

From the President

WELCOME to the first edition of *At The Board*, designed to keep the NSW Jewish community abreast of key activities and achievements of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies on your behalf.



We work to ensure the community's physical and political security – physical security through the Communal Security Group (CSG), and political security through the Board of Deputies itself.

As the peak body of 63 NSW Jewish community organisations we are your voice to Government, the media, other ethnic and religious groups and Non-Government Organisations.

Inside you will read about a cross-section of our activities, including our new Luncheon Club, which engages leaders of our community with key opinion-makers.

We report on the Journalists Mission to Israel, and a selection of our advocacy achievements.

We regard advocating for Israel as fundamental to fighting antisemitism, and through the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the Jewish voice is respected on national issues.

Premier Morris Iemma honoured us by addressing Youth Encounters, which was piloted in 2004 with 60 students and which in 2006 will have 240 Jewish, Christian and Muslim students learning from each other and building mutual respect.

We joined with the Catholic Church to mark the 40th anniversary of Nostra Aetate. Furthermore, the Women's Interfaith Network, founded by Josie Lacey OAM, was honoured with a reception at Government House.

In the education field, the Board-sponsored edition of *Teaching History* has reinvigorated focus on the Holocaust in high schools. We have also become the prime point of contact for textbook publishers on issues relating to Jews, Judaism and Israel.

We are proud of our commitment to the rights of indigenous Australians, and are focusing on issues concerning the poor, the disabled and the needs of older persons in the community.

2006 will see the launch of a new community-wide advocacy programme. We appreciate your support and I hope you enjoy this first edition of *At The Board*.

David D Knoll



At The BOARD

Working for the political and physical security of the community

NSW JEWISH BOARD OF DEPUTIES • Ph: 9360 1600 • Email: mail@nswjbd.com



COMMUNAL SECURITY GROUP • Ph: 1300 793 274

Vol 1 – 2006



Premier Morris Iemma with Jewish, Muslim and Christian students at the Youth Encounters programme which brought together 120 high school students.

TALKING TO EACH OTHER

Building respect among young people of different faiths is a key strategy towards creating social cohesion and reducing antisemitism.

ONE hundred and twenty Muslim, Christian and Jewish teenagers came together for a day of meaningful interaction and learning. The Youth Encounters project is the brainchild of NSW Jewish Board of Deputies Education Manager Josh Levin.

It is a two-month interfaith programme involving Year 11 students at Muslim, Christian and Jewish schools. Twenty students are selected from each school to participate in a programme in which they learn skills in communication and conflict transformation, as well as information about the other two faiths. All the students then come together in a day-long dialogue with their counterparts from the other schools, holding discussions

Hijab meets kippa as faiths say hello

Linka Morris
Religious Affairs Reporter

The Youth Encounters programme is in its second year. Last year, 60 year 11 students from three schools were brought together for a day of classroom interaction.

The program is organised by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies and the Affinity Intercultural Foundation. Before meeting together, the students spend six weeks learning about each other.

The Sydney Morning Herald article on Youth Encounters.

on issues that divide – and unite – them, engaging in role-play scenarios and playing basketball during the lunch-time break. The programme was initiated with Masada College, Kincoppal Rose Bay and Sule College in 2004, involving 60 students.

It doubled in 2005 with the addition of Emanuel School, Noor al Huda and Shore, and will double again in 2006 to 240 students. It is run by the Board of Deputies in partnership with the Muslim Affinity Intercultural Foundation, Kincoppal Rose Bay and other faith-based schools. A highlight of the day of interaction in 2005 was a keynote address by Premier Morris Iemma at the closing ceremony.



Member of the JCA
Family of Organisations



2000 students meet the President



Israeli President Moshe Katsav is welcomed by students at Central Synagogue. Two thousand students were bussed to the synagogue for the first visit to Australia by an Israeli president since 1986.

IN a mammoth logistical operation, 2000 Jewish school students were bussed to Central Synagogue to meet the President of Israel, Moshe Katsav.

Thirty-two busses were involved in transporting the students, with the narrow street outside Central Synagogue necessitating split-second timing so as to avoid undue congestion.

The operation ran without a hitch, the busses converging at prescribed intervals, unloading their passengers and swiftly relocating to a pre-arranged site, where they waited for the return operation two hours later. The President entered the synagogue to a rousing rendition of *Haveru Shalom Aleichem* from the massed students, representing Sydney's Jewish dayschools, as well as

numerous other schools under the aegis of Academy BJE.

President Katsav later commented that the Australian Jewish community "is probably the best organised and most successful in the world", and he wished other Jewish communities would emulate Australia's example.

Many students commented that the enormous symbolism of the occasion - their close encounter with the President of Israel - would remain with them for a long time to come.

Each student was presented with a specially-minted medalion to mark the occasion.

The event was organised by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, State Zionist Council of NSW, Zionist Federation of Australia and Executive Council of Australian Jewry.

THE BOARD'S GIFT TO PARLIAMENT

THIRTY years ago, the Board of Deputies donated a mace to the NSW Legislative Assembly. The anniversary of that gift was celebrated with a ceremony hosted by the Speaker of the House, John Aquilina. The gift was the initiative of Sir Asher Joel and Syd Einfeld.



