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2018 IN REVIEW

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY/7TH EDITION – SUMMER 2018



/ Above

ECAJ co-CEO Alex Ryvchin, Public Engagement Officer Samantha Khavin, Research Officer Julie Nathan, Digital Strategy Manager Lynzi Bennun and co-CEO Peter Wertheim at the ECAJ Annual General Meeting.

/ Left

Shadow Minister for Defence Richard Marles with Jewish communal leadership at the ECAJ Annual General Meeting.

2018 IN REVIEW

2018 was a momentous year for world Jewry, the Australian Jewish community, and its peak representative body, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry.

Internationally, Poland's move to criminalise discussion of the nation's hand in the slaughter of three million of its Jews during the Holocaust drew widespread condemnation, some clumsily overblown. The ECAJ advocated against the law, led discussion of the horrors of Polish collaboration, brought to public attention massacres like Jedbawne and Kelce, while recognising Polish suffering at the hands of both Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, and rejected the misnomer "Polish Death Camps."

Ireland's legislature was also hijacked by its most extreme elements, with the introduction of a new law that would make it a criminal offense to trade in any goods made by Jews living in the

West Bank. More recently, Air BnB bowed to a sophisticated, well-funded campaign by NGOs like Human Rights Watch, and delisted properties owned by Jews in the West Bank. To be clear, hundreds of properties in other conflict zones, disputed areas, and occupied territories remain on their service. Thankfully both the Irish parliament and the Silicone Valley tech company have reclaimed their moral virtue by cleansing themselves of

any association with Jews living beyond a defunct armistice line.

The year also saw fresh bloodshed in Israel. Terror attacks claimed the lives of at least 10 Israelis, through stabbings, shootings and vehicular rammings. Among the Jewish dead were Ari Fuld, a prominent activist who in a final act of heroism, chased and shot his attacker before succumbing to his mortal wounds. A young mother, Kim Levengrond and a father of three, Ziv Hajbi

were shot to death at the Barkan Industrial Park where Israelis and Palestinians work side by side.

The Palestinian leadership spent another year seeking to win symbolic victories in international forums in pursuit of its long-term aim of bringing about the collapse of the Jewish state by gradually turning the international community against it. Fatah continued to reward and incentivise terror. Hamas launched its biggest rocket assault in a single day,



Sydney vigil for the Pittsburgh massacre




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The Australian Jewish Quarterly is accepting submissions on all subjects relating to Australian politics, the Jewish world or the Jewish state. Submissions or brief pitches can be sent to the editor at aryvchin@ecaj.org.au. Please include the word "Submission" in the subject line.

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and mobilised its fighters and the civilian population at the border with Israel in a bid to "rip the hearts from the chests of the Jews", in the words of one Hamas leader, all while claiming that the riots were an organic act of nonviolent resistance.

International focus on the conflict brought with it the usual parade of boilerplate anti-Israel resolutions at the United Nations, which Australia consistently and admirably opposed. Also at the UN, the US Ambassador Nikki Haley, arguably the most effective voice against Palestinian manipulation of international forums in a generation, announced she will be stepping down as Ambassador.

The year also brought the extraordinary announcement that Donald Trump would finally do what Democratic presidents Clinton and Obama agreed to in principle, and what Republican candidates and presidents long pledged to do on the campaign trail, which is respect the right of Israel to nominate its capital and give effect to the blindly obvious reality, that Jerusalem in the capital of the State of Israel.

The question of Jerusalem was also elevated in the Australian political discourse following Prime Minister Morrison's announcement of a government review of its position on Jerusalem. For its part, the ECAJ's policy

platform has long called for Jerusalem to be recognised as Israel's capital, on the basis of 3,000 years of unbroken Jewish connection to the city and the fact that Jerusalem is Israel's seat of government, the location of the nation's parliament, ministerial offices, supreme court, and the official residences of the President and Prime Minister.

We were delighted to join with our Christian comrades in a delegation to the nation's capital to show that support for our position extends much wider than the Jewish community alone.

And staying in Canberra, the ECAJ established a permanent professional presence in our nation's capital with the opening of a Canberra office in April, which will enable us to better serve our community through even greater engagement with the nation's opinion leaders.

But perhaps the defining moments for our community and our people this year were events of deep sorrow and tragedy. Australian Jewry mourned the loss of Jeremy Spinak (of blessed memory), the immediate past president of our constituent body, the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, and former vice president of the ECAJ. Thousands paid tribute to Jeremy, a man

whose life was severed in the prime of life, at the age of 36, and with so much still to give and accomplish.

