, principals, heads of departments and educators from 22 Jewish educational institutions gathered for a two-day professional development conference, participating in 10 streams, over 70 sessions and some 50 international and local presenters.

The Conference is **THE major event in Jewish Education in Australia**. Over the years it has become the highlight in the calendar for all Australian Jewish educators, as well as educators from New Zealand.

Most Melbourne schools made Monday 14 August a pupil-free day to enable teachers to have full access to this unique opportunity. Over 350 educators participated in the conference with conference participants hailing from Perth, Brisbane, Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne and New Zealand.

The calibre of speakers this year plus the local professional speakers ensured it was a dynamic, informative and innovative conference with streams that provided options for everyone.

The contribution of the Department of Education of the Jewish Agency is invaluable.

### **3. EDUCATION – TEACHING ISRAEL**

In March 2005 the Pincus Fund approved the application on behalf of the Australian schools to support the programme put forward by the Zionist Federation of Australia with the support of the Association of Principals of Jewish Schools - Creating Models of Meaningful Engagement with Israel: Educational Dilemmas and Challenges.

This programme, designed in cooperation with the Melton Centre for Jewish Education, provides an ongoing long-term professional development framework that aims to introduce and formalise Israeli curricula in the Jewish high schools system.

The launch of the programme took place in February 2006 with an intensive seminar run by the Melton specialists, Alick Isaacs and Alex Pomson, in both Melbourne and Sydney. The Israel seminar, which 16 teachers attended, took place in July 2006 with follow up meetings and seminars ensuing.

Sima Guttman – the ZFA’s Central Education Shlichah and Rosh Mishlachah – is playing an integral role by helping the schools determine their focus, assemble texts and connect between them thematically.

### **4. EDUCATION – SHERUT LEUMI**

As a result of the continuing success of the Sherut Leumi programme at Yavneh College and Mount Scopus College in Melbourne, the Federation has managed, after some time, to facilitate the adoption of this programme by Moriah College. Moriah received two sherut girls from Israel in August 2006. We are continuing to encourage other schools to adopt this programme.

### **5. ISRAEL ADVOCACY ‘Blue Ribbon Campaign’**

This year has been a critical juncture in Israel’s history, filled with great challenges and heightened threats, in particular Israel’s war with Hezbollah in the north.

As part of the world-wide response to the recent crisis in Israel, the ZFA led the Australian ‘Blue Ribbon Campaign’, to raise awareness for the plight of the three kidnapped soldiers, call for their immediate release and show that we stand in solidarity with Israel. The campaign included the organisation and coordination throughout Australia of communal solidarity events, numerous media response activities, hasbarah training, constant briefings within the Jewish community and to the Australian Media and continual updates to the community. We successfully collaborated with many other communal bodies including the ECAJ around the country to mobilise the community and deal with the hasbara challenges that we faced.

We continue to pray for the safe release of the three kidnapped soldiers – Gilad Shalit, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev.

## **Israel Advocacy Seminar**

Seven Australians participated in the Israel Advocacy Seminar in Israel in December 2005. (Four from Victoria, three from NSW)

The programme was aimed at developing advocacy skills in the following areas – Information, Skill Development, Networking and Experience. The aim of the seminar was to give participants a first-hand understanding of the complexities and issues of the Israeli political and social realities with a view to creating a trained cadre of Israel advocates in Australia.

## **Ofakim**

This is a new initiative offered by the Department of Zionist Activities with the aim of developing young potential communal leaders. The concept involves the establishment of a group that will undergo training including a series of seminars and weekend retreats with a visiting scholar in residence and a week-long Israel programme. The aim is to develop local dynamic leadership who will have a thorough and extensive Israel knowledge and background, and who hopefully will be in a position to energise the local communities as future leaders.

SZC Victoria has already officially launched this programme and seminars and development of communal leadership is ongoing. SZC NSW is looking to join the initiative next year.

## **6. ZIONIST SEMINARS**

The Zionist Seminars, now in their 24<sup>th</sup> year continue to be one of the most important, comprehensive and successful educational activities undertaken annually by the Federation. This year some 30 madrichim from Israel participated in over 30 programmes at nine schools, together with communal events in all Australian states and New Zealand.

## **7. SHLICHIM**

The Federation views the shlichim as our best Israel resource in Australia. Most significant to the Federation is the role of the shlichim in their ongoing contribution to the Zionist Youth movements, and various communal organisations in both the larger and smaller states.

### **Shlichim – New Position – Educational Shlichah/Rosh Mishlachat**

A major achievement by the ZFA has been the arrival in Australia in 2005 of Sima Guttman who holds the joint position of educational consultant to the ZFA and the position of Rosh Mishlachat.

## **8. YOM HA'ATZMAUT**

Celebration concerts were held in Perth, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sydney and New Zealand.

The Federation brought out an IDF Entertainment Troupe for Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations across Australia and New Zealand.

## **9. 35<sup>TH</sup> WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS**

The 35<sup>th</sup> World Zionist Congress was held in Jerusalem from 19-22 June 2006.

The first elections in about 30 years were held for the 35th World Zionist Congress in Australia. The ZFA facilitated the process for the election of 12 Australian delegates from various Zionist organisations to the Congress, including establishing an Australian Area Election Committee, arranging delegate nominations, voter registration and voting.

## **10. VISITORS**

### **Ze'ev Bielski – Chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel and the World Zionist Organisation**

In April 2006, the ZFA welcomed Ze'ev Bielski as the guest speaker for the ZFA's 42<sup>nd</sup> Biennial Conference 2006. Ze'ev addressed the launch of the conference in Sydney as well as meetings with communal leaders, shlichim and youth leadership around Australia.

Many thanks to the UIA for their support.

### **Dr Shimshon Shoshani – Director General of Taglit-birthright israel**

As the Australian Taglit-birthright israel partner, the ZFA welcomed in October 2006 a Taglit-birthright israel delegation, headed by Dr Shimshon Shoshani. Dr Shoshani has formerly held posts as the Director General of the Jewish Agency for Israel and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport. Gidi Mark (International Director of Marketing) and Lisa Gann (Director, International Resources) completed the delegation.

It was the first visit to Australia by the Taglit-birthright israel representative and the delegation was keen to learn about the Australian Jewish community and to see how Taglit-birthright israel programmes can assist the community. The visit included meetings with communal leaders, tours of Jewish day schools and Academy BJE and discussions with Taglit-birthright israel alumni.

### **Other Visitors**

Other visitors included **Yuval Rabin** in 2005 for the ten-year commemoration of the assassination of his father, the late Yitzchak Rabin, **Ruby Rivlin MK**, Speaker of the Knesset, **Rav Michael Melchior MK**, Chairman of Meimad, a delegation from **Israel at Heart** and **Guy Spigelman**, IDF Spokesperson.

Representatives from the Jewish Agency who visited Australia in 2006 include Ariane Boekin-Rubin, Director of the MASA Regional Office for English Speaking Countries and Europe, **Tali Azoulay** of Israel Experience and Sharon Almougy, Director of the Machon Institute for Diaspora Leadership and Education.

## **11. AUSTRALIAN ZIONIST YOUTH COUNCIL (AZYC)**

The Federation continues to work in close partnership with the Zionist youth movements. The Federation provides significant financial and organizational support to the movements as well as supporting their Israel programmes and Ensuring the continuing supply of shlichim for the movements from Israel.

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## **12. AUSTRALASIAN UNION OF JEWISH STUDENTS (AUJS)**

The Federation continues to work in close contact with AUJS. We provide significant support for their activities as well as facilitating much of the financial assistance required for their extensive and highly successful Birthright Israel programmes.

I wish to congratulate Greg Weinstein and his executive on the completion of their term and to commend him on his leadership and hard work. Welcome to the new AUJS president, Joel Burnie, and the newly elected executive – we look forward to working with you.

## **13. ISRAEL PROGRAMMES**

### **Israel Central**

The Zionist Federation of Australia Ltd (ZFA) is committed to a meaningful Israel experience whether short or long term, being fundamental to the education and moulding of Jewish identity and the upholding of Jewish continuity in the Diaspora.

Israeli Central, running for the second year as the ZFA's Israel programmes company, deals exclusively with the promotion and administration of Israel programmes. **Israel Central** provides **a single port of call** for Israel programmes available to young Australians and its overall aim is to substantially increase the numbers on Israel programmes from Australia.

With the support of Israel Central over 620 participants took part in short term Birthright and long term MASA Israel programmes over the last summer and during this year.

## **14. DELEGATIONS**

I, together with Dr Danny Lamm, Vice-President of the ZFA, joined the ECAJ in a joint delegation to Canberra in May 2006 to meet Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and Malcolm Turnbull MP.

A joint ZFA, ECAJ, SZC of Victoria and JCCV delegation briefed the new Australian Ambassador to Israel, Mr James Larsen in Melbourne and Dr Ron Weiser, immediate past president of the ZFA, organised a series of communal briefings for Ambassador Larsen in Sydney.

## **15. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to acknowledge the close working relationship that we have enjoyed with Grahame Leonard, Geoffrey Zygier and the ECAJ committee of management in relation to many issues, including in particular the media response activity undertaken on behalf of the community during the recent Lebanon war.

I congratulate Grahame Leonard and his team for a productive and successful term and I wish them well for the forthcoming year.

## **MACCABI AUSTRALIA PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Maccabi Australia (MAI) is very excited about the forthcoming 25<sup>th</sup> Maccabi Australia Junior Sports Carnival to be held in Melbourne from the 16<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2007. It is a credit to the marketing of the Organising Committee lead by Yvette Shaw and the success of recent Junior Carnivals that this event has such unprecedented interest. The Carnival will have a record participation of over 1100 competitors from all over Australia and New Zealand.

MAI will be recognising this special event by providing each competitor with a commemorative pin.

MAI will also be conducting a Youth Leadership Seminar, for approximately 30 future Maccabi leaders from all over Australia and New Zealand, prior to the commencement of the Carnival. The following two Junior Carnivals will be hosted by Auckland and Sydney respectively.

### **Inaugural MAIGS**

During July 2006 MAI conducted its inaugural Maccabi Australia International Games in Sydney. This competition was for Open and Masters Sports and involved 640 athletes and officials from 12 countries in 11 sports.

The MAIGS set a great standard in the quality of sporting venues (using Sydney Olympic Park) which all the competitors greatly appreciated.

The Vibe Hotel in Rushcutters Bay was completely taken over by the Games and kashered by the Games caterers. This initiative, which is probably the first time in the world outside of Israel, was a superb success. These games have left a positive legacy for Maccabi Australia and the MAI Board is committed to have the second MAIGS in December 2010.

### **JCC Maccabi Games – August 2006**

A small delegation of 27 athletes, ably lead by Michelle Israel and Yvette Shaw competed at these Maccabi Games in Vancouver and Phoenix. The team comprised a junior Girls Soccer team and a boys Table Tennis team which experienced outstanding success winning most of the medals on offer.

During 2007 MAI will be sending a number of teams to International events on the Maccabi world calendar.

### **European Maccabi Games – Rome July 2007**

MAI is hopeful of sending a small team to Rome for the European Games from 4<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> July 2007. It is hoped that this representation will build closer ties with Maccabi Europe and that this will result in greater representation by them at the second MAIGS.

### **JCC Games August 2007**

MAI will be sending a team to Houston and Orange County next August. The likely team sports that we will compete in are boys and girls basketball and boys soccer.

### **Pan American Maccabi Games – Argentina December 2007**

MAI will be sending a team of 100 to 150 to Buenos Aires for the 10<sup>th</sup> \_Pan American Maccabi Games in December 2007. Maccabi Victoria Vice-President, Lisa Borowick has recently been appointed Head of Delegation of this team.

The Maccabi Australia Board wish ECAJ President Grahame Leonard and his Board much success for the year ahead and looks forward to continuing our close relationship.

Harry Procel  
President

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT ON ANTISEMITISM IN AUSTRALIA 1 OCTOBER 2005 - 30 SEPTEMBER 2006**

In contemporary Australia, to accuse any person or organisation of antisemitism is to allege that their behaviour is antisocial and unacceptable. No one with aspirations to public credibility admits to holding antisemitic views or to associating with openly antisemitic organisations.

While individuals and organisations associated with the political left who promoted extreme anti-Israel racism, which sometimes included offensive and gratuitous anti-Jewish imagery, were particularly keen to assert that they were not antisemitic, even far-right and neo-Nazi groups publicly professed to be "anti-Zionist" rather than anti-Jewish, although the material both groups distribute can give the lie to any such distinction. Further, Holocaust deniers, including those who present the claim the Holocaust is a Jewish confidence trick played on gullible Christians as one part of a raft of anti-Jewish slurs, generally claim they are only "researching" historical subjects. The small number of individuals holding public office who have associated with anti-Jewish groups always maintain that they have contact despite the latter's promotion of antisemitism, not because of it.

Between 1 October 2005 and 30 September 2006, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry logged over 440 reports of anti-Jewish violence, vandalism, harassment and intimidation. Anti-Jewish propaganda in fringe publications and from extremist organisations remained a serious concern. During debates on a number of matters of public policy overtly anti-Jewish language, and/or inflammatory slanders, sometimes were part of the mainstream discussion. Conspiracy theories abounded on the internet and these included a disturbing proportion which were overtly or implicitly antisemitic.

In the mass media during the year in review, a number of commentators and a large number of contributors of letters and other forms of public feedback crossed the line between political commentary and anti-Jewish slander. In the period in review, a large percentage of offensive commentaries came during the period when Israel was engaged in military activity against Hamas and Hezbollah. Other anti-Jewish comments came in the course of public discussions on for example the US military involvement in Iraq, the prosecution of Nazi War Criminals when this involved Australian residents and the personal campaign against Israel by an individual author who promoted himself as a victim of a mythical anti-democratic Jewish establishment. In non-mainstream publications, anti-Jewish rhetoric was also invoked in other discussions such as on Australia's anti-terrorism laws and on Australian Jewish support for victims of racism.

Issues of antisemitism emanating from Islamic sources in Australia were a significant topic of public discussion during the period in review. The Mufti of Australia came under the public spotlight when it was reported that he had promoted Holocaust denial in his Sydney mosque in 2006. A number of media reports appeared noting anti-Jewish books available in bookshops serving Australia's Muslim community.

The topic of far-left anti-Jewish harassment also received some media attention during the period in review, with the situation on university campuses a particular focus.

During the period in review, a number of speeches were delivered in Australian parliaments which condemned antisemitism, and a resolution was passed in the Senate (which was less forthright in criticism of anti-Jewish activity than resolutions had been in some previous years).

In cases under the Federal Racial Hatred Act, the ECAJ was successful in having an article in the One Nation political party's newspaper found to be in breach of the Act and having an Apology ordered. The case against the Bible Believers' web-site was fully heard in the Federal Court and a judgement is anticipated early in 2007. In the state of New South Wales, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal determined a Jewish couple had been the victims of unlawful anti-Jewish racial vilification. In Western Australia, a person was charged with making anti-Jewish telephone calls. In Queensland, a case commenced against a person who had used telephone text messages as a mode for harassment. Further, amended legislation as part of counter-terrorism policies was raised as a possible means for legal action against anti-Semitism in Australia in the future.

Jeremy Jones AM

## **DEFENCE FORCE REPORT - Rabbi Raymond Apple, AO RFD**

This report sums up my stewardship of the office of Senior Rabbi to the Australian Defence Force over the past 18 years. I had only two predecessors - Rabbi Jacob Danglow, CMG OBE VD, Senior Jewish Chaplain for 20 years after a long chaplaincy career dating from 1908, and Rabbi Dr. Alfred Fabian, OBE ED RFD, who was Senior Jewish Chaplain and then Senior Rabbi to the ADF for 26 years after prior service as an army reserve chaplain. When Rabbi Fabian became ill in 1988 I succeeded him in his Canberra and national responsibilities. I had been an army reserve chaplain for 15 years.

In Rabbi Fabian's time Defence chaplaincy was totally re-organised. A Religious Advisory Committee to the Services was created, comprising five Christian clergy and a Jewish representative. All were to be non-uniformed but with the status of two-star generals. All were also to be equal in rank and role, with the chairmanship of the committee rotating amongst them. Committee responsibilities were to include oversight of chaplaincy work in the three services as well as providing advice to the Chief of the Defence Force on spiritual and ethical matters. This structure has worked well and has uniquely contributed towards inter-religious harmony. As the only non-Christian I found myself handling queries concerning all non-Christian faiths ranging from Aboriginal spirituality to Islam. Because I ended up as the longest-serving member of the committee I had two two-year terms as chairman. Often the issues on the agenda did not directly affect Jewish concerns and I was able to suggest a way forward to help the Christians. It was I, for instance, who found a formula for women to become chaplains in the Air Force. I also had the privilege of drafting the wording for some matters of record. Working with my RACS colleagues was one of the great experiences of my life.

In the army we have a handful of Jewish reserve chaplains: in navy and air force none. As a result, navy and air force matters have been handled directly by me with help from the army chaplains. In leaving my posting I record my thanks to Rabbi Fabian, as well as to Rabbis Edward Belfer, Mordechai Gutnick, Jeffrey Kamins, John Levi, Yossi Segelman and Ernest Wolff, MBE, and also Rabbis Meir Kluwgant and Moshe Serebryanski who give honorary assistance. My successor, Rabbi Ralph Genende, is certain to be a worthy Jewish presence at Defence Force headquarters. I express my appreciation to ECAJ and FAJEX (especially Wesley Browne) and the State ex-service bodies for their constant support.

People ask how many Jews there are in the Defence Force; no-one knows. Almost always the people who seek our help are not officially recorded as Jewish. We have no records at all of Jewish members of the reserve forces. We get data on the grapevine, including names of Jews who are posted overseas, but all we can usually do is to refer them to Christian chaplains and/or local Jewish communities, with the request that they keep in touch with us in Australia. The Christian chaplains are always helpful; amongst my proudest memories are the chaplaincy conferences which I have attended and addressed, thus reinforcing the links between chaplains of all faiths, and the opportunity of getting to know successive Chiefs of the Defence Force and the top echelons of the Defence community.

