Union for Progressive Judaism

Annual Report

2023-2024

Mission Statement

The Union for Progressive Judaism exists to honour our tradition, inform the present and guide the future of our communities in the Australian, Asian and New Zealand region. This mission is fulfilled through:

- The establishment, strengthening and promotion of synagogues, schools and youth groups wherever there are Jews in this region searching for meaningful access to and expression of their modern Jewish values and life;
- Recruitment, training and placement of Jewish professionals;
- Sponsorship of programs and publications for youth, education, leadership development, and all aspect of community building;
- The pursuit of social justice and equal rights for all Jews, here and in Israel;
- Connecting and working with Progressive Jewish communities and organisations around the world to derive strength from one another.

UPJ Executive:

Va'ad
Danny Hochberg, Co-President
Larry Lockshin, Co-President
David D Knoll AM, Immediate Past President
Brian Samuel OAM, Immediate Past President
Ayal Marek, Co-Vice-President, ARZA President
Dorothy Graff OAM, Co-Vice-President
Sally Castle, Honorary Secretary
Harry Bernfield, Honorary Treasurer

Committee Members
Lynda Ben-Menashe
Avishai Conyer
Amanda Mace

Staff
Jocelyn Robuck, Executive Manager

Ex Officio Committee Members
Rabbi Allison RH Conyer, ARC Chair
Maureen Barten, PJV President
Aimee Harris, Netzer Mederal Mazkir
Hadar Lev-Tzori, Netzer Shlicha
Helen Shardey, WUPJ Representative

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MESSAGE FROM THE WORLD UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM

Dear Friends:

The WUPJ sends warm greetings to our partners in the UPJ. This has been an unprecedented year of tragedy and war in Israel and rising antisemitism in the Diaspora. The WUPJ's mission to connect the Progressive Jewish world, provide support and serve as a platform for ideas guides us in these challenging times. Our activities this year reflect our resolve and imperative to nurture global Progressive Jewish leadership.

We want to begin by expressing our deep gratitude to the UPJ for your contribution to support WUPJ programs assisting our Ukrainian Progressive communities suffering from the traumas of war as well refugees in Israel and around Europe.

This year, we demonstrated our commitment to stand with Israel. Some of our efforts included the WUPJ Israel Emergency Appeal through which the WUPJ raised and distributed funds in collaboration with the IMPJ and other Israeli partners for first responding, rehabilitation and refugee support. We also organized the WUPJ-Arzenu Global Solidarity Mission to Israel, bringing together twenty leaders representing diverse regions, ages and positions to visit sites, engage in dialogue and demonstrate support for Israel. They now lead as ambassadors for Israel and Progressive Zionism.

We congratulate UPJ co-Presidents Danny Hochberg and Larry Lockshin for leading the first UPJ mission to Israel, and the WUPJ is proud to have supported the mission and taken part in the program.

Our ongoing priority is Leadership Training. The WUPJ supported in 2024 the UPJ Governance Course for community board leaders as well as the Emerging Leaders Project and the Resource Sharing Network through our Local Leadership Development Initiatives. We are excited that Dr. Michelle Wise, the Chair of KiwiPJ, and Ashleigh Harris, board member of Progressive Judaism Victoria, are participating in this year's Global Leadership Fellowship. The WUPJ inaugurated a global forum of leaders of Shlichei Tzibor training programs, creating a database of resources, programming and peer support and providing pedagogical and organizational consulting to local programs. This included a leadership seminar in Israel for 25 emerging shlichei tzibor from Progressive communities in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus including practical training and deepening understanding of Israel after October 7th.

Netzer and Tamar Olami is our central platform for supporting youth leadership. Despite the war in Israel, Netzer's gap year in Israel program Shnat Shachar 2024 took place with two youth leaders from Australia who attended Machon Le'Madrichei Chutz La'Aretz, volunteered on a kibbutz and worked at URJ camps. Registration is open for Shnat Te'enah 2025. Tamar Olami supported regional conferences in South America and in Europe. We are looking forward to a gathering of the new Tamar sniffim in Australia. The first ever Progressive Tamar Taglit Israel Mission was held in May also in cooperation with Arzenu. We support the youth shlichut in Australia, the current shlicha, Hadar Lev-Tzori and are working with all of our partners to bring a second shaliach/shlicha.

As WUPJ Chair, Phyllis looks forward to meeting you all at the Biennial in Canberra along with WUPJ Secretary Sharene Hambur and will bring best wishes for a successful and enjoyable conference from your WUPJ family in person, . And we both look forward to seeing you at Connections 2025 in Jerusalem, kicking off a year of celebrations of 100 years of the WUPJ.

Am Yisrael Chai!

Rabbi Sergio Bergman
President

Phyllis Dorey, OAM
Chair

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MESSAGE FROM THE EUPJ

Dear friends,

On behalf of the Management Committee and Executive Board of the European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ) we send greetings to our friends and colleagues in Australasia on the occasion of your Biennial. We are partners in the sacred work of developing and supporting Progressive Judaism in our regions which, although geographically distant, are part of the WUPJ family.

The ongoing Israel-Gaza war has brought with it a significant rise in antisemitism in Europe which we are monitoring closely. Our new EUPJ-EU rabbinic envoy Rabbi Brian Doyle-Du Breuil attended the EU-Israel High Level Seminar on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Antisemitism as well as participating in EUPJ's activities focused on antisemitism prevention including the EUPJ Neighbours' Project, which held its final conference in Amsterdam in April. A full report about the conference and the project is available on our website. We take great pride in this important EU-funded project, in which eight of our member congregations participated.

A significant part of the mission of the EUPJ is to work with emerging and developing Progressive congregations in our region. In addition to the two new congregations, which the Executive Board has approved for associate membership, we are working with groups in Georgia, Portugal, Lithuania and Slovenia who are hoping to establish new Progressive congregations. We are also happy that our congregation in Lisbon has grown so that we were able to approve them to become full members of the EUPJ.

In addition to the support offered to emerging congregations, we are also actively supporting our developing congregations – in particular through advocacy work (e.g., to achieve cross-communal or state recognition) and with resources (e.g. support for developing prayer books). Thanks to the generosity of the Roswell Family, we are able to provide grants to congregations in Eastern-Central Europe, Italy and the Spanish peninsula.

We are excited that we will be returning to holding in person meetings in 2024. Following an in-person strategy retreat for the Management Committee, we will be holding a special Shabbaton in Vienna toward the end of the year for members of the Executive Board and leaders of our constituents.

Rabbi Lea Mühlstein
Chair

Miriam Kramer
President

President
Miriam Kramer
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Chair
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European Union for Progressive Judaism is an affiliate of The World Union For Progressive Judaism
The WUPJ is a constituent of the World Zionist Organisation and World Jewish Congress. Charity Number 253000

MESSAGE FROM THE UPJ CO-PRESIDENTS

DANNY HOCHBERG AND LARRY LOCKSHIN

This was our first year as Co-Presidents and it has been a difficult one following the events of October 7, 2023. We stepped into our role in November and found the priorities of our organisation had to be reassessed, while at the same time delivering on our overall mission to our members. We had the backing and advice of previous presidents and an experienced Executive to advise and help us.

