



# COUNCIL BULLETIN

National Council of Jewish Women of Australia Ltd.

Volume 91 No 1 September 2014/5775

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## President's Message



Di Hirsh OAM

The past weeks have been very difficult for all of us who care about the State of Israel. Our families and friends have been under attack, needing to be ever vigilant for the sirens that urge them to seek shelter at a moment's notice. The terrible toll in death and destruction in Gaza and Israel has caused immense suffering, with the vicious propaganda war laying all the blame at Israel's feet. This has reverberated around the world, whipping up shocking antisemitic demonstrations, which have in turn led to violent acts of anti-Semitism, even here in Australia. We are fortunate that the Australian Jewish community has strong support and protection from our lawmakers and law enforcers.

May the New Year bring promise of a true peace between Israel and the Palestinian people and in the whole Middle East.

As the New Year 5775 begins I would like to wish you all Shana Tova u Metuka.

May you all enjoy a happy, healthy New Year together with your families and friends, and may you be inscribed in the Book of Life for the coming year.

**Di Hirsh, OAM,  
National President NCJWA**

## Theme: In the Shadow of Gaza



It was an awful summer. There was hardly anyone in the country who was not affected by the war with Hamas, *Operation Protective Edge*.

Who can say when the war began? It could be said that the kidnappings

and murders of three Israeli teenagers and the revenge murder of the teenager from Shouafat was the start of war. Or was it the barrage of rocket attacks that followed the revenge killing? Or do we say that the war had begun once Hamas started digging the tunnels that are underneath towns and kibbutzim in the Negev, whose only purpose is for acts of terrorism? Or has the war never stopped? Since 1947? Perhaps?

**The escalation began because we citizens demanded that the government respond to the rockets making life impossible for so many of us.** We all had in our minds that our army would be dealing with a society

like our own, where citizens are kept safe by the military - not where they are used to protect the military. We truly did not imagine, or at least we refused to imagine, that destroying the rocket-launchers would mean hitting the schools, mosques and hospitals where they are located and where people were taking shelter. Watching nightly on our televisions, we in Israel were horrified by the images of the destruction in Gaza. We understood what the world saw. And we did not blame people for not understanding us. They couldn't see our fear of terrorists arriving from underground tunnels and they can't imagine the psychological damage caused by constant rocket-fire. Our suffering was qualitatively and quantitatively different - and Hamas orchestrated it perfectly.

My son, Adir, spent three weeks at the front. I do not know what he saw or did. I am only grateful that the Israeli withdrawal began as he arrived, which meant he was not part of the ground invasion. For the time he was there, I had that feeling of no control over

anything important - I think it is the very edge of depression - which 86,000 sets of Israeli parents shared over those weeks, as they sent their children to war. Israelis are all suffering some effects from this summer. We appear to have 'adjusted' but the legacy is there. Many residents of the south have refused to return to their homes even now. They are demanding evidence of a permanent solution.

### Let me list you my top three concerns:

1. The real threat to security from Hamas tunnels. Even if we successfully destroyed every one that had already been built, we can expect more unless there is some sort of political settlement, including UN or other foreign supervision inside Gaza;
2. The rise of hatred, right wing extremism and racism. Besides the fact that we have now successfully created a whole new generation of Gazans who will never forgive the Israelis for what they have done, there is a terrible growth here of self-righteous and dangerous Israeli right-wingers. They come from both the religious and the anti-religious sectors, from Ashkenazi and Mizrahi backgrounds, and the dangerous ones are mainly young.

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## Letter from Israel *continued from front cover*

3. The fact that our wonderful young people - and they are truly wonderful and brave - have come to believe that the test of their worth is their willingness to fight for their country. That is so sad.

Commentators said how united the country was during the war. I saw tremendous acts of kindness and generosity and selflessness and bravery. But I am not convinced that these wonderful qualities symbolise "unity". I am fearful that the country is more polarised than ever. A person opposed to the war may very well have visited an injured soldier or gone to comfort bereaved parents. Someone who believes we should still be inside Gaza until Hamas has disappeared may have joined prayers for peace. But these shared behaviours and the fact that almost everyone agrees now that a military solution alone will not bring peace is hardly the basis for 'unity'.

In addition to deep divisions within the Jewish population, the Arab population of this country is for the most-part disenchanted and disenfranchised. Only a minority identifies with the State. Israel has a huge task ahead, with educational, legal and social challenges.

Whatever the losses here, a month of pounding has destroyed many more lives and much more property in Gaza - but Hamas still says it has "won". Most of us here know that we cannot win a war. All war is a loss - and there is no sense of victory. It is true that we cannot let our enemies win, either. If Hamas really had "won", it would mean the end of Israel. Hamas says it has won so long as it still has the ability to strike fear in Israelis. Every civilian death, to them, is part of their "victory".

In reality, Hamas cannot achieve its goals of destroying Israel and we cannot achieve our goals of totally immobilising Hamas without the loss of thousands of lives - a price too high. So this is a lose-lose situation. We count our losses, not the number of targets we hit. And we cry for the losses of our enemy, too. We have lost - terribly.

We might have the military power but having 'power' is only relevant if you use it. Who has the diplomatic power? Not us. I wish Israel would lead the way to peace. I just wish we knew how.

There has to be an alternative to violence and there has to be a future in which we Jews live in the Holy Land. I pray that this will come about in 5775.

**Peta Jones Pellach**, an Australian Olah, is the Director of Educational Activities at The Elijah Interfaith Institute in Jerusalem.

## Contact us

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## Deadline

Deadline for Pesach Issue:  
February 28, 2015

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# In the Shadow of Gaza



During this past year we have seen war and death in Gaza & Israel, the rise of virulent antisemitism, the kidnap, trafficking and sexual slavery of women and girls in Nigeria, the attacks on Christian communities throughout the Middle East, the success of the militant Islamic State and the attempted genocide of the Yazidis people. We have also seen the devastating impact of hate on social media – directed at women as well as at Jews. It is incumbent on us, then, as Jewish women, to work for a peace in which all people are accorded justice, dignity and respect.

A thread running through much of the debate in the West has been the use and abuse of international law. The assumption that Israel has committed war crimes turns very much on misunderstandings propagated by her opponents. This is not to say that Israel is innocent or acts ideally in all circumstances – for anyone who follows the situation knows that there are many legitimate criticisms of Israel's actions. Here are some key questions:

**Has Israel acted “disproportionally”?** The loss of life is a tragic and inevitable consequence of armed conflict – a matter recognised by international law. However, a breach of the rule of proportionality does not occur if one side incurs significantly more loss or injury to its civilian population than the other. Rather, an act of war is disproportionate if an attack which could be expected to cause incidental loss or injury to civilians or civilian objects, is “excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated”. The question is essentially whether an army acted recklessly with regard to innocent civilians.

**Is the use of civilians as human shields a war crime?** To deliberately expose a civilian population to harm in the course of hostilities is a war crime. Any nation is allowed, under the law of war, to attack military targets – even those embedded in schools or mosques or residential buildings. The cynical use of a civilian population does not make the opponent guilty of a crime if their action is proportionate. On the contrary, any body using human shields is in breach of the law of war.

**Is Gaza “occupied territory”?** In 2005 Israel withdrew all soldiers and the civilian population from the Gaza Strip. This ended Israel's occupation of the territory – so the claim that firing rockets at Israel in order to end Israel's occupation of Gaza is wrong both in law and fact.

**Is Gaza under siege?** As a matter of law, it is legitimate for Israel & Egypt to blockade Gaza with respect to anything that poses a threat to security. As a matter of fact, even during Protective Edge there continued to be a flow of consumer and humanitarian materials, food and supplies through Israel's border crossings in co-ordination with both international aid organisations and Gaza's private sector. While this is not ideal, Israel's actions do not constitute a siege.