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT - Josie Lacey OAM

The main area of our concern has been to maintain and develop good relations with the various ethnic and religious groups in Australia, and to work together with them in projects of mutual interest.

### **Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia**

Jewish participation in the Ethnic and Multicultural Councils in the various states has been very valuable for our community. We have personal contact and friendship with the leadership of a wide range of ethnic groups, working together on a number of issues, including matters of specific importance to the Jewish community.

In NSW our presence at the ECC has been helpful in arranging meetings between the Board and representatives of various ethnic groups. It is also a base for issuing invitations to the representatives of a number of ethnic communities to the Yom Ha'atzma'ut cocktail party and other functions.

I continue as a vice-Chairperson of the ECC of NSW, and as the consultant to FECCA on Interfaith issues, and Ian is legal consultant to FECCA. Ian and I were delegates of the ECC at the annual conference of the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils ("FECCA") in Hobart, which elected new office-bearers. We spent some time with the leader of the Hobart Jewish Community, Caroline Heard and visited the beautiful historic synagogue.



*L-R: Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Jeremy Jones, Josie Lacey, Bishop Richards Appleby, Jim Miems, Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence at interfaith meeting at Great Synagogue*

### **Australian Partnership of Religious Organisations (APRO)**

As the consultant to FECCA on interfaith matters, I represent the organisation in APRO (formerly APERO) the national inter-religious consultative body which was established by FECCA, and which works with government participation. Jeremy Jones is the ECAJ representative.

In June 2007 APRO proposes to organise an annual two-day gathering to facilitate active engagement between people from the faith communities of Australia. Open to religious leaders, the forum will enable comprehensive interaction between different faiths, supported by experts and public officials. It will provide participants with opportunities to:

- Develop an understanding of faith communities in Australia
- Explore a future agenda for multi-faith interaction and collaboration
- Showcase and learn from good practice models of cooperation
- Identify shared successes, challenges, and strategies for overcoming challenges”

### **World Conference of Religion and Peace (“WCRP”)**

I have been a member of the NSW executive of WCRP for 15 years. We meet monthly, and organise twice-yearly Interfaith forums as well as two meetings a year of “heads of faith” at Parliament House.

The co-President of the International WCRP is Israeli Rabbi David Rosen, and the co-Moderator is Prince El-Hassan bin Talal of Jordan. As a United Nations Non-Governmental Organisation, WCRP has consultative status, Category I, with the UN Economic and Social Council and full consultative status with UNESCO and UNICEF.

In August on his way to the WCRP Conference in Kyoto, Rabbi Rosen spent a few days in Australia and it was rewarding to participate in a "round table" meeting with him and interfaith colleagues, who were most impressed.

### **Fifth International Inter-Religious Abraham Conference**

The NSWJBD was once again one of the host organisations of the Conference between the three Abrahamic faiths, which was held at Sydney University on 27th August. Other co-hosts included the Affinity Intercultural Association, the Sydney Catholic Archdiocese and the Uniting Church. This year’s topic was “Interfaith Relations in Confronting Cultural Conflict”. The preliminary organisation of the Conference takes regular meetings for some months and it also requires some careful negotiation. Indeed the process of organisation is itself an important exercise in interfaith communication.

A similar conference held in Melbourne was addressed by Rabbi Melchior.

### **The Women’s Interfaith Network**

I remain the Convenor of WIN which is now in its 7th year and we now have our core group plus 4 regional groups in Sydney. One of those groups is for young (25 to 35 ) women. Jewish women are involved with each of the WIN groups.

Since March 2006, the Core group has been holding its regular monthly meetings at Parliament House Sydney, hosted by a sitting member of parliament.



*L-R: Sr Helen Anderson, Jamila Husein, Josie Lacey, Wilma Visanathan, members of Womens Interfaith Network celebrating Eid*

The WIN program this past year has included dialogues in which we consider the perspectives of each religious group on a variety of subjects, such as rites of passage, prayer and the personal "spiritual journey", and we also attending each others' festivals where appropriate.

We are planning a visit of some 30 interfaith colleagues to the Temple Emanuel for Chanukah this coming December, which begins on Friday the 15<sup>th</sup>.

WIN is not a member of any organisation, nor is any organisation a member of WIN.

### **Uniting Church**

Together with Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence, Rabbi John Levi, Rabbi Jacqueline Ninnio, Jeremy Jones and Peta Pellach, Grahame Leonard and I continue to participate in the half-yearly dialogues between the ECAJ and the Uniting Church.

### **Bhawan Indian Cultural Association**

Bhawan Australia is part of an international organisation for the promotion of Indian culture and the development of interfaith understanding. Once again this year an interfaith meeting was held on the anniversary of the death of Mahatma Ghandi, convened by the Bhawan Indian Cultural Association. in Hyde Park Rabbi Lawrence spoke on behalf of the Jewish Community.

The president of the association Ghambir Watts attended the Council of Christians and Jews commemoration at St Mary's Cathedral and the Bhawan magazine published articles from both Rabbi Lawrence and Josie Lacey on the Council of Christians and Jews.

### **The Muslim community**

Members of the Community were invited to Iftar dinners by various organisations in the Muslim community including one from the Premier's department.

### **Federation of African Communities Councils**

The inaugural national conference of the Federation of African Communities Councils was held in Sydney and I represented the ECAJ on a panel together with the Reverend John Henderson, General Secretary, National Council of Churches in Australia, Benjamin Chow, Chairperson Council for a Multicultural Australia and Stepan Kerkyasharian Chairperson Community Relations Commission. The topic was "Helping newly emerging communities to have access and equity in resources." A representative of the ACC came to our Yom Ha'atzmaut cocktail reception from Newcastle.

### **Vietnamese community**

I was asked by the Vietnamese Community to speak to a group of 25 community workers in February. Below copy of letter received.

**From:** Xuan Duong

**To:** 'Lacey Family'

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 15, 2006 3:13 PM

Thank you so much for your wonderful talk and presence.  
We very much appreciate your kindness and generosity in offering your time, knowledge, network, and friendship.  
Looking forward to seeing you again soon.  
Xuan

### **National Days**

I represented the Jewish community at the national day celebrations of Romania and David Knoll and I attended the Croatian national day. (The Croatian day is the anniversary of the more recent state – not the anniversary of the Nazi puppet state, the celebration of which shamefully attracts some politicians.)

At my invitation the Romanian consul attended the Shoah commemoration held by the Council of Christians and Jews at St. Mary's cathedral.

### **Simon Wiesenthal Centre**

I facilitated meetings between visiting representative Simon Samuels and John Henderson and members of the committee of the Australian Council of Churches, and also Mehmet Ozalp of the Affinity Intercultural Association.

### **Radio National Program**

During the conflict in Lebanon I participated in a radio program hosted by Jon Cleary hosted a radio program with Jewish, Christian and Muslim speakers. The issue was n whether interfaith dialogue should continue in such a time of conflict, and the

unanimous view, expressed in differing terms, was that such communication remained particularly useful in the Australian context.

### **Interfaith Relations during the Conflict**

A number of approaches were made to community organisations in July and August by Islamic groups with which we have not had previous contact, suggesting joint statements calling for peace or inter-faith prayer meetings.



*L-R: Josie Lacey, Iman Dr Abduljalil Sajid, Jeremy Jones*

### **Meeting with Shaykh Mogra**

In September five Jewish and Christian representatives received an invitation from DIMA to a luncheon meeting with a Shaykh Mogra, a visiting cleric from Leicester in the UK who is active in interfaith work. The Shaykh suggested that we should be prepared to communicate with Islamic leaders who had made extremist statements in the past, as this may be a way of moderating their views. We disagreed, noting that it was not useful to give legitimacy to such people unless public apologies were received.

My thanks to President Grahame Leonard, Executive Director Geoffrey Zygiar, and PP Jeremy Jones for their dedicated support and assistance in this work

**REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY, 2006**  
**PETA JONES PELLACH, EDUCATION CONSULTANT**

The most significant educational challenge for Australian Jewry has been the dearth of qualified and talented teachers. 2006, however, was a year in which this ongoing problem was exacerbated by the need to find educational leadership for one third of our dayschools. The following article from The Australian Jewish News (AJN), explores the issues.

FEATURE (JULY 13, 2006)

A Matter Of Principal

MELISSA SINGER

REWIND to 1985. The future of Melbourne's Bialik College was hanging in the balance. Financially, the school was on the brink of ruin, having amassed huge debts that still lingered from an ill-fated decision in the 1970s to relocate its upper-primary and secondary schools to Melbourne's eastern outskirts. A proposed merger with Mount Scopus College was averted, no small thanks to an active campaign by the school's parents and founders.

But in 1988, after a string of short-term principals, Bialik appointed Genia Janover as vice-principal, and promoted her to principal in 1989 following the departure of Ben Ami Shemer.

Now in her 19th year at Bialik, Janover, who was poached from Yavneh College, sees her role primarily as a "culture builder".

"While there are challenges and difficult moments and sometimes heartbreaking moments ... I have never been bored or thought, 'Oh my God, another day.'"

But Janover is one of only a few longstanding Jewish school principals in Australia, alongside Beth Rivkah Ladies College's Shmuel Gurewicz, who has held his post for some 35 years. Last December, the principals of the country's two biggest Jewish schools, Roy Steinman of Sydney's Moriah College, and Hilton Rubin of Mount Scopus, announced their plans to leave their respective schools at the end of the 2006 school year.

Two months earlier, Leibler Yavneh College principal Rabbi Chanina Rabinowitz resigned from his post and returned to the US at the end of 2005. In one of the few vacancies to have been filled, South African-born Steinman will move to Melbourne and take the helm of Leibler Yavneh from next January.

2005 also saw the departure of Yeshivah College's Rabbi Avrohom Glick after 20 years and Masada College principal Jeff Cohen after just two. Former Masada deputy principal Wendy Barel was last month named as Cohen's replacement.

Queensland's Sinai College is also searching for a new principal after the resignation last month of Stuart Rich, as is Kesser Torah College in Sydney, where Rabbi Yehuda Spielman is expected to revert to vice-principal once a

permanent head is found.

But while the near-simultaneous resignation of one-third of the principals of Australia's 18 Jewish schools is almost certainly unprecedented in the history of this community, Johnny Baker, a former president of Mount Scopus College, believes the situation represents more of a coincidence than a crisis.

Still, the vacuum left by so many departing principals may strengthen the argument in favour of a rationalisation of Jewish communal resources, particularly in the area of the Jewish school system, a view Baker strongly advocates.

In a chapter entitled "The falling crown? The future of Jewish day schools in Australia" in the recently-released anthology *New Under the Sun*, Baker writes that "the Melbourne Jewish community, unlike all others in Australia [and the world], supports an infrastructure that far exceeds the capacity of the community. Put simply, supply far outweighs demand."

Conversely, Baker told the AJN the community's "supply of outstanding principals is far less than the demand". As a consequence, international searches for principals in Australian Jewish schools are almost mandatory, he says. "If you have a candidate locally, then it is ideal, but you aren't doing justice to your institution if you don't look elsewhere. Local principals emerge, [but] any appointment is a calculated risk."

The community's responsibility, he argues, is to do more to "attract outstanding people" to the faculties of the country's 18 Jewish schools. "The status of the teaching profession in the community is not valued enough," says Baker.

But one Jewish school insider, who spoke to the AJN on condition of anonymity, says appointing an overseas candidate can provide the "benefit of objectivity, someone who's not caught up in the history of the community".

Baker agrees that the tidal wave of South African immigration in the 1980s and early '90s "has proven to be an invaluable reservoir of professional educators and has supplied a disproportionate number of principals".

However, some of the country's biggest Jewish school principal success stories have come from outside the community.

In the late 1990s, Sydney's Emanuel School struggled with falling enrolments, partly as a result of competition from the then newly-opened Reddam House in Bondi North. To make matters worse, says Emanuel president Alex Abulafia, the college, which has its roots in the Progressive movement, was "not perceived as a viable option" to Moriah, the country's largest Jewish school.

But in 2001, Emanuel recruited former Cranbrook principal Dr Bruce Carter, who Abulafia says has been "a boon for the school".

Phil Roberts has been the principal of Sydney's Mount Sinai College for four

years and served as deputy principal from 1994-2002. Aside from a four-year absence in the early 1990s to teach at a private girls' school, he has been at Mount Sinai for 15 years.

With his level of experience in a Jewish school, Roberts doesn't feel being a non-Jew makes his job more difficult. "The parents know I'm not a novice [in Jewish matters]. They know they have someone here who understands where they're coming from."

And while Jewish parents are often – rightly or wrongly – typecast as pushy, precious and intrusive, Roberts says the challenges of leading a Jewish school, as opposed to a non-Jewish one, are "frequently overstated".

Rather, he says, the school principal's role has changed as "parenting and the way in which schools have to respond" have evolved.

The stability, or in some cases instability, of family life, the role of technology in everyday life, parental expectations and the premature sexualisation of children were all cited by Jewish school principals contacted by the AJN as reasons their job has become more challenging, particularly in the past five years.

Baker says that as the weight of the role of principal shifts from being "an educator to more of a CEO", the search for candidates has become increasingly difficult and promoting internally is not always a viable option.

"Not every outstanding classroom teacher would make an outstanding principal," Baker says. "Often, what principals have to deal with is very far from their job description. They're putting out fires that if structures were what they should be, then it wouldn't be their role."

It is for this reason that schools should focus on cultivating strong vice-principals and head teachers, says Abulafia. Succession plans, he argues, are vital.

"One of the principal's key roles is to ensure he [or she] has built a team behind them," he says. "It's not a one-man show."

But perhaps Mark Rohald, who is involved in the recruitment of a new principal for Moriah College, puts it best when he says: "It's difficult to find good people when you set the yardstick so high."

The quality of the Jewish education in our schools is still the subject of much debate, sometimes acrimonious. However, there is no doubt that the dayschools provide the best opportunities for the Jewish education of our children and the need to solve the economic crisis associated with maintaining our schools and making them accessible to all Jewish families is an ever-burgeoning dilemma for our community.

The diversity of schools in Melbourne and Sydney, including new schools offering intensive Jewish Studies for the Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox segments of the

community, is another source of pride. While rationalisation of resources is an important issue, the need for parental choice through diversity of approaches is also an element that has to be taken into account. Finding the balance between economics and ideology, the broader community needs and the needs of individual families, is a constant challenge in education.

Adult education continues to flourish. The opening of the Sydney Kollel and the continuing success and growth of Orthodox programs is complementing increased activity in the non-Orthodox and pluralistic sectors. Limmud-Oz in Melbourne was a huge success, attracting participants from across all sectors to hear presentations from scholars and enthusiasts of various ideologies and outlooks. It was inspiring to see the participation of Chabad Rabbis and teachers on the program with secular humanists, non-Orthodox and Orthodox presenters.

The universities are experiencing growth in their educational output as well as in enrolments. Monash University is leading the way, with the exceptional fund-raising success that has led to the firm foundations for the Centre for the Study of Jewish Civilisation for its future growth and development. The ability to bring scholars of note to Australia enriches the entire community, not just the University population, and Melbourne and Sydney have already benefited from the engagement of Professor Uri Bialer as the first scholar to occupy the Chair.

At Sydney University and at Melbourne, the excellent work of academics has ensured that the study of Modern Hebrew has continued to flourish. Cooperative efforts between the University of NSW and The Shalom Institute, housed on the University campus, will provide additional learning opportunities and access to resources in the future.

The motto of The Shalom Institute, which will host Limmud-Oz in 2007, is 'Creating a Learning Community'. Indeed, this is a motto that articulates a priority for Australian Jewry. Teachers are the most important element and resources need to be found. However, the determination to teach and to learn is a quality that the Australian Jewish community bears proudly.

## MASKING OUR DIFFERENCES: PURIM IN CEBU

The Yiddish term ‘beshert’ refers to that which is pre-destined, those incidents in life that can only be explained by Providence. The fact that the first Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue in December 2004 took place during Chanukah, the festival that celebrates the miracle of survival of the few against the many, seemed to be ‘beshert’. Add to this the fact that the second in the series, in March 2006, took place during the partner festival, Purim, commemorating another victory of a minority threatened by extermination? Both festivals are joyous occasions when the right to be different and to have the freedom to live as Jews is celebrated – ideal times to gather people from different nations and different faith-groups in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

The Jewish representation in Yogyakarta had particular significance when Muslim Indonesia hosted the lighting of Chanukah candles and the recitation of Hebrew prayer. The two Jewish delegates, from Australia and New Zealand respectively, were honoured by the positive response of fellow delegates from across the region. The second Dialogue’s location in the Philippines, a predominantly Catholic country, may have been less auspicious in terms of the symbolism, but for the Jewish representatives from Australia and New Zealand it presented different challenges and new opportunities.



*Australian delegation to Cebu*

We were accommodated in a luxury resort, well-sheltered from the poverty of some of the local population and removed from any political or inter-religious conflict that the Philippines is currently experiencing. The first meeting of the entire Australian delegation, consisting of the ten participants in the Yogyakarta Dialogue plus two

Interfaith experts, former ECAJ president Jeremy Jones and Graeme Mundine from the National Council of Churches, was on our arrival in Cebu. Our team had the same sense of mission that characterized our approach to the first Dialogue and worked cooperatively and diligently.

The Australian delegation was particularly well resourced, with support from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Australian Embassy in Manila. Nominees and volunteers were found for a number of tasks. Jeremy Jones was nominated as Australia's representative on the Drafting Committee, where one representative of each of the 15 states represented worked on the Conference outcome document. Peta Pellach represented Australia, along with Sister Trish Madigan of the Catholic Church and Dr Ameer Ali of the Islamic community, on the Education Workshop. Cardinal George Pell and Wendie Wilkie of the Uniting Church co-chaired the workshop on Peace and Security, with John Henderson of the National Council of Churches working as that Workshop's rapporteur. Jeremy Jones and John Baldock, an Anglican priest from Melbourne, delivered the keynote papers on this subject. The other Australian delegates, representing Australia's Hindus, Buddhists and Orthodox Christian communities, participated in workshops on the Media and on Human Development.