UIA Progressive Appeal

Our reassessment highlighted the importance of a successful UIA Progressive Appeal, which was led by David Knoll, immediate past president with the assistance of Jocelyn Robuck. We were very fortunate to secure Rabbi Yael Vurgan, rabbi of the Sha'ar Hanegev Council, located along the Gaza Strip, to visit us in Australia and relate her experiences on and after October 7. She worked with the kibbutzim and communities hardest hit by the October 7 attack. In the aftermath, Vurgan changed course and dedicated herself to supporting her dispersed congregation across Israel, listening to their pain and offering solace at funerals, shivas, and memorials.

Rabbi Vurgan gave heartfelt and emotional talks in Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth. You can listen to a short four minute version here or a full 30 minute version here. She met with large and small groups at special events, dinners, and services. As a result of her visit and the work of our team, we raised over $l.5 million for progressive programs in Israel. Our appeal went directly to Israel to help fund food, clothing, and necessities for those dislocated by the tragedy; to aid in gaining gender and religious equality in the military; and continued to aid refugees from the conflict in Ukraine among other projects.

Progressive Mission to Israel

We planned to develop the first UPJ Progressive Mission to Israel for 2025, but the events of October 7 pushed this up to 2024. Danny Hochberg took the lead in organising an eight-day mission to Israel focusing on meeting Progressive leaders and volunteers running projects. Fourteen Australians and one American went to Israel in early May to be there for Yom HaShoah. Many stayed after the mission to attend Yom HaZikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut ceremonies. We had several official meetings with various Israeli departments, the Australian Ambassador, and a Progressive member of the Knesset. We also saw so much evidence of resilience during our visit: The Arab – Jewish Cultural Centre in Haifa, the rehabilitation unit at Sheba Hospital, Ronen Koehler founder of Brothers and Sisters in Arms, Women of the Wall still fighting to bring a Torah to the wall every Rosh Chodesh, Lee Siegel, brother of Keith Seigel, still a hostage, and Aviva Siegel, Keith's wife who was released in one of the early hostage releases. The Mission was a great success in giving us a deeper understanding of Israel and the people and most of us gave talks and wrote articles after our return. You can find a full report here. We are in the planning stages for our next Mission in 2025. If successful, we hope to send Missions every second year.

October 7 memorial e-booklet

The UPJ sought and received member's reflections and hopes for an e-booklet, which was published online for use by our individual members and congregations. It contained artwork, essays, reflections and poems by some of our rabbis, students from Jewish day schools, our schlicha, and our three Netzer schnatties. You can read the booklet here.

Progressive Community Schlichim

We had two Shlichim during this year, Naama Yeruham in Melbourne and Hadar Lev-Tzori in Sydney. They helped Netzer conduct programs in both states and also visited Adelaide and Perth. Naama had to return to Israel after October 7 and we have yet to find a replacement. Hadar has taken on extra duties but will now take several months of maternity leave – with our congratulations.

Submission on Antisemitism

The UPJ organised a submission to the Consultation on Inquiry into Antisemitism at Australian Universities Bill 2024 (No. 2). It was mainly written by our Youth Committee Chair, Avishai Conyer with help from the rest of the executive. We received several compliments from people reading the submission, which was posted on Inquiry website as well as media inquiries.

New provisional members

The UPJ was pleased welcome two new congregations as provisional members to our association: Christchurch Hebrew Congregation, New Zealand and Taiwan Jewish Congregation.

WUPJ/KKL Grants

We received several grants to help us add to existing programs and develop new programs from the World Union for Progressive Judaism:

- Governance Course – the funding helped improve our governance course, offered two years ago to board members and leaders in Progressive synagogues. This year 16 leaders took part in the 4-week course in August and September. The four sessions were: Jewish values and the roles of the rabbi, staff and board; the roles of board members, including legal responsibilities and compliance; financial planning and organisational strategy; board recruitment and effectiveness. The program was enhanced by newly developed case studies for each of the units, where we split into groups to discuss and learn. The course is intended to run biennially.

- Netzer leadership programs – this was a new program for training seminars and outreach to help develop new leadership in Netzer. It is still in progress, but so far has resulted in several weekend seminars with a wide participation from across Australia. The situation in Israel has resulted in lower participation in the Netzer Shnat program, putting added emphasis on local leadership training.

- Emerging Leaders – a new program to help subsidise emerging leaders from across our region to attend the Biennial Conference in Canberra. We focused on attracting leaders from distant congregations in Western Australia, New Zealand, and Asia. They will attend the Biennial and participate in the presidents' roundtable discussion.

- The Resource Sharing Network – this was funding to enhance our existing resource sharing network (RSN) by purchasing a new module that allows uploads and downloads of material submitted by UPJ members in different categories. This project was very capably led by Dorothy Graff and Jocelyn Robuck. Through emails and bimonthly meetings, members throughout our region were able to join the forum and post and download documents and ideas from a wide range of topics, e.g. cheder resources, festivals and events, fundraising, governance, membership, synagogue policies, rabbinic issues, and ritual practices. The network also allows simple questions to be asked which are then forwarded to the entire group for answers. This unique resource helps fulfil our mission to provide innovative platforms for the development of Progressive Judaism in our region.

Tamar

TaMaR (Tnuat Magshimim Reformit - Movement of Reform Fulfillers) is a global platform dedicated to engaging Jews in their 20s and early 30s who seek to build and strengthen Progressive Jewish connections and communities. This year, the UPJ has taken on the exciting challenge of reimagining traditional approaches to Jewish engagement in order to bring TaMaR to Australia, creating meaningful spaces for young adults to authentically connect with Judaism and with each other. Spearheaded by Emanuel Synagogue in Sydney and supported by ARZA in Melbourne, TaMaR has hosted Shabbat dinners, guest speakers, social gatherings, a Pesach Seder, and High Holy Day programs. In December, Jewish young adults from small and large communities across the region will come together for a retreat to celebrate Shabbat, discuss contemporary Jewish life, and develop strategies to promote young adult engagement in their local communities. While there is always more work to be done, we are proud of the significant strides we have made so far in reaching this younger demographic.

Penny Jakobovits Youth Scholarship

The UPJ was saddened to learn of the passing of Penny Jakobovits, former president of the UPJ and Temple Beth Israel and long-time Progressive Jewish leader. A small committee organised by Dorothy Graff, Philip Bliss, and Jocelyn Robuck created a scholarship fund in her name. There was an excellent response in donations from across our region. The scholarship provides for an upcoming Jewish leader under 30 years old to attend the UPJ Biennial and to have a mentor from within our region to help them transfer their knowledge to their congregation. The first recipients were Mia Kline from Canberra, and Louis Gillispie from Adelaide. Both will attend and participate in this year's Biennial.

New social media position

The UPJ executive will invest in a 10-hour per week social media specialist to extend the reach of our messaging to a younger audience. The position and contract were developed under Amanda Mace, our marketing and communications committee chair. The position will start in the secular new year.

Roundtables and new regional structure

The UPJ has conducted Presidents' Roundtable discussions among our member congregations for many years. These aid our executive in understanding the issues our members face and some of the ways they have approached them, as well as helping members meet and share ideas with each other outside of the Biennial Conference. It became clear to use even before we started that Australia, New Zealand, and Asia are not all the same and the issues and solutions offer to some degree. As a result, and in consultation with the regions, we decided to divide our vast sub-region into 3 subregions.

We hosted presidents' roundtables for each of these three subregions and found strong support for continuing these roundtables and for developing Gatherings for each subregion. In the past, we have a Biennial Conference and then a Gathering of presidents in the odd years. In 2025, we will have separate Gatherings in New Zealand, Asia, and Australia. We believe these will help serve our members better by being more focused on each area's issues.

