



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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200 Jewish educators unite

A JEWISH Educators Forum has been established as an umbrella body to connect all Jewish teachers of all subjects working in schools and other institutions across NSW.

Set up by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, the Jewish Educators Forum (JEF) has attracted over 200 teachers and is growing.

"JEF is for all Jewish teachers - not just those in the dayschools, but those in schools where they may be the only Jewish person," said Board of Deputies Education Manager Lynda Ben-Menashe.

Teachers and communal leaders have responded enthusiastically to the establishment of JEF and its electronic newsletter, which comprises articles of Jewish interest, professional development programs and assistance for teachers in dealing with antisemitism and questions on Judaism and Israel, particularly those in the public and non-Jewish private systems.

JEF will hold meetings for teachers to network and will offer courses of Jewish interest, including a course titled "Talking about Israel".



Grammar Prep Edgecliff teacher Steve Gonski, Board of Deputies Education Chair Di Engelder and lecturer Madeline Rosen at the launch of the Jewish Educators Forum. Photo: Giselle Haber

24 speeches in 5 days

THE Board of Deputies conducted an intensive bridge-building tour of the Shoalhaven and Wollongong areas, conducting 24 meetings in five days.

These included engagements with 11 schools, four church leaders, two Rotary clubs, the Shoalhaven Christian Educators Teachers Federation, Shoalhaven City Council, the Jewish communities of Nowra and Wollongong, and media interviews.

Undertaken by Board of Deputies CEO Vic Alhadeff and Education Manager Lynda Ben-Menashe, the tour encompassed Nowra, Bulli, Port Kembla, Kiama, Vincentia and Wollongong.



Board of Deputies Education Manager Lynda Ben-Menashe with students at St Mary's Star of the Sea College in Wollongong.

The Board received permission to address Shoalhaven City Council in the aftermath of racist comments made by a former mayor. In his presentation, Alhadeff emphasised the damage done by such remarks.

Alhadeff and Ben-Menashe met the Catholic Bishop of Wollongong, Peter Ingham, and the Anglican Bishop of Wollongong, Alan Stewart, as well as the Senior Minister of the major Anglican church in Wollongong, St Michael's – Sandy Grant.

At the schools Alhadeff and



Anglican Bishop of Wollongong Alan Stewart.

Ben-Menashe did presentations on antisemitism, the Holocaust, the Arab-Israeli conflict and rites of passage.

Journalists visit Israel

FOUR senior journalists participated in the Board of Deputies' latest Journalists Mission to Israel, spending an intensive week meeting political and military identities.

The group included *Sydney Morning Herald* columnist Paul Sheehan, *The Australian* writer Janet Albrechtsen, Sky News journalist Jacinta Tynan and SBS TV *Insight* producer Peter Charley.

The mission is made possible by the JCA Haberman and Kulawicz Fund.

The Board of Deputies mission was accompanied by four journalists who were guests of AIJAC.



Paul Sheehan

Journalists Mission supporter Sabina Van Der Linden-Wolanski with Jacinta Tynan.



Peter Charley

Janet Albrechtsen



Shoalhaven City Council Deputy Mayor Gareth Ward, Board of Deputies CEO Vic Alhadeff and Shoalhaven Mayor Paul Green before Alhadeff addressed Shoalhaven City Council.



From the President

ONE of the things non-Jewish Australians say they respect about Jewish Australians is that, despite many of us being migrants, and many of our migrants having had horrific experiences in their countries of origin, we have generally made every effort to look forward positively in our life in Australia, integrating well in the wider Australian community, and contributing in many areas.

Less positive is the perception of many non-Jewish Australians that Jews are "standoffish" or "stick to themselves".

The Board of Deputies works hard to counter that impression through many interfaith, cross-cultural and social justice activities in which the Board and our constituents have long been engaged, by maintaining and strengthening our existing relationships and alliances, and by building new relationships and alliances with people and groups in the wider community with whom we might previously have had less contact, or no contact at all.

One of the latter initiatives is the Board's participation as a founding member in the gradual building of the Sydney Alliance, a network that aims to include a wide variety of union, religious and other communal and citizen organisations, along the lines of similar citizen networks in other cities and countries. (Interestingly, the original model for such networks was the brainchild of a Jew, Saul Alinsky, in the 1930s and in Chicago, the city where Barack Obama subsequently gained much of his experience in citizen organisation.)

We do that work, first and foremost, because it is good in itself, building social inclusion and capital and strengthening our multicultural society. But it also contributes in various ways to the welfare and security of the Jewish community.

We have seen evidence of this during the recent war in Gaza. Many of the voices of reason and balance that have been raised amid the welter of ill-informed, one-sided and often hypocritical criticism of Israel in particular and Jews in general, have been those of persons and organisations whose understanding and trust the Jewish community and Jewish individuals have earned through quiet engagement and shared activities over lengthy periods.

Remember that please, should you ever hear more reactionary members of our community (are there any?) saying things like: "What are they getting involved in that for? Waste of community resources! What has it got to do with the Jews?"

