



## **Australian Jewish community management of COVID-19 pandemic**

### **National Bulletin #3**

**3 April 2020**

Jewish community organisations and leaders across Australia continue their efforts to manage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Jewish institutions, families, individuals and, most especially, the elderly and vulnerable. We recognise with deep appreciation the continuing work being done by the Jewish community roof bodies in each State, the Crisis Management Teams of the Community Security Groups, shules, the Day Schools, the aged care sector, the welfare sector and volunteers, and commend them for the high sense of responsibility they have demonstrated.

With the approach of Pesach, when families typically gather to celebrate the Seder, many individuals and families will be feeling the effects of physical isolation from relatives and friends. Perhaps in the future we will look back upon these times and appreciate all the more the joy of being able to celebrate Pesach with family and friends, and have all the more compassion for those who have nowhere to go on Seder night, and are all alone.

The following is an update from last week's summary of the current status of Jewish community life in each State and Territory.

#### **New South Wales**

- Jewish Emergency Management Plan (JEMP) operated by CSG NSW has formally opened its Emergency Operations Centre and is already fielding enquires, coordinating responses and providing volunteers. It is anticipating an increase in demand and efforts are being undertaken to centralise the response by directing the attention of community members to its website. A community wide SMS and other mechanisms are being employed to achieve this.

- The medical sub-committee continues to actively plan and prepare for a potential increase in spread of COVID-19 within the Sydney Jewish community.
- The financial sub-committee is working on a number of potential financial scenarios which will likely impact the operations and wellbeing of community members and community institutions. It is working in conjunction with JCA to deliver financial relief and assistance as and when it is required.
- Mental health experts have been tasked in anticipation of an increase in community demand and a video has been released.
- <https://www.csgnsw.org.au/alerts> is the place to go to for regular updates and information relevant to the NSW Jewish community.

### **Victoria**

- The COVID-19 Taskforce is preparing a Pesach communication which will go out shortly.
- Jewish Care Victoria announced they would make available further interest-free loans of up to \$2,500 each for immediate needs that are not covered by government or other sources. Jewish Care assigns a case worker to each loan recipient to provide non-financial help as well as the loan.
- <https://vic.thecsg.org.au/covid-19-community-information/> is the place to go to for regular updates and information relevant to the Victorian Jewish community.

### **Western Australia**

- Maurice Zeffert Home (MZH) in full lockdown from Sunday, 29 March at 12.00 noon
- Carmel School closes today for the holidays.
- Supermarket and pharmacy shopping door to door has been made available to the community
- Flyer from The Black Dog Institute has been send out to community with some helpful thoughts on getting ourselves and families through the present crisis
- Menora Charity setting up a buddy system for the isolated and lonely in the community. Statement will be send out today

### **Queensland**

- No change since last week.

### **ACT**

- Exploring options for delivery of online classes for Tuesday and Sunday cheder for Term 2;
- Kabbalat Shabbat and Havdalah services now offered via zoom;

- All of the Rabbi's classes are now offered online;
- A team of community volunteers under the oversight of Rabbi Miller and ACTJC youth leadership employee have been busy contacting, visiting, purchasing and delivering shopping and meals to those in need.
- Rabbi Robuck has been organising an online program for the Progressive Congregation.

### **South Australia**

- An email bulletin was issued by the Jewish Community Council of South Australia to all Jewish community institutions in the State, with practical information about the availability of in-home support for the frail and elderly, options for shopping and home delivery, and online community gatherings.

### **Tasmania**

- Hobart Hebrew Congregation continues to engage with the vulnerable members of the Tasmanian Jewish community and fortunately they are doing well.
- With help from Sen. Eric Abetz and volunteers in Melbourne, Chabad of Tasmania was able to negotiate the tight border controls and collect and distribute Kosher for Pesach items to the community.

Please keep safe and keep those around you safe, by maintaining physical distancing requirements and good hand hygiene, and exercising every precaution.

Shabbat shalom, and wishing all a chag kasher v'sameach for next week.

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