Peta also joined Wendie Wilkie in drafting the Prayer for the Australian delegation to recite at the opening session of the Dialogue. As had been predicted, the Philippines resiled from the idea of reciting prayers on behalf of all delegates and requested that each of the 15 countries represented recite a prayer of 3 minutes' duration. Wendie and Peta determined that all members of the Australian delegation would participate in the prayer, which was crafted to celebrate the natural richness of the Australian landscape and the privileges and freedoms its people enjoy.

Drawing on the diverse nature of our delegation, which reflects the diversity of the Australian population, part of the prayer was repeated in the languages represented. Graeme Mundine opened in his indigenous language, followed by Dr Bala, the Hindu delegate, in Tamil, the two Buddhist representatives in Vietnamese, Dr Ali in Arabic, Archbishop Baliozian in Armenian, Jeremy Jones and Peta Jones Pellach in Hebrew and then the remaining delegates in English. It was an impressive array of cultures and symbolized our mutual respect. MP Andrew Robb, the Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism who represented the Government in the absence of Foreign Minister, Mr Downer, congratulated the group on this display of the qualities that represent Australia.

Prior to the recitation of the prayer on the first morning, Jewish delegates had a major religious obligation to fulfill. Purim began with nightfall and reading the Megillah, both night and morning, is a duty that can usually be fulfilled by listening to a public reading in a Synagogue. This year, the Megillah that was a gift to Jeremy Jones from the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress when he completed his presidency of the ECAJ was given its first use. With an attentive, multifaith audience, Jeremy and Peta read the complex text, supporting each other through difficult passages. Ra'shanim (noise-makers), fancy-dress accessories and chocolates were provided so that listeners could participate in the sense of fun that the Megillah-reading generally inspires. The task was completed, with recitation of appropriate blessings, and the Jewish delegates felt greatly relieved at their accomplishment while Buddhist and Christian observers

expressed gratitude for being permitted to participate, as they had done with vigorous noise-making at every mention of the name of the villain Haman.

The first evening dinner was for the Australian delegation alone. Held in an exclusive reception area, it involved minimal formality and was essentially an opportunity to become acquainted or re-acquainted with each other. Andrew Robb was a congenial participant in the dinner-time conversation which, despite the informality, touched on religious matters and issues of marginalisation in Australia past and present.

The morning opening addresses by host President Gloria Arroyo, New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark and senior representatives from Australia and Indonesia made all the appropriate and expected comments and observations. The national reports on progress since the Yogyakarta Dialogue provided some unexpected and welcome information. It appears that the Dialogue has had a significant impact in a number of countries. We learnt that the New Guinea national response to the Tsunami which followed on the heels of the Indonesian Dialogue was led by their inter-faith delegation. Minister Dame Carole Kidu, leader of the Delegation on both occasions, noted that without the Dialogue, the religious leaders would not have had contact with each other and would not have thought of coordinating their relief efforts. This was a significant shift for the country.

Progress in Thailand and Singapore also indicated that the Australian emphasis on working with youth and young adults had been successfully adopted in other settings. Particularly in Thailand, youth camps are now a feature of the intense effort to bridge differences between Buddhist and Muslim youth. In Indonesia, Australia's presentation featured the Journey of Promise and Youth Encounters programs. These provided inspiration for other nations. Indonesia's report, focusing on the building of the Yogya Centre for Interfaith Education indicated that that nation had taken its responsibilities in the field of Interfaith cooperation very seriously and was looking to even greater regional cooperation in the future.

Australia's report had four main components: the vast number of interfaith activities on a national scale; the Islamic Reference Group and other attempts to limit marginalization of the Muslim community; the commemorations of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nostra Aetate and resultant improvements in Jewish-Christian dialogue ; ongoing emphasis on education and working with youth. John Henderson, Secretary General of the National Council of Churches, led the report with input from John Baldock, Ameer Ali, Cardinal George Pell and Peta Jones Pellach respectively.

The majority of the Dialogue time was allocated to workshops on four specific areas, each workshop chaired by one of the four sponsoring nations. Australia chaired the workshop on Peace and Security, and Wendie Wilkie and Cardinal Pell were nominated to co-chair. Jeremy Jones presented one of the discussion papers, taking a leading role in determining the direction of the workshop's deliberations. As Australia's representative on the Drafting Committee, he also had significant input as to the way the workshop was reported and the resolutions that emanated from it.

The Education workshop was chaired by the Philippines and when the original chairperson was called away, his co-chair found herself out of her depth in managing the deliberations of a diverse, vocal and sometimes passionate gathering. The Australian

delegation, along with our New Zealand counterparts, proved resourceful in such a situation and frequently resolved issues, including taking a major role in drafting the resolutions and outcomes of the Workshop proceedings. Peta and a New Zealand colleague re-vamped the various proposals from the delegations and drafted the Workshop recommendations, responding to the written submissions from each delegation as well as to the discussion as it unfolded.

There were some tense moments in the final session of the Education workshop when representatives of one country, who had missed the first six hours of deliberation, joined the group. Demanding that participants be explicit in their understanding of the term 'Interfaith Education', the delegates criticized the general nature of the language used. It was Australian delegates (Peta in particular) who took the lead in explaining that general language had been consciously chosen to allow consensus among all countries represented. It was appropriate and, indeed, important to allow a broad interpretation so that each country could find a level of implementation relevant to its particular situation. The immoderate language and attitude of some delegates was intimidating but, with the strong support of Australia and New Zealand, the Philippines' chairperson was able to maintain the decorum of the discussion.

A second issue arose over the issue of Women. Sister Trish Madigan and Peta Jones Pellach teamed with New Zealand's Hindu delegate, a female academic, to press for recognition of the role of women in values education. In fact, the first suggestion to include a special mention of women came from Dr Ali, who noted that the first education children received was from their mothers and that values of peace and respect for the other could be instilled from early childhood, if mothers were empowered in this educational goal. This observation led to discussion around the predominance of women in teaching and the comparatively small number of women in delegations to the Dialogue and even in the Education Workshop.

When it came to drafting the recommendations from the Workshop, the original proposal was to include a mention of the contribution of women to education. Some Asian Muslim delegates objected, saying it was not necessary. A compromise from the New Zealand Muslim (male) delegate was that the contribution of women **and** men be noted. This was a satisfactory result as it allowed the role of women to at least be noted in the Dialogue's official reporting. Women were, as in Indonesia, severely underrepresented at the Dialogue, with some delegations not including any women at all.

In the Peace and Security workshop, a similar dynamic was present. Some delegates wanted explicit condemnations of acts of terrorism while others wanted a focus on "root causes" of terrorism. Jeremy Jones succeeded in removing reference to so-called "root causes" and any thing else which could have been perceived as justifying the murder of civilians. Some delegates also wanted to remove and implication that religion had any relationship to terrorism, claiming that to make and linkage was to "defame Islam".

During this workshop the extent of inter-communal violence in many different contexts was highlighted. Muslim and Christian in the Philippines and Indonesia, Christian and Hindu in Fiji, Buddhist and Muslim in Thailand, were a sample of the serious problems the workshop addressed.

Unlike in Indonesia, faith-based ‘caucus’ meetings did take place – informally, rather than as part of the official program. The Jewish ‘caucus’ of Paul Morris (New Zealand), Peta and Jeremy met and noted a number of matters. We expressed the view that, wherever possible, the appropriate people to present information about particular faiths were adherents of those faiths themselves. We noted that Judaism has the concept of justice as a central platform and that we were impelled, as people of faith, to pursue an agenda of social justice. Even more important in our hierarchy of values is the value given to human life. As Jews, we wished to emphasise the sacred duty to protect human life and, as a consequence, reject all terrorism and other forms of violence that could contravene that duty.

A meeting convened by New Zealand to examine the possibilities of holding the next Dialogue in that country resolved that inclusion of Youth in interfaith activities was a priority and that that topic would form part of the proceedings. Other proposals included a more academic symposium preceding the official dialogue and continuing to examine and question the relationship between religion and State and established religion and indigenous cultures.

As in Indonesia, the need to overcome terrorism was highlighted in the opening addresses and formed part of the deliberations drafting the Conference Declaration. It was appropriately noted that education against religious intolerance cannot take place successfully in a setting where discrimination is practiced. Education does not exist in a vacuum. Unlike in Indonesia, the inclusion of condemnation of violence and the need for religious leadership to promote peaceful forms of conflict resolution did not become a contentious issue.

One matter gave rise to heated debate and divided delegates. Due to the recent cartoon controversy as well as more general matters, one of the workshops was on the Media and its potential role in promoting interfaith harmony. From that workshop, one of the proposals for inclusion in the Cebu Declaration was to support ‘Freedom and responsibility of the media’. In the final session, where the wording of the Declaration was reviewed by the entire group, a Muslim representative suggested that this clause be rewritten to emphasise Responsibility, rather than Freedom. Peta Pellach spoke against the amendment, insisting that Responsibility only exists within a framework of Freedom. The leader of one delegation shouted ‘It is a matter of principle’, arguing that Islam does not believe in Freedom as a value. The Philippine chair of the session suggested that the amendment be put to a vote. Although this was not an ideal solution, the end result was satisfactory from the viewpoint of most of the Australian delegates with the amendment failing by just four votes in a room of more than 140 delegates.

The title of this report, ‘Masking our Differences’, refers, in part, to this vote. Not only did it put the Muslim delegates in an awkward position, with most of them (although not Australia’s Muslim delegate) feeling compelled to vote for the amendment, but it revealed that not all of Australia’s delegates felt strongly enough about the principle of Freedom of the Press to vote in this setting. One member of the delegation defiantly abstained, to the shock of most of the team.

There was a second incident involving an Australian delegate which is cause for concern.

When discussing the issue of the underlying causes of religious hatred, a suggestion was made that there is always an underlying social or economic cause for hatred. Peta Pellach made the counter-suggestion that there is also sometimes irrational hatred not based on any reality but couched in deep-seated prejudice. When asked for an example, she said Mediaeval Antisemitism was such a hatred. The response from a fellow Australian came as a shock. "But the Jews were the money-lenders so there really was a reason".

It is important to note that this individual has had a long involvement in Jewish-Christian dialogue. We have clearly not been successful in conveying our message, which is the universal message, that religious tolerance, much less respect, has to be taught. There is religious intolerance that springs not from any oppression or genuine grievance but that stems from ignorance and from that suspicion of difference that seems inherent in human nature and needs to be overcome. Until such prejudices are acknowledged, they cannot be fought. Until they are banished, we are simply masking our differences rather than embracing them.

Notwithstanding the above, the Cebu Dialogue was, overall, a positive encounter for the Jewish delegates. Both Jeremy and Peta established warm relationships with other delegates; in Peta's case, particularly with other women. Jeremy Jones, who was the only delegate wearing a kippa, was bombarded with questions on all matters of Judaism, Jewish history, Jewish demography and culture, by delegates from Cambodia, Papua-New Guinea, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, East Timor, The Philippines, Fiji and Brunei.

Peta was honoured to represent the Australian delegation at the Press Conference which concluded the Dialogue. She was one of just two women and certainly the single Jewish representative involved in the event. Again, her presence was highly symbolic.

There is no doubt that the visible presence of Jewish delegates is important. Many delegates expressed their genuine pleasure at meeting, for the first time, Jewish people. Many had serious theological questions to explore with their first Jewish colleagues; others were curious about the kosher food with which we were provided or about other life-style issues. There was no outward hostility, with even the Muslim delegate who had led the debate on freedom of the media and on alleged root-causes of terrorism taking the time to approach Jewish delegates to discuss the religious basis for his ideology. Even during the heated debates on the media, terrorism, causes of racism and global development, neither Jews nor Israel were demonized.

Our region is relatively free of the prejudice against Jews that is felt in Europe (partly due to the absence of a free press in most places); indeed, Jews are accepted as a 'quaint' minority about which little is known, but one which has played and continues to play a leading role in forging dialogues and promoting human rights and dignity.

Peta Jones Pellach & Jeremy Jones AM

**REPORT ON WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS GOVERNING BOARD AND  
OTHER MEETINGS  
INBAL HOTEL, JERUSALEM  
3-13 FEBRUARY 2006**

Other than the separately reported litigation initiated against Isi Leibler AO, the key outcomes can be summarised as:

- (a) The inaugural meeting of the WJC Young Professionals Diplomatic Corps which met for two days prior to joining the Governing Board meeting. The 25 young professionals aged between 25-40 years included Gilon Smith from Australia, a Board member of the ACT Jewish community. The project is coordinated by Peleg Reshef.
- (b) WJC governance was a major topic especially given the publication on 31 January of the report of the New York Attorney General. The report includes a 5 year "assurance" agreement. Israel Singer admitted the administration had been weak, accepted full responsibility, apologised and expressed regret at harm caused to the WJC.
- (c) For the 2005 year the WJC incurred a deficit of USDM 7.1 due to income being down by 50% from 2004 and extraordinary costs associated with the investigation of USDM 3.1. The deficit was funded from reserves which are now very low. The budget deficit for 2006 is USDM 1.0. Negotiations are underway with the former auditors to recover some of the extraordinary costs attributed to their negligence.
- (d) The threat to the international community from Iran was dealt with in a very professional and in depth session. There were three formal presentations setting out the Israeli, USA and UE positions followed by a lively discussion including developing an action plan should Iran's 20,000 to 30,000 Jews suddenly become hostages.
- (e) Jeremy Jones and I also attended the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress Regional Meeting.

While in Israel I also met with:

- (f) Ambassador Tim George
- (g) Bureau of Jewish Community Affairs
- (h) Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Nissan Amdur, Gabby Levy, Amos Nadai, Michael Ronen, Hagai Shaerir and Eli Yerushalmi.

Wide ranging discussions including Hamas, Iran, Regional Inter-faith, Israel Tourism Office (Sydney), visits to Australia, World Jewish Forum, Israeli Offices in Sydney and New Zealand, World Jewish Congress, Demography.

- (i) Office of President – Akiva Tor re proposed World Jewish Forum.
  
- (j) The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute:
  - Professor Yehezkel Dror (Founding President)
  - Avinoam Bar-Yosef (Director General)
  - Michael Weil
  
- (k) Isi Leibler AO

Grahame J Leonard

## REPORT ON VISIT TO ISRAEL & USA JULY 2006

1. The Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture bi-annual conference held in Jerusalem 4 – 5 July 2006 was noteworthy for:
  - (a) Adoption of a new mandate/mission which can be summarised as: "It is proposed that the mandate of the Foundation be revised to reflect these new emphases in the Foundation's work - the development of the social capital of the Jewish people, its communal, cultural, and professional leadership, and the fostering of Jewish connectiveness globally, including the propagation of the Hebrew language."



*L-R: Professor Anita Shapira, Dr Jerry Hochbaum, Grahame Leonard*

- (b) The agreement to hold the inaugural gathering of the Australian alumni of the Nahum Goldmann Fellowship in Melbourne to coincide with the ECAJ annual conference. The event would be a partnership between ECAJ and the Foundation
    - (c) Nina Bassat's mandatory retirement as Secretary after serving the maximum allowed two terms.



*L-R: Gideon Taylor (Executive Vice President Claims Conference Board), Grahame Leonard), Julius Berman (Chairman CCB) and Nina Bassat AM in New York July 2006*

2. While in Israel I also attended a wreath laying ceremony at Mt. Scopus War Memorial Cemetery (organized by JNF) and met with Isi Leibler AO.
3. Nina and I also represented Australia at the annual board meeting of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany in New York on 10 – 11 July 2006 held at the superbly located Museum of Jewish Heritage in Battery Park New York.

Revisions were made to the allocation policy in respect of programmes of social welfare, research, documentation and education. The adopted revised policies may create greater eligibility for projects for Australian organisations and individuals and as a result referrals have been given to B'nai B'rith for their traveling Holocaust Museum exhibition *Courage to Care*, the ACT community regarding the possible inclusion of a Holocaust memorial as part of the refurbishment for the National Jewish Centre, Jewish Care NSW for possible financial support for their new daycare centre and funding for a local film with a Holocaust theme.

Most importantly, as a result of the recent negotiations with the German government, there has been a significant increase in funding for "in-house services" for survivors provided through Jewish Care in Melbourne and Sydney. (A summary of monies currently paid to assist home care support for Holocaust survivors is attached).

The meetings also provided an invaluable opportunity to network with many leaders of other communities and organisations.  
Grahame J Leonard

# THE POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY

## ARC/LINKAGE GRANT PROJECT

Research for this project has continued actively throughout 2006 and the research project is on target. We have completed our focus group interviews across the country, apart from Adelaide which we will do early in 2007, and have undertaken research on issues of antisemitism, multiculturalism, and Jews and Muslims in Australia, presenting at conferences in both Israel and Australia on this key topic.

We have had some changes in research personnel. Sandy Saxon was replaced by Jessica Silberstein while she was on maternity leave. When she returned to work, she decided to do fewer hours, so we have organised a job share arrangement with Jessica Silberstein who is at present on maternity leave for her second baby. We have appointed Tessa Milne to fill Jessica's position for this period.

Jessica Silberstein and Sandy Saxon coordinated six more focus group meetings:

- Focus group with Jewish youth, Melbourne, 12 February 2006
- Focus group with Jewish main leadership, Melbourne, 12 February 2006
- Focus group with all stakeholders in Canberra, 2 March 2006
- Focus group with Jewish youth, Sydney, 26 March 2006
- Focus group with Jewish main leadership, Sydney, 30 August 2006
- Focus group with all stakeholders in Perth, 29 October 2006

Each discussion group dealt with key issues facing the community today, and the sessions were tape recorded and have been transcribed. The transcriptions have been circulated to all participants of each focus group interview for any follow-up comments. The responses of participants in each of these groups have continued to be very positive and so far everyone involved has found it to be a very valuable exercise in and of itself. We have promised the Perth group a short summary to be published in their newspaper, the *Maccabean*.

It is too early to provide an overview of data from our focus group interviews, but Sol Encel and I presented a paper on Jewish women in Australia for the Australian Association for Jewish Studies conference held in Melbourne on 12-13 February 2006 at the University of Melbourne. This paper summed up the findings of the study to date based on the interviews with the women's focus groups. The paper has been accepted for publication and will appear in the 2006 issue of the *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*.