Assembly of Rabbis and Cantors of Australia, New Zealand and Asia (ARC)

We have worked very closely with the ARC and wish to thank Rabbi Allison Conyer (President) and Rabbi Jacqueline Ninio (Vice President) for their support and advice. A particular focus has been supporting smaller congregations and those without a Rabbi. It was very pleasing that through our UPJ Rabbinical committee, led by Roger Mendelson, we were able to source several Rabbis to serve in communities over the High Holy Days.

Biennial

This year's Biennial was held in Canberra and hosted by the ACT Jewish Community and Progressive Congregation, organised by Dr Mike Kelly AM and Sarah Greenbaum. Having the Biennial in Canberra provides a unique opportunity to access a range of political and expert speakers usually unavailable elsewhere. We are also pleased to welcome representatives from the WZO, IMPJ and WUPJ. The focus was on responses to the October 7 attack and discussing how we can move forward in our communities and engage the next generation of leaders. We were fully subscribed to the limit of the facilities, which shows the ongoing commitment in our Progressive communities.

Treasurer and budget

Our new Treasurer, Harry Bernfield, worked closely with our former Treasurer, Sally Castle, to insure a seamless handover. Harry has provided advice on financial issues as well as providing the requisite budgets and updates. His full report is in this Annual Report.

Farewell to Sally and Dorothy

We have to say farewell to our very longstanding former Treasurer and current Honorary Secretary, Sally Castle, after more than a decade on the executive. It is a rare occurrence when the Constitution must be amended to allow a longer term for an officer, but such was the case with Sally. We will miss her concise financial statements and upfront and sage advice on many matters. We also say farewell to Dorothy Graff, our Vice President. Dorothy also brought sage advice to our executive and so ably led the development of our Resource Sharing Network. She especially helped with HR matters and strategic thinking.

A very big thank-you to Jocelyn Robuck

Our association could not function without our Executive Manager, Jocelyn Robuck. Although she is paid for three day's work per week, she seems to be available and working almost every single day, bar Jewish festivals and grandparent duties. Unless you work directly with Jocelyn, you can't comprehend how wide is her knowledge, her strong commitment to Progressive Jewish causes, and her amazing organisation and management skills. Scatter-brained presidents and executive members could never function without her guidance. The number of emails, postings, projects, and contacts are hardly measurable. We know this is your last year as Executive Manager and wish our budget could support the three people necessary to do the job you do alone. Thank you so much!

MESSAGE FROM THE UPJ EXECUTIVE MANAGER

JOCELYN ROBUCK

As alluded to in the Co-Presidents' Message, I will be retiring in 2025, although the exact date has not yet been determined.

Back in 2009, former UPJ Executive Director Steve Denenberg recruited me to project-manage the publishing project that became our region's first siddur, *Mishkan T'filah*, as well as to create an e-newsletter to connect our far-flung communities. Steve was (and still is) a dedicated supporter of Progressive Judaism and Zionism, and I was fortunate to have him as a mentor, as well as dear friends David Robinson (UPJ President) and Philip Levy (UPJ Treasurer). When Steve retired in 2015, I took on a much more challenging role, consolidating both of our job descriptions.

Over the years, I have taken great satisfaction in many projects, including:

- Helping to develop a more robust UIA Progressive Appeal, with an A-Team of chairmen, David Knoll AM and Alan Obrart *z"l* in NSW, and Dr Philip Bliss OAM and Brian Samuel OAM and in Victoria;
- Coordinating a second UPJ publication, our region's first machzor, *Mishkan T'shuvah*, and publishing a booklet about Progressive Judaism, *Living Judaism*;
- Presenting UPJ Biennials (my first was in Canberra in 2010 for the UPJ's 80th anniversary, and this year's Biennial is my eighth), and in alternate years, Gatherings for presidents and other leaders;
- Working with the Assembly of Rabbis and Cantors of Australia, New Zealand and Asia on a variety of projects: Elul Reflections, drashot on the weekly parshiyot for the UPJ website and e-newsletter, the Weekly News & Drash;
- Coordinating two Poland-Israel Missions in 2012 and 2014;
- Establishing in 2013 a biennial music conference, Shir Chadash, with a talented team: Cantor Michael Laloum (UPJ Music Network Chair), Rabbi George Mordecai (Emanuel Synagogue) and Judy Campbell (Music Director of North Shore Temple Emanuel). Our next music conference will be the most exciting: a collaboration between the UPJ and Jewish Arts, combining UPJ's Shir Chadash with the Australian Jewish Choral Festival to create the "Odyssey of Voices".

During this past year, two highlights for me have been acting as the "matchmaker" for a Torah donated by the World Union for Progressive Judaism, and generously funded by ACT Progressive Congregation member Daniel Casey and his family, which has now found a home at the Thailand Progressive Jewish Community; and working with Co-Chairs Philip Bliss OAM and Dorothy Graff OAM to create the Penny Jakobovits Scholarship Fund, which provides funding to recipients to attend UPJ Biennials and WUPJ Connections conferences, and is in memory of a wonderful leader of our region and UPJ president.

I am extremely grateful to those who served on the Executive Committee during this past year: Lynda Ben-Menashe, Avishai Conyer, Vered Harel and Amanda Mace; they are deeply committed and passionate individuals and our community is blessed by their generosity of time and spirit. My heartfelt thanks to our hardworking UPJ Va'ad (Officers), who have tackled many challenges and met them ably: Co-Presidents Danny Hochberg and Larry Lockshin, Co-Vice-Presidents Dorothy Graff OAM and Ayal Marek, Honorary Secretary Sally Castle and Honorary Treasurer Harry Bernfield. Our immediate past presidents, David Knoll AM and Brian Samuel OAM, have remained stalwart supporters who are always available when needed, and our ex-officio members, Maureen Barten (representing Progressive Judaism Victoria), Netzer Mazkira Aimee Harris, Progressive Community and Netzer Shlicha Hadar Lev-Tzori, and Helen Shardey (representing the WUPJ) have provided valuable input and assistance. Though he stepped down as immediate past president last year, Roger Mendelson has continued his work on behalf of the UPJ in many capacities and has provided to me friendship and support.

I wish to thank the UPJ community for the privilege of serving for the past 15 years. It has been a deeply rewarding experience to work with our wide-ranging community. As I'm sure many will agree, I have learned that the most effective way to build community and accomplish goals is to communicate directly with a phone call and, in that way, I have built many strong and lasting friendships with UPJ members. I have been so blessed by the friendships that grew from my professional relationships and while I hesitate to single out anyone, I will thank individually the amazing Sally Castle, who was brought on as UPJ Treasurer more than 10 years ago, and will this year also be taking a well-deserved "retirement". I believe Sally may have the title of longest-service Exec member, but she definitely has the title of my dear friend. L'hitraot and b'hatzlacha – may the UPJ continue to grow and move forward with success.

MESSAGE FROM THE UPJ HONORARY TREASURER

HARRY BERNFIELD

This is my first year as treasurer for the Union for Progressive Judaism.

I present a preliminary financial report of the UPJ for the year ended 30 June 2024. This final report is subject to audit adjustments.

I can advise that an operating profit of $100k was made for the financial year ended 30 June 2024. This compares to a surplus of $5k for the 2023 financial year. The main driver of the increased profit was primarily driven by lower costs.

Income

Income for the 2024 financial year was $343k, compared to the previous year of $347k. While they appear similar, there are some key differences.