Jeremy's tragic death and the massacre of eleven worshippers at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh reminded us of the fragility of our lives and the vulnerability of our communities. They also demonstrated what it means to be a community – to mourn together and to stand together, as thousands gathered in vigils to the

Pittsburgh dead around the country, and thousands more paid their respects to Jeremy.

We as a community and a people now move forward into a new calendar year, with renewed purpose and focus, and a determination to achieve and to overcome, for our own sake and for those who have passed.

Alex Ryvchin

Former ECAJ Vice President Jeremy Spinak (of blessed memory).



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ADVOCATING FOR OUR PEOPLE



ECAJ condemns Polish Holocaust bill, making it illegal to accuse Poland of being complicit in the Holocaust.



ECAJ welcomes United States withdrawal from Iran nuclear deal.



Launch of Gen17 Australian Jewish Community Survey.



Prime Minister Scott Morrison announces that Australia will be considering recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.



Jewish community commemorates the 11 worshippers massacred at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.



Joint Jewish-Christian delegation meets with senior parliamentarians in Canberra in support of recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.



YouGov Galaxy poll commissioned by ECAJ shows minimal support for immediate recognition of a Palestinian State.



Australia opposes UN Human Rights Council resolution to investigate Israel for Gaza border violence.



ECAJ condemns Senator Fraser Anning's maiden speech in parliament, which called for a "final solution" to Australia's "immigration problem."



Federal government announces \$2.2 million in security funding for the New South Wales Jewish community.



ECAJ co-host Wentworth By-Election Candidate Forum.



ECAJ releases annual report on antisemitism in Australia, revealing a 59% increase in antisemitic incidents.

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ECAJ RELEASES ANNUAL REPORT INTO ANTISEMITISM

Alarming increase in incidents

Julie Nathan

The 12 month period ending 30 September 2018 saw a 59% increase over the previous year in total antisemitic incidents in Australia involving threats or acts of violence.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry, State and ACT Jewish community roof bodies, and other Jewish community groups logged a total of 366 antisemitic incidents during the period, including physical assaults, abuse and harassment, vandalism, graffiti, hate and threats communicated directly by email, letters, telephone calls, posters, stickers and leaflets. This compares to a total of 230 such incidents logged by the same sources over the preceding 12 month period, an overall increase of 136 incidents.

In the latest 12 month period, there were 156 attacks (assault, abuse, vandalism, and graffiti), accounting for 43% of the total number of incidents. There were 210 threats (email, letters, telephone, leaflets, posters and stickers), accounting for 57% of the total number of incidents. There is also much anecdotal evidence of incidents which go unreported.

Overall, between 2017 and 2018 the number of 'attacks' increased slightly (from 145 to 156), while the

number of 'threats' increased by 147% (from 85 to 210). There was a marked increase in antisemitic abuse, vandalism, and threats via email, telephone, posters and stickers; a decrease in graffiti and threats by postal mail; while the number of physical assaults remained the same.

Jews continue to be verbally abused and harassed around synagogues on a regular basis, especially over the Jewish Sabbath of Friday evening and Saturday, and on Jewish festivals. These are periods when many Jews are congregating at, and walking to or from, synagogue. For antisemites, synagogues and the Sabbath are the easiest and most convenient places and times for them drive around in their vehicles on the lookout for Jews to target for abuse, harassment and intimidation.

There has been a noticeable emboldening of the far right in Australia, as has been occurring in much of the Western world. Many far right individuals in Australia who were formerly active against Islam and Muslims during 2015-2017 have now switched their focus away from Muslims and towards Jews. They have adopted the conspiracy theory that

"the Jews" are plotting and orchestrating the genocide of the European races, which they refer to as "White Genocide", through the "importation" of non-Europeans, especially Africans, Arabs and Asians, into Europe, North America and Australasia, in order to destroy European culture and to subjugate and decimate those of European ethnicity. These political activists have not just embraced antisemitism but many have also adopted Nazism and a veneration for Hitler.

One group, Antipodean Resistance, which has an overtly neo-Nazi ideology, was responsible for 133 (36%) of the year's total of 366 incidents, mostly consisting of placing posters, stickers, graffiti and murals, and one incident of vandalism, in public places. The total number of incidents attributable to Antipodean Resistance rose from 50 in the previous year, a rise of 166%. It thus accounted for 83 of the additional 136 incidents compared to the previous year. However, the activities of Antipodean Resistance do not account for the significant increase in recorded incidents of verbal abuse/harassment and vandalism.

The continued proliferation, from October 2016, through to October 2018, of Antipodean Resistance



posters calling to "Legalise the execution of Jews", posters warning of "Jewish Poison", posters blaming Jews for non-white immigration, posters of the Ungeziefer ('Vermin') image used by the Nazis to portray Jews, and many forms of stickers, has created a situation where a tiny and peripheral group of maladjusted youths has had a disproportionate impact. Antisemitic posters and stickers have often been put up at universities, high schools, and areas where many Jews live.