Apart from the focus group interviews, a major area we have been working on is the issue of antisemitism, multiculturalism and ethnic identity in Australia. This was in response to an invitation from Professor Robert Wistrich to present on this topic at a

major international conference of invited speakers, which was held in Jerusalem at the Hebrew University from 12-15 June 2006. Suzanne Rutland gave this as a power point presentation and following this we have written up a paper for publication in a book planned by Professor Wistrich on this key topic facing the Jewish world. On Friday 3 November Suzanne Rutland also gave a power point presentation to a conference on the 'New Racism' held at the University of Sydney. Suzanne Rutland also presented at the European Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, which was held in Moscow, on Australian Jewry's contribution to the Campaign for Soviet Jewry. Anyone interested in copies of these presentations/papers is welcome to receive them.

Apart from conferences, Suzanne Rutland has been working on writing up her research into the archives of the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS) which she plans to submit for publication to journals in the United States and Australia. She has been invited to present the essence of this research to the Board of Governors of the JDC in New York in December this year. Thus, the research for this project is attracting significant international interest.

In all, this has again proved to be a very productive year for the project and we are on target with our planned schedule. Once the writing up of the JDC/HIAS research has been completed, we shall be developing a book proposal in order to find a publisher for the overall project.

Associate Professor Suzanne Rutland and Emeritus Professor Sol Encel

**THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL DIALOGUE OF CHRISTIANS, MUSLIMS  
& JEWS REPORT TO 2006 ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE EXECUTIVE  
COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY**

At the request of the President of the ECAJ, I have continued in my position as Co-Convenor of the Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims & Jews.

The participants in the Dialogue representing the ECAJ in the period in review have been Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence, Jeremy Jones, Peta Pellach, Yair Miller, Tahlia Berger and the ECAJ President (ex officio).



*Participants at 2006 meeting of Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims & Jews*

The only formal meeting which took place in 2006 was hosted at the Malek Fahd School in Chullora.

Unfortunately due to internal issues afflicting the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, the two other scheduled meetings were postponed.

The relationship which the ECAJ has established with our partners in the ANDCMJ has developed over the years and has continued despite the lack of a formal dialogue process.

During the year, a number of the National Council of Churches of Australia representatives in the Dialogue visited Israel on a Rambam Clergy Mission led by the ECAJ Vice President Rabbi John Levi. This was greatly beneficial to the participants' understanding of the Australian Jewish community and our concerns.



*RAMBAM 2006 visitors to Israel from the ANDCMJ, with Jeremy Jones*

I was invited to attend the Annual Dinner of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils and was told by a number of those present that the fact a Jewish representative was in attendance was greatly appreciated.

In the absence of a formal umbrella for Jewish-Christian-Muslim dialogue I organised two “conversations” with visiting personalities Imam Yahya Hendi (from the U.S.A.) and Rabbi David Rosen (from Israel), to which I invited ANDCMJ participants and a number of other representatives of various Muslim and Christian communities. The “conversations” helped maintain the momentum for dialogue in the absence of a functioning ANDCMJ.



*Imam Hendi (second from right) at interfaith gathering in Sydney Jewish Museum*

The ANDCMJ is occasionally used as a reference point by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, with the co-convenors and individual members consulted on a

range of matters. With one exception, all of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim delegates from Australia to the Cebu Forum on Inter Religious Cooperation were involved in the ANDCMJ, and the three ANDCMJ Co-Chairs were consulted in the progressing of that significant international conference.



*Rabbi David Rosen with some participants in the Interfaith Conversation, NSW Parliament House*

The ANDCMJ is recognised internationally as an example of “best practice” in Dialogue. As a guest of UNESCO and the Griffith University Multifaith Centre, I was invited to speak about the ANDCMJ and all matters relating to the Jewish experience in interfaith dialogue, at a significant international conference in Brisbane in January.

The ANDCMJ and other ECAJ dialogue programmes have brought great credit to the Australian Jewish community and to Australia generally. I thank the ECAJ for giving me the privilege of playing a part in this work.

Jeremy Jones AM  
October 2006

**ANNUAL CONVERSATION OF AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS  
COMMITTEE AND THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN  
JEWRY  
REPORT TO THE 2006 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE  
COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY**

It was my privilege to continue to serve as the ECAJ Co-Chair of the Annual Conversation of the ECAJ with the Australian Catholic Bishop's Committee.

The Annual Conversations, which commenced in 1998, have always proven to be constructive in furthering the dialogue in Australia, for providing input into global Catholic-Jewish dialogue and for building a firm friendship grounded in intellectual, personal and theological mutual respect.

In the 2006 Conversation, the ECAJ representatives were the President, Rabbi Gersh Zylberman, Jeremy Jones, Peta Pellach and Bill Arnold.

The ACBC was represented by Bishop Michael Putney, Bishop Issam Darwish, Bishop Geoffrey Jarrett, Bishop Kerin Manning, Sister Mary Raeburn and Mr. Michael Brown.



*2006 Participants in Annual Conversation of ECAJ with the Australian Catholic Bishops' Committee*

The meeting was chaired by Jeremy Jones at the Sydney Jewish Museum, after the full delegations were conducted through the museum by Avril Alba. The tour lead to a discussion on the Shoah and on the way it shaped contemporary Judaism and Catholicism.

During the past year, the ACBC and the ECAJ have, in an unprecedented way, exchanged information, news and analyses to better assist in mutual understanding.



Panellists at Mandelbaum House Seminar “The Fruits of Nostra Aetate”

In my capacity as Co-Chair of the Conversation, I was accorded the privilege of addressing a seminar on The Fruits of Nostra Aetate, at Mandelbaum House. I spoke on a panel with His Eminence Cardinal Cassidy, Bishop Putney and Rabbi Raymond Apple.

Jeremy Jones AM  
October 2006

## **EURO-ASIAN JEWISH CONGRESS REPORT - Jeremy Jones AM**

The ECAJ was a founding member of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, and was represented in all of its international conferences and missions prior to July 2006, when the EAJC's relationship to the WJC was considered by the ECAJ to mean our existing relationship could not continue.

The constituents of the EAJC come from a number of Jewish communities in Europe, Asia and the Pacific. Originally, the EAJC had members from the former Soviet Union, Mongolia and the major communities of the Asia/Pacific Region. At each meeting, the number of Jewish organisations which have voluntarily associated themselves with the EAJC has increased. Communities from Turkey, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslavia and central Europe have affiliated while Baltic representatives have also attended council meetings.

The main agenda items of the EAJC, from its inception, have been:

- improving interfaith dialogue
- developing inter-community understanding
- educating non-Jews about Jewish concerns
- helping Jewish communities in 'Ex-Communist Space' develop responsible, effective local leadership
- participating in international meetings as a significant human rights organisation



*Laying the wreath at the Heydar Aliyev Memorial, Baku*

Examples of the activities sponsored, co-sponsored and/or facilitated by the EAJC include training in Holocaust education of a substantial number of non-Jewish teachers in the Former Soviet Union; the International Conference on Peace and Accord, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan; international Jewish-Muslim Dialogue; inter-ethnic summer camps for school-children in the Ukraine; the publication of high

quality Jewish material in Russia; documenting Jewish life in the Euro-Asian region; and helping small Jewish communities advocate their interests to national governments.

In 2006, the EAJC participated in the World Jewish Congress Governing Board in Jerusalem, with the ECAJ a component in the formal representation.

I was invited to be part of a small group from the EAJC with expertise in interfaith dialogue which met with prominent political, social, cultural and religious figures in Azerbaijan in February. This was a remarkable visit to a Shi'ite Muslim post-communist land, and I have maintained ongoing ties with Azerbaijanis.



*Children at Jewish School in Quba singing Hatikvah*

To witness Jewish life today, in places such as Baku and the historic Jewish enclave Quba, and to speak with Jewish and Muslim leaders in that country provided an insight into some of the ongoing challenges faced by the Jewish world.

The EAJC is active in analysing and developing resources to combat antisemitism. In 2004 in Berlin and 2005 in Cordoba, the EAJC had delegations at the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) meetings on antisemitism. Australia is not part of the OSCE and I was the only Australian present at these very important meetings. At the meetings, the EAJC tabled an overview on antisemitism, to which I contributed. In 2006, I also wrote a chapter on antisemitism which was included in the EAJC submission to the OSCE.

If the only role of the EAJC was to provide annual opportunities for representatives of the Jewish communities of Australia, New Zealand, Japan, India, Russia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Poland and many other countries to meet and discuss challenges and achievements, it would be a worthwhile organisation to which to affiliate. The EAJC's range of activities and genuine commitment to working with Australian Jewry made it far more than that, and I look forward to the ECAJ once again formally affiliating to the EAJC.

## **PUBLIC DIPLOMACY REPORT FOR THE 2006 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY**

In addition to contributing to the ECAJ decision-making process as Immediate Past President and Councillor, representing the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, I have, in active coordination with the President, been an ECAJ “voice” in the media and at a number of political forums.

On some issues such as the moral and legal aspects of efforts to bring to justice participants in the Nazi’s crimes against humanity, I have been the principal ECAJ spokesperson in the media. As ECAJ-designated co-convenor of a number of formal interfaith dialogues, I have also spoken out in the media on numerous occasions.

I continued to be part of the ECAJ representation at the important ‘round-table’ hosted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and by the Attorney-General. This has entailed a measure of liaison with a diverse range of human rights NGOs. I was also identified as the ECAJ Past President at the inaugural National Dialogue on Civil Society, at Parliament House, Canberra, in October.



*ECAJ officers Josie Lacey and Jeremy Jones with Parliamentary Secretary for Citizenship and Multiculturalism, Andrew Robb, at his formal welcome in Sydney*

Three times in the period in review, I also represented the ECAJ in a meeting of the Australian Partnership of Ethnic and Religious Organisations, which discussed a number of issues of direct concern to the community.

In January, I represented the ECAJ at the NSW Premier’s Australia Day Reception, meeting a number of diplomats, politicians and community leaders, in July at the USA Independence day reception and in October at the NSW Government’s Interfaith Iftar dinner.

Ad personam, but to a considerable degree due to past and present ECAJ activities, I have also:

- As a result of the ECAJ's long association with the Australian Institute of Polish Affairs chaired an address on "The hidden City: Jews in Hiding in Warsaw in WWII, by Dr Gunnar Paulssen, in April.



*Jeremy Jones with legal and academic experts at 3<sup>rd</sup> International Symposium on Hate on the Internet, Toronto, Canada*

- Been the keynote speaker and final plenary panellist at Canada's 3<sup>rd</sup> International Symposium on Hate on the Internet, in Toronto, in September. One of the main areas of interests for the conference participants was the ECAJ's cases against Fredrick Toben and Antony Grigor-Scott.
- As a guest of the Lowy Institute, met in August with Carl Gershman of the U.S. Government's National Endowment for Democracy. Ambassador Gershman was keenly interested in the Australian Jewish community and in the structure and achievements of the ECAJ.



*Imam Mogra (3<sup>rd</sup> from right) with invited Jewish and Christian dialogue leaders*

- Met in September with Imam Mogra, a guest of the Australian government brought from England to promote moderation in Australian Islam, to brief him on constructive community advocacy organisations.
- Was a member of the Australian Government representation at the Cebu Regional Dialogue on Interfaith Co-operation, in March, as an expert on Interfaith Relations. I was elected to the Conference Drafting Committee and invited to deliver a keynote paper on the Limits and Potential of Interfaith Dialogues for Peace and Security. Australian delegates included Cardinal George Pell, Dr. Ameer Ali (president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils), the Most Venerable Phuoc Hue, Rev. John Henderson (General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Australia), and other Christian and Hindu personalities. As one of only three Jews in 200 delegates and officials from 15 Asian and Pacific countries, I was involved in intensive advocacy and representation.



*Australian Delegation at Cebu Conference on Interfaith Dialogue, March 2006*

- Spoken at a moving event at NSW Parliament House marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic National Reconciliation Conference, in May. I was chosen as, in my ECAJ capacity, I had chaired Faith Communities for Reconciliation for a number of years. In December, I was involved in a number of media interviews and provided background on Australia's extremist right wing and Islamic groups, after the Cronulla riot and its aftermath.
- Was a panellist on an ABC radio 2BL forum devoted to Israel's war against Hezbollah, in July.
- In August, spoke at the AUJS Political Training Seminar in Canberra, where I encouraged students to become involved in their community organisations.

- In December, spoke on “Alternative Visions to Extremists”, to a predominantly Muslim interfaith meeting in South-West Sydney.
- In February, was a keynote speaker at an academic seminar on “After Cronulla: Rethinking Multiculturalism”, hosted by Griffith University and the University of The Sunshine Coast.
- Met with and addressed participants in an ANU programme designed to increase understanding of multiculturalism by senior officials from Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Laos, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pacific Islands, in August.

Additional activities included having small meetings with representatives of a number of Christian faiths and non-Christian religions with which the ECAJ does not have formal dialogues in place, as well as participating in meetings with other ECAJ officials with diplomats and other prominent public figures.

Jeremy Jones AM

**UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA/ECAJ NATIONAL DIALOGUE  
REPORT TO THE 2006 ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE EXECUTIVE  
COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY**

16 Years ago, then ECAJ President Leslie Caplan AM (z.l.) oversaw the establishment of a formal National Dialogue between the ECAJ and the Uniting Church in Australia. The impetus for the establishment of the Dialogue was action by members of the UCA which had created enormous tension between the ECAJ and the UCA. Calm and intelligent leadership by Leslie Caplan and the moderator of the UCA, Rev Dr D'Arcy Wood, brought these two national peak bodies together in which has proven to be a long, constructive journey together to a point of growing understanding and respect.

I was a member of the very first ECAJ component in the Dialogue and continue to co-chair meetings.



*Participants in 2006 Sydney Meeting of the UCA/ECAJ National Dialogue*

In the period in review, ECAJ participants in the Dialogue have been Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence, The President, the Honorary Secretary, Rabbi John Levi, Dror Abramovich, Nina Bassat, Jeremy Jones, Melanie Landau, Peta Pellach and Ian Jankelowitz, Jessica Taft with Professor Solomon Schimmel complementing our delegation at the Sydney meeting. The Dialogue took place in Ormond College (Melbourne) and Shalom College (Sydney).

The Dialogues have evolved to include religious studies and a general discussion. Text studies have invariably lead to intellectual and philosophical discussions which help us develop deep mutual identity and respect.

The general discussions often focus on Israel, antisemitism, international affairs or other issues which it is important to discuss frankly and opening in an environment of trust and goodwill.

At the dialogue meeting in Sydney in May 2006, a constructive and thoughtful discussion took place on the issue of the cartoons relating to Mohamed in the Danish media and the response by Muslims and non-Muslims.

At the conclusion of the dialogue in Melbourne in November 2005, a joint media release “Respond to terrorism by celebrating, not rejecting, multicultural Australia”, was issued and received coverage in the religious and general media.

We have now completed 22 Dialogues and there is every indication that the process, which has had an impact far beyond the individuals who participate in it, will continue well into the future.

Jeremy Jones AM

## **ECAJ CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS**

### **RESOLUTION 25 MAY 2006**

**THIS EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** of the Committee of Management of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry held in Melbourne on 25 May 2006:

**REAFFIRMS** its primary objective of advancing the welfare of the Jewish community in Australia and throughout the world and doing so by adhering to the highest standards of governance;

**CALLS UPON** all officers of the WJC, and other Jewish organisations, to recognise the damage done to world Jewry by public conflict especially in respect of disputes internal to organisations and to appreciate the need for any criticism of communal organisations or individuals, to be made without rancour or vituperation, and offers its good offices to assist with that objective;

**NOTES** its Resolution of 23 February 2006, concerning the lawsuit instituted on 31 January 2006 by the WJC and Israel Singer against Isi Leibler AO CBE, which Resolution is attached;

**NOTES** that the WJC has not discontinued the lawsuit;

**NOTES** that particularly in his letters to the ECAJ of 7 March 2006 and 21 May 2006, the Secretary General has gone to great lengths to attempt to justify the bringing and maintaining of the lawsuit against Mr Leibler;

**NOTES** further that the Committee of Management has today provided the Secretary General, (at his request) in the presence of his lawyers, with the opportunity to discuss with the Committee of Management, the lawsuit and the matters arising from the Resolution, in person;

**ACKNOWLEDGES WITH APPRECIATION** the preparedness of the Secretary General to travel to Australia to meet with the Committee of Management and acknowledges the openness of the ensuing discussion of differences as being one of the necessary features of good governance and transparency;

**WELCOMES** the expressed attitude of the WJC to work cooperatively with its affiliates including the ECAJ;

**REGARDS** the steps taken since 2004, by the WJC to attempt to improve its governance and the transparency and clarity of its decision-making, as most important;

**NOTES WITH SATISFACTION** that consistent with its undertakings to the Office of the Attorney General of New York, the WJC is obliged to institute and maintain regimes of good governance on fiscal and related matters;

**EXPRESSES CONCERN** however, after reviewing the Secretary General's correspondence and after having heard from him, that in particular:

- (a) the decision to institute the lawsuit against Mr Leibler does not appear to have been taken by any organ of the WJC in a manner consistent with principles of transparent and clear governance;
- (b) the Report of the Attorney General of New York was either not at the time published, or not made available by the WJC after its publication, to those deciding to institute the law suit;
- (c) no consultation appears to have been undertaken with members and affiliates of the WJC, prior to instituting the law suit;
- (d) the WJC Press Release and the Secretary General's Memorandum both dated 31 January 2006, whilst understandably promoting a positive portrayal of the findings in the Report of the Attorney General of New York, do not represent either a fair or reasonable summary of that Report ;
- (e) in instituting the lawsuit against Mr Leibler, and highlighting that fact both in the Press Release and the Memorandum, the WJC ensured that the governance issues which the WJC wished to downplay, would remain a matter of significant public controversy and comment, at least until the litigation was resolved;

**REJECTS** the essential justifications relied upon by the Secretary General both orally and in writing, for the institution of the lawsuit;

**REAFFIRMS** the matters recorded, and the views and beliefs expressed, in the Resolution.

**NOTES** that in light of the findings contained in the Report of the Attorney General of New York, the Secretary General's statement contained in his January 2005 "Report to the Plenary Assembly of the WJC", that "*The allegations of financial irregularities regarding the transfer of \$1.2million of WJC funds are false*" is wrong;

**CALLS UPON** the WJC to forthwith remove the January 2005 "Report to the Plenary Assembly of the WJC", from its website;

**NOTES WITH DEEPEST CONCERN AND ALARM** that the lawsuit:

1. is highly unlikely to achieve any of the purposes for which it was allegedly brought;
2. is likely to take many years to resolve and will during that time ensure that the criticism previously made by Mr Leibler will remain in the public domain, exciting unfavourable media comment and undermining the otherwise proud achievements of the WJC;
3. will be hugely disruptive to the ongoing mission and reputation of the WJC and others;
4. will be extremely expensive including in time and effort, notwithstanding that a Legal Defence Fund has been established by the WJC;

**EXPRESSES ITS PROFOUND BELIEF** that, regardless of which party is successful in the litigation, the lawsuit is manifestly not in the best interests of world Jewry and the WJC, its members and affiliates;

**ACCORDINGLY ONCE MORE CALLS UPON** the WJC to discontinue the lawsuit.

**NOTES** that the next meeting of the Steering Committee of the WJC is scheduled to take place on 18 July 2006;

**RESOLVES** with considerable regret to withdraw its membership of and disaffiliate from the WJC effective 25 July 2006 unless, by that time, the WJC has discontinued the lawsuit.