**Is Israel committing genocide?** Genocide involves the systematic destruction of all or a significant part of a racial, ethnic, religious or national group, with the specific intention to wipe out a people or a cultural group. While Israel is defending itself, and does not always treat her Arab citizens and neighbours as she should, there is absolutely no evidence that Israel's actions are genocidal. Hamas, on the other hand, in its Charter calls for Israel to be “obliterated” (preamble) and for the killing of Jews (Article 7, final paragraph). It also declares that peace negotiations are “a waste of time” (Article 13). To the extent to which this seriously represents Hamas' position, there is one side of the conflict engaging in genocide – and it is not Israel.

In a recent speech in Germany, Finance Minister Yair Lapid made the following comments:

The Holocaust placed before Israel a dual challenge:

On the one hand it taught us that we must survive at any price, and be able to defend ourselves at any price. Trainloads of Jews will never again depart from a platform anywhere in the world. The security of the State of Israel and its citizens must forever be in our hands alone. We have friends, and I stand here among friends. The new Germany has proven its friendship to Israel time and again, but we must not, and we cannot, rely on anyone but ourselves.

On the other hand, the Holocaust taught us that no matter the circumstances we must always remain moral people. Human morality is not judged when everything is OK, it is judged by our ability to see the suffering of the other, even when we have every reason to see only our own.

Let us pray that 5775 is a year of peace, a year when we can simply get on with the act of living among our neighbours in harmony and when we can continue to work for a better world with those who seek justice for all.

**Melinda Jones**

## Despite Everything – We Are Still Singing



As you are no doubt aware, the situation in Israel during the recent Gaza War was far from optimal but we did our best to keep life as normal as possible.

ILAN managed to successfully hold the majority of summer camps

for children and adults, including the integration of the children from the South to summer camps in the North.

ILAN special schools in Tel Aviv continued their summer activities despite the threat of rockets. However all activities were restricted to protected spaces. The Onn kindergarten conducted its summer activities at Onn school. It is not easy to have 28 children from age 3-7 in the same protected room all day. We had plans to take them to the garden and to have fun outside but

this was not possible. We brought some volunteers who did special activities for them as clowns and others. The Onn School, with 140 children, stayed also in protected rooms without the possibilities to play outside. In Tel Aviv we had 1.5 minutes to get to the shelter or protected rooms from the time the alarm was sounded. This is not enough time to take 140 children with physical disabilities, the majority using wheelchairs, into a shelter – which is why the difficult decision to keep to the protected rooms was taken.

The Day Center For Adults With Physical Disabilities moved to the Center for the Blind in Tel Aviv, and had almost “normal” activities. We hope that soon we will start the construction of the planned new day center where a basement is planned with all the facilities to maintain operations during emergency situations.

Wishing you a Happy New Year & a year of peace and tranquility.

**Hana Laor, Chairwoman & Silvina Freund, Director Ilan Tel Aviv**

**To support the work of ILAN, please contact  
NCJWA Office 03 95230537 or your local Section.**





## The Middle East Conflict and The Lancet

The Lancet is one of the world's oldest and best known general medical journals. It is a weekly peer-reviewed medical journal that was founded in 1823. As well as publishing medical articles The Lancet has taken a political stand on some medical and non-medical issues. On 23 July this year The Lancet published "An open letter for the people in Gaza" by Manduca et al. The authors claimed that they "wish to denounce what we witness in the aggression of Gaza by Israel".

This letter was a flagrantly biased attack on Israel that made false claims against Israel's military and medical personnel. No evidence or facts for their allegations were provided, rather it was political rhetoric aimed at denigrate Israel. Regrettably the letter received over 20,000 signatures in support.

Both Israeli and international doctors responded rapidly to these outrageous claims. Only a small number of these responses were published by The Lancet. As Dr Leonid Eidelman, President of Israel Medical Association commented in a letter published on August 13, that "of course when one chooses to advance one's own political agenda and has a respected so-called scientific publication only too eager to help, facts are of little concern. As physicians and as human beings, we hope for a peaceful end to this conflict as well as a resumption of the non-biased, academic discourse to which we are accustomed."

We forwarded the links to support the rebuttals to the membership of Australasian Jewish Medical Federation. Recent contact with Dr Tamir Wolf, the primary author of a rebuttal was published in the Lancet, indicated that they received over 8000 medical and scientific professional supporters from around the world, which they very much appreciated. In addition to encouraging our members to support the rebuttals, we also circulated a petition to request Elsevier, the publishers of The Lancet, to dismiss the editor Richard Horton (who has a history of promoting Palestinian causes). Further, we have complained to The Lancet Ombudsman.

The World Association of Medical Journal Editors (WAMJE) submitted a response titled "How the Lancet abuses medicine for political ends". They called on medical workers and researchers irrespective of their stands on the Israeli-Gaza conflict to renounce medical journalism that spurs hatred, division and racism and ultimately erects political stumbling blocks to international collaboration.

We remain appalled that a medical journal disseminates lies and political extremism.

**Dr Miriam Kuttner**, President Australasian Jewish Medical Federation (VIC)

## Free Speech is Alive & Kicking in Australia

From the many newspaper and other media reports, you would be forgiven for thinking that freedom of speech in Australia was seriously compromised by 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act (RDA). You may also have heard that the "Israel lobby" suppresses legitimate criticism of Israel – and therefore those on the "left" have no outlets for the expression of their perspective. Both these views have been pushed on the Australian public, yet in both cases the positions proffered are misleading.

With respect to the alleged suppression of views by the "Israel lobby" (which harkens back to the old antisemitic trope of Jews controlling the world), it is a case of "she protests too much". The frequency with which this view is expressed, accompanied by harsh critiques of Israeli action, proves the opposite to the claim. There is no shortage of "anti-Israel", "anti-Zionist" speech here and elsewhere, which on occasion engages in not so subtle slippage to "anti-Jewism"/antisemitism.

Some may wish that 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act had the effect of silencing antisemitic views. If that were the case there would be one of two possible outcomes. First, the law would act as a shield to the extent that people were afraid to express antisemitic views. Alternatively, we would expect to have many people punished – jailed, or at least fined – for the overt antisemitism expressed in the name of supporting the citizens of Gaza. Yet none of this occurred.

The debate about 18C and the RDA was the direct result of the election of the Abbott government. The government announced that it would repeal the Racial Hatred laws for 3 reasons:

1. 18C imposes unreasonable limitation on freedom of speech;
2. it is inappropriate to have a law which punished a person for merely offending another; and
3. it is wrong to have a law outlawing hatred on the basis of race, if there was not also a law against the expression of hatred against women or people with disabilities.

The government backed down after community outrage about the proposed repeal of the law. This was not simply because the proposal was unpopular. It was also because submission after submission demonstrated that this involved a misunderstanding of the law.

Along with 18C, there is also 18A, 18B & 18D – all of which are part of the package. There are many exceptions, including for fair comment and public debate, which ensure that free speech is stronger with the law than without it. There has never been a successful case where the offense was trivial and no one has been jailed in Australia for expressing a racist position.

On the other hand, the law has proved quite effective in persuading internet providers to block much of the worst hatred published online. The law would be even more effective in dealing with social media if it were amended to fine those who express hatred.

In a tolerant society we have to protect the speech of those who are disempowered by expressions of racism, and provide a means of giving voice to those who are silenced by hatred. If anything we need law protecting against hatred directed at women, people with disabilities and people of different religions.

**Melinda Jones**

# GLOBAL ANTISEMITISM & HATRED



In Western European societies, reports of both antisemitic activity and the fears of Jewish residents are at alarmingly high levels. In North and South America, Australia and other countries where there are Jewish communities, there have been varying degrees of increases in the violence and seriousness of incidents and the impact on the well-being, as well as feeling of security, of the Jewish people.

Each country has a unique set of circumstances and while experiences of antisemitism may have similarities there are also many differences. Nevertheless, there are a number of global issues which require international responses.