- The contribution from the UIA has increased ($38k), in part due to increased donations from the UIA Progressive appeal and partly due to an accounting change where we are accruing the contribution for the current year's campaign.
- Against this, there was no income in 2024 from the Shir Chadash music conference, Governance Course and Biennial ($50k) run during the 2023 year. However as noted below, not operating these programs had significant cost savings.
- Although small, we are starting to earn interest ($3k) from term deposits.

Expenses

Expenses in 2024 were $243k, compared $342k for the previous year. The variation in expenses of $99k was primarily due to:

Cost Increases:

- Cost on new website - $16k
- Gathering (held Nov 2023) and other travel costs - $15k

Cost decreases:

- Biennial - $87k
- Shir Chadash Program - $26k
- Governance Course - $8k
- Advertising and Administration - $8k

Cash reserves

As at 30 June 2024, we had cash reserves of $286k, including term deposits of $250k.

Outlook

We have budgeted for a small profit for 2025. Revenues are to increase slightly ($20k) because of revenue from the Biennial however there is a net loss overall from the Biennial of approximately $40k.

Appreciation

Special thanks to Sally Castle, the previous treasurer, and to UPJ Executive Manager Jocelyn Robuck, both of whom have provided me with invaluable support, enabling a seamless transition to the role.

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSEMBLY OF RABBIS AND CANTORS OF AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND & ASIA

RABBI ALLISON RH CONYER, CHAIR

The Assembly of Rabbis and Cantors (ARC) of the Union for Progressive Judaism (UPJ) of Australia, Asia, and New Zealand has experienced significant transition over the past year. Rabbis Kim Ettlinger (Perth) and Rafi Kaiserblueth (Sydney) stepped down from the ARC Executive, and Rabbis Jacqueline Ninio and Sam Zwarenstein (Sydney) have stepped up as our new Vice Chair and Treasurer, respectively. They join me (Melbourne) as Chair, and Rabbi Martha Bergadine (Hong Kong) as Secretary, as we continue our roles on the ARC Executive.

Rabbinic transitions

Our region has seen considerable rabbinic transition. We said farewell to Singapore's United Hebrew Congregation Rabbis Beni and Miriam Wajnberg, as well as to Rabbi Shoshana Kaminsky, from Adelaide's Beit Shalom, who had served as the longest-standing Chair of the ARC/Moetza. We are looking forward to welcome Adelaide's incoming rabbi, Frankie Salzman, who, we hope, will arrive soon. Following the UPJ's provisional engagement with the Taiwan Jewish community, we have extended an invitation to Rabbi Cody Bahir, the first non-Orthodox full-time rabbi in Taiwan, to join the ARC as a guest member.

We will soon be saying goodbye to Rabbi Moshe Givental from North Shore Temple Emanuel in Sydney and to Rabbis Martha Bergadine and Stan Zamek from Hong Kong's United Jewish Congregation. Rabbi Moshe, who has brought passion for environmental and social justice issues to both his community and our region, will leave at the end of the year. Rabbis Martha and Stan, who have been the longest-serving Progressive rabbis in Asia, will depart in June 2025 after 17 years of dedicated service to return to the United States. Their contributions to the region, particularly their support of Asian communities, have been invaluable.

Current Staffing

Our region currently has:

- 8 full-time rabbis (with 1 more on the way)
- 1 full-time rabbi/cantor
- 2 full-time cantors
- 2 part-time rabbis employed by UPJ congregations
- 4 rabbi emeriti
- 5 rabbis working on an ad hoc basis as consulting rabbis or educators
- 3 rabbis regularly invited as guests of the ARC

Recruitment and Challenges

Given the shortage of rabbis in our region, I have been actively recruiting in the United States, Israel, and through the World Union for Progressive Judaism. I met with rabbinic and cantorial students at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles and New York, as well as at Hebrew College in Newton, Massachusetts, and spoke with the Dean of the Academy of Jewish Religion in New York. However, I encountered two key challenges during these conversations:

1. There is a shortage of rabbis in the U.S., making the job market highly competitive with more attractive salaries that help graduates manage student loans.
2. Students are more comfortable with short-term commitments, such as internships over the High Holy Days or during the U.S. summer, before considering longer-term placements in our region.
3. I also discovered that securing a short-term (2-year) religious worker's visa is more straightforward than obtaining longer-term visas.

Accreditation and Standards

One of the growing challenges we face is the increasing number of pathways through which individuals can become rabbis. While the ARC has traditionally recognised "legacy" seminaries such as Hebrew Union College and Leo Baeck College, we are now seeing applicants from less traditional institutions, and even some who have received private smicha. Currently, in addition to our

Reform/Progressive rabbinic seminaries, the ARC recognisea the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (Reconstructionist), Jewish Theological Seminary and American Jewish University (Conservative/Masorti), and Alef (Renewal), and some pluralist rabbinic institutions as providing sufficient rabbinic training to serve as a rabbi in our region. Given the current shortage of rabbis, cantors, and educators, and the evolving needs of our communities, the ARC is working to develop criteria for recognising rabbis who have not followed the traditional path to ordination. This will be a key focus of our upcoming ARC conference.

ARC Projects

In November, the ARC began updating our standards and assessment for conversion, as well as reviewing ARC policies for the Progressive movement. This is an ongoing process, and we will keep the UPJ and our congregations informed of any updates. In addition to providing our policies and processes to all of our UPJ communities, we are working on an updated version of "What we stand for" identifying 10 key issues of our time.

Preventing Burnout and Contract Standardisation

The ARC is also working to establish better boundaries and realistic expectations for rabbis and cantors to help prevent burnout and retain clergy in our region.

In addition, we are identifying key elements in rabbinic and cantorial contracts that we believe should be standardised across all UPJ congregations. We plan to collaborate with the UPJ, congregational presidents, and boards to ensure that these changes are implemented in the spirit of sacred partnership, with mutual respect for the roles and boundaries of all parties.

Financial Support for Rabbinic Services

I am pleased to report that the ARC has allocated AUD $5,000 to support Asian communities without full-time rabbinic leadership. This funding, made possible by a donation from Rabbi Nathan Alfred upon his departure from Singapore, has been distributed to several communities. Beijing and Thailand will use the funds for High Holy Days rabbinic support, while Indonesia used the funds to subsidise a visit from Rabbi David Kunin.

In addition, we have reinstated our AU$1,000 donation to Netzer to help subsidise camp costs for children in need, particularly those from outlying communities.

Regional and International Engagement

As Chair of the ARC, I worked with Roger Mendelson from the UPJ on regional rabbinic placements for the High Holy Days. I also attended a World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) meeting with chairs from each of the seven regions, discussing how we can support each other in the face of challenges such as antisemitism, funding, and professional support.

Locally, I met with Victorian Premier Jacinta Allen, alongside other community leaders, to discuss the impact of the 7 October attacks and the subsequent rise in antisemitism.

After the Prime Minister met only with Orthodox Jewish leaders in Sydney, Rabbi Ninio wrote to the Prime Minister's office and state Premiers, highlighting the presence and leadership of our Progressive Jewish community.

It is also noteworthy that Rabbi Ninio and I were invited to participate in Yom Ha'atzmaut ceremonies in Sydney and Melbourne, respectively, alongside Orthodox counterparts.

Since 7 October, there has been a noticeable shift towards greater inclusivity and collaboration within the broader Jewish community.