Thank you for your support of the Board and its 61 constituents. May 2009 be a better year for Israel, for our community and for all Australians.

Robin Margo S.C.



Member of the JCA family of organisations

2000 rally for Israel

2000 members of the Sydney community demonstrated their solidarity with Israel at a Gathering for Peace.

Held at Central Synagogue, the function was organised by the Board of Deputies, State Zionist Council of NSW, Executive Council of Australian Jewry and Zionist Federation of Australia.

Noga Gulst described the stress of her children growing up under the shadow of rockets being fired from Gaza.

Board of Deputies President Robin Margo said the purpose of the gathering was to support Israel's "just, defensive war. We mourn for each civilian casualty, whether they be Israeli or Palestinian".

ECAJ President Robert Goot said: "If Israel laid down its arms there would be



Section of the gathering at Central Synagogue. Photo: Nadine Saacks

no Israel. If Hamas and Hezbollah lay down their arms there would be peace".

Israeli Deputy Chef de Mission Eli Yerushalmi and SZC Vice-President Ron Wiseman also spoke and called for the Hamas rockets to cease.

Not all black and white

AN exhibition titled *It's not all black and white*, on Jewish South African migration to Australia, was launched by Board of Deputies President Robin Margo S.C. at the Sydney Jewish Museum. In a moving address, Margo wove his personal involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle into the broader picture of the turbulent 1960s and '70s, during which he was arrested, assaulted and harassed by authorities.

His activities brought him into contact with anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko and clinical psychologist Dr Joan Phillips. The exhibition was created by Jewish Museum



Joan Phillips with Robin Margo and his son Jonathan and at a 1990 march in Sydney to celebrate the release of Nelson Mandela from prison. Photo: Courtesy Joan Phillips

curator Roslyn Sugarman, assisted by curators Barbara Linz and Louise Leibowitz. It will run until December 2009.

Faith speakers share notes

LEADERS of the three Abrahamic faiths – Islam, Christianity and Judaism – explored their commonalities at the annual Abraham Conference.

The symposium is organised by the Board of Deputies, Uniting Church of NSW and the Muslim Affinity Intercultural Foundation, and sponsored by the Community Relations Commission and Charles Sturt University.

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Paul Lynch opened the forum, while the keynote address was given by Indigenous UTS Professor Larissa Behrendt. The other speakers were Justice Stephen Rothman AM and Associate Professors Ismail



Justice Stephen Rothman AM (left) with Muslim Affinity President Mehmet Saral.

Albayrak and Gerard Hall from the Australian Catholic University.

Community combines for Kristallnacht

A GROUND-breaking ceremony marked the 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht.

The NSW Council of Christians and Jews and Emanuel Synagogue combined their function with the Board of Deputies event at the Great Synagogue. Keynote



speaker Dr Paul O Shea (pictured) explored the role of Pope Pius XII during the Holocaust. "He was a good man who made some terrible decisions and errors of judgment," he said.

Other speakers included Goethe Institute Executive Director Klaus Krischock, Great Synagogue Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence and Emanuel Education Director Sandy Hollis.



'Have the guts to speak out'

ABOUT 200 students from four north shore schools came together at the Armenian Hamazkaine Arshak and Sophie Galstaun College in Ingleside for the third event in an innovative three-part intercultural program titled Respect, Understanding and Acceptance.

Devised by the Board of Deputies Education Secretariat, the program included students from the Armenian School, the Australian International Academy (a Muslim school), Brigidine College (a Catholic school), Davidson High School (a government school) and Masada

College (a Jewish school).

The first event of the program was held at the Sydney Jewish Museum and the second at Masada College. Both featured interactive sessions with Jewish, Muslim, Armenian, Aboriginal and Catholic speakers, and comprised discussion, multimedia performances and sport.

Board of Deputies CEO Vic Alhadeff appealed to the students "to have the guts to step out from the crowd and speak out when you see someone being isolated, marginalised or discriminated against".



Students from Masada College, the Muslim Australian International Academy and Davidson High School during the Respect, Understanding and Acceptance program, which is aimed at breaking down barriers. Photos: Jenny Kahn



Students participating in the Respect, Understanding and Acceptance program.

250 students build bridges

THE flagship Board of Deputies' interfaith youth program saw 250 Jewish, Muslim and Christian students from ten schools come together.

Youth Encounters is run by the Board of Deputies together with the Muslim Affinity Intercultural Organisation and Kincoppal Rose Bay.

This harmony project enables

students to explore commonalities of faith and encourages them to respect differences and recognise their shared aspirations as Australian teenagers.

The workshops were held at Moriah College and Shore School and involved students sharing meals, discussing contemporary issues and - for the first time - playing sport.



