



At The BOARD

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of the community



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Bridge-building tour reaches thousands

THE NSW Jewish Board of Deputies reached 800 people directly - plus thousands more through media interviews - during an intensive bridge-building tour of Central West NSW.

Board of Deputies CEO Vic Alhadeff and Education Manager Lynda Ben-Menashe visited Forbes, Parkes, Dubbo and Mudgee, conducting 19 engagements in a week - with eight schools, five media outlets, three Anglican churches, two Rotary clubs and one MP - Independent Member for Dubbo Dawn Fardell.

Topics covered included Israel, the Middle East, the Holocaust, the Jewish experience in Australia, Jewish belief and practice, racism and antisemitism.

The bridge-building tour is conducted as part of the Board of Deputies' Speaker Service.

"The response was overwhelming and the interest in all these issues extremely encouraging," Alhadeff said.

"The fact that half-a-dozen schools in Central West NSW requested presentations on the Holocaust is a clear indication of



With students at Parkes Christian School.



Board of Deputies CEO Vic Alhadeff and Education Manager Lynda Ben-Menashe with students at Parkes High School.

the abiding interest in this vital issue and the lessons which emanate from it."

Throughout their visit, Alhadeff and Ben-Menashe encouraged visits to the Sydney Jewish Museum and distributed educational materials, including the *Understanding Judaism* brochure which was published by the Board of Deputies; the anti-racism *Paper Clips* DVD; Alan Dershowitz's book *The Case for Israel*; Rabbi Raymond Apple's book *The Jewish Way*; promotional packages from the Sydney Jewish Museum; and lists of websites for

teachers to utilise.

They received numerous requests to return.

"Parts of Central West NSW are doing it tough because of the drought," Alhadeff said.

"We spoke about Israel's world-leading water-management practices, the fact that drip-irrigation - which is used extensively in the Central West - is Israeli technology, and the fact that Israel leads the world in water recycling.

"We encouraged connections with the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce, which conducts IT trade missions to Israel.

"We also found commonalities

between the local communities and Israel's experience in responding to terrorism, as the Forbes rugby team was in Bali and Forbes lost three of its sons there. We emphasised that the clash with democratic values for which those three young men were killed is what Israel faces on a daily basis."

A student at Mudgee High School disclosed that her Dutch great-grandparents saved Jews during the Holocaust.

Alhadeff and Ben-Menashe also visited the cemetery in Forbes, where they found three large Jewish tombstones, two of them inscribed "Vandenberg, 1864".

Journalists visit Israel

FOUR Sydney journalists spent a week in Israel as participants on the Board of Deputies' annual Journalists Mission.

Sydney Morning Herald deputy foreign editor Kirsty Needham, *Daily Telegraph* opinion editor Tim Blair, Radio 2UE presenter Glenn Wheeler and Radio 2GB journalist Joel Labi flew over the country by

helicopter, visited Sderot - the target of incessant rocket attacks from Gaza - and met with experts, politicians, strategists and commentators from across the spectrum.

The Journalists Mission is generously supported by Sabina Van Der Linden-Wolanski and the JCA Haberman and Kulawicz Fund.



Journalists Mission supporter Sabina Van Der Linden-Wolanski with Glenn Wheeler (2UE) and Kirsty Needham (*Sydney Morning Herald*). Inset: Tim Blair (*Daily Telegraph*, top right), Joel Labi (2GB). Main photo: Ingrid Shakenovsky



From the President

COMMUNAL security touches people's hearts. The word "security" conjures up different concepts in the minds of individuals.

However, in a communal context it is about ensuring the emotional and physical well-being of the individuals who make up our community and the institutions and facilities we use.

Elsewhere in this edition you will find information about what the Board is doing to ensure that the Jewish community's voice is heard by Government, media, the education sector, other faith and ethnic communities and the wider Australian community.

We work hard to make anti-semitism socially unacceptable, pressing government and other sectors to take action where the Jewish community cannot achieve that goal on its own.

The reality is that we live in a place where the frequency of anti-

semitic incidents continues at an unacceptable level. That is why the Communal Security Group (CSG) has become more visible and more effective over the last few years. Its work is increasingly valued by our community, as it should be.



CSG volunteers are now uniformed and their presence at schools, synagogues and community functions acts as a deterrent to those who would wish us harm.

The visible and highly effective parent volunteer teams at our schools have demonstrated their worth to the community. Parent volunteer teams as we know them did not operate just four years ago.

The CSG operates on five pillars: community support, trained personnel, intelligence, proper procedures, physical and technical security.

During the coming year much will happen to keep the essential work of the CSG front of mind for the community.

We are determined to build on the already-outstanding level of community support, to continue to train the hundreds of highly-trained volunteers, to maintain and develop our excellent contacts with the authorities and to improve the sound procedures we have in place to minimise the risks to our community.

