



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

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Photographs from recent functions organised by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies.

Jewish Emergency Management Plan

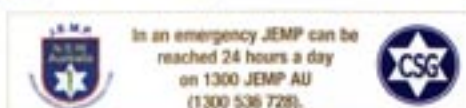
A Jewish Emergency Management Plan (JEMP) has been set up by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies to respond to any crises which may arise within the Jewish community.

After nearly two years of intensive planning by a dedicated group of volunteers, JEMP is ready to react if needed.

JEMP NSW, as the plan will be known, will provide a co-ordinated response to any major local or international incident which affects the Jewish community of NSW.

Events to which it may respond include natural disasters, medical emergencies and terrorist-related incidents. JEMP will supplement, not replace, state and federal emergency services.

During an incident JEMP will liaise with the NSW Government Office for Emergency Services, the NSW Police Force, NSW Fire Brigades, NSW Ambulance Service, SES



In an emergency JEMP can be reached 24 hours a day on 1300 JEMP AU (1300 536 728).

For any security emergency contact the CSG on 1300 SYD CSG (1300 793 274) 24 hours a day.

and the Departments of Community Services and Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Much effort has been made to establish relationships and agreements with local and district Emergency Management Committees and to train volunteers in various areas. An emergency operations centre which utilises current communal infrastructure has also been established. JEMP aims to co-ordinate:

- The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies' public affairs professionals
- The Communal Security Group (CSG)
- JewishCare
- Hatzolah First Aid Services

- Emergency transport, shelter, kosher food and clothing
- Access to Orthodox and Progressive rabbis
- Advice on Jewish issues that may arise
- Funeral services (in conjunction with the Chevra Kadisha and the State Coroner, as required)
- Other Jewish communal resources
- Interpreter services.

JEMP NSW will join an already-functioning JEMP Victoria which was launched by the Victorian Minister for Police and Emergency Services in 2001 and which forms an official part of the Emergency Management Manual of Victoria.

The principal organisations involved in the establishment of JEMP in NSW are the Board of Deputies, its Communal Security Group (CSG) and JewishCare.

- To volunteer for JEMP, contact the Board of Deputies on 9360 1600 or nsw@jemp.org.au

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Building bridges

IT was an unprecedented event in the annals of NSW Jewry - a Trade Union Seder.

An initiative of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, it brought together 140 people from the trade unions and the Jewish community in a Passover Seder with a difference.

Speakers dwelt on the shared values which the trade unions and the Jewish people cherish - family, human rights, social justice, the right to a fair wage.

While the conventions of a seder were carried out, the carnival atmosphere and labour references turned the event into a ground-breaking bridge-building exercise between the Jewish and union communities.

The Board of Deputies compiled a tailor-made Haggadah, while *Dayenu* was



Robert Goot AM and John Robertson, Secretary of Unions NSW, at the Union Seder.



Peta Jones Pellach, who led the Union Seder, with Roz Feitelson, who co-ordinated it.



Moriah College students entertained the gathering with several songs.

Photos: Ingrid Stepanovsky

rewritten to reflect such issues as the entrance of women into the work force. Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) president Sharan Burrows, who flew from Melbourne for the occasion, opened the evening by rolling dough under the watchful eye of the Matzah Factory. Unions NSW Secretary John Robertson, who co-hosted the event at Union Headquarters, told the gathering: "The lessons of the Exodus are relevant beyond their exclamation of freedom from slavery. The Passover story is all about the building of community coalitions to achieve social justice."

The brainchild of Andrew Casey of the Board of Deputies Social Justice Committee, the seder was led by Peta Jones Pellach, Education Director of The

Shalom Institute.

The organising committee was led by Roz Feitelson, who volunteered time, expertise and personal resources to create an interactive and informative evening. Storyteller Donna Jacobs Sife, bass singer Len Mahemoff and the Trade Union Choir performed.

Reference was made to the fact that Moses was the first collective bargainer, rallying the workers and demanding a fair go from their employers! The question "Why is this night different from every other night?" had never been more apt.

The Board of Deputies plans to emulate the success of the Union Seder by holding an interfaith/multicultural seder in 2007.

From the President

SHORTLY after I joined the Board of Deputies, the 1991 Gulf War broke out.

This was the first time I saw, from an insider's perspective, just how much the Board of Deputies is capable of, especially when it works with other communal organisations.

Together with the SZC of NSW and the Israeli Consulate, we convened a crisis management group, which kept the community aware of the latest issues, liaised with the State Government and police, ensuring our community's safety and security, and presented a consistent policy position to the media.

During all this, one thing became apparent - there was a significant need for a longer-term strategy, with a full-time professional staff implementing it.

The Board of Deputies which exists today embodies that

vision. We now have a professional staff who are responsible for the political, educational, social justice, outreach, information and security needs of our community. Together with the elected lay leadership, they develop and implement strategies which benefit our community.

While we are seeing the fruits of these labours, much work needs to be done in order for our community to feel safe. It's not enough to have laws in place which protect us, or police on our streets.