**FINALLY RESOLVES** that after this Resolution has been communicated in writing to the Secretary General of the WJC, the ECAJ will publish this Resolution and any reasons in support of it, including to members of the WJC.

Grahame J. Leonard

President

# Executive Council of Australian Jewry

הוועד הפועל של  
יהודי אוסטרליה

## The Representative Organisation of Australian Jewry

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Norman Schueler (SA)

Daniel Albert (TAS)

Bill Arnold (ACT)

CONSTITUENTS:

Jewish Community Council  
of Victoria Inc

New South Wales Jewish  
Board of Deputies

Jewish Community Council of  
Western Australia Inc

Queensland Jewish Board of  
Deputies

Jewish Community Council  
of South Australia

Hobart Hebrew Congregation

ACT Jewish Community Inc

AFFILIATES:

Australasian Union of Jewish  
Students

Australian Federation of WIZO  
Union for Progressive  
Judaism - Australia

Federation of Australian  
JewishCare

Maccabi Australia Inc

National Council of Jewish  
Women of Australia



29 May 2006

Mr. Stephen E. Herbits  
Apartment 904  
1000 Venetian Way  
Miami, Florida 33139

### By email

Dear Stephen,

I want to thank you once again for travelling to Melbourne to meet with the Committee of Management on Thursday 25 May 2006. The meeting was productive and most useful.

As you know after you left the meeting, the Committee of Management gave earnest consideration to the position of the ECAJ in relation to the lawsuit between the WJC and Isi Leibler, having regard to your letters of 7 March and 21 May 2006 and the discussion that we had with you.

The unanimous resolution of the entire Committee of Management (with the exception of Isi Leibler who for obvious reasons was not part of this process), is enclosed. We urge the Steering Committee to give it most careful consideration.

We believe it would be helpful to express some of the reasons behind our Resolution, especially having regard to some of the remarks contained in your earlier correspondence. I now set out those reasons, by way of response to that correspondence.

### THE REASONS FOR THE LAWSUIT

#### Your 21 May 2006 letter to the ECAJ

In your most recent letter (21 May 2006), you seek to justify the lawsuit, amongst other reasons, by reference to your 7 March 2006 letter to the ECAJ. You describe all activities undertaken by the WJC "since the formation of the Steering Committee in 2004" as characterised by "transparency and clarity". We do not agree.

**In your 7 March 2006 Letter** you sought to justify the lawsuit on a number of bases as follows:

1. "Leibler led a public campaign of attack against the WJC with a large number of allegations, which when investigated turned out to be unfounded" and  
"Leibler chose to launch a media attack"

**Our Response:**

Leibler produced an internal memorandum on 8 September 2004 (**Memorandum**), posing questions relating to governance at the WJC. At the time Leibler was a Senior Vice President and member of the Operations Committee of the WJC. The Memorandum raised governance issues, including in that context, questions about: Salaries (10.1); Expenses (10.2); Geneva Office and Swiss Bank Account (10.3); the Israel Branch (10.4) and the manner of appointing certain officers.

The Memorandum noted:

**"To put an end to rumours and gossip these matters should be reviewed by independent professional third parties and auditors with no axe to grind. I am hopeful that after a comprehensive review, the findings will confirm that whilst there may have been lack of order, there were no deliberate irregularities or malpractices..."**

**"I reiterate that this document does not necessarily assert the existence of deliberate malpractice or impropriety. But the application of corporate governance and fiscal transparency in this body is the responsibility of the President and each and every one of us. I should also say that no matter how much we may admire the work of various personalities in the WJC who have made major contributions to Klal Yisrael, there can be no exemption to accountability in a public organization. Publicly donated funds (in contrast to organizational structures funded by a private individual) must be treated as sacrosanct"** (emphasis added).

The Report of the Office of the NY Attorney General (**NYAG Report**) found that most of the concerns raised in the Memorandum were largely substantiated. A comparison of the Memorandum and the NYAG Report is instructive. We maintain that Leibler's stand was vindicated (see e.g. paragraph 12 below).

There is no evidence that the "campaign" in the media was initiated by Leibler as opposed to the WJC and/or Singer. The "*Jewish Week*" article published 8 September 2004 which represents the commencement of the "campaign", was published before the Memorandum was distributed by Leibler and quotes extensively from Singer. It is significant that the WJC cannot exclude the possibility that the campaign was initiated by Singer and not Leibler. We also note that it appears that each time the media reported on the WJC matters, it was in response to actions of the WJC. Thus:

- (i) the initial media reports on the matter came only after Singer appears to have presented *Jewish Week* with a draft copy of Leibler's Memorandum;
- (ii) the next series of media reports followed one of the first acts undertaken by Bronfman's newly appointed Steering Committee - Leibler's removal. The Steering Committee accepted your statement to the effect that all was in order and refused to address Leibler's concerns, or those of the then WJC legal adviser in Geneva, Mr Lack;
- (iii) additional media coverage came in response to the European Jewish Congress' resolution in November 2004, following a presentation by you. The EJC resolution released to the media, condemned Leibler and threatened to suspend the Swiss Jewish Community unless they withdrew their demand for a genuine independent audit;
- (iv) there was also media coverage of the public statements by Professor Donath, the president of the Swiss Jewish community who refused to withdraw his demand for an independent audit, alleging that Singer had personally threatened to "destroy" him and all his family;
- (v) the next wave of publicity was associated with the Brussels Plenary Assembly in January 2005 which removed Leibler as the Senior Vice President. This took place in the wake of the initial announcement by the Attorney General of the probe into the WJC management;
- (vi) the 1000-page "*Report to the Plenary Assembly*" that you presented in January 2005, which purportedly cleared the WJC of any irregularities, has now been confirmed by the Attorney General to have been inaccurate in critical respects. Importantly, however, it was the WJC itself that distributed the report to the media and posted it on the WJC web site. It remains there today – despite the fact that the Attorney General's report demonstrated that some of its contents and conclusions were clearly wrong. You still refer to it in your 21 May 2006 letter to the ECAJ;
- (vii) initially, it was claimed by Singer that the \$ 1.2 million transferred by him to Geneva originated from the Jewish Agency and had been earmarked by the Jewish Agency for Singer's pension. The Jewish Agency subsequently commissioned an audit, released in March 2005, which confirmed there was no connection whatsoever between \$1.5 million transferred by the Jewish Agency to the WJC Operating Account in January 2001, and the subsequent transfer of \$ 1.2 million in 5 instalments by Singer (without the authorization of any organ of the WJC) to Geneva. The Jewish Agency Report attracted media publicity. Leibler is not responsible for media reports highlighting that the Jewish Agency repudiated the explanations of the WJC in relation to the origin of the \$ 1.2 million. We understand it has been alleged that the Jewish Agency Report is inaccurate, but we note it is significant that no clarification of the accuracy of that Report has to date been published;

- (viii) some of the most damaging publicity resulted from your attack on other American Jewish organizations reported in NY Magazine in March 2005 when you said that the WJC "ain't going down by itself". It was reported that in relation to unnamed Jewish organizations, you referred to false IRS returns, misuse of public funds, "outlandish" benefit packages, and lying to the government. You later apologized.
2. The NYAG Report "specifically rejected several of Leibler's allegations"

**Our Response:**

No allegations were specifically rejected. One allegation relating to Singer's purpose in creating the \$1.2m fund was found to be "not substantiated" (Section 36). In that respect Barak, an important figure in all of this, refused to co-operate with the AG.

3. "The expense of attorneys and accountants to provide full and complete answers to these allegations cost substantial sums of money"

**Our Response:**

You and the WJC apparently take pride in having adopted appropriate fiscal governance standards and practices and have undertaken to the NY AG to comply with the requirements as reflected in the NYAG Report. Clearly this demonstrates at the very least, that all was not well. More importantly with a NYAG certified "clean bill of health" the WJC can approach donors with a degree of confidence and credibility which without compliance with the NYAG's requirements it would simply not be able to achieve. In those circumstances to attempt to recover the costs associated with the NYAG's investigation from the complainant whose complaints have largely been vindicated, is in the ECAJ's view unprincipled, unprecedented and unconscionable.

4. "Leibler could have raised the issues of reform earlier"

**Our Response:**

This appears to us not to be the case. It was only in July 2004, after Leibler formulated and carried a resolution demanding disclosure of expenses and after the \$1.2 million account in Geneva and London was exposed that the Operations Committee was dissolved.

In any event the NYAG Report relevantly concludes as to the \$1.2m transfer

"19. Singer did not report his creation of a pension fund in Geneva to other WJC leaders during or immediately after the money transfers...Although Singer claims that the existence of the fund was known to other WJC officers, including Beker (WJC's Secretary General at the time) and Steinberg, Beker denies having any knowledge of the fund before October 2003. Steinberg...was no longer working at

the WJC in late 2002 and early 2003, when the transfers took place...but claims not to have learned about the fund until July 2004.

**”20. Most significantly, the WJC maintained no records in New York from which the existence of assets designated as a pension fund in Geneva could readily have been detected...Accordingly, no one reviewing the WJC’s 07 account ledger would have learned the intended purpose of the transfers or that the money was for any purpose other than to pay expenses of the Geneva representative office...” (emphasis added)**

5. "The WJC acted responsibly, only responding to questions from the media and never launching a counter-attack on Leibler"

**Our Response:**

For the reasons set out in 1 above, we reject this view completely. Further:

- (i) it is at least just as likely that it was Singer and not Leibler who gave a draft of the Memorandum to the media before Leibler even sent his Memorandum to the Executive and before Leibler had spoken to any media about his concerns. This has never been referred to, let alone denied by Singer or the WJC. **You have not referred to it and the simple fact is that you cannot demonstrate that Leibler did, or that Singer did not, launch the media campaign;**
- (ii) in its very first act, the newly created Steering Committee removed Leibler without addressing any of his concerns. **It then issued a press release** announcing that Leibler was no longer permitted to act on behalf of the WJC;
- (iii) a resolution of the European Jewish Congress was carried condemning Leibler personally for spreading false and baseless allegations and conducting a media campaign against the WJC. Leibler was not given any proper opportunity at the meeting to counter the allegations presented by you prior to this resolution being adopted. **The resolution was distributed to the media;**
- (iv) a 1,000-page “*Report to the Plenary Assembly*” was prepared and distributed by you in January 2005. It contained: inaccuracies, misleading statements, distortions and communications presented out of context. It was distributed widely to the media by the WJC and, **notwithstanding the contrary findings in the NYAG Report, remains on the WJC website to this day;**
- (v) that Report appears to have informed and influenced every decision by the WJC relating to this matter, thereafter. **It is seriously wrong;**

- (vi) for example, in light of the NYAG's Report, the "fundamental conclusion" to your January 2005 "Report to the Plenary Assembly of the WJC", that:  
"The allegations of financial irregularities regarding the transfer of \$1.2million of WJC funds are false", **is demonstrably and manifestly wrong.**
6. "The best way to ...demonstrate the inaccuracy of Leibler's allegations is in the neutral fair and impartial setting of a Court Room"

**Our Response:**

- It is not the best way at all. It presupposes that the WJC will win. There are no guarantees in litigation except that it will take longer and cost more, than anticipated.
- The test of whether the WJC's quest for truth and justice is genuine or not may be the continued publication of the 1,000 page "Report to the Plenary Assembly" on its website and Bronfman's and your failure to consent to the jurisdiction of the Israeli court to hear Leibler's claims against you arising out of its publication (the correspondence is attached Attachments C1 & C2 to the Leibler's Defence);
- In any event win, lose or draw, this lawsuit will be a disaster for the WJC and world Jewry and a bonanza for our enemies.

**In your 21 May 2006 Letter**, in addition to the justifications contained in your 7 March letter dealt with above, you wrote:

7. The WJC sued Leibler for several reasons

"...the NYSAG concluded that many (allegations) were "found to be either unrelated to the administration of charitable assets or immaterial." The significance of this paragraph cannot be understated. The NYSAG investigated the WJC for over one year. Throughout that time allegation after allegation was brought to their attention either directly or through the media. **The NYSAG investigated them, and chose to place that sentence first in their section containing their conclusions.**

**Our Response:**

The Preliminary Statement in the NYAG Report related to the **deficiencies; unreasonable and/or unreported compensation; and unsubstantiated cash disbursements** etc.

A comparison between the press releases of the AGNY and WJC both issued on 31 January 2006 is instructive, as to what was regarded as important and by whom, viz:

## Attorney General Spitzer's Press Release

“After an extensive review of financial records and interviews with dozens of persons, **the Attorney General's office concluded that the organizations lacked appropriate financial controls to safeguard charitable assets and failed to keep adequate records regarding their fund-raising activities.** The investigation did not reveal criminal conduct.

“The investigation focused particularly on an unusual transfer of funds by WJC's former Secretary General and Governing Board Chair, Israel Singer. In early 2003, Mr. Singer transferred \$1.2 million from a bank account controlled by the American Section to bank accounts in Europe. The purpose of the transfers was to establish a pension fund for WJC employees. **However, Mr. Singer's actions were not approved by any governing body of WJC and were undertaken without appropriate measures to protect WJC's ownership interest or ensure return of the monies.**

“Neither WJC nor American Section suffered losses from this transaction, but it did highlight **major deficiencies in the organizations' administration and helped spark the adoption and implementation of previously-absent financial controls.**

“The investigation also revealed a series of inappropriate disbursements to senior to WJC employees. These disbursements consisted of payments for insurance for family members, car lease payments and personal credit card charges, as well as undocumented accrued vacation and sick leave, some of which already have been repaid. In the case of Mr. Singer, the inappropriate disbursements totalled over \$300,000” (emphasis added).

## WJC Press Release

**NEW YORK CITY – (January 31, 2006) –** The World Jewish Congress (WJC), the international organization dedicated to addressing the needs of Jews and Jewish communities around the world, today **welcomed** the final report by New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer's office concluding its thorough investigation of the governance, administration and operations of the WJC. **The WJC emerges from this process with transparent governance, efficient administration and overhauled corporate structure and management systems that make it stronger than ever.**

The exhaustive **examination identified outdated practices well on their way to modernization in the organization.** The Report concludes that “these shortcomings did not compromise the core mission of the WJC or American Section; nor did they impair the effectiveness of WJC. In addition, they did not result in defalcations or

other identifiable losses of charitable assets.” The Report also summarizes the WJC’s successful ongoing structural enhancements to achieve the highest level of best practices.

In particular, the Attorney General thoroughly investigated and analysed the transfer of funds that started this investigation. In the end, there was no evidence to support the **central accusation\* that the organization or any individual had misappropriated, embezzled, stolen or laundered \$1.5 million, which the WJC was fully entitled to earmark for pensions.**

Defense against slanderous claims have cost the WJC valuable resources that should have gone to address the needs of the Jewish people. **Therefore, we have today initiated legal action against Isi Leibler in Israel, where he resides, for his leading role in this costly and damaging campaign”** (emphasis added).

**\*It is of course fundamentally important to point out that we have been unable to find any instance where Leibler alleged embezzlement stealing or laundering. Most significantly you have refused to identify any such occasion and have even refused to indicate whether Leibler ever made an allegation in those terms.**

Your memorandum to WJC offices & affiliates dated 31 January 2006 was similarly misleading, viz:

“Today, Eliot Spitzer, the New York State Attorney General announced the completion of his 14 month inquiry into the administration and operations of the World Jewish Congress. **The AG’s final report found that the WJC’s practices did not “compromise the core mission of the WJC,” or result in “losses of charitable assets.”** The final report also summarized a comprehensive series of enhancements undertaken by the WJC to institute transparent governance, efficient administration and an overhauled corporate structure that make the WJC stronger than ever.”

You also noted:

“We can all be proud of the way the organization met this challenge. **Although our detractors attempted to manipulate the media in an effort to destroy the organization\***, the WJC avoided the temptation to try this case in the press and permitted the Attorney General’s office to conduct its inquiry free from such intrusions and distractions. **We have today filed suit in Israel against Isi Leibler for his leading role in this costly and damaging campaign.”**

\*Whatever Leibler was attempting to do, it could not reasonably be said that he was attempting to destroy the WJC which he had served with such distinction for so long.

8. “Despite our being open and forthcoming with the NYSAG...we are accused by Leibler of a “sophisticated and meticulous cover up.” Now, Leibler takes his attack on the WJC to new heights by charging the organization with “public corruption.” Such a charge is unconscionable, and I know of no one who could tolerate an accusation of “public corruption” in their institution or business without responding legally”.

**Our Response:**

It certainly is strange for you to quote from Leibler’s Statement of Defence to the WJC lawsuit in an attempt to justify the lawsuit. Whilst novel it is unsustainable.

9. “Leibler continues to lobby allies to become active in his campaign. Interestingly, 80% of the questions asked of me in a recent television interview tracked the same questions sent to me by you on behalf of the ECAJ Committee of Management. I await only a transcript of my interview for the evidence of their exactitude.”