It is, however, time for our community to focus on its physical security. Many communal buildings were constructed at a time when terrorism did not exist. Fortunately, many newer buildings have taken such threats into account in their planning and construction.

The authorities acknowledge that Jewish communal interests face a substantially higher risk of terrorism than the general popu-

lace and than other ethnic or religious targets.

Many of our synagogues, schools and institutions are working to protect members and visitors, relying on advice from the CSG. But it remains the responsibility of every member of the community to be alert and to contact the CSG - on 1300793274 - whenever a suspicious event occurs.

It is essential to support those whom we elect to lead our communal institutions in the efforts that are being undertaken to ensure that Jewish lives and the Jewish way of life continue to be protected and secure in NSW.



David D Knoll



Tom Breen, Dr Rachael Kohn, Margaret Gutman OAM, Alan Gold. Photos: Giselle Haber

Keneally at Kristallnacht

ACCLAIMED author Thomas Keneally AO (pictured) was the spearhead of a moving Kristallnacht ceremony, co-hosted by the Board of Deputies, Sydney Jewish Museum and Australian Association of Holocaust Survivors and Descendants.



Keneally was interviewed by ABC journalist Dr Rachael Kohn about his new play, *Either Or*. Extracts were performed by Matthew Foster and Ritchie Singer.

Either Or focuses on SS officer Kurt Gerstein - a chemist involved in providing Zyklon B gas for the mass murder of Jews. He attempted to sabotage shipments of the gas and notify authorities. Arrested after the war, he handed the Allies enough evidence to prosecute senior Nazis.

The packed hall also heard a personal account from Gertie Jellinek, a Kristallnacht survivor.

The ceremony was chaired by Board of Deputies Shoah Committee Chair Alan Gold, with Margaret Gutman OAM and Marika Weinberger OAM representing the Sydney Jewish Museum.

Education fast forward

THE Board of Deputies has established an Education Secretariat to increase its messaging to the wider community about Judaism and Israel, and to further develop its relationships in the education sector.

With Susi Brieger the Chair of the Board's Education Committee and Lynda Ben-Menashe the Manager of the Secretariat, its purpose is:

- to foster closer networks between Jewish education organisations.
 - to facilitate increased interaction between Jewish education organisations and the wider education community
 - to develop activities vis-a-vis the Department of Education, professional educational associations, unions, schools and universities
 - to build consensus for the benefit of promoting the community's interests in the education sector.
- Activities to date have included:
- taking students from Masada, Moriah and Emanuel to the Cultural Exchange in Schools Conference
 - a bridge-building tour of Central West NSW, with the



Board of Deputies President David Knoll with Moriah College students, from left, Daniel Hendler, Jonathan Morris, Joshua Lowy and Ben Falk at an advocacy seminar.

Board of Deputies CEO

- developing resource packs for schools studying "The Arab-Israel Conflict"
- working with the NSW Board of Studies, Department of Education and Association of Studies of Religion, History Teachers' Association and Islamic schools' curriculum representatives
- delivering advocacy seminars to Masada, Moriah and Emanuel students with the NSW State Zionist Council. Facilitators included AUJS President Jessica Roth, Hillel Director Gary Samowitz, Shlichah Sima Guttman, member of the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency Ron Weiser and Board of Deputies President David Knoll.



Youth talking to youth

THE Board of Deputies brought together a total of 300 Muslim, Christian and Jewish teenagers in 2007 under the umbrella of its Youth Encounters programme.

Established in 2004 with 20 Year 11 students from each of the three faith groups, the inter-faith bridge-building programme has expanded each year so that it now encompasses about 25 schools, with 100 students from each faith group.

The students engage in discussion and interaction, using the opportunity to explore the meanings of specific rituals and finding the commonalities which they share.

Board of Deputies CEO Vic Alhadeff: "When students representing faith groups interact, the exchange empowers them to



Students explore their commonalities.

articulate their beliefs, develop an understanding of differences and, most importantly, challenge prejudice. This programme does all of that and is a great antidote to racism."

The Muslim Affinity Intercultural Foundation and Kincoppal Rose Bay are the Board of Deputies' Muslim and Christian partners in the programme respectively.



Jewish, Muslim and Christian Youth Encounters participants. Photos: Ingrid Shakenovsky



Board of Deputies Honorary Life Member **Robert Goot AM SC** was elected President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry.



Board of Deputies Executive member **Jeremy Jones AM** received the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's medal for human rights work.



Board of Deputies Interfaith Committee Chair **Josie Lacey OAM** receives an award for interfaith work from Uniting Church Past President Jim Mein at the Affinity Intercultural Foundation's annual dinner.

Israel's humanitarian face



From left: Muslim Affinity Foundation President **Mehmet Saral**, Greens MP **Ian Cohen**, **Stephen Chipkin** of Investec, which hosted the function, and Peres Centre Sydney Executive Director **Tanya Oziel**.