Conclusion

This past year has been marked by both division and solidarity. The ARC has been a source of support for one another, enabling us to provide strong leadership to our communities. Together, we have worked to nurture pride in our Jewish identity, while offering comfort and strength to those affected by recent events. As we move forward, the ARC remains committed to addressing the challenges we face and to fostering collaboration and unity across our diverse region.

The Progressive Congregation of the ACT Jewish Community – Canberra, ACT

Peter Wise, Chair of the Progressive Committee of the ACTJC

The ACTJC Progressive Congregation has had a busy year. The 2023/2024 year marked the resumption of visits to the Community of Rabbi Gary Robuck as Rabbi to the Progressive Congregation, and in the new role of Community Educator for the ACT Jewish Community. Rabbi Robuck's energy and commitment to the Progressive Congregation and the ACT Jewish Community is deeply appreciated. His innovative and stimulating services and events have contributed to an increase in both the number and level of participation of congregants in services and other community events.

Our High Holy Day services were led by Rabbi Robuck. Services were inclusive and highly participatory. It was wonderful to see a large attendance of the Progressive community from Canberra and further afield join us for High Holy Days services.

Four of our young congregants became b'nei mitzvah this year. Rabbi Robuck is overseeing the preparation of several young people who will become b'nei mitzvah in the coming year.

We continue to run regular Friday night Shabbat services, led by Rabbi Robuck, or *shlichei tzibbur* when the Rabbi is not present.

We will be welcoming delegates from across our region to the UPJ Biennial Conference, to be held in Canberra in November. The Conference Committee is working with Jocelyn Robuck to stage a stimulating and enjoyable event.

We look forward to growing our congregation in the coming year.

Central Coast Shalom Progressive Jewish Congregation – Central Coast, New South Wales

Brian Green, Public Officer and Ceremonial Leader

The Central Coast Shalom Congregation was established in 1988 and was meeting regularly until Covid struck, though we had a small and loyal but aging membership. Most graduates of our Hebrew & Religion School have left the Central Coast for either jobs or university studies in Sydney. However, the Central Coast now is not much more than an hour from Sydney's North Shore and with the improved freeway, many of the local Jews have become members of North Shore Temple Emanuel where they will generally attend for the High Holy Days.

An offshoot of our group, Kadimah, had also been meeting monthly, on Shabbat mornings, pre Covid. Their services have now resumed post-Covid on Shabbat mornings, at Greenpoint Community Centre.

In the past year, Rabbi Jonathan Keren-Black has become our honorary 'Consulting Rabbi', having moved into our area, and is available to assist with support and bereavements etc. Jonathan is also assisting with leading services at Kadimah.

This year there was a joint gathering for Tu Bishvat at the Narara Ecovillage and we also shared a Pesakh Seder.

Over the years, our religion school graduated over 30 students who celebrated B'nai Mitzvah, four in Israel and one at 'the Wall.' The last one was in 2016 and we no longer have the demand to operate it.

However, we are hopeful that we can increase our activities and the number of people participating in the coming year through Family Shabbatons as we work to raise our profile and re-establish a relevant and meaningful Jewish presence on the Central Coast.

During the Gaza crisis we have been supporting, in particular, our resident Israelis.

North Shore Temple Emanuel – Chatswood, New South Wales

Josh Keller and Julia Selby, Co-Presidents

With the pandemic officially behind us, 2023/24 was a year for NSTE to thrive and sustain and support our community through good times and bad.

Starting with the bad times, which sadly, are still with us in 2024, the invasion in the south of Israel by Hamas on 7 October 2023 and all that followed brought sadness and worry to our community. The rise in antisemitism globally, including in Sydney has brought much concern.

Putting aside their own personal shock and concern, our rabbis were quick to consider how best to care for our community, particularly for those with family and friends in Israel or teenagers, those with children and students having to deal with the situation in schools and universities.

A particularly moving event was the Havdalah/Shirat Nechama sharing gentle Israeli songs, poetry, psalms, prayers, and moments of silence, in support of those with loved ones in Israel. Rabbi Nicole's thoughtful initiative of placing two Shabbat candles in the ark, which will only be lit when all the hostages are free, and providing Prayer Squares for people to write the names of loved ones also be placed in the ark were simple but profound means for people to express their pain and hurt.

While the rabbis tended to the spiritual and pastoral needs of the NSTE community, the board focussed on security at our campus, representing NSTE at wider community vigils, along with our rabbis, and providing extra budget support for the unprogrammed special events at NSTE.

We are grateful to have received funding under the Australian Government's Securing Faith Based Places grant program for security infrastructure and a security guard for services until March 2027, as well as funding support under Multicultural NSW's Stronger Together Safe Places for Faith Communities grant.

It was exciting to see the development of the Temple Tribes, first suggested by Rabbi Nicole in late 2022. These gained momentum in 2023, which has continued into 2024, providing an opportunity for members with similar interests or in similar locations to meet with each other for enjoyment and sharing their common passions.

We continue to be grateful to the large number of people who volunteer their time or professional expertise to NSTE and it was a joy to be able to express our gratitude at a shabbat in February 2024, which included a special blessing over our many volunteers.

With the aim of simplifying the number of membership categories and encouraging younger people to join NSTE, the board approved a new membership fee structure, which commenced in 2024. This included providing free membership to anyone aged up to 34 years and a reduced membership fee up to the age of 39 years

At our annual general meeting in May 2024, following approval of changes to the NSTE Constitution, we were elected as Co-Presidents of NSTE, a model which UPJ and other congregations have used to encourage generational succession.

Emanuel Synagogue – Woollahra, New South Wales
Grant McCorquodale, President

2024 has been a highly active year of unification, member engagement and new member growth. Emanuel has built a global blueprint for a successful and multi-stream Jewish community and synagogue with our members. Engaged and inclusive, thriving with memberships, we are very proud of our progress.

Record attendances, on our campus throughout the year and especially over the High Holy Days—with in excess of 2,000 people attending Kol Nidrei service alone, and similar numbers returning for the Saturday services—it was an incredible time to come together.

Our board strategy this year prioritised 3 key areas:

1. Provide an open place to restore and heal – a safe sanctuary to be as one together, supporting members from the chaos outside
2. Host high quality and diverse cultural events to bring members together – to honour our pride in our Jewish identity and culture. Sold-our keynote events included, Josh Friedenberg, evenings with Nova Peris, David Gonski and Ralph Heimans, Remembering Rhodes (commemoration of 80 years since the expulsion of Jews from Greece with the dramatized reading of Vic Alhadeff play and live musical performances and presentation by the Consul General of Greece in Australia),and Lt Col Peter Lehrner and Jillian Segal Shabbat dinners, with many more big events still to come, including an exclusive convert with Lior.
3. Combat antisemitism – Via a series of Inter-faith services, events and Shabbat dinners.

Additionally, we are expanding our audiences further via—

- Youth engagement is flourishing today with an engaged and active group of 20-somethings regularly participating in programs
- Our rabbis have hosted successful events off-campus with hundreds participating in out-reach services in the inner west.
- Our digital platform emanuelplus is reaching many more and now includes a new joint partnership with TBI, Melbourne.
- Our social media engagement is up 300% this year as we continue conversations on a daily basis online.

We have also celebrated significant events in our clergy team. Rabbi Ninio celebrated 25 years of service to Emanuel Synagogue as well as the joint installation of Rabbi Mordecai and Rabbi Zwarenstein.

Many Emanuel Synagogue members are performing leadership roles at both the national and state levels, with special mention to our Jill Segal's appointment as Special Envoy to combat Antisemitism. Others have given generously to Israel and many external communal causes this year.