First, strains of far-right wing antisemitic nationalism, which sometimes include elements drawn from Christian historiographies of contempt and hatred to Jews, were never extinguished. The poisonous ideologies now can reach far greater audiences than ever before due to the development of online communication. Further, disillusion in many countries with mainstream politicians and conventional parliamentary politics has provided a pool for recruiting young people to ideologies of hatred, fuelled by conspiracy theories.

A second factor has been a widespread abrogation by the political left of any responsibility to combat antisemitism and the co-option of antisemitism by some far-left movements. The blurring of lines between criticism of Israeli actions to opposition to Israel's very existence, to the right of Jewish people to be considered equal members of the human family, has developed to a position where it has become almost unexceptional.

While sections of the left have become complicit in promoting antisemitic atmospherics, there has also been an explosion of open hostility from some Arab and Muslim groups in the West. Attacks on Jewish individuals and institutions in a number of European cities have been committed openly by individuals purporting to be carrying out a war on Israel.

Significantly, the rhetoric heard in Sydney, as in other places, at anti-Israel rallies has been directed not at Israel or its supporters, but at all Jews - which make it clear that the existence of Israel (let alone the actions of its government) is irrelevant to the hatred expressed.

In the UK and France, comprehensive analyses revealed a doubling of the number of reported incidents of violence against Jews over a comparable period. Although data is not widely available, anecdotal information suggests this is a general pattern. With a few notable exceptions, response by political leaders was late in coming, which added to the distress of Jewish communities.



Social media added to the impact of anti-Jewish activity, as it brought some Jewish people into direct contact with putrid rhetoric and chilling threats for the first time.

Disgraceful failures by media outlets to moderate comments on their web pages, the lack of diligence by the major players in social media with regards to abuse of their platforms and the viral spread of defamation via information-sharing outlets has led to a feeling by many Jewish people that anti-Jewish activity has reached virtually unprecedented levels.

On the positive side, a number of European leaders made their opposition to antisemitism - and those who promote it - abundantly clear. Incidents of actual violence (as against promotion or incitement of hatred) received strong, firm and speedy condemnations.

After an unacceptable delay, a number of Christian leaders, and some Muslim figures, as well as representatives of other faiths, made appropriately strong statements condemning bigotry, prejudice and anti-Jewish incitement. Public demonstrations of support for Jews by non-Jews have taken place in cities across the globe.

Unfortunately, far too many of the individuals involved in antisemitic activity received no consequences for their actions. Those who marched through central Sydney chanting anti-Jewish war cries would have felt empowered by the politicians and civic leaders who marched with them and did not issue a word of criticism. The purveyors of anti-Jewish literature, so often chastised by co-religionists, instead found MPs and mayors who defended them - for reasons one can only imagine!

A willingness to excuse the promotion of medieval and pre-medieval anti-Jewish slanders as if they were in some ways legitimate criticism of policies of the Israeli Government would be laughable if it were not so deleterious to our societies.

In Australia and internationally, considerable efforts are being made to develop societies in which antisemitism is understood to be abhorrent, destructive and an issue not just for Jews but for everyone.

No one underestimates how much more work needs to be done - but there is a growing commitment by the Jewish people and our allies to do the work.

## **Jeremy Jones AM**

Director of International and of Community Affairs for the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council.



## Empowering Youth at Risk at the Haifa Rape Crisis Center



Over the past year there have been many reports of incidents of sexual abuse of at-risk girls in Israel. HRCC is regrettably too familiar with instances where such girls are trapped in the hands of men and youths who take advantage of their innocence and social vulnerability. In fact research shows that at risk youths are at much higher level of vulnerability and exposure of sexual abuse compared with the rest of the population. Gladly, thanks to your support, we were able to offer our services to this group throughout the school year.

Empowering Youth at Risk focused on sexual violence and its prevention and works with groups of children and adolescents who are recognized as needing special services in light of their having been abused (physically, sexually, emotionally) and/or neglected. This group is particularly vulnerable to future abuse because of low self-esteem and a tendency to see themselves as victims who have no control over what happens to them.

During 2014 the project worked with three groups of youth at risk:

- Girls and boys at risk in after school programs (173 participants & 144 meetings)
- Girls and boys in schools for youth at risk: (109 participants & 24 meetings)
- Girls and boys at risk in boarding schools: (660 participants & 180 meetings)

In working with boys, the emphasis is both on preventing their being abused but also on preventing their abusing others by encouraging mutually respectful relationships and the seeking of consent in sexual relationships.

**Tali Meir**, Fundraising Coordinator for the Haifa Rape Crisis Center.

**To support the work of HRCC, please contact the NCJWA Office 03 95230537 or your local Section.**

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## Pathways to Respectful Relationships Forum

NCJWA Victoria was one of the organisations which recently helped organise a forum to promote the prevention of family violence, Pathways to Respectful Relationships. Other organisations who participated in arranging this event were, the Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence, Impact and the Jewish Community Council of Victoria. Over 150 people attended from both the Jewish and wider communities.

The Manager of Salvation Army Family Violence Services, Alice Coakes commented: "More than 1 in 3 Australian women have been subjected to violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime and approximately 1 in 4 children and young people have witnessed family violence," Ms Coakes said. "Forums such as this one are a great way for community agencies to come together in bringing this issue to public attention and providing an opportunity for all of us to explore how we can make Victoria a safer place for all women and children."



*Pathways to Respectful Relationships Forum: L-R Elizabeth Miller MP, Hon Mary Wooldridge MP, Debbie Wiener, Chair JTAV, David Southwick MP, Maya Avdibegovic, Rodney Vlasis, Rosie Batty, Fiona McCormack, Annette Sweet, Ken Lay & Clem Newton-Brown MP*



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# Misogyny and the Internet



Chetna Mahadik

Jo Silver

Two incidents in the last month have sparked a debate about online misogyny and sexism: the hacking and publishing of the nude photos of women celebrities and the intense online harassment of the feminist video-blogger Anita Sarkeesian after she posted a video highlighting the misogynistic nature of most online games. In fact, the rape and death threats sent to Sarkeesian on Twitter were so direct and targeted that she had to move out of her house for a while.

Together, they throw light on two different kinds of ways in which the Internet is used to harass women.

The first is to cause direct reputational damage to women by means such as slut-shaming, revenge porn, circulating rape videos for extortion or shaming and malicious impersonation. It is not just celebrities who are victimised in this way. It is happening to ordinary women around the world, who have paid the price by way of lost jobs, incomes and relationships.

The second is the use of internet to threaten and intimidate women out of the public debate. Women journalists and bloggers are regularly threatened with rape and death threats on social media for being politically outspoken. The idea is to intimidate them into moving out of the public domain voluntarily.

What is common between the two kinds of harassments is the sexually explicit nature of it. As the author of a recent book "Hate Crimes in Cyber Space" Danielle Citron explained in an interview: "It is sexually demeaning, it's sexually threatening, it reduces the victims to basically their sexual organs, and sends the message that all they're there for is to be sexually abused, used and thrown away, that they offer nothing."

Australia is not immune to this Internet culture. One of the most famous cases of slut shaming to emerge out of Australia was the Facebook Page set-up last year called "Sluts of Perth": a public page set-up to humiliate women for fun or revenge. It was removed but only after the media reported on it. A back-up page has since reappeared, which despite being reported several times hasn't been removed.

Also, being the prime minister did not stop anonymous trolls from savaging Julia Gillard's Facebook page with sexist remarks of the worst kind.

For Jewish women, online misogyny represents a bigger problem. The community is small and closely connected, incidents circulate readily and there are few degrees of separation between community members. As such, online incidents can wreak havoc within families, networks and community. The culture is so much a part of Jewish life, leaving the community and establishing yourself elsewhere is not easy; for religious women with an even smaller network, this would be difficult indeed.