The humanitarian face of Israel was seen at its best at an innovative boardroom dinner hosted by the Board of Deputies and the Sydney chapter of the Peres Centre for Peace. Guests included Muslim leaders, journalists from the *Sydney*

Morning Herald, ABC and Radio 2UE, church leaders and Greens MP Ian Cohen. The Peres Centre's projects in Israel and the territories include thousands of Palestinian children being treated in Israeli hospitals and Israeli doctors training Palestinian doctors.

Board co-hosts Pratt Orator



Dr **Karen Knoll**, **Sally** and Dr **Michael Oren**.

Leading Israeli political analyst and author Dr Michael Oren delivered the inaugural Pratt Orator in Sydney under the joint auspices of the Board of Deputies. He discussed the concept which David Ben-Gurion defined as *mamlachtiut* – the need for a state to find the balance between power and morality.

Israeli jurist at breakfast

Justice Salim Joubran, the only Arab on the bench of the Israeli Supreme Court, addressed jurists at a breakfast hosted by the Board of Deputies and the Australian Friends of Haifa University. He discussed the court's challenge of finding a balance between security needs and human rights.

From left: Board of Deputies Vice-President **Robin Margo SC**, Justice **Salim Joubran**, JCA Vice-President **Jillian Segal AM**, Commonwealth Solicitor-General **David Bennett AO QC**.



Opinion-makers at lunch

THE Board of Deputies Luncheon Club provides a forum in which opinion-makers engage with leaders of the Jewish community.

Speakers in 2007 included: Radio 2UE presenter **Glenn Wheeler**, *Sydney Morning Herald* deputy foreign editor **Kirsty Needham** and columnist **Peter FitzSimons**, *Daily Telegraph* opinion editor **Tim Blair**, **Julia Gillard** (later elected Deputy Prime Minister), then-Defence Minister **Dr Brendan Nelson**, **Mark Dreyfus QC** (later elected

the Member for Isaacs), *Australian* political editor **Dennis Shanahan** and columnist **Janet Albrechtsen**, SBS Radio Head **Paula Masselos**, current and former NSW Opposition Leaders **Barry O'Farrell** and **Peter Debnam**, Deputy Premier **John Watkins**, MP **Chris Bowen** (later elected Assistant Treasurer), Palestinian Media Watch Director **Itamar Marcus**, former Israeli Deputy Defence Minister **Ephraim Sneh** and US political strategist **Dr Frank Luntz**.

The Luncheon Club is generously hosted by Shaw Stockbroking.



JCA's **Greg Shand**, Federal Opposition Leader **Dr Brendan Nelson**.



US political strategist **Dr Frank Luntz**.



Board of Deputies Executive member **Robin Schuck**, Federal Assistant Treasurer **Chris Bowen**, **Yosi Tal**. Photos: Ingrid Shakenovsky



Kjeld Hansen, Shaw Stockbroking Director **Harold Milner**.



Australian Jewish News publisher **Bob Magid**, Israeli former Deputy Defence Minister **Ephraim Sneh**.



Sydney Morning Herald writer **Peter FitzSimons**.



SBS Radio Head **Paula Masselos**, Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce CEO **Anthony Hollis**.



Board of Deputies Vice-President **Yair Miller**, Sydney Jewish Museum Marketing Director **Charles Aronson**, *Australian* Political Editor **Dennis Shanahan**.

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From the CEO



NELSON Mandela once observed that education is the most powerful weapon one can use to change the world.

It is said that every teacher teaches 1000 students during his or her career. Given the direct influence which teachers have on the next generation – not to mention the exponential flow-on effect - the imperative to reach out to teachers is paramount.

Teachers shape the next generation's thinking, meld its outlook, inform its prejudices. They exert a major impact on what society will look like – its beliefs, its value systems, its acceptance – or otherwise - of diversity.

With this in mind, the Board of Deputies is to hold an unprecedented event in April – an Educators Seder. It will be based on the Trade Union Seder which we held in 2006 and the Interfaith Seder which we held in 2007.

The objective is to create an opportunity for representatives of the community to engage with educators within a framework that promotes the shared values of freedom and democracy, while imparting key elements of Jewish history, customs and beliefs.

Organised by the Board of Deputies Education Committee,

the function will bring 100 primary, secondary and tertiary-level educators and decision-makers from the Department of Education and Teachers Unions together with 50 representatives of the Jewish community at a demonstration seder.

The education arena is today's intellectual battleground. It is where political ideas and opinions are debated. It is where hearts and minds are fought, won – and lost.

It is therefore vital that as a community which relies on acceptance and understanding as a condition for its survival and continuity, we engender understanding of the Jewish people, the Jewish experience and the Jewish story.

By strengthening our relationships with educators, we enhance the possibility of informing the next generation – and the future leaders of society.

The work of the Board of Deputies is funded by the JCA. The Educators Seder will receive special funding from the JCA LotBen Fund in loving memory of Lotka & Bernard Ferster.

Vic Alhadeff