Nor is it sufficient for Jews to be "tolerated" in our society. That is what drives us to do more, to reach more people, never to lose sight of the reason the Board of Deputies exists - to make antisemitism unacceptable, to ensure that the Jewish community is a valued and respected part of the Australian social fabric and to protect the physical and political security of the Jewish community of New South Wales.



David D Knoll

Recognising ability

THREE parents of children with disabilities addressed the Board of Deputies in one of the most moving communal meetings in recent memory.

The Board of Deputies held the plenum to focus on disabilities within the community and what can be done to improve the support which exists for those who have disabilities.

Co-ordinated by Lesley Gild, a member of the Board of Deputies Social Justice Committee and President of Access Ezer, the forum drew a packed house of 120 people.

Gild said the community "represents itself as being a caring community that takes care of its own. However, this is not the

experience of most people with disabilities and their families.

"We need to help the community understand that our children are people first and disabled second - to change the way the able-bodied perceive our children," she said.

Dr Karen Schwartz and Belinda Epstein-Frisch both urged the community to recognise that people with disabilities can make a significant contribution. The Board of Deputies adopted several resolutions, one of which was to establish a register of businesses which potentially can offer employment to people with disabilities.

• **Inquiries:** Access Ezer at accessez@bigpond.com



Dr Karen Schwartz, Lesley Gild, Peter Philippsohn, Eva Fischl, Bruce Freeman and Belinda Epstein-Frisch at the Board of Deputies plenum on disabilities in the Jewish community.

Grassroots work where there is no grass



THE immediate outcome is a \$50,000 Federal Government grant, but it is the long-term benefit which is impossible to quantify.

Twelve Jewish university students travelled to Toomelah and Boggabilla - two severely disadvantaged Aboriginal communities - to assist wherever they could.

Called Derech Eretz, the programme saw students from the Australasian Union of Jewish Students spend a week in the indigenous communities, running programmes for children and assisting with grant applications.

As a result of one application, the Government awarded the communities \$50,000, which will fund a project that will guarantee one million cubic litres of much-needed water a year.

The Board of Deputies has become a sponsor of Derech Eretz, together with B'nai B'rith, BBYO, AUJS and Hillel. The programme is organised and run by Assistant Hillel Director Gary Samowitz and UNSW criminal law lecturer Melanie Schwartz.



The students who participated in the Derech Eretz programme in Toomelah and Boggabilla.

The brainchild of then-Hillel Director Ian Jankelowitz, the project came into being after Board of Deputies CEO Vic Alhadef returned from a speaking tour of the Northern Rivers region, during which he met Aboriginal Studies Professor Judy Atkinson at Southern Cross University. She informed him of the needs of the Toomelah and Boggabilla communities. Aware that Ian Jankelowitz was looking for

such a project, he put the two parties together. The students who participated were: Ian Jankelowitz, Melanie Schwartz, Gary Samowitz, Ben Wahlhaus, Amelia Watson, Michal Alhadef, Jessica Drabkin, John Parker, Melanie Stern, Romy Grace, Tunni Kraus and Yael Rosman.

The second programme in Toomelah and Boggabilla took place in July.

Filling the gap

THERE has been much attention in the media about the national shortage of dentists. One of the groups worst affected is indigenous Australians.

The Board of Deputies Social Justice Committee is supporting the Filling the Gap Indigenous Dental Programme, which sends volunteer dentists to Wuchopperen, an indigenous health service in northern Queensland.

Wuchopperen offers services to 20,000 people, but cannot find any dentists. It relies on one local dentist once a week, or the occasional backpacker dentist. People have to wait over a year for treatment.

Filling the Gap is a voluntary initiative started by Uri Windt, a member of the Board of



Volunteer dentist Dr Ivor Epstein (left) at Wuchopperen in Queensland, where he volunteered his services.

Deputies, and Gael Kennedy. The programme began in January and has already treated over 400 patients. Other health professionals are welcome to volunteer their services too.

How you can help:

- Volunteer by calling Uri Windt 0418 208 755 or Gael Kennedy 0403 131 410.
- Buy or sell second-hand dental equipment via Dental Job Search, www.djs.com.au, with proceeds going to this project.

Finding jobs

THE Board of Deputies is lending its support to a project designed to assist members of the indigenous community find jobs.

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES) is an agency run by and for Aborigines, training and placing Aboriginal people in jobs, lifting the self-esteem of the community, providing its members with skills and giving them the ability to change their circumstances.

It believes in work, not welfare. The AES assesses the education and practical skills of the candidates and matches them with the type of jobs they want and for which they are suitable.

- **Inquiries:** Board of Deputies Social Justice Committee member Jenny Symonds at jensymonds@yahoo.com.au.

One of the great stories of our time

ISRAEL is "one of the great stories of our time", Premier Morris Iemma told the annual Israel Independence Day cocktail function.

It "has yet to know a decade when it has not been under military, terrorist or political attack," he said.