Board of Deputies Education Committee chair Susi Brieger and honorary secretary Ilana Lee.

Celebrating Israel



NSW Jewish Board of Deputies President David Knoll with Bob Carr at the Yom Ha'atzmaut cocktail function.

FOUR hundred Sydney leaders from all walks of life - MPs, diplomats and business, religious, community and ethnic identities - gathered to celebrate Israel's 57th Independence Day. The event is an annual highlight of the Sydney calendar and an opportunity to showcase Israel as a beacon of democracy in the Middle East.

Keynote speaker then-Premier Bob Carr called on all those

present to "isolate attempts to isolate Israel and to resist them and condemn them".

He also praised Israel as "a permanent inspiration to all who strive for freedom and democracy in a troubled world". The event is organised by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, State Zionist Council of NSW, Zionist Federation of Australia and Executive Council of Australian Jewry.

Experts in Sydney



Israeli political analyst Hirsh Goodman (back, centre) with youth at the public function at Central Synagogue.

ISRAELI political analyst Hirsh Goodman flew to Sydney as a guest of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies.

He addressed public meetings at Kehillat Masada Synagogue and Central Synagogue, providing insights into Israel's disengagement from Gaza.

The Board of Deputies also co-hosted with the Zionist Federation of Australia, the State Zionist Council of NSW and the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council a public meeting which was addressed by the Speaker of the Knesset, Reuven Rivlin.

Media coverage was organised by the Board of Deputies for both speakers. The Board of Deputies was also responsible for the extensive media

coverage accorded to Holocaust denial authority Dr Deborah Lipstadt, JCA campaign keynote speaker David Harris, Israeli counter-terrorism expert Boaz Ganor and Palestinian Media Watch director Itamar Marcus.



Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin (left) makes a presentation to Board of Deputies Vice-President Yair Miller after an address at the Hakoah Club.

Engaging with key opinion-makers



MAJOR identities in politics, the media and academe addressed the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies Luncheon Club. A new initiative of the Board of Deputies, the Luncheon Club is a forum in which opinion-makers engage with leaders of the Jewish community in an off-the-record environment.

Speakers at the Board of Deputies Luncheon Club included ...



**Liberal Party
Federal MP
Malcolm Turnbull.**



**Labor Party
Federal MP
Tanya Plibersek.**



**Former ABC
Radio presenter
Julie McCrossin.**



**Sydney Morning
Herald senior
writer David
Marr.**



**Fairfax Director
of Corporate
Affairs Bruce
Wolpe.**

NEXT EDITION

- The community's Jewish Emergency Management Plan (JEMP)
- Reaching out to the trade unions
- Building bridges with indigenous communities
- Empowering people with disabilities



**Labor Party
Federal MP Daryl
Melham.**



**Labor Party NSW
MP Kristina
Keneally.**



**Holocaust expert
Dr Deborah
Lipstadt.**



**Haifa University
Law Professor Eli
Salzberger.**



**Greens State MP
Lee Rhiannon.**

Strengthening Catholic-Jewish ties

FOUR hundred members of the Catholic and Jewish communities gathered at the Great Synagogue in a resounding affirmation of Catholic-Jewish relations.

The occasion was the 40th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* – the landmark Vatican statement which condemned anti-semitism and marked a watershed in Catholic-Jewish dialogue worldwide.

The function was a joint project of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies and the St Thomas More Society.

It was addressed by video from Jerusalem by Rabbi David Rosen, the Anti-Defamation League's Co-Liaison to the Vatican, as well as by Rabbi Raymond Apple, Cardinal Edward Cassidy and Cardinal Walter Kasper, the latter also by video.



Board of Deputies President David Knoll, Great Synagogue Senior Minister Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence, NSW Governor Marie Bashir and Cardinal Edward Cassidy at the Jewish-Catholic ceremony to mark the 40th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*.

Tackling the issues

MAJOR policy issues are tackled at the monthly plenum of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies. The Jewish community's support for the rights of indigenous Australians, ensuring a fair balance in the counter-terrorism laws, advocating fair treatment of refugees, co-ordinating efforts to reduce poverty in the community, promoting the rights of people with disabilities and building respect for the aged are some of the policy issues which have been debated at the plenum.



Board of Deputies Vice-President Jillian Segal with Liberal Federal MP Malcolm Turnbull, who addressed a Board of Deputies plenum meeting.

Training advocates and activists

THE Board of Deputies is training hundreds of high school and university students to be effective advocates and activists for Israel and the Jewish world.

It is at the forefront of advocacy programming and training for high school and university students in the community, and in partnership with the Zionist Federation of Australia, it delivers a programme titled *Hamasbir* (The Advocate).

The university and young adult components of *Hamasbir* deliver specific skills designed to aid young adults in their defence of Israel and the Jewish people.



NSW Liberal Party Leader Peter Debnam and Sky News presenter John Gatfield ... both addressed the Board of Deputies plenum, which is open to the community.