There was a concerted effort by more than a dozen members of the far right Lads Society in NSW to infiltrate a mainstream parliamentary party, the National Party. The aim was to manoeuvre and manipulate the National's policies in line with the extreme racist right, beginning with

immigration, by promoting an end to Australia's non-racially discriminatory policy and a return to the racially-based White Australia policy. The Lads Society is closely connected to Antipodean Resistance, sharing many members and a worldview.

Many of the principal themes in contemporary expressions of antisemitism, especially online, involve a cross-fertilisation of concepts between the political Left and Right. For example, left-wing rhetoric exaggerating the power of a so-called "Jewish lobby" has helped to revive and stoke far-Right myths about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions. Conversely, symbols and images

associated with classic antisemitism, which attribute negative qualities such as cruelty and blood-lust to Jews as a group, have frequently been deployed by left-wing and Islamist groups and individuals to characterise Israel or Israelis, or Jews outside Israel who simply support Israel's right to exist.

Online there has been a surge in calls for the killing of Jews, for the extermination of Jews world-wide, and of images of Jews being killed—through stabbing, shooting and hanging. Most of this incitement occurs on Gab, a Twitter-like platform, which is a haven for extremists and racists. Many racists moved over to Gab when Twitter closed their accounts in December 2017. In October 2018, Gab suspended its whole platform, but only for a week,

after the murder of 11 Jews in a synagogue in Pittsburgh, USA, by a man who had incited against Jews on Gab, and who subscribed to and promoted the “White Genocide” myth. However, other more popular social media platforms also continue to host pages where Jews are denigrated and demonised and incite against Jews.

Within the mainstream of Australian society there are elements that either express or downplay antisemitism. Within the media, the ABC continues to stand out from other media outlets, as it permits antisemitic comments to remain online and unmoderated; and permits those who make antisemitic comments on Facebook to continue to comment without facing bans. The people who were making antisemitic comments several years ago are still freely commenting on the ABC, using the same names. It is this toleration for antisemitism, and in fact an enabling of antisemitism, that threatens not only Jewish Australians but the whole of society, as it warps societal bounds of decency.

Holocaust minimisation continues mainly in the form of false comparisons between Nazi Germany and Australian government policy. This is often done in order to sensationalise political issues at home, but it is at the expense of the memory of the suffering and deaths of millions of people of all nationalities and ethnicities under Nazi control and grossly underplays the horrors perpetrated by Nazi Germany.

The sale of Nazi memorabilia, although not illegal, continues in auctions and online. One egregious item was the production and sale of replica labels and canisters of Zyklon B, the blue crystal that turned into a gas upon exposure to the air. It was

used in the gas chambers in Nazi death camps as one of the principal means by which the Nazi genocide against the Jewish people was carried out.

Within religious communities, notably Christian and Muslim, there has continued to be those individuals and groups who have over the years consistently either expressed antisemitic sentiment or have tolerated it on their social media pages. Some, like the Islamist group, Hizb ut-Tahrir, openly expresses hatred for Jews. Inter-faith dialogue remains an important means to promote mutual understanding and beneficial relationships.

The anti-Israel movement, although with much less wind in its sails nowadays, continues to attract rabid antisemites, especially online. Often these people are not only tolerated but are embraced. Conspiracy theories about Jews abound as do calls for the destruction of Israel. It appears that many are more concerned with hating Israel as a Jewish state than with

supporting Palestinian Arabs.

In summary, although Australia remains a stable, vibrant and tolerant democracy, where Jews face no official discrimination, and are free to observe their faith and traditions, antisemitism persists. There are segments of Australian society which are not only hostile towards Jews, but actively and publicly express that hatred with words and threatened or actual violent acts. As a result, and by necessity, physical security remains a prime concern for the Jewish community.

As the political far right increasingly becomes emboldened and more active, and as far right groups publicly denigrate, demonise and incite violence against Jews, it is incumbent upon political and other leaders to demonstrate that antisemitism, and all forms of racism, is not acceptable in Australia, and to ensure that policies, laws and other measures are adopted and implemented in order to effectively counter antisemitism.



Antisemitism

SEE IT? EXPERIENCE IT? REPORT IT.

WHY REPORT IT?

As the elected representative national body of the Australian Jewish community, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), liaises with government, the media and law enforcement to help keep our community safe.

It is vital therefore that we have accurate data on antisemitic incidents, whether vandalism of property, verbal abuse, online threats, leaflets or posters, or acts of violence.

WHERE TO REPORT IT?