We have completed the restoration of our Heritage Sanctuary, and meaningfully reduced the debt of the project. Executed the construction very well, considering significant cost increases, contractor failures and instability of in the construction industry today.

We are shortly to launch the Emanuel Synagogue Foundation as a key pillar to our future financial security. This is being executed in tandem with a formal review of our current member model and pricing strategy.

Our staff and clergy continue to perform at high levels, reflecting the unique year that was and the prioritisation to member safety and engagement. They have invested considerable time engaging with local State and Federal politicians, retaining close friendships and representations.

Work is already underway for 2025 offerings and programs and we look forward to another record-breaking year.

Temple Shalom – Gold Coast, Queensland
Louise Ward, President

Our initiatives to engage with the broader community have yielded positive results. Through a variety of community service projects, interfaith dialogues, and cultural events, we have highlighted the values and traditions of Temple Shalom. As a result, our visibility and the respect we receive from our neighbours have significantly increased.

A key factor in our success has been the hiring of Rabbi Cohen, along with the dedication of his wife, Gila, who has been instrumental in our community's achievements. Rabbi Cohen's commitment, along with the efforts of our Board of Management and volunteers, is charting a promising future for Temple Shalom. We have fostered friendships and enhanced collaboration with our multi-faith and multicultural partners on the Gold Coast, enriching the support within our community.

This year, we were proud to receive several awards for our community involvement, including recognition at the multicultural awards night held at Queensland Parliament House.

In July, local MP Angie Bell honoured us with an Australian flag from Parliament House in Canberra. Establishing and nurturing positive relationships with influential figures like Mrs. Bell is crucial for promoting unity with other faith communities on the Gold Coast and ensuring we receive support when needed. Over a hundred attendees gathered for this event, including members of the Temple Shalom congregation and the wider Jewish community.

Our events have been remarkably successful, serving as a significant catalyst for increasing membership applications. Many of our gatherings have reached full capacity, underscoring this trend. To meet this growing demand, our catering facilities require upgrades.

Members of Temple Shalom, alongside Rabbi Cohen, volunteer at Serving Our People. Rabbi Cohen has made remarkable contributions to both the broader Jewish community and the non-Jewish community. Currently, he is a member of the Serving Our People (S.O.P.) advisory board. Now in his second year with the charity's Advisory Board, we take pride in Rabbi Cohen's active involvement with one of Australia's rapidly growing charities, which currently has over 4,500 volunteers and branches in Queensland and Sydney. S.O.P. is crucial in providing crisis support and highlights the significance of a Jewish presence in non-denominational charities that enhance social cohesion and community relationships. It is vital to uphold our values and showcase our meaningful contributions to society.

Representatives from Temple Shalom regularly attend the MAAG - Multi-Faith Action Advisory Group monthly meetings, which focus on community safety and offer insights into the traditions and beliefs of various faith groups. MAAG is instrumental in fostering positive relationships among diverse faith organisations and individuals.

We felt immensely honoured to host the launch of the QLD Traveling Holocaust Museum. Temple Shalom had the privilege of unveiling this traveling exhibition, allowing us to honour the Shoah survivors among us and to remember those who are no longer with us. Our partnership with the museum and the QLD Jewish Board of Deputies enhances the significance of the Jewish community in Queensland and elevates Temple Shalom's visibility within the community.

Engaging in Jewish affairs in Queensland not only enhances our visibility but also amplifies our community's voice. This increased presence has encouraged greater involvement from the broader Jewish community.

We have consistently voiced our concerns both publicly and through various media channels. Our influence has been evident in local news outlets and on television regarding issues that resonate with us, such as the initiative by Pro-Palestinians supporters to end our council's twin town partnerships with Israel, and during the October 7 Memorial Day when we were the only synagogue in Queensland featured on the local news.

To express our gratitude for the steadfast support we received over the past year, we invited the fifty leaders of different Christian churches, who sent us a supportive letter following the October 7 attacks, to join us for a morning Shabbat service. At almost every

event or Shabbat service we have members of the non Jewish community join us to show their support. The number of people who have joined our Affiliate list has also grown.

By increasing our visibility, vocal presence, and engagement with the wider community, we have also strengthened our connections with like-minded members of the Jewish community. Their participation in these events has contributed to the growth of Temple Shalom, clearly demonstrating to our members and the broader Jewish community that we have significant support.

Financially, we have made significant strides and have returned to a state of profitability. Our careful budgeting and the generous contributions from our members have stabilised our finances. While we have managed to secure funds for our daily operations, there is limited budget available for investing in growth and necessary upgrades to our building and facilities. We have achieved considerable outreach on a zero budget, yet the potential for greater accomplishments exists with additional funding.

We have introduced a membership model that allows individuals to choose their contribution level, starting with a minimum amount. We have clarified the actual costs associated with maintaining our organisation per member and encouraged support where feasible. Many members have expressed their willingness to increase or even double their previous fixed membership fees. This approach ensures that our membership remains accessible to everyone, irrespective of their financial circumstances.

In closing, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to last year’s Board of Management for their dedication and support. The loss of John Malone z"l, our Honorary Secretary, has left a substantial void in our shul's management. John's commitment and expertise were invaluable, and we miss him dearly.I look forward to an even more positive year ahead with Rabbi and Gila Cohen, our new Co-Vice Presidents, Karen Webel and Ben Naday, our Treasurer Jason Froman, our new Honorary Secretary Naomi Bennell, and our new and returning Board members.

Beit Shalom Synagogue – Adelaide, South Australia
Ruth Gilbert, President

After the events of October 7th 2023 and with increased security concerns, Beit Shalom has been conducting services only from Zoom on Friday nights and with a security guard on Saturday morning and for Hebrew School on a Sunday. Beit Shalom has been in close contact with SAPOL and with CNG but since there is no CNG in Adelaide, this has placed more responsibility on the Jewish Community Council which coordinates all Jewish organisation in Adelaide and communicates with the media and police often on their behalf. This organisation is very ably led by Annetay Henderson Sapir, who is a member of Beit Shalom.

During the year we saw a return to normal with a Purim carnival and spiel – this year the theme being "Corporations." We held our communal Seder to high numbers and a delicious meal. We celebrated Shavuot with an oneg and our traditional and fiercely-competed cheesecake competition, this year with a record 13 entries.

The end of April saw the departure of our long-standing rabbi Shoshana Kaminsky who left us for pastures new in the US. Our Recruitment Committee had already swung into action and the appointment of new rabbi was approved by a majority of the congregation at a Special General Meeting in March. Despite experiencing some bureaucratic delays, we hope to be welcoming Rabbi Frankie Salzman in October.

In the meantime "Bimah Associates" have been exercising their service-leading skills, and we're grateful to every member who stepped in to fill the breach, some members hosting services and Shabbat dinner in their homes.

Mid July we began our long awaited renovations and we are hoping that they will be compete mid-September, and if not, then in time for the High Holy Days. We are looking forward to seeing a new hall, remodelled kitchen and new toilets including a disability toilet. We have conducted a big fundraising campaign to finance these renovations and are at present 80% towards our goal. With all donor names recorded on a wonderful new art piece this is a great opportunity to be remembered and with gratitude by future generations. Donations can be made on our website.

Hobart Hebrew Congregation – Hobart, Tasmania

Jeff Schneider, President

Hobart Hebrew Congregation
Custodians of Australia's Oldest Synagogue

While several things are different in a small community, Hobart shares the pain of October 7th and the aftermath.

