



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA

2020
ISSUE 1

PESACH
EDITION

"Women working together can achieve anything." - Dr Fanny Reading MBE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



2020 has lurched from bushfires and subsequent flooding in Australia to a far greater disaster, the COVID-19 (Corona) Virus Pandemic which is impacting the whole globe, including our nation.

On March 18, National Office issued an announcement regarding COVID-19. In the announcement, we acknowledged that many events and activities have already been suspended or postponed by several Sections. We recommended that all NCJWA Sections' regular and planned events that involve people gathering in the same physical space be suspended and/or deferred, effective immediately until further notice.

We acknowledge that the suspension of normal operations is a difficult but essential action for the health of our Volunteers, Staff, Members and the Public.

On a positive note, we were all very pleased that the February 12, 2020 NCJWA Extraordinary General Meeting, unanimously adopted the new NCJWA constitution. Once again many thanks to Di Hirsh OAM and her Constitution sub-committee (Melinda Jones and Belinda Plotkin) for this achievement.

Another of our 2019 National Conference Resolutions is coming to fruition with the development of a cohesive and contemporary Branding for our organisation nearing completion. I shared the draft designs with the Sections present at our Leaders Forum on February 12 and followed up individually with most of them. Feedback has been mainly very positive and once these briefings are finalised, I look forward to rolling out the rebranding nationally, as soon as practicable.

Congratulations to NCJWA Vic for rolling out their rebranding, in March in parallel with

closing their office because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their work has been the driving force in enabling a national rollout of the new look for all the sections – watch this space.

Recently, the National Board and Section Leaders held an emergency Leadership Forum Zoom meeting (too late to buy shares now!) to share approaches and suggestions for dealing with the current situation. It was heartwarming to hear these gutsy women talk about how each section is rising to the occasion with the help of its younger members and assisting their members and friends to weather this storm.

These meetings will continue for the duration and are a fine example of our founding mother's favourite saying *"women working together can achieve anything"*.

We note too, the tremendous work being done by the State and Federal level Jewish and non-Jewish communal organisations, as well as the various government and public service organisations showing the power of focus and unity.

We are coming up to Pesach shortly and it will be a very memorable Seder this year – Zoom anyone?

When we celebrate the Seders, in the privacy of our individual homes, let's all reflect on the immense change we are undergoing and relate it to the Pesach upheaval and its message of hope and a new future. As many have said in the past "we survived Pharaoh, we'll get through this too".

I hope that all our members, their families, friends and the wider community stay well at this difficult time. We must look after each other, especially after those needing extra care at this time.

Wishing you all Chag Sameach

Negba Weiss-Dolev
National President

WA Section has had a busy few months. A music afternoon was held on 15th December at the Jewish Community Centre featuring Suzanne Kosowitz and her group, Kol Nafshi. Even though the temperature reached over 42C, a large audience attended. Suzanne's group played many favourite melodies including Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah, Fiddler on the Roof and Al Kol Ele. A delicious Grazing Table afternoon tea was served, prepared by Talia Lawrence and Lynne Swersky.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day was celebrated on Tuesday 28th January. NCJWA WA worked with the Holocaust Institute of WA to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz.



Rivka Majteles, an Auschwitz survivor, gave a very moving personal testimony of her experiences in Auschwitz. Lilian Kessly from NCJWA lit the memorial candle in honour and memory, of those who were murdered in the Holocaust.

International Women's Day was celebrated with a lunch at the Jewish Community Centre. The Keynote speaker was Professor Lynne Cohen AM. The Honour Badge Award and Angela Davis Community Service award were presented to Ester

Steingeisser and Jill Green, respectively. A raffle was held, and proceeds were donated to the RSPCA WA Bushfire appeal. We all wore purple to signify justice and equality for all women.

Shalom Group and Natanya Group have started their meetings and are thriving. New members are always welcome.



Dr. Ruth Perets is Director of the Women's Cancer Laboratory and an Attending Physician and Oncologist in the Oncology Division at Rambam Health Care Campus. Dr. Perets is the principal investigator of all Phase 1 clinical trials in Rambam's Oncology Division. Dr. Perets was visiting the Hudson institute at Monash Health, as part of an ongoing collaboration.

Dr. Perets spoke about ovarian cancer, a disease with grim prognosis, mostly because it is diagnosed at late stages, when it is widespread in patients, and no longer curable. Dr. Perets discussed the findings that

ovarian cancer often does not start from the ovaries, but rather from the fallopian tubes. She described the current evidence that this is indeed true, and detailed the implications to ovarian cancer prevention, especially in women at high familial risk for ovarian cancer. Dr. Perets also described the work currently done in her lab, explaining how understanding the fallopian tube origin can lead to future novel therapies, and better tailoring of therapy to specific patients.

Bushfire response

In view of the terrible disaster of the bushfires that devastated our country, it was decided that NCJWA Vic should donate directly to one of the agencies involved in crisis support. As we are a Victorian Incorporated Association, only Victorian causes could be supported.

Consequently, NCJWA Vic made a significant donation to Foodbank Victoria which is a non-denominational agency with a long history and good reputation.

We felt this was the best way of helping as giving directly to an established agency experienced in disaster relief meant that the money could be used quickly and effectively.