**Our Response:**

The 23 February ECAJ Resolution was not the result of Leibler’s lobbying. The questions were also totally home grown although they are so obvious that it is little wonder others may have asked them.

10. “The WJC must continue its suit against Leibler because contributors to this institution should not have had to suffer from Leibler’s unfounded allegations and defamation. Leibler’s campaign cost the WJC substantial funds, and Leibler should be made to pay that back. Others have had to repay the WJC for only technical accounting errors. Leibler must do so much more, especially as he continues to this day his defamatory “war.”

**Our Response:**

As the NYAG Report made clear, the allegations were not unfounded, on the contrary. In any event why didn’t the NYAG Report finally resolve the matter? That was certainly Leibler’s view as expressed in his 3 February 2006 email (referred to below), which was sent to you and others before he had received the lawsuit.

11. A court of law is the only venue where all of the false and defamatory allegations made by Leibler can be disproved and put to rest once and for all.

**Our Response:**

See paragraph 6 above. In addition, such statements are contrary to our experience of litigation. No one believes that a court will put to rest anything once and for all. That is a matter for the parties. And even if that could or would be the result, and leaving aside the possibility of Leibler winning

(which would be a catastrophe for the WJC), the litigation cannot possibly be in the best interests of the WJC or world Jewry.

## **THE ALLEGATIONS AND THE FINDINGS OF THE NYAG**

12. Although he dealt with other issues, the gravamen of the Leibler Memorandum related to the \$1.2m transfer from a Swiss Bank Account. Indeed you have described it as “*the central accusation*”. It is important to set out in full what Leibler said on this topic (at 10.3), in the Memorandum:

### **“The Geneva Office and Swiss Bank Account:**

This is a serious issue that must be clarified as it involves allegations of financial irregularities.

The Operations Committee decided unanimously in April 2004 to restructure the Geneva office and terminate the services of the WJC representative in Geneva, Maya Benhaim Rosen. She was also asked to terminate the employment of other Geneva office employees. Ms. Benhaim Rosen then engaged the services of a Swiss lawyer and is challenging the terms of her termination. Her lawyer has been in discussion with the WJC lawyer in Geneva.

Subsequently Professor Alfred Donath, head of the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities (who had represented Switzerland at the WJC as far back as the Goldman era) wrote a letter to President Bronfman and the Operations Committee on this matter. He protested against the abrupt closure of the Geneva office and warned that rumours of financial irregularities undertaken in Switzerland by WJC personnel had come to his attention. He was concerned that a lawsuit with Ms. Benhaim Rosen would expose these matters to the public which would be highly detrimental to the WJC and Swiss Jewry. He therefore called for an independent audit of WJC affairs in Switzerland. Professor Donath did not provide details or evidence of these allegations and Singer subsequently informed the Operations Committee that Professor Donath had withdrawn his request. However, I have recently been advised that Professor Donath only agreed to withdraw his letter if the Geneva office were to be reopened and all questions relating to financial irregularities be investigated by an independent audit. As his conditions were not implemented, he has not withdrawn his demand for an investigation and audit forthwith to review possible financial irregularities. On this basis alone, I believe we have no choice but to proceed with such an independent investigation and external audit.

Additionally, in July 2004, the WJC received a letter from Daniel Lack, a WJC legal adviser and Geneva Office staff member whose association with the WJC also goes back to the Presidency of Dr. Nachum Goldman and who served the WJC under Dr. Gerhard Riegner. Mr. Lack is one of the employees whose services Ms.

Benhaim Rosen was asked to terminate. The communication from Mr. Lack (who has retained legal counsel in this matter) also mentioned alleged irregularities in the management of the WJC's accounts in Switzerland including, inter alia, the discovery of an undisclosed WJC account in UBS, Geneva which had contained approximately \$1,200,000.

We were perplexed because Singer had never informed the Operations Committee or the Task Force of the existence of such an account. WJC personnel in Geneva were initially also unaware of it. Singer then confirmed that the funds had been transferred to the account in Geneva a number of years ago from the WJC bank account in New York but insisted that it represented money paid by the Jewish Agency for his pension. This was particularly puzzling since Singer was never an employee of the Jewish Agency. However, Singer advised Professor Dinstein that the pension was provided to him by the Jewish Agency in recognition for the services he had provided to the Jewish people and the Jewish Agency in relation to restitution issues.

The amount paid by the Jewish Agency to the WJC New York account approximately three years ago (for Singer's "pension" or otherwise) was \$1,500,000 of which \$1,200,000 was transferred in installments to the Swiss account and \$300,000 remained in the New York account.

Hopefully the Jewish Agency will be able to clarify its involvement in this matter. In the past, the Jewish Agency did indeed make annual financial contributions to the budget of the WJC, but we are not aware of pension payments being provided to those not employed by the Jewish Agency.

We learnt from the letter of Mr. Lack that the funds were subsequently transferred out of the UBS account in Geneva on July 1, 2003. Singer confirmed to the Operations Committee that he had personally flown to Geneva to oversee the transfer of the funds from the Geneva account to London.

**In fact, the funds were transferred initially to Israel to the account of Israeli attorney Zvi Barak, a friend of Singer who at the time had no formal relationship with the WJC. It was then apparently transferred by Barak from Israel to London.**

We asked why neither the Operations Committee nor the Task Force had been informed of the existence of this account or the funds when they requested details about the asset position of the WJC. The reply was somewhat confusing.

Singer could not explain why the funds of the Geneva account were transferred from New York to Geneva in the first instance. And why

the funds were transferred in individual amounts of several hundred thousand dollars over a period of time, rather than in a single transaction.

Nor was there any adequate explanation as to why the account was subsequently transferred from Geneva to London via Israel. The only explanation given by Singer to the Operations Committee was his concern that Avi Beker (at the time still WJC Secretary General with signatory rights) might misappropriate funds from the account.

The Operations Committee formally minuted an instruction that the funds be repatriated forthwith to New York and two weeks later, Barak finally complied, pointing out that his custodian fees still needed to be paid. **Clearly serious questions remain that must be clarified regarding the origin of these funds and why they were transferred in the first instance in installments to Geneva and subsequently to Israel and London.**

In future, we hope that reasonable explanations regarding these matters which were not provided to me may be forthcoming. But having regard to the concerns expressed by those who allege that there were financial irregularities, there is only one way to resolve the matter. **An independent investigation and external audit must be undertaken concerning the Geneva bank affair in conformity with the demand by the Swiss Jewish community leadership which will ensure that all allegations of financial impropriety expressed by Swiss lawyers and other parties are set to rest once and for all**" (emphasis added).

13. In respect of this central matter the NYAG Report vindicated Leibler. The NYAG found (emphasis added):

- "Singer's movement of this money, without the approval of any governing body of the WJC, and his appointment of a custodian without an agreement establishing the terms of the custodianship, **violated his fiduciary duties as a trustee of charitable assets...**" (section 14);
- "Over a five-month period, from October 2002 to February 2003, Singer transferred \$1.2 million from WJC's account in New York to the account of WJC's office in Geneva, to create a pension fund for his retirement; **without seeking authorization from any of WJC's governing bodies or keeping a record of the fund** in the files of WJC's New York headquarters."

and:

"In July 2003, he arranged to transfer the money to an account in London under the custody of an Israeli attorney **without specifying the terms of the custody arrangement**". (section 14);

- **“Singer did not report his creation of a pension fund in Geneva to other WJC leaders during or immediately after the money transfers...Although Singer claims that the existence of the fund was known to other WJC officers, including Beker (WJC’s Secretary General at the time) and Steinberg, Beker denies having any knowledge of the fund before October 2003. Steinberg...was no longer working at the WJC in late 2002 and early 2003, when the transfers took place...but claims not to have learned about the fund until July 2004”.**
- **“Most significantly, the WJC maintained no records in New York from which the existence of assets designated as a pension fund in Geneva could readily have been detected...Accordingly, no one reviewing the WJC’s 07 account ledger would have learned the intended purpose of the transfers or that the money was for any purpose other than to pay expenses of the Geneva representative office...”** (section 20).

**The finding that Singer breached his fiduciary duty, if made in Australia in respect of a person of Singer’s status in the organization, would inexorably lead to the termination of his employment for cause. It appears that the NYAG in consultation and agreement with the WJC is satisfied that Singer can remain as an employee, but be relieved of all and any his fiscal responsibilities and duties. That finding alone demonstrates how misguided the lawsuit is, and why it should forthwith be discontinued.**

## GOVERNANCE

**In Your 21 May 2006 Letter** you said:

14. “...this is an issue which the WJC is still engaged in, if even marginally, and as such it deserves the **transparency and clarity** that all WJC activities have received since the formation of the Steering Committee in 2004” and  
“The World Jewish Congress is a democratically governed institution. We have rules of operations and procedures which are strictly followed.

### **Our Response:**

There can be no justification whatsoever for a decision of the magnitude and with the potential repercussions of the decision to initiate the lawsuit, being instituted without proper consultation and deliberation. We note the following significant matters:

- The NYAG Report had not even been published when the decision was allegedly taken on 19 January 2006, by the Steering Committee without consultation, discussion or arguably the power to institute the proceedings;

- the Legal Adviser to the World Zionist Organisation has stated in writing that Mr Ze'ev Bielski (Chairman of the Jewish Agency and the Zionist Executives), whom the minutes of the WJC Steering Committee meeting of 19 January 2006 record as being present, "*was not a participant in any meeting which dealt with that (filing of the lawsuit) issue*";
  - the so called "review" of that decision, which allegedly occurred on 7 February 2006, took place after the event, and without the NYAG Report having been tabled or considered, by the Steering Committee, but after the press releases stating that the lawsuit had already been instituted. It was a *fait accompli*;
  - the Governing Board meeting likewise did not have the NYAG Report but only your 31 January 2006 memo and the WJC Press Release, both of which were misleading, and could not on any basis be said to be a fair or accurate summary of the NYAG Report;
  - no correction or clarification of the wrong statements contained in your January 2005 "*Report to the Plenary Assembly*" was given or made by you or anyone else to the Steering Committee or the Governing Board;
  - at the Governing Board, there was no discussion, consultation, motion or vote. There was nothing "transparent" or clear in the process adopted at all.
15. "Discussion and dissent are commonplace in the decision-making process of the WJC. However, once a decision is taken in a democracy, the group moves forward with some people having endorsed the decision and some not. Democracies cannot function if the possessors of a minority position threaten to quit if they disagree with the outcome of a democratic proceeding."

**Our Response:**

In the ECAJ's view, there was little that was democratic about the proceedings of the Governing Board or the Steering Committee. The process was certainly alien to the ECAJ's own transparent and clear processes.

**THE LEGAL DEFENCE "FUND"**

**In your 21 May 2006 letter you wrote:**

16. "The costs of the lawsuit itself, however, are minor. Virtually all research required for the WJC's lawsuit has already been undertaken in the context of the NYSAG's investigation. Moreover, the suit seeks to have Leibler make full "payment of trial expenses and legal fees, including V.A.T. as required by law."

“Finally, the overwhelming support for the lawsuit against Leibler has inspired individuals to come forward and ask the WJC to establish a separate legal defense fund, in which private individuals can make substantial contributions specifically for this and other legal action, separate from contributions in support of the WJC mission”; and

“The lawsuit will not cost the WJC money raised to support its mission.”

**Our Response:**

We all know that the cost of litigation can never be predicted let alone in respect of a lawsuit for monetary damages of \$US 6 million, involving parties and witnesses all over the world, very extensive documentation, subpoenas, discovery and translators. If the WJC loses, the fact that it seeks costs from Leibler won't assist.

As for the separate legal defence fund, it was apparently not referred to when the decision was taken, or in the press release, or at the Governing Board meeting, or at any time before our questions were submitted in April 2006. We all know that funds can be redirected and that the opportunity cost to the WJC will be very high as a result.

Defence fund or not, the fact remains that the litigation will cost the WJC dearly in time and money and anyone who says it won't hasn't litigated.

**THE LAST WORD**

**In your 21 May 2006 letter you wrote:**

17. **“Leibler ... has brought damage to the WJC. He continues to bring damage to the WJC. Given the opportunity to cease and desist, he did not stop.**
18. You quote Mr. Abrams a former New York Attorney General, who was retained as a lawyer by the WJC in respect of the Report (a fact you omit to mention), as saying, “[t]he time for detractors and critics is behind us, and we should all focus on doing what it is necessary to carry out the WJC's central mission, helping our brothers and sisters around the globe.”

**Our Response:**

Leibler offered to cease and desist as soon as the NYAG Report was published. In an email Leibler wrote to the WJC on 3 February 2006 (before the Complaint had been served on him), which you received but have never referred to, Leibler said:

Dear former WJC colleagues,

This is addressed to those of you who will be attending the forthcoming Governing Board meeting scheduled to take place here in Jerusalem next week.

Let me state at the outset that I am delighted that the WJC will hopefully now be operating in a framework of accountability and financial transparency. My only regret is that this was only achieved as a result of the public scandal and intervention of the Attorney General. This and the enormous outlay of funds would have been avoided if the WJC would have agreed from the outset to conduct a genuine independent audit.

However, I would strongly suggest that you take the time to personally read the attached 34 page report of the findings of the Attorney General and compare it to the press release that the WJC released.

In the spirit of the new regime of good governance and transparency, I would also urge you to ensure that your colleagues have access to this report and that at your forthcoming meeting you are able to review and discuss the findings in order to ensure that such practices are avoided in the future.

**I am confident that if the new fiscal and oversight reforms set out in the AG's report are implemented in substance as well as in form, the WJC will soon re-emerge as a constructive global body acting on behalf of the Jewish people.**

**I wish you every success and express the hope that the confrontations of the past will now be set aside in favor of constructive activity on behalf Klal Yisrael and the State of Israel.**

The Complaint was served on him later that day.

The ECAJ regards it as a serious failure of the WJC to not have immediately tried to resolve the matter in the light of Leibler's clearly conciliatory approach and his expressed desire to put and keep the past confrontations, in the past so that the WJC could move on with constructive activity.

That remains the view of the ECAJ and we urge its acceptance on the WJC. Discontinue this lawsuit which will only harm if not destroy and build on the WJC's impressive positive achievements for Klal Yisrael.

The ECAJ stands ready to provide whatever assistance it can to achieve these goals.

Yours sincerely

Grahame J. Leonard  
President

Encl.

25 July 2006

Mr. Edgar M. Bronfman  
President  
World Jewish Congress  
501 Madison Avenue,  
New York NY 10022

**By email and Facsimile**

Dear Mr Bronfman,

I refer to my letter dated 29 May 2006 to Stephen E. Herbits enclosing the Resolution of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry passed 25 May 2006. Both documents are enclosed herewith.

World Jewry, in particular at this time, needs to display the greatest degree of unity that it can muster and put behind it personal animosity and past acrimony in order to serve the interests of both the State of Israel and the Jewish community throughout the world. If we ever could, we cannot now afford the luxury of the damaging and counterproductive lawsuit between the WJC and Isi Leibler. While we have continued to maintain that this action is inappropriate, you have continued to maintain the appropriateness of your conduct of these proceedings.

Now, however, the State of Israel, and world Jewry, is under attack. Whether or not you subscribe to our view, this new circumstance must be recognised by you as one that alters significantly the balancing exercise we assume you previously undertook in order to embark upon this litigation.

We call upon you to act, in this time of crisis, in the best interests of world Jewry and, to put yourselves above criticism by recognising the overriding interest of unity in the face of the adversity that we must all now confront.

In the current circumstances, it is even more obvious, and should be to the WJC, that the proceedings against Isi Leibler must be withdrawn. Once more, we call upon you to do so forthwith.

I remind you of the terms of the ECA J Resolution, which operates in a self-executing manner.

The ECAJ's Resolution noted:

that in light of the findings contained in the Report of the Attorney General of New York, the Secretary General's statement contained in his January 2005 "Report to the Plenary Assembly of the WJC", that "*The allegations of financial irregularities regarding the transfer of \$1.2million of WJC funds are false*", is wrong;

and called upon:

the WJC to forthwith remove the January 2005 "Report to the Plenary Assembly of the WJC", from its website.

As at the date of this letter the January 2005 Report *to the Plenary Assembly of the WJC*, which is manifestly wrong and misleading remains on the WJC website.

The ECAJ's Resolution also noted:

that the next meeting of the Steering Committee of the WJC is scheduled to take place on 18 July 2006;

and resolved:

with considerable regret to withdraw its membership of and disaffiliate from the WJC effective 25 July 2006 unless, by that time, the WJC has discontinued the lawsuit.

Although the WJC Steering Committee met on 18 July 2006, the lawsuit has not been discontinued.

Accordingly, the ECAJ hereby formally gives notice that as from today, it has withdrawn its membership of and disaffiliates from, the WJC and all its activities including the Euro Asian Jewish Congress.

While the ECAJ will in the future consider membership of a properly structured and governed WJC focussing on the issues that matter to the Jewish world, that issue can only be addressed when the WJC displays the kind of unified leadership and focus to which we have referred.

It is extremely regrettable that this separation must occur and that, as a consequence, the WJC will not be able to speak, during these times, for the whole Jewish world.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grahame Leonard', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Grahame Leonard  
President

## SELECTED MEDIA RELEASES

# Executive Council of Australian Jewry

**The Representative  
Organisation of  
Australian Jewry**



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**MEDIA RELEASE  
24 April 2006**

### Historic Interfaith Meeting in Sydney

Representatives of Anglicanism and Judaism, two faiths present in Australia since the arrival of the First Fleet, held an inaugural national dialogue in Sydney this week.

Delegates from the National Synod of the Anglican Church and of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) met at Sydney's historic Great Synagogue in an effort "to learn about and from each other, strengthen understanding and cooperation and explore collaboration in the interests of a more just Australia", Grahame Leonard, president of the ECAJ said.

"The meeting was held in an atmosphere of respect, honesty and a genuine desire to learn, which augurs well for the future", Dr Ray Cleary, head of the Anglican delegation, added.