Several local unsettling events this year caused us apprehension. In May, a concert by Jewish singer Deborah Conway in Hobart was disrupted by vocal troublemakers who yelled diatribes at Conway, in response to comments she made supporting Israel in the current conflict. Several of our community members were in attendance and were forced to endure this vicious display. This event received local and even national media attention.

We are also aware of several lectures and presentations throughout the state where there is strong Anti-Israel propaganda shared with university students, and organisations such as unions and arts organisations. A national media publication shared that one of these talks called for the end of Israel's existence.

The local media has been quite a disappointment, with both news coverage and opinion pieces focused on activists and in most cases, not properly acknowledging or inviting comment from a different perspective. At the same time, the congregation is comfortable keeping a low public profile, reflecting our very small population.

Our response to these events in private includes:

- Meeting and strengthening ties with local politicians. We have very productive, ongoing engagement with Senator Jonathon Duniam, Senator Jacqui Lambie and State Politicians Madeleine Ogilvie and Eric Abetz.
- Regular fortnightly meetings with Tasmanian Police. Clear, responsive lines of communications is in place.
- Media engagement. After the Deborah Conway concert, I met with the ABC Hobart station manager to discuss an offensive comment by the morning radio host questioning if the event should have been cancelled. Our perspective was conveyed. Additionally, with the assistance of the ECAJ, content for news articles were shared with national publication The Australian to cover local offensive Anti-Israel events
- Implementation of the Commonwealth's security grant to Jewish communities that is used for security guards and physical security upgrades to the synagogue.

For our community, we continue to grow as local families and members join us. We are proud that we have a regular Shabbat morning service, successful High Holy Day services, and well attended communal picnics. We also take pride in continuing to host several Jewish visitors to tour our historic synagogue.

Kehillat David Hamelech (Kedem) – Armadale, Victoria
Deb Absler, President

2024 marked Kedem's 30th anniversary and it has been a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the many events, activities, milestones and achievements we have travelled through together during this period. We held three specific events to honour our anniversary – a shared Kabbalat meal across a number of homes with people sharing wonderful stories about how they came to first join the congregation and special moments.

We also held a specific Shabbat service which was extremely well attended by a combination of past and present members and lovely guests. The highlight was a 30th anniversary party with 100 people in attendance. Two of our members and their 70's tribute band provided the entertainment and the ruach was wonderful, dancing and sharing many memories of our experiences of the last 30 years.

Alongside the joy and delight of these celebrations the past 12 months has of course been deeply marked by the events in Israel and within Australia. We have endured enormous heartache and disbelief over these events. We have found the strength to find our way through these challenging times by organising a number of opportunities over this period to meet and process together how to stay connected at this time, the importance of, and need to wrap our hearts and souls and arms around each other. Finding the light amongst the shadow. Finding connection within our own community and our extended community.

The past 12 months has seen the continuation of many of our valued activities; discussion groups, study sessions, shared meals, celebrating Chaggim and special milestones for members. We have seen strong attendance at many of these alongside smaller attendances at some of our regular Shabbat services. This has been challenging for us.

Our 30th anniversary also provided us with a lens to look back and celebrate what Kedem has been, and also the beginning of looking forward to what Kedem will become. We have recognised that we are beginning a process to shape what model will best suit us, as we move into our next phase.

Our committees have worked hard, and I feel privileged to be well supported by a strong Board and ritual committee and Tikkun Alum committee. We have maintained our involvement in external committees.

We are excited and looking forward to the arrival of Rabbi Micky Boyden from Israel who is our guest rabbi over the High Holy Days. These are exciting times amongst the sadness.

Etz Chayim Progressive Synagogue – Bentleigh, Victoria
Pam Spiegel, President

Our synagogue has undergone a significant and, at times, challenging transition from rabbinical to lay leadership. This shift, while initially daunting, has fostered resilience and adaptability within our community. Members have stepped forward to take on roles previously held by our Rabbi and administrative officer, working collaboratively to lead services, organise events, and provide pastoral care. This change has not only strengthened the bonds among us but has also empowered individuals to contribute their unique skills and insights. While we deeply value and miss the guidance of rabbinical leadership, this new model has allowed our congregation to thrive in a different way, highlighting our commitment to shared responsibility, tradition, and continuity. We thank Kathy Kaplan OAM, David Bloom, Buck Rosenberg, Peter Esdaile and Noel Hall for the lay leadership and our team that leyne torah for us each week.

Alongside the transition to lay leadership, our synagogue has formed a valuable partnership with Temple Beth Israel (TBI) in St Kilda. This alignment allows us to share essential organizational resources and benefit from TBI's established programs, including Hebrew classes, B'nei Mitzvah preparation, and conversion courses. By collaborating with TBI, we not only expand the educational opportunities available to our members but also strengthen our community's ties within the broader Jewish network. This partnership ensures our congregation continues to thrive, supporting lifelong learning and spiritual growth for all.

In preparation for the High Holidays, our community embraced the spirit of togetherness and tradition through a series of meaningful activities. We gathered for a challah-making session, where people of all ages, from children to grandparents, joined hands to knead, braid, and bake. Additionally, we hosted a tallit-making session, and a latern making afternoon in preparation for us to participate in luminate for the hostages in Gaza. We enjoyed a wonderful morning building and decorating the Sukkah once again with multigenerational participation. These activities not only enriched our High Holiday experience but also strengthened our bonds as a community, bringing us closer as we entered this reflective and sacred season.

For our High Holiday services, we invited David Bentley to serve as our cantor, enhancing our spiritual leadership during this sacred season. His presence brought depth and inspiration to our services, guiding us through the prayers and melodies that connect us to tradition and to each other. Thank you to Cantor David our community were delighted with his presence.

Leo Baeck Centre for Progressive Judaism – East Kew, Victoria
Deborah Ogawa and Mark Pryor, Co-Presidents

This year LBC has continued it search for a new rabbi with both Rabbis Fred Morgan AM and Aviva Kipen continuing to assist our community. Rabbi Kipen and Rabbi Morgan have provided LBC members with pastoral care, service leadership, articles for our magazine and assistance with our beit mitzvah students. Rabbi Morgan led our High Holy Day services, officiated at services for our beit mitzvah students and led a very well attended community Seder.

The most recent AGM in May saw two new co-presidents be elected. They take over from Michael Taft, who has been an outstanding president for the past three years and still continues as part of the Committee of Management and chairperson of our Ritual Group. The current Committee of Management is focused on the future of LBC including hiring a rabbi and scheduling required maintenance and improvements at our site.

One of our members and past president Sharene Hambur AM was honoured in the King's Birthday Honours.

Events continue to be a significant part of LBC with a number continued over the year, including:

- A number of lively chaggim continue with lay leaders and Rabbi Morgan, including a well decorated Yom Ha'atzmaut with a catered lunch. For Shavuot, we showed a film "The Chosen", followed by discussion, led by Rabbi Fred with film critic Jan Epstein.
- Activities such as Torah Tots for our youngest, religion school.
- Women's group, Book Club and Israeli dance class – which has resumed after a two-year break due to COVID and with support from Boroondara's Annual Community Strengthening Grants, among others.
- Several chavurah lunches were held following Shabbat services, with members, or some visitors, telling us about their personal or professional journeys, while those present shared lunch contributed by attendees, and added to the discussions.
- Sponsoring Kiddushim has become popular as a way to celebrate milestones, organised by our Kitchen Group and using our renovated kitchen.
- Several art exhibitions were held.
- A musical and violin concert and fundraiser was much enjoyed.