SECURITY

The Board of Deputies oversees the community's physical security through the Communal Security Group (CSG), which operates 24 hours a day. The telephone number is:

**1300 SYD CSG
1300 793 274**



Media identities see Israel for themselves

ISRAEL is better seen than explained.

This is the rationale behind the Board of Deputies' annual Journalists Mission, which sees senior Australian journalists spend an intensive week in Israel being briefed by experts and touring the country.

About 50 journalists have participated since the mission began 25 years ago.

In 2005 the participants were Louise Dodson, Chief Political Correspondent for the Sydney Morning Herald; Sally Watson, Supervising Producer for SBS Television News; John Hill, Senior Reporter with Network Ten; and Sharon McKenzie,

Presenter on Sky News.

The journalists were flown by helicopter to observe Israel's borders and security barrier. They were also briefed by leading political, defence and education identities.

Previous participants include Paul Sheehan, John Lyons, Paul Bongiorno, Greg Sheridan, Gerard Henderson, Piers Akerman, Maxine McKew, Hugh Riminton and Peter Kerr. The mission takes place with the generous support of Holocaust survivor Sabina Van Der Linden - Wolanski.

It is organised through the Israeli Foreign Ministry and in conjunction with AJAC.

Louise Dodson

Lessons that may be learnt from Israel

If 1948 is a truly strange time for Israel, education would stand across the world as being special and somewhat unusual, not least in its independence. Certainly education was not a major government priority at the time, according to a major government report, 'Education in the State of Israel' (1948-1950). The report was a study into the education system in the newly formed state. It was a study into the education system in the newly formed state. It was a study into the education system in the newly formed state.

An article which Louise Dodson wrote in the Sydney Morning Herald on her return from Israel.



Louise Dodson, John Hill, Sally Watson.



Sharon McKenzie.

Education advocacy in action

TEACHING TEACHERS ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

IN response to a reduced focus on the Holocaust in the Modern History syllabus, the Board of Deputies Education Committee developed resource materials to encourage teachers to select topics which provide opportunities to teach aspects of the Holocaust.

The Board of Deputies also sponsored and co-ordinated a Holocaust edition of *Teaching History*, *The Journal of the History Teachers' Association of NSW*.

A survey conducted by the History Teachers Association indicates that 62 per cent of the HSC candidature of 10,000 students will choose the National Study of Germany 1918-1939 in 2006.

PREVENTING HSC CLASH

IN 2005 Succot, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah coincided with the HSC exams.

As a result of meetings between the Board of Deputies, the day-



The cover of the teachers' manual which was devoted to teaching the Holocaust - and sponsored by the Board of Deputies.

schools, Academy BJE and the NSW Board of Studies, the impact of the clash on affected students was greatly minimised. The clash may recur in 2008, so the Board of Deputies is working with the Board of Studies to ensure that HSC exams are not scheduled on those days.

JUDAISM CURRICULUM

THE Board of Deputies Education Committee, together with the dayschools and Academy BJE, successfully participated in the NSW Board of Studies revision of the Judaism section of the Studies of Religion syllabus for Years 11 and 12.

The Board of Studies then requested a sample programme to help teachers implement the Jewish component of the syllabus. The Board of Deputies Education Committee co-ordinated the sample programme, and

teachers now have access to resources in the section on Judaism from a Jewish perspective.

CHALLENGING BIAS

THE Board of Deputies Education Committee monitors Modern History and Studies of Religion textbooks. Publishers now request the Board of Deputies to review their texts. In 2005 the Board of Deputies achieved the amendments requested in two key texts.

ARAB-ISRAEL SIMULATION

ACTING on a complaint by students at a state school, the Board of Deputies investigated an Arab-Israel simulation exercise conducted by an organisation outside the school. The students were concerned about lack of balance and divisiveness. The Board of Deputies approached the Department of Education, which found the programme to be unsuitable for students at government high schools and decided not to run it in 2006.

From the CEO

THE Board of Deputies is your roof-body.

It is your community's advocate and spokesperson. We speak for you to the NSW Government, we act on your behalf, we protect your interests, we work to make New South Wales a better place in which to be Jewish. It is a vital and complex task, requiring a multi-pronged approach.

In pursuing that objective, we have a streamlined office dedicated to enhancing the well-being of our community. At the same time we rely on a strong corps of volunteers who give of their time and expertise in a range of capacities. The Board of Deputies diplomatically and sensitively represents the community's interests.

Some activities are undertaken behind the scenes, but it is important for you to know what your Board of Deputies does.

We invite you to engage with us in the vital task of fighting antisemitism and building a positive perception of Jews in the wider community.

We welcome your constructive input and invite you to contact us. We also urge you to subscribe to the Board of Deputies. By becoming a subscriber, you will add your voice to ours and in so doing will strengthen your community's roof-body.



Vic Ahadeff
Chief Executive Officer



CONTACT THE BOARD OF DEPUTIES:

Phone: (02) 9360 1600 • Email: mail@nswjbd.com
Address: 146 Darlinghurst Road, Darlinghurst, NSW 2010
www.nswjbd.org • www.ijis.org.au • www.holocaust.com.au