

## Mayors "break bread" for Passover

1 April 2009

120 mayors and councillors from across the state gathered at a unique Passover dinner last week.

Minister for Local Government The Honourable Barbara Perry MP was guest of honour at the unprecedented event, which was held in Randwick Town Hall on April 1.

Organised by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, the Local Government Passover Dinner included the Mayors of Gosford, North Sydney, Ryde, Kogarah, Shoalhaven, Liverpool, Leichhardt, Waverley, Randwick, Woollahra and Botany Bay, as well as councillors from Kuring-gai.

From left: NSW Jewish Board of Deputies President Robin Margo S.C.; Randwick City Council Mayor Bruce-Notley Smith; Woollahra Mayor Andrew Petrie; Minister for Local Government The Hon. Barbara Perry MP; Waverley Mayor Sally Betts; Botany Bay Mayor Ron Hoenig.



Other guests included Shadow Special Minister of State Chris Hartcher MP, Local Government, Shires Association President

Genia McCaffery, who is also Mayor of North Sydney, and Stepan Kerkyasharian AM, Chair of the Community Relations Commission.

Guests enjoyed an evening of discussion, ritual, music and dancing as they participated in a contemporary celebration of the Jewish festival of Passover, led by Board of Deputies education manager Lynda Ben Menashe.

The function featured personal stories of freedom by Elias Farah from the Australian Federal Police; Dai Le, Community Relations Co-ordinator for the NSW Liberal Party; and Holocaust survivor Olga Horak.



Back from left: Shadow Special Minister of State Chris Hartcher MP; Michael Levy; Robin Margo S.C.; Stepan Kerkyasharian AM; front: Professor Herbert Huppert, North Sydney Mayor Genia McCaffery; Minister for Local Government The Hon. Barbara Perry MP; Renee Ferster Levy; Olga Horak.

Minister Perry spoke of the Government's commitment to community building and equitable representation of local communities on councils. She also applauded the Jewish community's commitment to social justice.

NSW Jewish Board of Deputies CEO Vic Alhadeff: "We celebrated our lives of freedom in this great state. And we did so through the prism of Jewish history, which serves as a microcosm both of the migrant experience to Australia, and of the importance of overcoming racism and taking our place among the family of communities which make up this great country."

From left: Kogarah Mayor Nickolas Varvaris; Shoalhaven City Council Mayor Paul Green; Gosford Mayor Christopher Holstein; Liverpool City Council Mayor Wendy Waller; Ryde City Council Vic Tagg; Minister for Local Government The Hon. Barbara Perry MP; NSW Jewish Board of Deputies President Robin Margo S.C.; North Sydney Mayor Genia McCaffery; Leichhardt Mayor Jamie Parker



The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies has previously held Passover Dinners for the trade unions (2006), interfaith leaders (2007) and educators (2008).

The Local Government Passover Dinner was funded by the JCA Lotben Fund in loving memory of Lotke and Bernard Ferster.

Photos: Ingrid Shakenovsky