Incidents of antisemitism occurring in Australia can be reported directly to Julie Nathan, the ECAJ Research Officer, and author of the annual Report on Antisemitism in Australia.

Report antisemitism to: julie@ecaj.org.au



Executive Council
of Australian Jewry Inc.

ON PITTSBURGH

Alex Ryvchin

The partisan advantage-taking began before the bodies had even been identified.

To opponents of the US President, the massacre of 11 Jews during a baby naming ceremony at a synagogue in Pittsburgh, was the logical endpoint of President Trump's refusal to expressly reject an endorsement from former Grand Wizard of the KKK, David Duke; the President's drawing of moral equivalence between clashing Antifa extremists and white nationalists in Charlottesville; and his incendiary talk on migration and refugees.

To those calling for tougher gun laws, Pittsburgh was another mass shooting event made possible by the easy availability of high-powered assault rifles.

And to those who never miss an opportunity to direct our attention to the supposedly boundless evil of that little Jewish state on the edge of the Mediterranean Sea, the massacre of Jewish civilians in the US was the result of rage against Benjamin Netanyahu's policies in Gaza and the West Bank, or poetic justice for Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the State's capital.

The ideologues simply picked their cause of choice, selected their preferred villain and placed the 11 corpses at their feet. Hardly

mentioned are the facts. This is not the first mass shooting targeting a Jewish community in the US. In 2014, three people were murdered at a Jewish community centre in Overland Park, Kansas. Barack Obama was president then.

Mass shootings of Jews are common throughout the western world, in countries without the Second Amendment and with low gun ownership. Jews were massacred in a kosher supermarket in Paris in 2015; in a Jewish museum in Brussels in 2014; in a Jewish school in Toulouse in 2012; and at a synagogue in Copenhagen in 2015.

Far from acting out of frustration at Middle East politics, the Pittsburgh killer didn't care a jot for the Palestinians or Israel's foreign policy. The existence of the State of Israel and its absorption of millions of Jewish refugees from throughout the world has saved countless Jewish lives, not imperiled them.

The common factor in every attack of this sort is not the weapon of choice, the religion of the perpetrator or the commander-in-chief at the time of the attack. It is antisemitism - the irrational, irrepressible, consumptive hatred of the Jewish people that pervades elements of every political ideology and every faith.

It is what shatters gravestones in

Jewish cemeteries throughout the United States and Europe with appalling regularity. It is what led Louis Farrakhan, a US Muslim leader embraced by major figures in the Democratic Party, to liken Jews to termites, just weeks ago. It is what lodges knives in the backs of Jews standing at bus-stops in Jerusalem. It is what has prompted 40% of British Jews to consider leaving Britain, as Jeremy Corbyn - a man who hosts Holocaust deniers at Westminster and lays wreaths at the graves of terrorists who have spilled Jewish blood - nears the threshold of No.10 Downing Street.

Antisemitism is a remarkably robust and versatile form of hatred. It finds favour in the political left where the Jews are seen as too privileged, too comfortable, too establishment to be seen as a vulnerable minority or as allies in solidarity. To religious extremists, the Jews are too stiff-necked in their rejection of the later monotheistic teachings of Christianity and Islam, too content with their own beliefs and customs, and therefore deserving of scorn and hatred. While to the hard-right, the speed with which the Jews seem to bounce back from each calamity inflicted upon them, through a combination of resilience and bitter experience, only feeds the paranoid conspiracy theories about Jews



secretly controlling everything and sowing our misfortune.

The appropriation of the Pittsburgh dead to fight the latest round of the cultural wars is an affront to the memories of the eleven people murdered as Jews in their place of worship.

Condemnations of Trump's jingoism and dubious associations,

right and necessary as they are, ring hollow unless one is equally reviled by the racism of Farrakhan and the associations of Jeremy Corbyn. The condemnation of antisemitism must be a matter of basic decency and not partisan politics. Otherwise, we will merely entrench the discord and polarization in which violent

extremism lives and thrives and await the next bout of violence and the next mass burial of the Jewish dead.

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AUSTRALIANS DO SUPPORT RECOGNISING JERUSALEM AS ISRAEL’S CAPITAL

Peter Wertheim

The brouhaha that followed the federal government’s announcement that Australia will consider moving Australia’s Israeli embassy to Jerusalem continues to sputter along. Immediately following the announcement the ABC reported, correctly, that Indonesia’s Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi had expressed concerns about the announcement to Marise Payne. But the ABC also jumped the gun and reported, incorrectly, that Indonesia was considering putting the proposed Indonesia Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership on hold. The latter proposition was swiftly and emphatically denied by Indonesian Trade Minister Enggartiasno Lukito who confirmed that the deal remains on track to be signed this year. The deal is as much in Indonesia’s interests as Australia’s.

Whilst the Palestinian cause is a highly emotive one within the 56 states of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation, including Indonesia and Malaysia, none of these states has a record of putting its concerns for the Palestinians ahead of its own national interests. States rarely place sentiment above their national interests. The Indonesian Trade Minister’s statements should not have come as a surprise.

A second tack taken by critics of the announcement was given voice

by the Palestinian Authority’s envoy to Australia, Izzat Abdulhadi, who claimed that moving the Australian Embassy to Jerusalem would be ‘contrary to international law’ and would thus make Australia ‘an international pariah’. To support the claim, Palestinian spokespeople frequently cite UN Security Council Resolution 478 which they say is a decision binding on all States under Article 25 of the UN Charter. However, 478 only applies to action taken by Israel to assert its sovereignty ‘in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since June 1967, including Jerusalem’. Israel’s government precinct is located in the western part of the city, which has been part of Israel’s sovereign territory since 1948. It is not located in the part of Jerusalem ‘occupied [by Israel el] since June 1967’. The US Embassy is located in the western part of the city, as would any other embassy, including ours.

A third criticism was the assertion that most Australians are opposed to moving our embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. A Roy Morgan SMS survey undertaken on December 14-15, 2017 was dusted off to support this claim. It asked the question: Do you support or oppose President Trump’s recent decision to declare Jerusalem the capital of Israel? The survey found 76 per cent of Australians opposed the

Trump announcement and 24 per cent supported it. Implausibly, there were no ‘Don’t know’s.

The wording of the question suffered from several defects. It linked recognising Jerusalem as Israel’s capital with Trump, who on any view is a polarising personality. It also mischaracterised Trump’s decision. Trump did not ‘declare’ Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel; the US recognised it as already being Israel’s capital.

There is no way of knowing which of those who answered ‘No’ did so because they did not like Trump personally, or were put off by the controversy, or were misled into believing that Trump was ‘declaring’ Jerusalem to be Israel’s capital, rather than because they were opposed in principle to recognising the reality that Israel’s seat of government has for decades been in Jerusalem.

Israel’s parliament, ministerial offices, Supreme Court, President’s residence and PM’s residence have all been located in the western part of Jerusalem since the early days of the state. This is not part of the area that Israel captured during the 1967 war and is not designated by the UN as ‘Occupied Palestinian Territory’. It is not a part of the city that has been the subject of negotiations for a two-state outcome. Locating an embassy in the uncontested western part of Jerusalem would in no way pre-judge

the future status of the contested eastern part of the city captured by Israel in 1967. It is ironic that some of those who argue against a unilateral embassy move on the false premise that it would pre-judge a permanent status issue in the Israel-Palestinian conflict, namely the future status of the eastern part of Jerusalem, are the very people seeking to commit Labor at its National Conference in December to extend unilateral recognition to a Palestinian state. That move would necessarily pre-judge a whole raft of issues, including east Jerusalem.

My organisation, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, was keen to test the veracity of the Roy Morgan survey. We commissioned YouGov/Galaxy to conduct a poll asking: In 1949, Israel designated Jerusalem to be its capital city, and has its parliament there. Do you think Australia should recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel? The survey was conducted in February among 1,205 Australians. The demographic distribution of the sample as between age, gender, marital/parental status, geographical location, income level and educational attainment reflected the results of the 2016 census as published by the ABS. The margin of error was plus or minus 2.9 per cent.

The results paint a very different picture to the published Roy Morgan findings. A key finding of the YouGov survey was that when the question of Jerusalem was framed as one of whether to ‘recognise’ (rather than ‘declare’) Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, and was asked without mentioning Trump or the US, Australians supported recognition by a margin of almost two to one (40 to 21 per cent). Based on party preference, those supporting recognition outnumbered those against in every group except the Greens [scroll down].

In 1949, Israel designated Jerusalem to be its capital city and has its parliament there. Do you think Australia should recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel? (By party support)

	YES	NO	DON’T KNOW
TOTAL	40	21	39
ALP	36	21	43
LNP	51	18	31
GRN	26	37	37
ONP	49	21	29

In 1949, Israel designated Jerusalem to be its capital city and has its parliament there. Do you think Australia should recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel? (By Gender and Age Group)

	YES	NO	DON’T KNOW
TOTAL	40	21	39
FEMALE	39	17	44
MALE	40	25	34
18-24	44	24	32
25-34	36	20	45
35-49	35	20	45
50-64	38	19	43
65+	49	24	27