After representatives of each group outlined the organisational structure of their communities and introduced themselves, the delegations reflected on two significant subjects, "A Jew called Jesus" and "Theological consequences of the Holocaust". The first topic led to a discussion on the way in which Jews understand Christian teaching, how the Christian Testament can be read to reflect the realities of the time of the birth of Christianity, and the offensiveness to Jews of groups which use deception as a means of proselytising.

The question of the Holocaust was very topical, as the dialogue took place during the week in which Jewish communities around the world commemorate the victims of the Nazis' Genocide.

The Anglican delegates were Reverend Dr Ray Cleary, Reverend Ray Barraclough, Archdeacon Philip Newman and Reverend Dr Gregory Jenks. The ECAJ delegates were ECAJ president Grahame Leonard, ECAJ Deputy President Rabbi John Levi, Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence and ECAJ Immediate Past President Jeremy Jones.

The next meeting of the group, which will be known as the Anglican Jewish Australian Dialogue (AJAD,) is scheduled to take place in Melbourne in August.

**For further information or to arrange interviews, contact either Grahame Leonard on 0411 462 242 or Dr Ray Cleary on 03 9321 6133.**

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**MEDIA RELEASE  
27 April 2006**

## **IRVING RIGHTLY CONVICTED**

Grahame Leonard, President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), the elected representative organisation of the Australian Jewish community, has said:

“Some years ago, right-wing British historian David Irving sued American Holocaust scholar Deborah Lipstadt for libel in a British court, but lost. Presiding Judge Charles Gray then wrote that Irving was "an active Holocaust denier ... anti-Semitic and racist." On Monday, Irving was rightly convicted in Austria of denying the Holocaust and sentenced to three years prison”.

Leonard continued, “Deniers, including notorious Australian identities such as Frederick Toben, contend this is a free speech issue. This is mendacious. Holocaust denial is a crime against truth and morality. Irving has sown the seeds of hate for many years and must now accept the consequences of his actions”.

Further information: Geoffrey Zygier  
Mobile: 0413 731 545  
Email: [info@ecaj.org.au](mailto:info@ecaj.org.au)

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **ECAJ/ZFA DELEGATION RECEIVES POSITIVE RECEPTION IN CANBERRA**

Grahame Leonard, President, Executive Council of Australian Jewry and Zionist Federation of Australia President, Philip Chester led a joint delegation to Australia's capital on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2006 to meet separately with Israel's Ambassador, Mr Nati Tamir, and Federal politicians, the Hon Alexander Downer and the Hon Malcolm Turnbull.

Delegates included Bill Arnold (President, Australian Capital Territory Jewish Community), David Knoll (President, New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies), Ian Lacey AM (ECAJ New South Wales Councillor), Josie Lacey OAM (ECAJ Honorary Secretary), Dr Danny Lamm (President, State Zionist Council of Victoria and ECAJ Victorian Councillor) and Geoffrey Zygier (ECAJ Executive Director).

The meeting with the Ambassador covered a wide range of issues including concerns about Iran's nuclear ambitions, Israel's relationship with New Zealand and potential visits to Australia by Israeli dignitaries in the coming months. Mr Tamir described the Australia/ Israel relationship as "excellent" and praised the Australian Jewish community's contribution to this positive situation.

Foreign Minister Downer welcomed the group and discussion centred on two key questions, once again on Iran, and about growing antisemitism in Europe accompanied by the growth of radical Islam on that continent. In regard to the former, Mr Downer and delegates agreed Iran is a concern for all of its neighbours, not merely Israel, and indeed for the entire world. As for the European situation, Mr Downer noted that many of its governments were less supportive of Israel and of local Jewish communities than they might be. The discussion was frank and helped cement an already warm relationship with Minister Downer.

As the Member for Wentworth, Mr Turnbull is well acquainted with the Jewish Community and for that matter, some delegation members. The affable conversation focused largely on security concerns and the direction of reform of sedition laws. The ECAJ has been invited to make submissions on sedition law reform and will do so.

As Grahame Leonard stated to Mr Downer, "...the Australian Jewish Community is very appreciative of the opportunity to present its views in such an open manner, and particularly of the Government's fulsome support, continuing a tradition of many previous Australian Governments".

Further information: Geoffrey Zygier  
Mobile: 0413 731 545  
Email: info@ecaj.org.au

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**MEDIA RELEASE  
31 May 2006**

## **ECAJ CONDEMNS UK UNION'S ACADEMIC BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL**

Grahame Leonard, President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), the elected representative organisation of the Australian Jewish community, said today:

“The Executive Council of Australian Jewry condemns in the strongest possible terms the resolution passed by Britain’s National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NAFHE), which calls for a boycott of Israeli academics and Israeli academic institutions not publicly stating their opposition to the Israeli Government’s policies in the Palestinian Territories.

“NAFHE has strongly criticised the Iraq War yet has not sought to bully American or Australian academics into voicing their opposition. Neither does it demand that its own members have to “stand up and be counted” on this or other political issues. Has NAFHE proposed to isolate chronic violators of human rights such as China, Syria, Cuba and Saudi Arabia? That NAFHE singles out Israel for such treatment - particularly when it is actively seeking a solution to Palestinian woes, as demonstrated by its disengagement from Gaza - can only be seen as racist.

“If NAFHE really is concerned about helping the Palestinians, it should be encouraging dialogue and cooperation with Israelis. Blacklisting academics and institutions in the only democratic country in the Middle East will surely set back the Palestinian cause, and possibilities for improved relations between Israel and its neighbours.”

For further information: Geoffrey Zygier, ECAJ Executive Director  
E-mail: [info@ecaj.org.au](mailto:info@ecaj.org.au)  
Mobile: 0413 731 545



**STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY AND THE  
ZIONIST FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA  
ON BEHALF OF  
THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY  
18 JULY 2006**

The outbreak of hostilities in Israel, Lebanon and Gaza is of deep concern to all Australians of goodwill. Our prayers are particularly with our fellow Australians in the region and those who have families there. We applaud the principled stand taken both by the Australian Government and Opposition in condemning the unprovoked attacks on Israel. We support all efforts by the Australian Government to secure the safe return of all Australians wishing to leave the region.

The Australian Jewish community regards the loss of any human life as tragic, whether it be Israeli, Palestinian or Lebanese.

The path towards peace requires recognition of the following realities:

1. Israel withdrew from Lebanon six years ago. Subsequently UN Security Council Resolution 1559 required the disbandment of all militias in Lebanon. It further required the Lebanese government to assume control over the whole of its territory. Neither of those requirements has been met. Instead, with the support of Iran and Syria, and the acquiescence of the Lebanese Government, (which includes two cabinet members from Hezbollah), Hezbollah has imported from Iran an arsenal of thousands of rockets into southern Lebanon to attack Israel. Since Israel withdrew unilaterally from Gaza last year more than a thousand Quassam rockets have been fired with support from Hamas into Israeli territory from Gaza.
2. Israel has shown restraint. Until recently, Israel made limited responses when rockets were fired at Israel's civilian population from Gaza and Lebanon. However the latest Hezbollah attacks on sovereign Israeli territory and the killing and kidnapping of Israeli soldiers on Israeli soil have escalated the conflict to a new and unprecedented level. We commend the G8 for its recent statement unanimously attributing responsibility for the current crisis to Hezbollah and Hamas.

3. The measures taken by Israel in self defense are not excessive. Israel has targeted Hezbollah centres and infrastructure. It has also of necessity targeted the air, road and port facilities used to channel arms and supplies to Hezbollah and to cut off the means by which the hostages might be removed from Gaza and Lebanon. In times of war these are all conventional targets of military necessity. And this is not a war of Israel's making.
4. Hamas and Hezbollah do not recognise Israel's right to exist and oppose a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They declare openly, on their websites, and in statements by their leaders, that their goal is the complete destruction of Israel and its replacement with an Islamic state.
5. In their objective of destroying Israel, Hamas and Hezbollah are supported by Iran and Syria, who supply them with finance, weapons training and technical and other support.
6. Over 1500 of Hezbollah's rockets have struck population centres in northern Israel. The rocket attacks on Israel from Gaza and Lebanon are unarguably directed at civilians. Israel does not deliberately target civilians. Israeli responses have resulted in civilian casualties, which is deeply regrettable, but unavoidable when the attackers operate from amongst civilians.
7. The current Israeli operations are a response to well-planned and unprovoked aggression. Israel has more than 50 years' experience of defending its citizens from those planning to kill and injure them and the most recent and significant escalation means that the military threat to Israel can no longer be ignored.
8. We pray that the Israeli soldiers Gilad Shalit, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, will be released unharmed and look forward to the establishment of a just and lasting peace for all people in the region.

Please direct any queries to:

Grahame Leonard, President ECAJ, 0411 462 242

Philip Chester, President ZFA, 0419 136 750

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**MEDIA RELEASE  
26 July 2006**

## **The 2006 Census will benefit the Jewish community**

The peak body of the Australian Jewish community is urging all Jewish Australians to fully participate in the next Census which will be held on 8 August 2006.

Grahame Leonard, the President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, said today, "Census data affects Government's allocation of resources to assist the Australian community in a host of vital areas. The Jewish community also depends on the Census for accurate planning information for services in fields of such as education, welfare and aged care."

Leonard continued, "The estimate of the number of Jews in Australia comes from Question 19 on the census form that asks "What is your religion". There is no box you can tick marked: 'Jewish'. In the past many Jewish people did not answer the religion question, or even selected another religion to mask their identity. In Australia today, Jews do not need to worry about privacy or discrimination. Individual records are seen only by a data entry operator, and the form then is destroyed (unless the individual asks for it to be kept for genealogical research). The Census will provide vital data for all Australians including the Jewish community. Hence I ask all Jewish Australians to complete the form as thoroughly as possible."

Further information: Geoffrey Zygier  
Mobile: 0413 731 545  
Email: info@ecaj.org.au

# Executive Council of Australian Jewry

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Organisation of  
Australian Jewry**



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**MEDIA RELEASE  
31 JULY 2006**

Grahame Leonard, President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the peak body of the Australian Jewish community, called for tolerance and cool heads after an attack on Parramatta Synagogue yesterday.

“I understand the strong passions the current Middle East conflict has aroused amongst Australians of diverse backgrounds who have family, friends and strong emotional ties in that part of the world.

“While all Australians are free, indeed welcome, to express their opinions, violence to persons or property is totally unacceptable. Australia is a country built on people of different nationalities, races and faiths and we have long demonstrated a remarkable capacity to get along. Now more than ever is the right time to express Australia’s internationally acclaimed capacity for tolerance.

“I call for leaders of all faith and ethnic groups, particularly the Muslim community, to join Australian Jewry in praying for peace in the Middle East, justice for all its peoples, and for common sense to prevail in this wonderful country as well.”

Further information: Geoffrey Zygier  
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# Executive Council of Australian Jewry

**The Representative  
Organisation of  
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**MEDIA RELEASE  
21 August 2006**

## **Anti-Jewish incidents caused by gutter racism, not Middle East politics**

Grahame Leonard, the President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the peak body of the Australian Jewish community, said today:

"All decent and fair-minded Australians are appalled at the harassment of, and violence against, any members of the Australian community, and the ECAJ welcomes the strong condemnation of the incidents of anti-Jewish vandalism, violence and intimidation which have occurred during the past two months".

"While decades of research have shown there is no necessary correlation between rises and falls in Middle East violence and attacks on Jewish Australians, it appears some cowardly, bullying racists in Australia have taken advantage of Middle East tensions to act on their bigotry".

"The small minority of fanatical racists in Australia, on both the left and right, engage in behaviour which attacks the very fabric of our traditionally tolerant and peaceful society".

"This is not a matter of a 'race war' in Australia but should be a call to oppose racists at war with Australian values".

"Every decent Australian will condemn racism in any shape and form and will be affronted by attacks on synagogues, mosques, churches and temples regardless of personal religious affiliation".

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**MEDIA RELEASE  
19 October 2006**

### **Violent attack on Melbourne Jew an attack on all Australians**

Grahame Leonard, President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Malcolm Thomas, President of the Islamic Council of Victoria, and Archdeacon Philip Newman, President of the Victorian Council of Churches, stated today:

“On the Jewish Sabbath last Saturday, Menachem Vorchheimer, an Orthodox Jew, was peacefully walking to his synagogue in East St Kilda with his two children, aged 3 and 6.

A mini-bus containing some twenty footballers pulled up. These men yelled "F--- off Jews" and "Go the Nazis" before miming shooting a machine gun at the Vorchheimer family. They then tore off Mr Vorchheimer's religious headgear, and carried out a brutal attack on him. That a group of young sportsmen were responsible for this cowardly attack is a particularly distressing and disappointing aspect of this incident. There is nothing remotely 'sporting' about twenty people terrorising a man quietly walking along the street with young children.

There was simply no question of provocation or extenuating circumstances. This incident was unquestionably a clear example of racial or religious hatred. And, while personally extremely distressing for Mr Vorchheimer and his young children, it is also of great concern for the Jewish community, as well as for all faith groups in Australian society and for all Australian citizens.

Over the past thirty years Australia has gained an enviable international reputation as a tolerant society that is accepting of diversity, and perhaps even more that, respectful of difference. However an attack like this is an assault on every Australian and besmirches that hard-won reputation.

We recognise the work undertaken by organisations such as the AFL in dealing with racism at an elite level. However this incident suggests that acceptance of difference has not percolated down, and that a need exists for further education. We request the AFL to let the club concerned know in the strongest possible terms that Australians see racism as offensive and intolerable. We advise that we would be happy to work with their competition to educate officials and players.

The Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities are deeply concerned that such ugly incidents occur in our community; we hope that they not be allowed to proliferate and are responded to in such ways that demonstrate that they are totally unacceptable in this country. We appreciate the fact that Premier Bracks and other political leaders have condemned this violence, and urge that they continue to condemn racial and religious vilification in our Victorian communities.

While we expect the police to take appropriate action according to the law, we would hope that all community leaders would do all that they can to support legislation like the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act, legislation that works to protect people of all races and religious communities from vilification and its ultimate expression, violence against the person. Harassment of anyone in our community is just not on.”

Further information:

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Sherene Hassan (ICV) 0411 485 518 [sherene@icv.org.au](mailto:sherene@icv.org.au)

Archdeacon Philip Newman 0419 390 650 [archdeacon@malvernarchdeaconry.org](mailto:archdeacon@malvernarchdeaconry.org)

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**2 NOVEMBER 2006**

### **Iranian Holocaust cartoon competition morally obscene**

Grahame Leonard, President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the peak body of the Australian Jewish community, today denounced an Iranian competition and exhibition of Holocaust cartoons following the announcement of winning entries.

“This exhibition has been deservedly condemned by every civilised nation. It is obscene for two reasons.

Firstly, it mocks the terrible suffering of the Jewish people during the Second World War. Some survivors are still alive today, elderly people who lost parents, siblings, spouses and children in horrific, unprecedented circumstances. This is the ultimate adding of insult to injury.

Secondly, this exhibition was inspired by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's tirades calling for Israel's extinction. As the exhibit curator Masoud Shojai said when announcing the prizes, the contest is to be an annual event. He continued, "Actually, we will continue until the destruction of Israel". That one member of the United Nations should call for another's destruction is more than asking for the removal of a political entity. It is quite simply a call for genocide.

The Australian Jewish community asks for other people of goodwill to condemn and oppose Iran's plans for nuclear capacity. This is a threat not just to Israel and the Jews, but to the entire world.”

Further information: Geoffrey Zygier  
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## SELECTED LETTERS PUBLISHED IN THE PRESS

### **The Australian 11 April 2006**

TWO points about Martin Chulov's article "Life brutal under Gaza missiles" (Worldwide, 10/4). First, the new Hamas government has continued the practice of permitting bombs to be launched from Gaza at the city of Ashkelon and other civilian targets in Israel. What country wouldn't respond to similar attacks?

Second, like Hamas, Adolf Hitler's Nazis were democratically elected. This led to the suspension of democracy in Germany and a horrific war with more than 50 million casualties. This should be considered before unquestioningly endorsing Hamas's rule. Geoffrey Zygier, Executive director, Executive Council of Australian Jewry

### **The Australian 19 April 2006**

Antony Loewenstein argues the unfavourable response to Mearsheimer's and Walt's paper criticising the 'Israel lobby' seeks to muzzle anti-Israel opinion ('Don't let any lobby shut down debate', April 18).

Really?

Aren't the respondents rather engaging in debate – a position Loewenstein purportedly endorses - by their critiques? Or does Loewenstein believe only anti-Israel views can legitimately be aired?

Geoffrey Zygier, Executive Council of Australian Jewry

### **The Australian 25 April 2006**

There are two principles you learn on your first day in Politics 101. One, politics involves competition between interests. Name any issue, be it wind farms, English curricula, Aboriginal rights or farmers' subsidies, there are groups pushing opposing views. Once this is understood, it is clear the furore over the Mearsheimer/Walt paper on the "Israel lobby" is no more than a beat-up.

Of course there is an Israel lobby. But there is also an anti-Israel lobby, which takes various forms as diverse as pro-Palestinian voices, oil interests or just plain anti-semitism. This contest is inherent in the political process, particularly in democracies.

Two, as individuals and groups, people invariably act according to their perceived self-interest. Hence, if the US government favours Israel's narrative, this is neither altruism nor stupidity but, rather, hard-headed politicians and bureaucrats deciding this is the best course for them to follow. To suggest otherwise is, at best, foolishness. At worst, however, it is something far uglier.

Geoffrey Zygier, Director, Executive Council of Australian Jewry

### **The Australian Jewish News 5 May 2006**

Recently the Executive Council of Australian Jewry arranged a visit to Australia by Ronaldo Gomlevsky, a prominent member of the Brazilian Jewish community. Currently Editor of 'Menorah', a high quality monthly magazine, Ronaldo was here to research the Pesach issue which will be devoted entirely to Australian Jewish life.

Leaders of the Perth, Melbourne and Sydney communities hosted Ronaldo's visits to a wide variety of institutions and arranged interviews of Jewish identities from all walks of life. Rabbis, teachers, artists, administrators, volunteers, welfare and community workers were just a few of the people Ronaldo met.

Ronaldo's critical and enquiring perspective gave us a wonderful opportunity to see through an outsider's eyes what we too often take for granted. It is clear Australia boasts a rich and varied Jewish life on so many levels. While Australian Jewry is not perfect and we cannot be complacent, we can all nonetheless be very proud of what our community has achieved over the years.