From left: Aqdas Habib from Sule College, Moriah College student Ricky Melamdowitz, Emanuel School student Meaghan Kemeny and Moriah College student Helen Helfenbaum. Photo: Ingrid Shakenovsky



Harmony on the field

About 200 Jewish, Muslim, indigenous and Christian students came together at the Sydney Cricket Ground for a day of Aussie Rules and ball skills. The event was organised by the Board of Deputies, the Peres Centre, the Australian Sports Commission and AFL NSW/ACT. The feature of the day was a clinic run by the visiting Peres Peace Team and Sydney Swans staff. Photo: Ingrid Shakenovsky

Unions, Board shed light

THE values shared by the union movement and the Jewish community were highlighted when the Board of Deputies partnered the Australian Workers' Union to host a Chanukah function.

The watershed event was held at Trades Hall, home to the 700,000-strong UnionsNSW.

AWU National Secretary Paul Howes pointed to the universal message of Chanukah. "It celebrates freedom from oppression," he said. "It celebrates the value of acting for what is right, and of communities not succumbing to laws that deprive them of basic freedoms."

Donna Jacobs Sife narrated the Chanukah story, and candles were lit by leaders of the Jewish and



AWU National Secretary Paul Howes lights a candle. Watching is Board of Deputies President Robin Margo S.C. Photo: Ingrid Shakenovsky

union communities, with the first candle dedicated by Maritime Union of Australia National Secretary Paddy Crumlin to the Jewish lawyers who represented the MUA pro bono during the Patrick Stevedores industrial dispute.



Opinion-makers at lunch

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

Recent speakers included: Senator **Mark Arbib**; **Michael Coutts-Trotter**, Director-General of the NSW Department of Education and Training; journalists **Paul Sheehan** and **Jacinta**

Tynan; American divinity expert Professor **Amy Jill Levine**; British foreign affairs analyst **Dr Hagai Segal**; **Jonathan O'Dea MP**, Member for Davidson; and Australian Ambassador to Israel **James Larsen**.

The Luncheon Club is generously hosted by Shaw Stockbroking Director **Harold Milner**.



Senator Mark Arbib (left) with George Newhouse.



Board of Deputies Vice-President Roma Shell with Australian Ambassador to Israel James Larsen.



Divinity Professor Amy-Jill Levine of Vanderbilt University, Tennessee.



Michael Coutts-Trotter, Director-General, NSW Department of Education and Training.



Jonathan O'Dea MP, Member for Davidson.

Benny Morris in town



Israeli "New Historian" Benny Morris addressed a packed public lecture organised by the Board of Deputies and the Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies Department of the University of Sydney. He is pictured with Board of Deputies Functions Co-ordinator Ydele Nathan (left) and Office Manager Alla Pilman.

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Young Luncheon Club

The Board of Deputies has launched a Young Luncheon Club. It has held two functions to date - for Young Labor and Young Liberals.



At the Young Labor Luncheon Club, from left: Councillor Sean Carmichael, Sam Ison, Chris Roth, Councillor Kiel Smith.



Lauren Eather, Jaimi Primrose-Levi and Jennifer Richardson at the Young Liberals Luncheon Club.



Councillor Anthony Boskovitz, Young Liberals NSW President Scott Farlow.

JEMP wins two awards

JEMP (the Jewish Emergency Management Plan) has won national and NSW awards in the voluntary category of the Australian Safer Communities Awards. JEMP is a project of the Board of Deputies. From left: Board of Deputies President Robin Margo S.C., Emergency Management Australia Director-General Tony Pierce, JEMP executive director Yair Miller, JEMP chair Alan Deutsch.



From the CEO



THE conflict in Gaza saw the Board of Deputies go into overdrive on a number of fronts.

We were extremely active on the media front, including organising a press conference which was addressed by the Deputy Chef de Mission of the Israeli Embassy, Eli Yerushalmi.

This was attended by most of the mainstream media, with reports going out within hours, including to all 60 SBS Radio language programs.

We also conducted and arranged interviews with television, radio and print media outlets, including a one-hour radio session which was open to talk-back callers, and we published op-ed pieces in various forums.

At a community level, we worked with the SZC, ECAJ and ZFA to organise the Gathering for Peace. This drew 2000 participants at 48 hours' notice, such was the feeling that people felt a need to identify.

We also arranged for Mr Yerushalmi to address a public meeting on the north shore, as well as meetings for community leaders and professionals.

And on the student front, we worked with AUJS to provide support for students on campus

in anticipation of a difficult climate ahead.

Our consistent message on Gaza was to emphasise that Israel's operation was in response to the firing of 8000 rockets at Israel by Hamas over the past eight years. In addition, we highlighted the fact that Hamas deliberately located its fighters and its rockets in the midst of the Palestinian civilian population.

While there were problematic instances in the media, there was an overriding understanding that Israel's response was a legitimate right of self-defence.

The conflict has heightened tensions within the wider community, with numerous anti-Israel rallies being held in Sydney and hostile emails and articles doing the rounds.

All of this underscores the importance of the bridge-building and advocacy work which we do at the Board of Deputies, and why we welcome involvement from members of the community across a range of spheres.

It is important to note that all our work is funded by the JCA.

Vic Alhadeff