My organisation, the peak representative body of the Jewish community, has long supported recognising the reality that Jerusalem is Israel's capital and moving the embassy there. Of course Jerusalem strikes an emotional chord for all Jews. It has been our people's spiritual and political capital since the dawn of the Iron Age 3,000 years ago. But we also believe it is in Australia's interests, and

the interests of peoples of the Middle East, for western nations to back the region's only real democracy, instead of cravenly yielding to threats of retaliation or, worse still, conjuring up the spectre of threats which don't exist. The announcement of the Australian government that it is open to considering whether Australia's embassy in Israel should be moved to Jerusalem was made four days before the highly-

significant by-election for the Federal seat of Wentworth. The timing of the announcement led to a storm of criticism. Yet when the issue of recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital is considered on its merits, without being accompanied by the hoopla of Australian (or US) domestic politics, the idea enjoys far more support than opposition. Its time will come.

First published in The Spectator Australia.

In 1949, Israel designated Jerusalem to be its capital city and has its parliament there. Do you think Australia should recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel? (By educational attainment)

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
TOTAL	40	21	39
YEAR 12	39	19	43
TAFE	43	16	41
UNIVERSITY	38	26	35

In 1949, Israel designated Jerusalem to be its capital city and has its parliament there. Do you think Australia should recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel? (By State)

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
TOTAL	40	21	39
NSW/ACT	41	22	37
VIC/TAS	35	22	43
QLD	43	19	38
SA	44	20	36
WA	40	18	42

GLOBAL REPRESENTATION

The ECAJ is the Australian affiliate of the World Jewish Congress (WJC), the international organisation that represents Jewish communities and organisations in 100 countries around the world. Through its work with the WJC, the ECAJ contributes to advocacy on behalf of the Jewish people globally on a range of matters including protecting the memory of the Holocaust, deepening the bond between Israel and the Jewish diaspora; and undertaking diplomatic efforts on matters affecting the physical and political security of the Jewish people.

In 2018, the ECAJ represented Australian Jewry in major WJC delegations to Israel and Europe, and held meetings with world leaders to address matters affecting our community.

ECAJ President Anton Block with Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).



ECAJ co-CEO Alex Ryvchin addressing a major Jewish National Fund conference in Phoenix, Arizona.



ECAJ co-CEO Peter Wertheim at the World Jewish Congress National Directors Forum with other communal leadership.



ECAJ co-CEO Alex Ryvchin with Tzipi Livni, Knesset Opposition Leader.



ECAJ President Anton Block with Gillian Geron, British Jewish Board of Deputies CEO, Shimon Fogel, Canadian Jewish Board of Deputies CEO, Mary Kluk, South African Jewish Board of Deputies President and Esther Mor, Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) President.



ECAJ Immediate Past President Robert Goot with Czech Republic Prime Minister Andrej Babiš.



ECAJ co-CEO Alex Ryvchin with Isaac Herzog, former Knesset Opposition Leader and current Chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel.



ECAJ Research Officer Julie Nathan with former Anti-Defamation League National Director Abraham Foxman at the Global Forum for Combatting Antisemitism in Jerusalem.



ECAJ Research Officer Julie Nathan at the Global Forum for Combatting Antisemitism.



ECAJ co-CEO Alex Ryvchin lecturing at Yale University on the Israel-Palestinian conflict.



ECAJ Research Officer Julie Nathan with the International Council of Jewish Women Executive Committee.



ECAJ Immediate Past President Robert Goot with Czech Republic President Miloš Zeman.



ECAJ President Anton Block with Mary Kluk, President of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

ADDRESS TO WJC GOVERNING BOARD

Robert M Goot AM SC, Co-Chair of the WJC Policy
Council & ECAJ Immediate Past President

When our President Ronald S Lauder addressed the CRIF Annual Assembly yesterday he described the Jewish people as “one people”, not the Jewish religion or the Jewish race but the Jewish people. We are of course both a religion and a race but as he so persuasively reminded us - we are “one people”.

We are religious Jews in a variety of streams including orthodox and reform. We are irreligious and non-religious Jews. We are secular Jews and cultural Jews.

And in this hall we are all of those things, a microcosm of the Jewish People. And when it comes to unity it is worth recalling how our Constitution describes our mission to foster the unity and represent the interests of the Jewish people, and to ensure the continuity and development of its religious, spiritual, cultural, and social heritage... and recognizing the centrality of the State of Israel to Jewish identity, to strengthen the bonds of Jewish communities and Jews in the Diaspora with Israel

The centrality of Israel to Jewish identity manifests itself today in donors contribution millions of dollars each

year to send young people and school students on Israel experience programs.

“

These matters, if left unresolved, will continue to alienate Jews worldwide, especially young Jews, and put at risk their continued support for Israel

”

But I have a deep concern at the challenges to that unity and aspects of the relationship between Israel and the Jewish world, posed by such issues as the stalled attempts to create an egalitarian space for worship at the Kotel, and the Israeli government's decisions concerning conversion.

The WJC Executive Committee at its meeting in London in September 2017 were so concerned about some of those developments that they resolved, inter alia to:

NOTE that the Western Wall (Kotel) is the last standing structure comprising part of the ancient Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. It thus forms a central part of Jewish history and holds deep significance for all Jews,

regardless of religious practice, orientation, or gender;

STRONGLY SUPPORT the Israeli Government's past agreement to create an official space for egalitarian worship at the Kotel, with joint oversight by all streams of Judaism;

LAMENT the government's recent decision to suspend the execution of that agreement in order to find an alternative, and the divisiveness and despair that have arisen as a result of that decision;

FURTHER LAMENT the Israeli government's decision to support a conversion bill in the Knesset that aims to delegitimize conversions to Judaism in Israel conducted otherwise than by the Israeli Chief Rabbinate, ... and the divisiveness and despair that have arisen as a result of that decision;

CALL UPON the Israeli government to urgently work toward finding solutions to these issues in the spirit of tolerance, respect, and accommodation, and, importantly, in the spirit of Israel's Proclamation of Independence, which committed the State of Israel to “guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture”;



URGE productive dialogue between Israel and Diaspora communities in order to engender mutual understanding and ensure that Israel continues to fulfill its Zionist goal as the national home for all Jewish people and continue the quest for a solution in the interests of the Jewish people...”

These matters impact on Jewish identification, Jewish continuity and ultimately support in the Jewish world for the State of Israel, if not now, then in 10 or 20 years time.

Importantly, these matters if left

unresolved, will continue to alienate Jews worldwide especially young Jews and put at risk their continued support for Israel.

I see the challenge for the WJC as the foremost and most influential representative body of World Jewry, to provide an opportunity to establish a respectful and earnest discussion with the Government of Israel preferably with the assistance of the Jewish Agency for Israel, to attempt creatively to enhance the unity of the Jewish people and to reduce the negative impact of differences

between Israel and World Jewry and in particular those differences including – importantly – religious differences and the sense of alienation of large numbers of Jews manifested by those differences.

That is the challenge the WJC must take up – it will not be easy - some of the issues to not readily permit of easy resolution, but it is incumbent upon us to try.

The price of doing nothing, or failure, is simply too high to contemplate.

FIGHTING FOR HOLOCAUST SURVIVERS

The Claims Conference represents world Jewry in negotiating for compensation and restitution for victims of Nazi persecution and their heirs; administers those and other compensation funds; recovers unclaimed Jewish property; allocates funds to institutions that provide social welfare services to Holocaust survivors; and preserves the memory and lessons of the Shoah by allocating funds for remembrance, education and documentation projects.

At the annual meeting of the Claims Conference Board of Directors in New York in July, Robert Goot was re-elected as an at-large member of the Leadership Council of the Claims Conference, which is responsible for the governance of the Claims Conference between Annual Meetings.

This year's negotiations resulted in an agreement under which there will be a €75 million (\$US 87.75 million) increase in 2019 for social welfare services funding for Holocaust survivors. This brings the total amount of the agreement between the Claims Conference and the German government for 2019 to €480 (\$US 564 million). Over the past years, the amount of welfare funding has greatly increased. Even though the number of Holocaust survivors is unfortunately

decreasing, the Claims Conference has spent considerable time with the German government explaining the increased needs of elderly, poor and disabled survivors.

In Australia, the ECAJ wrote to the Foreign Minister on 17 July 2018 urging the Australian government to redouble its advocacy to the Polish government in support of aging Holocaust

survivors and their families, in Australia and abroad, whose property was unjustly taken by the Nazis and their allies during the Holocaust and its aftermath.

The ECAJ also took a strong position of opposition to a proposed law in Poland that would criminalise discussion of Polish complicity in the Holocaust.



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THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS AND ADVOCATES

In August, The ECAJ, together with Australasian Union of Jewish Students (AUJS), held the inaugural National Advocacy Summit, with full day events in Sydney and Melbourne. The Summit was conceived out of recognition of the importance of our campuses as a battleground in the fight against antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment and the need to offer greater support and training to our students to ensure they have the confidence and ability to advocate for Jewish rights on campus. Student leaders took part in intensive, interactive sessions to give core knowledge and practical skills essential to Jewish/Israel advocacy on campus and beyond. The topics covered ranged from speechmaking and debating to media interviews and lobbying, and more.

In 2018, the ECAJ also launched a program to strengthen the education component of subsidised trips to Israel for Jewish high-school students to ensure that such trips not only give students a deep emotional connection to Israel, but also a sophisticated understanding and awareness of its politics and history.



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IN PICTURES ECAJ IMPACT

A sample of our leadership and advocacy
- at home and abroad.



ECAJ co-CEO Alex Ryvchin on Sky News, discussing the United States' withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Deal.



Unveiling of the National Jewish War Memorial in Canberra.



Annual conversation between ECAJ and Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.



Israeli Ambassador Mark Sofer delivering a speech at the ECAJ Annual General Meeting.



ECAJ co-CEO Alex Ryvchin speaking at the Queensland launch of his book, The Anti Israel Agenda.



ECAJ co-CEO Alex Ryvchin interviewing Alan Dershowitz at a United Israel Appeal young adult function.



ECAJ co-CEO Alex Ryvchin, President Anton Block, Israeli Ambassador Mark Sofer and co-CEO Peter Wertheim at the ECAJ Annual General Meeting.



ECAJ President Anton Block leading the singing at the Jewish Community Council of Victoria's Yom HaAtzma'ut (Israel Independence Day) function.



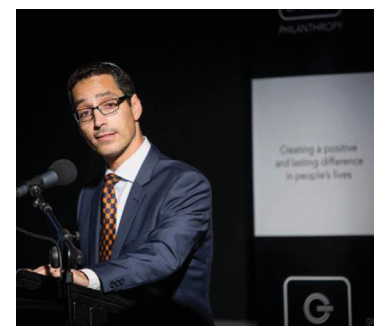
ECAJ President Anton Block with Isaac Herzog, former Knesset Opposition Leader and current Chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel.



ALP President-elect Wayne Swan and ECAJ co-CEO Peter Wertheim.



ECAJ co-CEO Alex Ryvchin participating in 'The Great Debate - Israel-Palestine: Is Peace Possible?' in Perth.



ECAJ President Anton Block speaking at the launch of landmark Australian Jewish population survey Gen 17.



ECAJ co-CEO Alex Ryvchin emceeing the Friends of Refugees of Eastern Europe Gala Dinner.



ECAJ co-CEO Alex Ryvchin marking the 8th night of Chanukah in Sydney, alongside Gabrielle Upton MP, NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Rabbi Yehoram Ulman.



ECAJ co-CEO Peter Wertheim and Vice President Lesli Berger with Israeli Ambassador Mark Sofer at the ECAJ Annual General Meeting.



From right: Shadow Attorney General Mark Dreyfus QC MP, Race Discrimination Commissioner Tim Soutphommasane, ECAJ co-CEO Peter Wertheim AM and other representatives of the Jewish, Chinese and Arab communities on the occasion of Tim Soutphommasane's final official speech to a capacity audience at the University of Western Sydney.



ECAJ Public Engagement Officer Samantha Khavin with members of the Armenian, Assyrian and Pontian communities at Parliament House, following a debate regarding recognition of the Armenian Genocide.



ECAJ co-CEO Peter Wertheim at a farewell event for Australia's outgoing Race Discrimination Commissioner Tim Soutphommasane.



ECAJ Deputy President Jillian Segal, Vice President Jennifer Huppert and former President Nina Bassat at the ECAJ Annual General Meeting.



ECAJ Vice President Joan Hillman with Western Australian Premier Mark McGowan



ECAJ Research Officer Julie Nathan with Sara Saber-Freedman, Executive Vice President, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and Wendy Kahn, Executive Director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.



ECAJ co-CEO Peter Wertheim with Yoel Hasson MK and Sharren Haskel MK.



ECAJ co-CEO Alex Ryvchin speaking at the Jewish Communal Appeal's Festival of Dangerous Ideas.



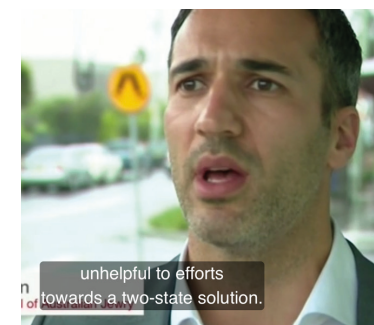
Colonel Richard Kemp speaking at the launch of ECAJ co-CEO Alex Ryvchin's book, The Anti-Israel Agenda.



ECAJ Public Engagement Officer Samantha Khavin with Pontian community leadership.



JCCV President Jennifer Huppert, Richard Marles MP, ECAJ co-CEO Peter Wertheim, Deputy President Jillian Segal and President Anton Block at the ECAJ AGM.



ECAJ co-CEO Alex Ryvchin on SBS World News, discussing recent United Nations resolutions.



Christian, Jewish and Muslim representatives at the Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims and Jews in Sydney.



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