Grahame Leonard, President  
Geoffrey Zygier, Executive Director  
Executive Council of Australian Jewry

### **The Age 1 June 2006**

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry condemns in the strongest possible terms the resolution passed by Britain's National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE), which calls for a boycott of Israeli academics and Israeli academic institutions not publicly stating their opposition to the Israeli Government's policies in the Palestinian Territories (The Age, 31/05).

NATFHE has strongly criticised the Iraq War yet has not sought to bully American or Australian academics into voicing their opposition. Neither does it demand that its own members have to "stand up and be counted" on this or other political issues. Has NATFHE proposed to isolate chronic violators of human rights such as China, Syria, Cuba and Saudi Arabia? That NATFHE singles out Israel for such treatment - particularly when it is actively seeking a solution to Palestinian woes, as demonstrated by its disengagement from Gaza - can only be seen as racist.

If NATFHE really is concerned about helping the Palestinians, it should be encouraging dialogue and cooperation with Israelis. Blacklisting academics and institutions in the only democratic country in the Middle East will surely set back the Palestinian cause, and possibilities for improved relations between Israel and its neighbours.

Geoffrey Zygier, Executive Director, Executive Council of Australian Jewry

### **The Age 17 June 2006**

On 15/06, Leslie-John Newman writes in *The Age's* letters section: "Only an investigation into [the Gaza beach shelling] by a truly independent authority such as the United Nations will determine Israel's guilt or not." The following day *The Age* reports: "A review of the United Nations staff management has found a culture that undervalues merit, and is riddled with nepotism and bias."

Just another example of life's little ironies.

Geoffrey Zygier, Executive Director, Executive Council of Australian Jewry

### **The Age 5 July 2006**

David Langsam states external agents must resolve the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians because they won't or can't do it themselves (Letters, 4/7). His statement suggests equal responsibility for this failure. Is this really the case?

For decades, the Palestinians and the international community demanded Israel's withdrawal from the disputed territories. In a brave, bold and painful measure, Israel disengaged from Gaza last year. As David Bernstein wrote ("Saving Corporal Shalit", Opinion, 4/7): "The pull-out had produced a glimmer of hope among many Israelis that a significant step had been taken towards some form of peaceful rapprochement with the Palestinians."

The very next day, Qassam rockets were launched at Israel's civilian population and have continued without cease. A short time later, Palestinians elected a government whose explicit goal is the destruction of Israel and the creation of an Islamic state. The events of the past 10 days are the direct outcome of this.

Langsam writes of squabbling siblings. This is a belittling description of two peoples who desperately want homes. And it is wrong not to acknowledge Israel's efforts to come up with at least a partial solution. Peace will remain a distant dream until the Palestinians accept they just can't have it all.

Geoffrey Zygier, executive director, Executive Council of Australian Jewry

### **The Australian 6 July 2006**

BRIAN Hail (Letters, 4/7) asks some interesting questions while condemning Israel's attempts to save Corporal Gilad Shalit. However, he would have done well to also ask these questions: After Israel disengaged from Gaza, thus providing a genuine opportunity for peace, why was the Palestinians' immediate response a bombing campaign of Israeli civilian targets that continues today?

Are Palestinians being collectively punished when they freely chose a government whose explicit goal is Israel's destruction and the creation of an Islamic state? Why does Hail regard Israel's careful targeting of Palestinian infrastructure (rather than civilians) as more heinous than the murder of 18-year-old Israeli settler Eliyahu Asheri by his Palestinian abductors on the West Bank last week?

And finally, why reproach Israelis for caring so much about one of their children while their neighbours strap explosive-filled belts on theirs?

Geoffrey Zygier, Executive director, Executive Council of Australian Jewry

**The Sydney Morning Herald 12 July 2006**

The suggestion made by some recently that the Jewish people are no longer victims of racial hatred and instead are practitioners of racism is morally perverse in the extreme.

Israel permits Jews and Arabs to be its citizens, requiring only that they live in peace with each other. Neither Hamas nor Israel's other neighbours permit Jews to be their citizens. They say Muslims but not Jews have a right of self-determination. Again, there is racism directed against Jews.

Israel does not send people to blow themselves up on civilian buses or in crowded public areas on the Palestinian side. The Hamas promotion of terrorism and violence among Palestinian children continues unabated. There is no equivalent government-ordained teaching of hatred by Israel. Nor would any reasonable person expect there to be any.

For decades, Palestinian spokespersons said: "End the occupation, for then we can negotiate peace." About 18 months ago, Ariel Sharon gambled that disengaging from Gaza had real potential to create goodwill and ultimately peace. Israel ended the occupation of Gaza.

In the months that followed, the Palestinians have demonstrated that the conflict is not about the occupation of territory occupied in 1967 at all. Israel's southern town of Sderot, the western Negev and now the city of Ashkelon, have been struck with hundreds of Qassam rockets since the disengagement, in a blatant escalation of unprovoked attacks since Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip. These rockets have killed and wounded scores of Israeli civilians. The rockets that struck Ashkelon landed in a school playground in the heart of the city.

Now, unlike six decades ago, the children of the survivors of the Holocaust are not defenseless. They have a nation of their own and an army that has, after months of restraint, taken action to stop the rockets and to deter future terrorism.

War is not pretty, and Palestinians do not follow the international law of war. They shoot from civilian centres, placing their children on the battle front. Yet they demand Israel fight according to the rules they reject.

Israelis are tough and determined, and Israel will continue to offer a two-state solution to the Palestinians, but to achieve that, the Palestinians have to learn to love their children more than they hate their neighbour.

David Knoll and Geoffrey Zygier, Executive Council of Australian Jewry

**The Australian 21 July 2006**

Certain of your correspondents have expressed concern that Israel has not discontinued its response to Hezbollah's terrorism to facilitate the departure of Australian nationals.

Israel does not wish to harm innocent people. However its first priority, as is every country's, is its own citizens. If Australia was engaged in a life and death struggle – and make no mistake, Hezbollah is totally committed to Israel's extinction – I suggest all Australians would find it unacceptable were our government to lay down its arms before the matter was resolved.

And as an aside, why aren't your correspondents also worried about visitors to Israel who equally find themselves in a war zone?

Geoffrey Zygier, Executive Council of Australian Jewry

### **The Australian 26 July 2006 & The Age 5 August 2006**

ONE of the most tendentious arguments employed in the Middle East debate is that the US and, to a lesser extent, the UK and Australia are partisan.

So who might be impartial? Perhaps North Korea, France, China or Russia? What about the 25 per cent of the world's nations that are Muslim? Could Iran, Syria, Yemen, Pakistan or Saudi Arabia be the honest broker Bob Reece (Letters, 25/7) is looking for? Clearly not. No country in the world is even-handed, yet is it telling that accusations of bias are only ever made against supporters of Israel.

Just like people, nations have relationships based on commonalities. It cannot be a coincidence that Israel has the support of the great democracies while Hezbollah's only allies are the world's dictatorships.

Geoffrey Zygier

Executive director

Executive Council of Australian Jewry

### **The Australian 14 August 2006 & Herald-Sun 15 August 2006**

IT is monstrous to claim, as certain of your correspondents have done, that the thwarted UK attacks have anything to do with redressing wrongs done to Muslims. Plane passengers are people going on and returning from holiday, visiting friends and family, innocent people at work and play. They are every race, gender, age, nationality and religion, a cross-section of humanity. This plan exemplified terror at its ugliest. Both it and any attempt to justify it are inexcusable.

Geoffrey Zygier

Executive Director

Executive Council of Australian Jewry

### **The Sunday Age 29 October 2006**

Terry Lane established his credentials as an Israel basher many moons ago. However, even by Lane's standards, his claim in his Perspective column, "Unless and until the Palestinians are treated justly and their punishment for the crimes of the Nazis comes to an end there will be no peace", go beyond the pale. If Lane is interested in helping

bring about an enduring peace in the Middle East and improving the Palestinians' quality of life, he could start by urging Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas to recognise Israel's right to exist within secure borders and for them to admit the Holocaust happened.

Grahame Leonard, president, Executive Council of Australian Jewry

### **The Australian Jewish News 10 November 2006**

According to Dr Mark Baker (AJN, 3/11) the situation in Darfur is horrific and something must be done. This is not exactly news and his article would have had considerably more to offer if it had gone lighter on the hand-wringing and heavier on the solutions.

For Dr Baker's information, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, Jewish Community Council of Victoria, Australasian Union of Jewish Students, B'nai B'rith, Union of Progressive Jewry, Anti-Defamation Commission and Australian Jewish Democratic Society are among the local Jewish organisations who have taken action in some way, be it petitioning Government, liaising with Darfurian Australians or fund-raising for refugees. Indeed the international Jewish community has been at the forefront of the 'Save Darfur' campaign, to the extent that radical Moslems have criticised their efforts as a Zionist plot! Hence for Dr Baker to imply the Jewish community has been lax is quite simply wrong.

Geoffrey Zygier, Executive Director, Executive Council of Australian Jewry

## A cry for 'Daddy'

Geoffrey Zygiel

August 22, 2006 12:00am

Article from: **Courier Mail**

**FOLLOWING the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, American professor Francis Fukuyama concluded the world had reached the "end of history".**

Liberal democracy had prevailed as the chosen form of government by most nations.

However, this comforting illusion was shattered very quickly as certain of the old "isms" again began to rear their ugly, apocalyptic heads in this supposedly enlightened post-modern age.

In the seeming blink of an eye we moved from the Cold War to an increasingly warming one between the values of liberal democracy, characterised by individual choice, and an extremist version of Islam that demands total subservience to its precepts.

As Hezbollah, the puppet of fanatical Iran and Syria, remains armed and continues to hold Lebanon to ransom; as the latest gang of British home-grown wannabe Jihadis are thwarted in their wish to crash planes full of innocent travellers; and as Iran comes ever closer to being a nuclear power, it is easy to conjure a picture of masked, cold-eyed men, shooting their pistols in the air as they march in hot dusty Middle East streets.

For people aware of the events of World War II, such a scene brings to mind other robotic thugs, just as committed to the creation of a new world order. And, of course, the order they see is "us". Just as in Nazi Germany, there's no room for anyone else in today's scenario.

Just "us": no more Jews, Christians, Hindus, Baha'is, Sikhs, Buddhists or atheists.

And, a point that is often overlooked, no more Muslims who refuse to toe the fundamentalist line.

Welcome to the Orwellian world of Islamic fascism, characterised by hypocrisy and fanaticism, a mass movement of imperialist totalitarianism designed to crush any trace of individuality.

As occurred with Nazism and Communism, many seemingly intelligent and idealistic people have allied themselves with 7th-century absolutists who unquestionably and inevitably will outlaw the beliefs the former hold dear.

Terrifyingly, it is only the ruthless, perverted, cruel and lost who will remain committed and prosper.

A few weeks ago, I received a hand-written letter from a stranger in response to something I had written in opposition to totalitarianism.

She outlined various concerns including global warming, over-population and poverty and concluded: "No use sneering at dictatorships while we understand how profoundly people long to be protected, to be looked after by some immensely strong and wise leader."

This (and I do not say this in a derogatory way) pathetic, childish cry for Daddy exemplifies the fear many feel in this increasingly unstable world; hence their abdication of responsibility for one's life and embrace of fascism, in the guise of compassion.

While all tyrannies are fanatic by definition, there is something even more horrifying about the added religious dimension.

If the Lord is on your side, then every murder, rape, enslavement, destruction, every imaginable horror is justifiable. I have no pat solutions for avoiding this Armageddon.

The ideal answer would be the assertion by moderate Muslims that it is possible to practise their religion in ways compatible with living in a modern, democratic society.

Whether they have the will and courage, however, remains to be seen.

Other people will put their faith in diplomacy, or reason, or common sense, or military strength. Some will surrender or succumb to despair.

My prayer and hope are that there are enough people with imagination and foresight, and more importantly with love of life, who will stand up and say "no!"

But we are starting to run out of time.

**Geoffrey Zygiar is the executive director of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry**

## Jewish recipients of Australia Day Awards 2006

Name	Award
Mr Jack Smorgon AO	For service to the community through philanthropy and support for a broad range of organisations including Jewish community and health and welfare groups; and to promoting economic development in Australia.
Dr Alan Simon Finkel AM	For service to biomedical science, particularly through the design and manufacture of a range of electronic instruments, and to support for medical research and education.
Prof. The Hon. George Hampel QC AM	For service to legal education, particularly in the field of advocacy training, and to professional organisations.
Mr Herman Eisenberg AM	For service to the community, particularly through the Great Synagogue of Sydney, the Wesley Mission and Rotary International.
Ms Carol Judith Schwartz AM	For service to business and commerce in a range of executive roles, and to the community through support for health promotion organisations, preservation of historic buildings and the arts.
Ms Belinda Ruth Epstein-Frisch AM	For service to people with disabilities and their families, particularly through advocacy roles to improve educational and social support within mainstream settings.
Professor Sasson Stephen Gubbay AM	For service to medicine in the field of neurology, particularly through clinical and academic contributions to the neurological care of both children and adults, and as a teacher and mentor.
Dr Karl Sven Kruszelnicki AM	For service to the community through promoting greater understanding and knowledge of the application of science to daily living as an author and science commentator on radio and television.
Mr Ian Lacey AM	For service to the community, particularly as a contributor to law reform in relation to human rights issues and to the promotion of interfaith harmony.

Mr Francis Laurence Levy AM	For service to the Jewish community, particularly through a range of educational, cultural, legal and religious organisations.
Mr Albert Abraham Barouh OAM	For service to the community, particularly Heartbeat Victoria, and to support for health, social welfare and arts organisations.
Mrs Margaret Beadman OAM	For service to the community through support for the Australian War Memorial as a volunteer and guide, and to the Jewish community.
Dr Joseph Leslie Feldman OAM	For service to medicine and to the community, particularly the development of emergency treatment programs.
Dr Roland Ronnie Goldberg OAM	For service to community health, particularly in support of Rotary International projects.
Mr Max Lemberg OAM	For service to the Jewish community, particularly as a teacher of religious practices and tradition.
Dr Peter Zelas OAM	For service to medicine and to the community of western Sydney, particularly through roles at the Blacktown Hospital and in the field of colorectal surgery.
Mr Samuel Parasol OAM	For service to the community, particularly through the sporting programs of Maccabi Australia.

## Jewish recipients of Queen's Birthday Awards 2006

<b>Title</b>	<b>FirstName</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>For</b>
Mr.	Joseph Aarons	OAM	for service to the Jewish community through the Maccabi movement
Mr.	Peter Bancroft	OAM	For services to the hospitality industry, in particular for introducing espresso machines to Australia in the 1950's
Dr.	Alan Barcan	AM	For services to the study of the history of education and social sciences
Mrs.	Susan Bures	AM	For service to the community through a range of multicultural, Jewish, arts and youth Organisations in New South Wales.
Mr.	Herbert Flugelman	AM	For service to the visual arts as a sculptor and teacher.
Dr.	Herbert Freilich	AM	For service to the community through philanthropic support for a range of Organisations as a medical practitioner.
Mr.	Joe Gersh	AM	For service to business, commerce and public sector administration and to the community, particularly through Jewish Organisations
Mr.	Michael Gudinski	AM	For service to the entertainment industry through the promotion of Australian music recording artists, as an advocate for young people in the music industry, and to the community
Mr.	Kurt Hacker	OAM	For services to industry as a silverware manufacturer, and to the community, particularly through cultural and service organisations.
Mr.	Reuven Herzog	OAM	For service to the Jewish community of Melbourne, particularly through Chevra Hatzolah
Mr.	Phillip Isaacs	OAM	For services in civil engineering, and for your contribution to the arts
Mrs.	Rachel Kalman	OAM	For service to the Jewish community through the Joseph Giligich Foundation, the 'Kadimah' and the AJAX Amateur Football Club
Ms.	Eva Knox	OAM	For services to the Knitters for Melbourne's Needy
Prof.	Raymond Lowenthal	AO	For service to medicine in the fields of oncology and palliative care and as a clinician, educator, researcher and contributor to professional Organisations at state and national levels.
Ms.	Jill Margo	AM	For services to journalism and to the community through reporting, promoting and raising awareness of men's health issues, and as a contributor to a range of cancer-support organisations.
Mr.	Gerald Moses	OAM	For service to the Jewish community of Queensland, and to the community of the Gold Coast
Mrs.	Zipporah Oliver	OAM	For service to people with disabilities and to the Jewish community of Melbourne
Dr.	Francis Owen	OAM	For services to the community of Newcastle through public speaking and charitable organisations.
Mr.	Peter Philippsohn	OAM	For service to the Jewish community, particularly as a contributor to the establishment and development of Mount Sinai College and through the Jewish Communal Appeal
Professor	Leon Piterman	AM	For contributions to family medicine through distance education for doctors in remote areas as well as to research and student training.
Dr.	Colin Rubenstein	AM	For service to the community through executive roles with a range of Jewish Organisations, to the advancement and promotion of multiculturalism, and to the academic discipline of political science.
Dr.	Max Shavitsky	OAM	For service to the community as an advocate for reform in the areas of child health and child protection, and to

			medicine as a general practitioner.
Dr.	David Solomon	AM	For service to journalism and organisations concerned with the law.
Mr.	Peter Spira	AM	For service to the housing and construction industry as an architect, to the development of design standards and building methods, and to the Jewish community.
Mrs.	Barbara Stewart-Kann	OAM	For service to the Jewish community of the Gold Coast through a range of social welfare, women's, school and health organisations.
Mr.	Geoffrey Sussman	OAM	For service to pharmacy and to the multidisciplinary field of wound care as a clinician, researcher and educator, and to the sports of diving and gymnastics.
Mr.	Roy Tashi	OAM	For service to the Jewish community particularly through a range of aged care, educational and cultural organisations.
Emeritus Prof	David Weisbrot	AM	For services to law reform, education and legal services, as well as for your contribution to research, analysis and policy development on a range of public-interest matters.
Mrs.	Zara Young	OAM	For service to the Jewish community, particularly through the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia