

# Our Community Needs Support More Than Ever



# the elul project

This year will go down as one of the most memorable in our lifetime, with many struggles and challenges. It is a year we would never have expected and hopefully one that we will not see again.

The challenges have included running our lives from Zoom, working from home, remote learning for our kids and my Facebook activity reaching a whole new level to keep in touch with family and friends. Many of these changes would be similar to most families and career women and men and it has been remarkable how we have all adapted in these difficult times.

As a leader of a community organisation this has presented a number of additional challenges. I know that many working in community leadership roles do a wonderful job in sometimes difficult situations with limited resources. This year has been particularly difficult to run events and fundraise with many annual activities and milestones being sacrificed.

In my role as the President of UIA Victoria we were excited to have BIG celebrations for our 100th Year of supporting the national priorities of the State of Israel. We were fortunate to have our Gala with Rivlin, President of Israel but had to cancel many other events.

Like many community organisations we have pivoted to a number of online Zoom events.

It has been a year full of unexpected changes. I had recently taken over as Manager of our family's office furniture business, a business that was started by my late grandfather and his brother following the Holocaust. This has been a huge learning experience for me and although it hasn't been the best year to run a retail business we are doing our best to keep people employed and the business going. Our son started his first year of a Law degree at Monash University and hasn't seen a day on campus and our daughter has spent countless hours on Zoom learning at home instead of being in Boarding School for Year 11.

As a person who has always seen life as a 'cup half full', there have been a number of positives and learnings from these times.

During normal times I spend very little time at home, so this has been a real change for me. I have learnt to appreciate the small things, a trip the supermarket, a walk and a coffee, a distant view and wave to a friend, an online sale.

It's a joy for me to wake up knowing that both of our children are at home. Every morning my daughter, very happy dog Sammy and I head off for an early morning walk and coffee which has certainly been a highlight for me, that time to chat and connect.

People who know me, are aware that I have trouble boiling water, so lucky I have a husband who cooks for all of us while my daughter makes me watch teen Netflix shows.

No matter what, we are lucky to live in a caring community that looks out for one another. The upcoming Jewish Holidays will be a challenge but like everything this year we will have to adapt.

No matter what, we will get through this and I look forward to seeing you on the other side of COVID whatever and whenever that is.

Stay Well Stay Safe



## HAYLEY SOUTHWICK

Hayley Southwick is a married mother of two. A career woman who strives to give back to community and Israel through her role as UIA Victoria President.

## ABOUT THE ELUL PROJECT

An initiative aiming to share stories and teachings from Jewish women leaders in our community. Whilst many of us are stuck at home, or isolated from family over Elul and the High Holy Days, we hope this project will serve to inspire, nurture, and uplift during this difficult time.

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