Is there anything that can be done?

Yes. The answer lies in first recognising the problem for what it is – hate against women. It is not OK to use sexually intimidating,

humiliating or threatening social media posts about women, either for fun, or to humiliate them, or to silence them. This is not about the freedom of expression of men, it is about women's right to live a life free of intimidation and fear.

The Internet is the space where we conduct our social lives: we speak to our friends, we play games, we discuss and debate issues, we store our photos and life stories. Increasingly, it is getting integrated into our professional lives. Employers "google" their potential employees and scour through social media to check their backgrounds. Journalists, bloggers, academics, public personalities depend on the Internet to get their word out. Intimidation and violence against women should not be acceptable on the Internet anymore than it is allowed inside people's homes, work places, universities and social spaces.

After Anita Sarkeesian was cybermobbed by gamers, an influential video gaming designer Andreas Zecher wrote an open letter requesting gamers to respect critics of video games, including women. Thousands of members of the gaming industry rushed in to sign the letter.

But the problem is too important to be left to the industry to sort out. We need the political leadership to set regulations to which platform operators must adhere. And we need community education to assist people to quickly recognise and respond to online misogyny, thus minimizing the spread of the incidence.

There was a time when the business community argued against stringent laws against sexual harassment in work places. People argued it cannot be done. But proper laws and their implementation changed workplace culture. We believe the sexual harassment can be similarly erased out of the online culture with the proper push from the political leadership.

**Chetna Mahadik** is the Communications Officer for Online Hate Prevention Institute and **Jo Silver** is a Director. [www.ohpi.org.au](http://www.ohpi.org.au)



## WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?

Take Back The Tech is a global campaign that connects the issue of violence against women with information and communications technology (ICT). It aims to raise awareness on the way violence against women is occurring on ICT platforms such as the Internet and mobile phones, and to call for people to use ICT in activism to end violence against women.

The campaign highlights the way that violence against women is taking new forms including:

- Online harassment involves the sending of repeated, unwanted, threatening and/or sexualised messages through the use of email or SMS. This can also include posting personal information about the victim and/or digitally altered images of the victim on public forums and websites, often accompanied by messages that solicit sexual or violent responses.
- Cyberstalking involves the use of social networking platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to track a person's activity and movements, the use of spyware to monitor a person's computer and Internet use, and the use of global satellite positioning devices to track a person's physical movement and location.
- Online violation of privacy and blackmail includes actual or threatened posting of private photographs and video clips - usually sexualised - with the aim of humiliating another person or to making the person comply with the demands of the poster.

Of the more than 4,000 cases of cyberstalking reported to Halt Online Abuse ([www.haltabuse.org](http://www.haltabuse.org)) since 2000, 70% of victims were female. We're all too familiar with the death and rape threats women receive on Twitter, Facebook pages devoted to violence against women and sexual and violent responses to the YouTube videos of women in fields dominated by men.

Take Back The Tech is demanding answers and action from Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. To find out more about how you can participate in ending violence against women, go to <https://www.takebackthetech.net/>

## President's Report



Di Hirsh (standing on the right) with fellow participants in the Joint Journey to Jerusalem

These past few months I have been involved in a number of interfaith activities. In May I was privileged to be part of a Joint Journey to Jerusalem: 4 Jews, 4 Muslims and 4 Christians visited Jerusalem to experience each other's holy sites and discuss texts together. It was a truly amazing experience to be part of a group of people with such diverse backgrounds.

We were all keen to know more about each other and share our beliefs. We have since spoken at a number of different venues about our journey and been interviewed by Dr Rachael Kohn on 'The Spirit of Things' on Radio National. The podcast can be heard at <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/spiritofthings/a-joint-journey-to-jerusalem/5691684>.

I have also attended the Asia Religions for Peace Assembly in South Korea, where I met many interesting people from a variety of faiths and countries throughout Asia. I believe it is very important for Jewish people to be part of the interfaith conversation and to be seen at the table. There was only one other Jew present, also from Melbourne.

We must also be seen and heard in relation to women's rights and issues of concern to women world-wide. The theme of our National Conference to be held in Sydney next year is: Jewish Women Unite - Be Seen Be Heard.

**Di Hirsh, National President NCJWA**

## From Roots to Fruits. Jewish Women Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: International Council of Jewish Women Convention



Australian delegates at ICJW Convention in Prague. New ICJW President, Robyn Lenn OAM, is 5th from left.

NCJWA was represented at the recent ICJW Convention held in Prague, with the theme From Roots to Fruits. Jewish Women Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. Approximately 130 women from 28 affiliates attended and there was also an observer from Armenia who is becoming an associate member.

The Convention, released Resolutions in three key areas:

1. Support for Israel and condemnation of the BDS campaign.
2. Expression of horror at the kidnapping and trafficking of girls in Nigeria, as well as solidarity with their families and a call for support for all for government efforts to rescue them.
3. Deploing all forms of human trafficking and calling on all Governments and International Organisations to work collaboratively to adopt a position of "zero tolerance".

A number of Australians are now on the ICJW Executive (see page 9).

Our thanks go to Alice Vesela and the Council of Jewish Women of Czech Republic for a wonderful Convention.

**Di Hirsh, National President NCJWA**

## Take Action Against Human Trafficking



Modern day slavery involves child trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude and trafficking for sexual exploitation. There are many ways you can act to make a difference to the millions of men, women & children who are caught up in modern-day slavery.

### 1. Become Informed

NCJWA works with Stop the Traffik and we recommend their website as a good starting point. <http://www.stopthetraffik.org/australia>

Anti-Slavery Australia, based at UTS in Sydney, has developed a free, on-line course about modern day slavery: <http://www.antislavery.org.au/e-learning.html>

### 2. Send a Postcard or an Email

Without losing focus on the chocolate industry, attention is also being paid to the issue of the over 200,000 young women and girls are trafficked to work in cotton spinning, weaving and dyeing mills in the Tamil Nadu region of India. Because it is not currently possible to know which items or which shops sell items that are made with cotton that is free from human trafficking, the aim of the campaign is to make companies accountable for their chain of supply. Stop the Traffik make it very easy for you to act: <http://www.stopthetraffik.org/au/fashion>

### 3. Organise an Event

In the UK, October 18 was declared to be Anti-Slavery Day by Act of Parliament in 2010 to raise awareness of modern slavery and to inspire people to eliminate it. While this has not been replicated in Australia, there is a global move to get churches and synagogues to celebrate a day of worship, prayer and action on human trafficking.

On Saturday 18th October or Sunday 19th October 2014, religious institutions all over the world are joining together to raise awareness of the crime of human trafficking and show the world our compassion for men, women and children who are trafficked and exploited. The aim is for the religious body to demonstrate a united and tangible response to human trafficking. Freedom Sunday resources have been developed by members of 21 different denominations, networks and faith based groups – so there is ample & appropriate material for you to allow your community to join in the global celebration.

<http://www.freedomssunday.org/resources/>  
<http://www.stopthetraffik.org/campaign/freedomssunday>



# Introducing Robyn Lenn - the First Ever Australian President of ICJW



In May, Robyn Lenn OAM, from Sydney became Australia's first ever President of the International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW). Australia through Dr Fanny Reading was one of the foundation countries of the ICJW, so it is a great honour to finally have the ICJW Presidency on our shores.

Robyn has been a member of NCJWA since the mid 1970s and she has come a long way from her early membership of the NSW Northsider and Shifra Groups. She has held a range of positions on both the NCJWA NSW and National Boards including NSW President for six years and National Presidency from 2003-2007. She has also represented Australia at ICJW conferences for 20 years and held positions previously on the ICJW Board.

*Editorial Committee Member, Andrea Cooper, interviewed Robyn to find out more:*

## How does it feel being the first Australian ICJW President?

I am becoming comfortable in the new role, which is endlessly fascinating. It is also extremely time-consuming and could occupy every waking minute! Having been active in NCJWA for 40 years, I find ICJW an extension

of a familiar route. It is of course much broader, with dozens of Jewish women's organisations to consider and work with.

The fact that ICJW appointed an Australian president is an honour for NCJWA, showing recognition of our organisation as one of ICJW's early and esteemed affiliates. It is also an acknowledgement that within NCJWA the values inculcated since Dr Fanny Reading have been maintained through decades of leadership.

Today's world allows immediate and visible contact with any person around the globe, meaning that the home base for ICJW is virtually immaterial. Thus I am as easily able to work from the office in my home in Sydney as could an ICJW president anywhere.

## What does this mean for NCJWA?

Happily, I have formed a great team of NCJWA members to work with me on ICJW matters. Several of them are ICJW stalwarts but others are new to international work. I must say that I ensured these members were not poached from NCJWA boards!

## What will be the impact on NCJWA?

Probably the greatest impact will come in 2018 when the next ICJW International Convention is held in Sydney!

## Will you be travelling much & to where?

There will certainly be plenty of travelling ahead in my four year term of office. ICJW Executive meetings are held every six months in different parts of the world, hosted by ICJW affiliates. I have planned the following meetings within my presidency: New York, Antwerp, Latin America, Nashville, Madrid, Israel, London and finally Sydney.

Additionally I am planning to visit as many ICJW affiliates as possible

over my term of office. In May after the Prague Convention I visited three affiliates – Budapest, Kosice and Sofia – wonderful meeting affiliate members in each city.

In November, I will meet with the Swiss affiliate in Zurich, USA members in New York and Canadian members in Toronto and Vancouver. In March 2015, I will visit Mexican members, and in May affiliates in UK, Belgium and France.

## What is the biggest difference between working at the national level and the international level?

There are several big differences in my responsibilities as an international leader. Since I began my presidency there have been a number of serious crises in countries of ICJW affiliates. The Israel/ Gaza conflict, the Ukraine / Russia conflict, the rise of anti-Semitism in many parts of the world, particularly in Europe where ICJW has 22 affiliate organisations. Then the life-threatening environmental issues such as floods in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia – all these matters concern ICJW members and involve us in supportive action.

The other important difference is ICJW's relationship to international organisations such as UN where ICJW has consultative status and maintains permanent delegations in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Paris. We maintain accredited representatives to a number of global organisations, both Jewish and general. It is a source of great pride to all ICJW members that the voice of Jewish women may be heard around the world, involved in many issues of importance. I am pleased to be attending the Beijing Platform for Action meetings in Geneva this November and the Commission on the Status of Women meetings in New York next March.

## ICJW Australian Executive Members

ICJW President - **Robyn Lenn OAM**

Affiliate President - **Di Hirsh OAM**

ICJW Australian Vice-President  
- **Susie Ivany**

Chair Asia-Pacific Region  
- **Vivien Brass**

Vice Chair Asia-Pacific Region  
- **Dr Anita Shroot**

Chair Public Relations &  
Communication - **Eva Robey**

Chair Environment & Development  
- **Dr Anne Morris**

Chair Interfaith & Intercultural  
- **Di Hirsh OAM**

Chair Volunteer Training (Isabelle Brown Fund) - **Malvina Malinek OAM**

Vice Chair Volunteer Training (Isabelle Brown Fund) - **Rhoda Berman**

Vice Chair Status of Women in Jewish Law  
- **Susie Ivany**

Life Members - **Malvina Malinek OAM, Sylvia Gelman AM MBE**

## In Memoriam



Bina and Arthur Best

### Bina Best

In early September Bina Best a NCJWA member for over 60 years died suddenly, aged 94. Only a few days earlier she was still driving around helping her friends. This typifies the life of Bina and her late husband Arthur, always being available to help others.

In 1953 Dr Fanny Reading met with a small group of Jewish women in Preston. Bina was so impressed that she immediately joined NCJWA, founding the Preston group. Later she was very involved with the Alma group

and was especially known for running their annual Cup Day luncheon.

Bina along with her husband Arthur were amongst the first volunteers when Essie Wieselmann started Kosher Meals on Wheels. Together they would make sure that needy people in 'far flung' Preston, Brunswick and Carlton did not miss out.

Bina Best was NCJWA National Treasurer from 1985 -1991.

As the years went on Bina and Arthur Best's lives became one of almost perpetual community service. Visitors to their home, would be impressed with their many Certificates and Trophies from various organisations: JNF, UIA, Emmy Monash Home, City of Glen Eira, NCJWA, Ashwood and B'nai B'rith.

Perhaps the most memorable Award was from 2000. Nominated by NCJWA Victoria for their volunteer work they received a trophy and cheque of \$10,000 for NCJWA Victoria. Bina Best was our NCJWA Bus Convenor for many years and Arthur our original driver. The late Vera Cohen conferred on Arthur, NCJWA's first honorary male membership!

In 2007 Bina was awarded Honorary Life membership of NCJWA VIC.

Bina was most welcoming and always gave me a lot of support. She was a true role model

She will be sadly missed

**Rysia Rozen OAM**

**Past National and Victorian President NCJWA**



### Pam Goldstein

Pam Goldstein, a Life Member and Trustee of NCJWA Gold Coast passed away in May after a 12 year battle with cancer.

Pam was a founding member of the NCJWA Gold Coast

Section and for many years the majority of our Section's functions were held at her home.

She was always available to help or to arrange a Council activity and in 1995 she became a Section Trustee.

In 2000, when Gold Coast Section hosted the National Conference, Pam was in charge of all catering for this week long conference. This included organising our very special opening boat cruise function and the launch of the Council History book.

It was during this conference that she received the Dr Fanny Reading Honour Badge for her dedicated and continued service to NCJWA Gold Coast

In 2010 she was made a Life Member of our Section

Pam can only be described as an inspiration to all who knew her, was a dear friend to many and supporter of NCJWA.

She will be missed and remembered by all.

**Barbara Stewart-Kann OAM**

**President NCJWA Gold Coast**

## Book Club



### The Boy's Own Manual to Being a Proper Jew

by Eli Glasman

At a recent interview with author Eli Glasman, an audience member claimed that "this is the first Australian Young Adult novel with a gay protagonist."

It is, without a doubt, the first one with a gay protagonist who is also a Lubavitcher hasid.

The Boys Own Manual to Being a Proper Jew introduces us to Yossi, who is faced with the

choice of admitting to his sexuality or remaining committed to orthodox Judaism. The story is his journey to realising that maybe he doesn't have to give up either.

The novel is set in East St Kilda and the author evokes all the sights and sounds with which local readers will be familiar. We are introduced

to characters in the highly traditional Lubavitch community, who shun secular entertainment and whose young couples are introduced by matchmakers.

Yossi's gradual realisation of his sexuality torments him, as it conflicts so vehemently with Torah teachings and he tries to combat his feelings. When he meets Josh, a new-comer to the community, he is forced to confront these feelings, as Josh is also gay.

The story has two climaxes which feel both inevitable and very authentic. Yossi's sister's plea that he not come out until she is married, not to spoil her chances, rings very true to those who are at all familiar with the workings of a hasidic community.

The other characters, Yossi's father, sister and school friends, are well defined; Yossi's classmates are touchingly naive and earnest in the way of boys raised in a community that discourages mixing with the outside world.

Eli Glasman was brought up in the Lubavitch community. He has now left the community but clearly retains a warm affection for it, which he demonstrates in this poignant story of adolescent self-discovery

**Sandra Gillis** Book Review Editor



# Congratulations



Michelle Urban OAM and Jenny Shub OAM

Two NCJWA Western Australian members have recently been awarded Order of Australia Medals (OAM). NCJWA is proud to salute both of them and their achievements.

## Jenny Shub OAM

Jenny Shub has been a NCJWA Western Australian member for over 50 years, with much of her involvement hands-on. She has held NCJWA National Board positions such as Chair of Education and was Section President 1989-1998.

Her OAM citation includes a long list of community service activities both within the Jewish and wider communities. This includes a focus on her role within Holocaust education organisations. In 1990 she realised that time was running out, that it was important to record the stories of Holocaust survivors. The Holocaust Institute of Western Australia was born and Jenny initiated a program of research which included recording Holocaust survivor stories. This also led to her involvement in preparing nominations to Yad Vashem for 'Righteous Amongst Nations' Awards.

Jenny has had an over 40 year professional career as a school and education psychologist with credits including initiating counselling services within the Carmel School as well as a number of other Perth High Schools. She also spent time working with intellectually disabled children and their families.

Jenny Shub credits her continuing passion for community service and education to the inspiration of her late mother and the support of her husband Les.

## Michelle Urban OAM

Michelle Urban is a founder of the Jewish Historical Society of Western Australia.

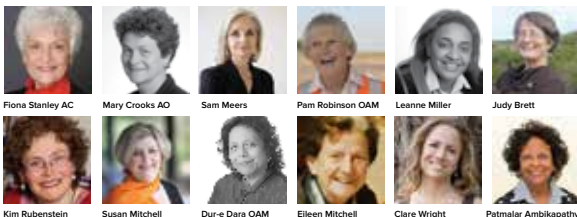
Growing up in Perth she is the daughter of a 4th generation Australian mother and a Holocaust survivor father. A strong awareness of her own heritage led to her keen involvement in ensuring that the heritage and cultural history of the Jewish community in Western Australia is recorded. Her role in preserving and recording WA Jewish history includes as a writer and editor, key research projects and exhibition programs.

Michelle's community involvement goes beyond local history. She is a long standing member of the NCJWA Western Australian Section's Yael Group and is the current organiser of the WA Jewish Communal Appeal.

## MONSTER CLIMATE PETITION

**Please join us — sign our petition to the House of Representatives.**

Twelve Australian women have come together to provide a simple but powerful mechanism for men, women and children across the country to give voice and plead for strong action on climate change. We are inspired by petitions in the past that have marked fundamental shifts in political thinking, such as the 1891 Monster Suffrage Petition to the Victorian Legislative Assembly.



### Join us and add your signatures if you:

- Want to let our politicians know that huge numbers of Australians desire urgent action to reduce carbon emissions; and that climate policy should be a bi-partisan priority rather than a political football;
- Believe in ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future for Australia;
- Believe that the solutions to climate change that exist in policy, science, industry, technology and within communities in Australia and internationally should be given every possible opportunity to succeed.

Between now and mid November, we aim to collect massive numbers of signatures in advance of the gathering of G20 leaders in mid November as well as taking the petition to the House of Representatives before the end of this year. Petitions to the House of Representatives must be pen on paper. Every one of us can sign, including our children.

**[www.monsterclimatepetition.com](http://www.monsterclimatepetition.com)**

Download all the forms you need. These are also available in 7 languages other than English. Start collecting signatures from your family, friends, clubs, businesses and community.

**Important: Please mail all petition forms by 8 November to the Victorian Women's Trust – Level 9/313 Latrobe Street Melbourne Vic 3000**  
The Monster Climate Petition is an independent initiative without any party political affiliation.

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**86 High St**  
**Kew VIC 3101**  
**Tel: 9853 1100**



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**Proud supporters of NCJW**



# News from the Sections

## Brisbane



*Kiri English-Hawke*

Our highlight event in recent months was the presentation on Sunday 24 August, by Kiri English-Hawke on her book *The Handkerchief Map*. An enthusiastic audience listened to Kiri talk about how she first wrote her book aged 15, without having had contact with any WW2 survivors. In early 2014, with the benefit of research, she has re-released her book.

Our fundraising has quietly continued in recent months we have been able to make donations to the Karuna Hospice in Brisbane and the Share-a-Book Program run by the Australian National Literacy Foundation. Our donation to Karuna Hospice was in honour of one of our long time members Zena Abrahams who passed away earlier this year.

Moving forward to late 2014 and into 2015 we have plans for a range of interesting speakers from a talk about the work at Karuna Hospice, Beyond Blue through to an Exercise physiologist. Please contact us via NCJWA national office to go onto our direct mailing list.

**Carolyn Goldsmith OAM**

## Canberra



*L-R Liana Levin performing Israeli and Hebrew songs at Canberra Section's AGM with Karen Tatz*

Our post Pesach activity kicked off on Sunday 2 May when we enjoyed our popular annual Show and Tell afternoon at the home of Karen Tatz, with the theme of "home-made". This year we brought hand-made objects, some of which we had made ourselves. The proceeds went to Breast Cancer Network Australia.

We held one of our regular successful movie nights for the whole community on Sunday 15 June at the National Jewish Memorial Centre, with the film *Everything is Illuminated*. We provided a warm supper on a cold winter night using the two large slow cookers NCJWA Canberra donated recently to the Centre. Proceeds from the function were donated to a local women's refuge.



*Karen Tatz displaying her crochet work at the Show and Tell.*

Talented performer Liana Levin provided a musical performance of Israeli and Hebrew songs at our AGM on 20 July. This was held at the home of Sylvia Deutsch. Glass artist Galia Shy donated one of her beautiful mirrors as our raffle prize. Re-elected unopposed to the steering committee were Barbara Butow, Yael Cass, Sarit Cohen, Sylvia Deutsch, Jo Dixon, Janet Frommer, Yvette Goode, Anita Shroot, Fiona Sweet Formiatti and Karen Tatz.

By the time this goes to press we shall have held our second annual Short and Sweet Poetry Afternoon, on Sunday 7 September. This will be held at the home of Yvette Goode, with proceeds earmarked for the Haifa Rape Crisis Centre.

**Sylvia Deutsch**

## Gold Coast



*Luana Gorris addresses our audience at our Education Day event*

Against the back drop of the evil kidnapping and murder of the three Israeli boys and the loss of so many IDF and civilians in Israel, our section is also in mourning for the tragic loss of our Life Member/Trustee, Pam Goldstein. She will be missed and remembered by all.

As we all know, the best defence against misunderstanding and evil is education. We are proud to report on our successful Education Day – held on 29 June. Our topic was *Living on the Kibbutz*. Our Section secretary, Luana Goriss spoke on the history of the Kibbutz, from the ancient Essene communities in the Qumran over 2000 years ago, to the kibbutzim of the modern era. This was followed by a slideshow. Our guest speaker, Rivka Karmeli, a former kibbutznik, also spoke on her experience living on the kibbutz from the age of 4-16 years. For Rivka, the kibbutz was a 'foster home'. Her story was truly insightful.



*Rivka Karmeli speaking at our Education Day event.*



*Luana Gorris addresses our audience at our Education Day event*

# News from the Sections

Our AGM was held on 27 July. Thank you to all those who attended and to the ladies who provided a delicious spread to indulge in after the formalities. Although the meeting was overshadowed by the events happening in Israel and some closer to home, it was a very successful afternoon. There are no changes to the Executive who were all voted in for another term of office! They are President, Barbara Stewart-Kann OAM, Vice Presidents, Felicia Godwin & Sheila Catterall OAM, Hon Secretary, Luana Goriss, Hon Treasurer, Elaine Watson, Community Services, Barbara Stewart-Kann OAM & Felicia Godwin, Catering/Functions Rayna Lewis.

In the last 12 months we are proud that our membership has continued to increase and we welcomed the following new members over the past few months: Judith Dvorak, Karen Webel, Janette Kornhauser, Karen Kaufman, Evelyn Manning, Sally Yarrow and Celia Beare.

L'Shanah Tovah

To all members of NCJWA

**Tammy Raanan-Ota** – News Editor

## New South Wales



L-R Matt Kean MP representing Premier of NSW, Victoria Nadel, Robyn Lenn OAM, Gabrielle Upton MP & Di Hirsh OAM

We are thrilled that our own Robyn Lenn OAM has been inaugurated as the first Australian President of ICJW. We honoured her on 23 June with a cocktail event attended by members, friends, community leaders, politicians and our National President Di Hirsh. The hall was full for our AGM which followed. We welcomed two new members to the NSW board, Sylvia Lenny and Mandi Chonowitz-Jacobson. Life Member, Kate Feigen was presented with the NCJWA NSW JNF award by State Executive Director and Jerusalem Emissary, Yigal Shapir, for her many years of dedicated service to the NCJWA NSW.

On 24 July in the midst of the distressing situation in Israel/Gaza, it was empowering to be a part of our Transcultural "Women Helping Women" event. We packed another 1,000 birthing kits to be sent to women in developing countries. We were joined by volunteers from a variety of backgrounds and faiths as well as our own community.



MUM FOR MUM speaker Dr Leo Leader with some of his audience



L-R Isabelle Shapiro OAM and Mandi Chonowitz-Jacobson holding books by Kerryn Phelps.

A screening of the moving Kindertransport documentary *Into the Arms of Strangers* was organised by ILAN co-chair and Vice-President of the Kindertransport Association, Janet Merkur, at her home. Janet introduced the event and discussion that followed included 'second generation' descendants of Kindertransport speaking about their parents' and relatives' experiences. The film was again shown on 1 September during a daytime function at Council organised by our Progressive Group.

On 14 August the Jewish Women's Breast Cancer Network held an information evening with speaker Professor Kerryn Phelps AM on *How to Achieve Ultimate Wellness*.

This year the lead up to Rosh Hashana, has been busy, especially for our MUM FOR MUM program. Committee member, Gittel Muller organised a series of three well attended parenting and educational events. MUM FOR MUM co-ordinator Nadene Alhadeff has also held a number of professional in-services which have been popular with volunteers and those affiliated with the program.



Dr Yoke Berry organises volunteers at our Birthing Kit Morning event

On 25 August we also held a library/discussion event, *Jewish Women Writers*. Meanwhile our Co-Vice President and Status of Women Chair Dr Yoke Berry, held a screening of *Too Sexy Too Soon*. This raises awareness of the sexualisation and objectification of women. An ongoing program is planned, with a committee formed to take this project forward.

Our groups continue to hold regular events for our Israel projects with a theatre night organised by Northsiders and a Shifra group luncheon at Sunny Gold's home.

Progressive Group also holds regularly screenings of interesting films and afternoon teas.



# News from the Sections

Our final major event prior to the New Year, was on Monday 8 September with a Human rights focus. Our speaker was Professor Karen Zwi who talked on the topic - *Children in Immigration Detention- How Safe are They?*

I would like to thank all our members, volunteers and friends for their support and hope that the New Year brings happiness and real PEACE to all.

**Victoria Nadel - President NCJWA NSW**

## South Australia

Our little group continues to meet from time to time and we are all looking forward to our annual Cup Day event, which this year will be an afternoon tea in the Rose Harrison Hall.

We are also excited about a new initiative which we are announcing here in the Bulletin – the *NCJWA South Australia Coffee and Chat*. We are extending Council Greetings to any visitors to Adelaide. Please join us for a chat over a cup of tea or coffee. To make a time contact NCJWA National Office or email the Bulletin editorial team. We look forward to meeting you on your next visit to South Australia.

**Ruth Dunn**

## Victoria



*Reflections of Jerusalem evening. Front L-R Mary Coloe, Michael Gawenda, Mai Sarraj Back L-R Geraldine Doogue, Vivien Brass*

This is my first Bulletin report since becoming NCJWA Victorian President. I wish to acknowledge the hard work of my predecessor Vivien Brass. I want to recognise her instrumental role in securing a substantial grant of \$1 million, generously donated by Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO, for the renovation of Council House. We look forward to Vivien's ongoing contribution to NCJWA and this truly exciting project.

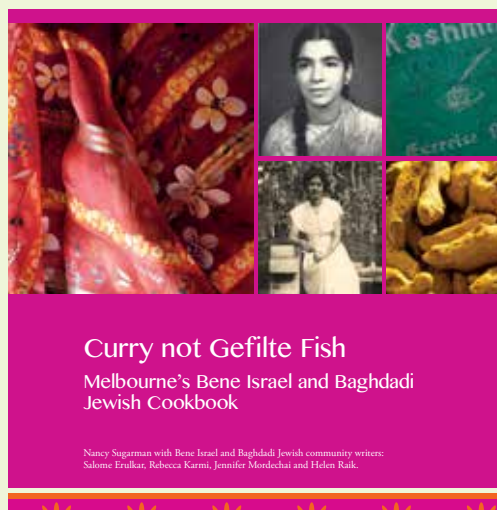
In May Victoria held a successful fundraising dinner *Reflections of Jerusalem*. Geraldine Doogue AO moderated a dynamic Interfaith panel including; Sister Mary Coloe, Michael Gawenda and Dr Mai Sarraj.

In June, during the Melbourne Jewish Writers Festival, we launched *Curry Not Gefilte Fish*. This book of recipes and stories is a result of a NCJWA community project supported by the Victorian Multicultural Commission. The book features recipes from Melbourne based Indian Jews who are from the Indian Bene Israel and Baghdadi communities.

Over the winter months we have held a number of interesting and entertaining events. These include a large group of 80 attending the premier of the updated version of Alan Hopwood's play *Wicked Widows*. An evening at Kew's Lyon House museum, where participants listened to organ music. On another occasion we listened to talented author Kiri English-Hawke speak about her republished book *The Handkerchief Map*. Whilst our recent annual Bridge Day served as a fundraiser for the Caring Mums program



*Shirley Glance (L) receiving her State President's badge from Vivien Brass*



*Curry not Gefilte Fish*

NCJWA Victoria's Caring Mums program continues to make a difference and grow. We are now assisting over 100 women from 26 ethnicities. Volunteers recently participated in a grief and loss training session with Keren Ludski, an experienced professional educator and counsellor. We are grateful for the grant supporting this program from the City of Bayside.

We have also recently received a grant from the City of Glen Eira for our Seniors Programs. Additionally a grant from Feed Melbourne will be used to upgrade our tired kitchen equipment.

During the AGM on 26 August a number of awards were presented. These included to Daphne Saltzman a Caulfield District Victorian Volunteer Award, the Sylvia Gelman Award for Outstanding Woman Educator in Victorian Jewish Studies to Michele Bernshaw, past Principal of The King David School, whilst this year's Fanny Reading Scholarship went to Alexandra Smirnova for outstanding achievement in Hebrew language subjects.

In addition NCJWA Victoria Honorary Life Membership was bestowed on Eva Besen AO, Susie Ivany and Dr Susan Feldman in recognition of their support, dedication and commitment to our organisation over many years.

On behalf of our Board and staff may I take the opportunity to wish all members and their families a Chag Sameach and well over the Fast.

**Shirley Glance - President NCJWA Victoria**



## Western Australia



*Together at the WA AGM*

On Sunday, 25 May, we held a special breakfast function at The Jewish Centre, entitled: *How To Raise A Nobel Laureate Son!* The guests of honour were the wife and mother of Professor Barry Marshall, Nobel Prize Laureate in Physiology and Medicine from the University of Western Australia. The Nobel Prize was awarded to Professor Marshall jointly with Robin Warren for the identification of *Helicobacter pylori* and its role in gastritis and peptic ulcer disease. We also took this opportunity to celebrate Shalom Group's 35th anniversary with a delicious cake. This was cut by Eve Cohen, the Group's President.