In addition, 33 special toiletries kits plus a large box of assorted toiletries were delivered to Operation Angel who supported evacuees and those working on the fire frontlines. NCJWA Vic Members collect and donate toiletries throughout the year as part of our Mitzvah Day efforts.

We also promoted the Jewish Bushfire Relief Fund through the JCCV appeal on our website and social media channels.



OBSERVERSHIP PROGRAM



*L-R:
NCJWA Vic Board member
Helen Lewin,
Board Observers Kelley
Hartman, Nicole Gandel,
NCJWA Vic President
Miriam Bass*

In February our 2020 Observership Program participants began their 12-month placement with NCJWA Vic.

The Program facilitates the involvement of talented and energetic individuals in a structured experience on not-for-profit Boards.

Each Board Observer is paired with a Board member to learn our Board culture

and expectations.

Our two new Board Observers, Kelley Hartman and Nicole Gandel attended our Board Training Day and will attend all Board Meetings throughout this year.

They will be involved in developing our digital marketing strategy and reviewing our events.

PRIDE MARCH

NCJWA Vic was represented at the annual Pride March on Sunday Feb 2, where about 100 people from the Jewish community joined with many others in a show of support for the LGBTQI community. It was a great day with fantastic atmosphere and a great opportunity to network with others and show our support for Aleph.



Doron Abromovich with NCJWA VIC President Miriam Bass

After a quiet December and January, our year started off with a great demo by Delia and Ronnit from Better Together Kitchen, after which we shared in a delightfully delicious lunch.

What a stunning way to start off the year!



And then the year rolls on with a joint event through the local WIZO and Courage to Care groups where Professor Gelber will present Hate Speech and its Effects.

Our program for the year is sorted in the majority and we look forward to a varied and interesting program.



CANBERRA

In November 2019 a Garden Party was held at the home of Judith Eisner. The guest speaker was Associate Professor Keren Hammerschlag who spoke about Jewish women in the visual arts.

At our recent Council Shabbat we joined with our local youth group CATZ who led the shul service. 16 year old Amy Joshua delivered an outstanding drasha.

A Shabbat lunch was held for the whole community, also welcoming Rabbi Elchanan Miller.

NCJWA recently helped with delivering Purim food gifts to our elderly and sick.

In other news, our dedicated treasurer Barbara Butow is moving to Sydney and Debra Hurwitz is taking over the role.

GOLD COAST

Gold Coast were prepared to hit the ground running with March Members Month. Unfortunately, due to the Corona virus restrictions, their events were cancelled.



Over the summer, Gold Coast raised over \$1200 in a Bushfire Appeal which was donated to the CWA of NSW Disaster Relief Fund.

OTHER NEWS

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



International Women's Day

International Women's Day was celebrated across the country, with Sections holding varied events.

NSW held a Council Shabbat paying tribute to women and celebrating Esther and WA held a lunch with Professor Lynne Cohen AM. Unfortunately, due to the onset of the Coronavirus, Victoria's planned event with Rachel Griffiths AM was cancelled.

CSW64
Commission on the Status of Women



BEIJING+25: REALIZING GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS
9-20 March 2020

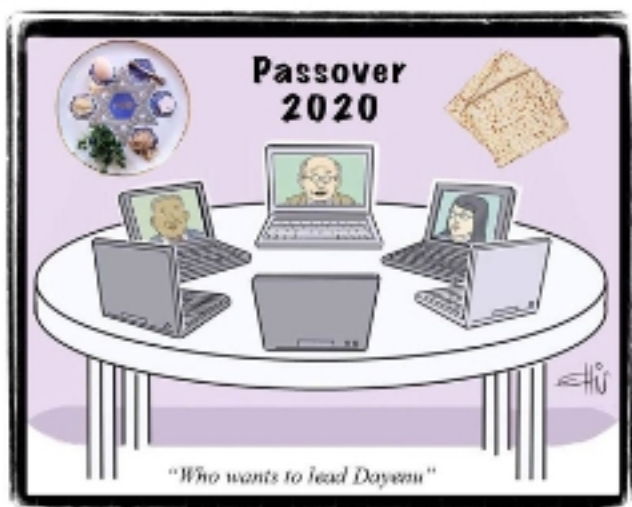
The UN Commission on the Status of Women was scheduled to be held from March 9 - 20 in New York. Unfortunately, it fell victim to Coronavirus restrictions and was cancelled. The only part of the Commission that went ahead was a procedural meeting on the 9th of March which included opening statements, followed by the adoption of the draft Political Declaration and action on any other draft resolutions.

VIRTUAL SEDER

With families remaining in their homes, Pesach this year will truly be a unique experience. Unfortunately, the seders will be particularly difficult for many.

There are some clever ideas being offered to deal with the seder, some great suggestions can be found in this article in USA Today:

[Planning a coronavirus Passover: Tips for a virtual Seder in a year unlike any other](#)



CORONA VIRUS CLOSURES

With the outbreak of the corona virus, we find ourselves in uncharted waters, living in uncertain and very difficult times. With the closure of Section offices across the country and the cancellation of all events, it is perhaps more important than ever that we all stay in touch and keep abreast of what we are doing – whether work related or home activities. Everyone's mental health is paramount so let's stay in touch and work together – and most importantly, stay healthy.

CONTACT NCJWA NATIONAL

info@ncjwa.org.au



@ncjwa

0420 891 923

PO Box 104
Balaclava 3183
Victoria

NCJWA.ORG.AU