The function, organised by the Board of Deputies and the NSW State Zionist Council, attracted 370 guests, including representatives from 20 nations, including Poland, Argentina, South Korea, Britain and Fiji, as well as MPs, members

of the judiciary and interfaith leaders.

Delivering his first address to an Israel Independence Day celebration, Premier Iemma said it was imperative to "fight for respect for Israel, its independence and Jewish people worldwide".

"Respect for Israel and respect for the Jewish people go hand in hand," he said. "Israel faces new threats, more extreme than any in her history. The flames of antisemitism continue to be fanned." Israeli Ambassador Nati Tamir commended the Premier for his address.



NSW Premier Morris Iemma, Israeli Ambassador Nati Tamir, SZC President Brian Levitan and Board of Deputies President David Knoll at the Yom Ha'atzmaut cocktail event. Photo: Ingrid Shakenovsky

Crossing boundaries



INTERFAITH work is one of the many vital areas in which the Board of Deputies is proactively involved.

Aiming to generate productive relationships between people of different religious and ethnic backgrounds, this essential work is led by the Board of Deputies Interfaith Committee, chaired by long-time activist Josie Lacey OAM.

Lacey is the founder of the Women's Interfaith Network, which has flourished and spawned four regional groups. She also represents the Jewish community at the World Congress on Religion for Peace, is the interfaith adviser to the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia and is a member of the steering committee of the annual Abrahamic Conference, which brings together Muslim, Christian and Jewish professionals for a day of dialogue and engagement.



Board of Deputies interfaith chair Josie Lacey (centre, yellow jacket) with some of the 160 women at a reception for the Women's Interfaith Network hosted by the Department of Women at Government House.

The 5th Abrahamic Conference will be held on August 27 at the University of Sydney. It will include the Sydney Catholic

Archdiocese, the Uniting Church, the (Muslim) Affinity Intercultural Foundation and the Board of Deputies.

Inside story

MEDIA analysts and political leaders received the benefits of an insider's perspective when *Jerusalem Post* political correspondent Gil Hoffman spent a week in Sydney as a guest of the Board of Deputies.

Hoffman's packed schedule was part of the Board of Deputies' strategy of bringing overseas speakers to Australia to bring fresh perspectives and insights on current issues of relevance to both the Jewish and wider communities.

Hoffman has been reporting on the Israeli political scene for eight years and has covered numerous elections.



Gil Hoffman (right) with Central Synagogue president Adrian Skurnik at a public meeting at Central.

From the CEO

IN 1790 US Jewish leader Moses Seixas wrote to President George Washington, explaining what was needed to ensure that the community received a fair go.

In the lofty language of the time, he wrote that the Jewish community sought a government "which to bigotry gives no sanction, to persecution no assistance, while affording to all liberty of conscience and citizenship, deeming everyone of whatever nation, tongue or language equal parts of the great governmental machine".

The point which emerges is that the issues do not change. Wherever we are, at whatever point in history, the issues that matter to the Jewish people remain the same – a quest for a fair go, the right to be Jewish, free of fear, discrimination and prejudice.

This is what drives the Board of Deputies. This is the basis of our Strategic Plan, which includes interfaith, social justice, education, youth, media and political work.

The Board of Deputies has taken a quantum leap in terms of initiative, outreach and bridge-building in recent months. Highlights include:

- We held Australia's first Trade Union Seder. It was an extraordinary success as a bridge-building exercise between the Jewish community and the 700,000-strong union movement.



- Our Luncheon Club, in which opinion-makers engage with the community.

It is hosted by Shaw Stockbroking, whose support is deeply appreciated.

- We brought *Jerusalem Post* political correspondent Gil Hoffman to Sydney, organising briefings with ABC, Fairfax, SBS, MPs and a meeting hosted by AUJS and the UNSW School of Political Science.

- Finally, an example of the positive effects of our bridge-building:

A blatantly antisemitic article was published in *The Western Onion* student newspaper at the University of Western Sydney, which comprises 40,000 students on six campuses.

Through positive relationships which the Board of Deputies has developed in the Muslim and Christian sectors, strong statements of condemnation by the Principal of Sydney's oldest Muslim school, the Executive Director of Christian Schools Australia and the University Vice-Chancellor were published in *The Western Onion*.

The impact of the Board of Deputies is not always easy to measure. Yet when members of the wider community are willing to speak out on our behalf, we know that we do make a difference.

Vic Alhadeff

Engaging with opinion-makers

THE Board of Deputies Luncheon Club provides a forum in which opinion-makers engage with leaders of the community. It is hosted by Shaw Stockbroking.

Recent speakers:



Virginia Trill, Presenter ABC Radio 702



Gladys Berejikjan MP, State Member for Willoughby



Michael Daley MP, State Member for Maroubra



Bruce Wolpe, Director of Corporate Affairs, Fairfax



Angela D'Amore MP, State Member for Drummoyle



Anthony Albanese MP, Federal Member for Grayndler

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