On 6 July, we held our AGM. Jean Finkelstein and Peggy Lowe were each awarded Life Memberships. Both started to work for Council in their teens and are now in their 80's, with remarkable stories of volunteering for Council. We had a L'chaim for them and also honoured our two members who recently received OAMs: Jenny Shub and Michelle Urban. It was a very uplifting event.

In August we helped to organise the annual Yolande Frank Memorial Award, a Human Rights drawing competition for Primary School children. This year Jill Green represented Council in the judge's panel.

On Tuesday 2 September we organised a fundraiser for MDA. This was a movie night as part of the Israeli Film Festival. Thank you goes to Joan Motta for her capable organization skills and hard work.

On behalf of our State Committee, our warm wishes for a Shanah Tovah Umetukah!

**Ester Steingieser** President, NCJWA WA

On Tuesday 29 April we gathered at the Maurice Zeffert Home for the Aged to mark a remarkable achievement and mitzvah. In 1973 a Kiosk was established by NCJWA, to give support and care to the residents. Since this time our NCJWA ladies, all volunteers, continued to manage the Kiosk. The members of our Gilad and Shalom Groups have provided much love and dedication to this project. They participated in the unveiling of a plaque honouring their over 30 years work at the Kiosk.

On 20 May some of our members attended the Inter-Religion Dialogue of the Council of Christians and Jews WA. The guest speaker was Dr Debbie Weissman, the first Jewish Woman President of the International Council of Christians and Jews. It was an inspiring meeting.

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**Simon Althaus**  
ANZIF (AFF)

**Proudly supporting our community organizations**



Wishing you all a wonderful healthy and peaceful 5775.

Shana Tova  
Melinda Jones  
& Andrea Cooper  
Editorial Team



Join us in Sydney at National Conference  
**31 May - 3 June 2015**  
**Jewish Women Unite**  
**Be Seen Be Heard**

Enquiries:  
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# A Sweet New Year

Amongst the many symbolic foods associated with Rosh HaShana, one of the most well-known is the eating of apple or challa dipped in honey, coupled with the declaration "May it be Your will HaShem, our G-d and the G-d of our ancestors, that You renew for us a good and sweet year."

Honey is an ancient food, its sweetness and other properties referenced throughout Tanachic and Midrashic literature. It is praised for its energy-yielding properties (Jonathan, son of King Saul found honey in forest during a battle against the Philistines and declared it invigorated him - I Samuel 14); it is noted for its medicinal and therapeutic properties (honey was used as a wound salve placed on sores of people and blisters on animals - Talmud tractate Shabbat 76b); it is applauded for its positive impact upon eyesight, "honey enlightening the eyes of man" (Yoma 83b); and the Torah is metaphorically compared to honey (Tehillim 19:11; Devarim Rabbah 1:6). More recently it has been discovered that, given its high levels of antioxidants - together with antibacterial and antifungal properties - honey may augment natural body defences against oxidative stress, thereby promoting good health. Its anti-microbial activity means that it is also never spoils and does not need refrigeration. Supplying an impressive 64 calories per tablespoon, providing fuel for working muscles, honey is a powerful food. But what deeper symbolism is there in honey, making it the food of choice on the Rosh HaShana table?

One reason for the custom of eating honey may be to connect the Jewish people to Israel. Often referred to in the Tanach as the "land of milk and honey", the honey in this laudatory expression referring to date-honey evokes images of abundance and agricultural prosperity. The blessing of a national-spiritual homeland should never be taken for granted; the astoundingly successful agricultural fertility of Israel is cause for pride and celebration. That half of the Jewish people now reside in Israel after two millennia of exile is a sign of Divine favour. Honey serves as a reminder of the Divine promise of a homeland and the good fortune associated with living at this time in history, wherein we are witnessing its renaissance.

Another reason for honey might be its association with the Exodus and subsequent 40 year period wherein the Jewish people were sustained by G-d in the desert. In contrast to the miracles of Egypt which the Midrash laments did little to alter the nation's faith, the manna - described as tasting like "dough fried in honey" (Shemot 16:31) - was instrumental in forging a more sustained faithful commitment to G-d and the Torah. Given that the Sages declare "our annual provisions are determined on Rosh HaShana", the recollection of the honey-flavoured manna "recalls our total dependence on G-d's beneficence", the reliance on G-d for sustenance in the desert being the appropriate mindset to adopt throughout the year.

Perhaps the inclusion of honey on our Rosh HaShana tables expresses a very powerful hope that, for all of us, the coming year is filled with all of the qualities of honey: its sweetness, its ability to mask the bitterness of life and its ability to remarkably reprocess all events, seeing in them their positive purpose. May all of us be blessed with honey's powerful properties, culminating in a physically, mentally and spiritually sweet new year.

**Adina Bankier-Karp** teacher and author of *Tsofim Ba'Parasha: Insights into the Weekly Torah Portion*



## Upcoming Events and Activities

### Brisbane

*Tuesday 4 November* - Annual Cup Day luncheon in support of Ethiopian Women's Fund in memory of Dr Geulah Solomon OAM z"l

*Thursday 2 October* - Interfaith Candle Lighting Ceremony for Peace and Hope-St Johns Cathedral, Brisbane

*Monday 16 February* - Come along for a morning tea and our first meeting of 2015

### Canberra

*Sunday 2 November* - Supper & Movie Night at the Centre

*Sunday 7 December 2pm* - NCJWA Founders Day - Elysse Borghi on Gender Violence & Jewish Ethics.

*Sunday 15 February 2015, 10.00am-12 noon*, Membership Garden Party

*Saturday 21 February 2015*, Council Shabbat

*Sunday 22 March 2015, 5.00-7.00pm*, cocktail party to celebrate 50th anniversary of founding of the Canberra Section

### Gold Coast

*Saturday 22 November* Screening My Name is Richard Rozen, the story of a child survivor of the Holocaust. Special guests will be Richard Rozen OAM and Rysia

### Rozen OAM

*March 2015* Council Month events will include a special Cocktail Party

### New South Wales

*Tuesday 14 October* Pink Sunday fundraiser- Kosher morning tea at Habitat & Style

*Tuesday 21 October* MUM FOR MUM fundraiser- brunch with our speaker psychologist and author- Heather Irvine

*Sunday 26 October* Annual Pink Sunday event 10am-noon. Keynote speaker Professor Allan Spigelman

*Sunday 30 November* Celebrating Israel cocktail party

*Monday 8 December* Founders Day and Book Club evening - Jewish Women Rebels facilitated by Rachael Kohn

### South Australia

*Tuesday 4 November* Annual Cup Day afternoon tea for the benefit of Ilan

2015 Coffee and Chat invitation for NCJWA visitors to Adelaide

### Victoria

*Sunday 16 November* Mitzvah Day - distribution of community care packages

*Sunday 7 December* UJEB Batmitzvah Program, NCJWA(Vic) component

*Wednesday 10 December* - Human Rights and Founders Day - Movie Night - The Gett

*Sunday 1 March 2015* - International Agunah Day participating in a joint Women's Event

*Tuesday 24 March 2015* - Forum on Violence Against Women: Fiona McCormack, CEO of Domestic Violence (Vic) in conversation with Rosie Batty, Pride of Australia Medal nominee

### Western Australia

*Sunday 30 November* Women Achievers and 85th Anniversary NCJWA WA - special guest Di Hirsh

*Tuesday 27 January 2015* Holocaust Remembrance Day Commemoration

*Thursday 19 March 2015* Richard Rozen - a Survivor Story - in partnership with the Holocaust Institute of WA

*Sunday 22 March 2015* Remembering Angela Davis OAM- a celebration of the life and dedication of Angela to Council - special guest Rysia Rozen

For further information on any of these Events, or Contacts in any other NCJWA Sections please look online at [www.ncjwa.org.au](http://www.ncjwa.org.au) or phone our National office 03 9523 0537

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Design: **Yacreative** M: 0412 991 993

Print: **Currency Print and Corporate Communications** T: (03) 9381 2333