Temple Beth Israel – St Kilda, Victoria
David Arkles and Jacky Magid, Co-Presidents

As we reflect on the past year at Temple Beth Israel, we are filled with pride and gratitude for our remarkable journey together. Guided by our dedicated Rabbinic team, we have reestablished TBI as a leading Kehilla Kedosha.

This year marked a historic milestone with the appointment of co-presidents, ushering in a new era of collaborative leadership. Our new Senior Rabbi, Rabbi Allison Conyer, has brought an inclusive and warm approach, invigorating our community and fostering a deeper sense of connection and spirituality. Her dynamic presence sets a vibrant tone for our future.

Our events have been thoughtfully designed to position TBI as a cultural destination. Initiatives like Pop-Up Shabbat and our Scholars Series have stimulated both intellectual discussion and spiritual growth. Lynda Ben-Menashe's seminar on responding to antisemitism drew significant attendance from Jewish students and engaged many young adults who were unfamiliar with Progressive Judaism or TBI. The screening of "Never Again," followed by a Q&A with Josh Frydenberg in partnership with Zionism Victoria, filled our hall, allowing us to remember and learn from the past.

February's Pride Shabbat was a landmark event, showcasing impressive attendance and an uplifting atmosphere. Our Purim celebrations in March brought joy and laughter, while the sold-out Seders in April reflected our community's dedication to tradition and togetherness. We were thrilled to host Israeli singer Aviv Geffen in July, marking TBI as a cultural hub. We are excited to announce the installation of a new sound system, made possible by a generous donor and expertly installed by Sound and Music Promotions, just in time for the High Holy Days.

Our commitment to social justice continues with Project Dignity and Nourish, supporting those in need and inspiring younger volunteers to ensure continuity in our outreach efforts. We have strengthened our alliances with various organizations, including the King David School, other Progressive congregations, Zionism Victoria, the Jewish Community Council of Australia, and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry. Our collaboration with Etz Chayim has been particularly fruitful, leading to the growth of shared programs and services.

In partnership with Emanuel Synagogue, we have launched TBI TV, supported by their Emanuel Plus channel, connecting members with Jewish spirituality and entertainment. These achievements stand as a testament to the hard work and dedication of our Board, office team, clergy, and, importantly, our volunteers. Despite the challenges we face, TBI remains a beacon of Jewish spirituality and culture.

As we look ahead, we are excited about the vibrant new chapter for TBI and the Progressive community under the leadership of Senior Rabbi Allison and Cantor Michel, along with their talented team. Together, we look forward to a year filled with continued growth, unity, and vibrant Jewish life.

Kehillat S'dot Zahav – Goldfields, Victoria

David Kram, President

Committee

Dr David Kram AM remained President. Ms Sandra Joffe remained as Public Officer/Honorary Secretary. Sarah Austin remained Vice-President, Bruce Sokel remained Treasurer. Leah Mow-Yoffee remained Committee Member. I would like to thank all committee members for their valued contributions.

Thank yous:

- ARZA, PJV and UPJ, and for their publicity and communications. These organisations are very important to help present a unified voice to the world.
- Dr. The Hon. Howard Nathan AM QC, for his continuing vigorous support of KSZ and a Jewish voice in the region.
- The Bendigo Interfaith Council for their support. It is so important to know that we are part of a wider community keeping religious faith alive in the Goldfields.
- Cantor Michel Laloum, our designated consulting rabbi, for continued advice and support.
- Rabbi Jonathan Keren-Black, for leading the annual Nature interfaith service, coming back from his new home in NSW.
- Rabbi Fred Morgan, for continued advice and support.
- Sandy Joffe and Leah Mow-Yoffee for continuing to encourage the social aspect of KSZ.
- Bruce Sokel for generous support and also for being KSZ's voice on the PJV Committee.
- Temple Beth Israel, for loan of sukkot items.
- Linda Stern, for service leading, shavuot.
- Jerome Winston, for leading education workshop at Shavuot.
- Ailsa Jean, for support to Jerome and the congregation.
- Fran Sokel for assisting with financial oversight.
- Members who donated extra funds to sustain KSZ.
- Members and visitors who made long journeys to attend our live events.
- Members and visitors who donated and prepared food for our gatherings.

Membership

The 2023-24 year membership and friends arrested the previous decline and KSZ is now back to 40 (34 2017-18, then 36, 34, 42, 35 and 30 (2022-23). Categories are Full (Jewish, living in Bendigo area), Associate (Jewish, living outside that area - or partners of a full member), Friend (all others). You do not need Jewish ancestry to become a Friend. There are no life members.

Finances/Assets

KSZ's financial year is July 1-June 30.

Membership fees

Annual dues remained at $100 per person (Full), $50 p.p. (Associate), $35 p.p. (Friend). Full and Associate members could join ARZA (Australian Reform Zionist Association) through KSZ for $18 per year.

Financial standing as at June 30, 2024

Account balance; Cash balance at 1/7/24 = $3,122. (Income in year 2023-24 plus balance rolled over from 2022-23 = 8,308. Expenditure = $5,186.). No outstanding liabilities. A few members are in arrears still.

Non-cash assets

Unchanged since previous financial year.

KSZ organised the following events:

August 20, 2023: AGM at the Ray Bradfield Room in Castlemaine, followed by a lunch and a performance by the Dafka duo from Melbourne. This was the event which brought membership levels up again.

August 20: Committee meeting

September 23: Shabbat Shuvah service, morning and afternoon at West End Hall, Castlemaine. Led as before by Dr David Kram. The music video clips were a salient feature again. There was a morning service, a lunch and an afternoon service. The morning service alluded to Rosh Hashanah; the afternoon service was a condensed version of a Yom Kippur afternoon and yizkor service

September 30: Sukkot-themed event, hosted by KSZ Treasurer Dr Bruce Sokel and his wife Fran, complete with sukkah, with loan of lulav from Temple Beth Israel. We played some Sukkot-related videos.

October 20: Online Shabbat service led by David Kram, to emphasise solidarity following the October 7 massacre. This was a benefit to mental well-being.

October: Gatherings in private homes in Castlemaine to support local community members affected by a misguided pro-Palestinian movement in that town.

November 1: Committee meeting at which Cantor Laloum attended on-line

December 10: Chanukah party at the home of KSZ Secretary Sandy Joffe in Chewton. About thirty guests. Convivial. A groaning table. The candle-lighting blessing was very evocative, in a rural setting with a borrowed landscape.

February 9, 2024: Dinner for KSZ committee, Rabbi Keren-Black and his wife Susan hosted by Sandy Joffe.

January 10: Interfaith open-air nature service in Malmsbury Botanical Gardens led by Rabbi Keren-Black. We also had some guests from PJV and other congregations, Jewish and non-Jewish. With the communal lunch, this is now a popular annual way to start the year, with pleasant weather and a beautiful setting. It was a special occasion as Rabbi Keren-Black and his wife Sue had settled into an eco-village on the Central Coast of New South Wales. After the lunch people sat in a circle and debriefed on the Gaza issue under the guidance of the Rabbi.

March 24: Open-air Purim celebration, Kangaroo Flat. Leah Mow-Yoffee organised megillah storytelling and social activities Good weather, good food, good singing - a lovely day.

April 4: Committee meeting

April 21: In -person model seder luncheon at Chewton Town Hall, near Castlemaine, led by David Kram. This afternoon event was based on TBI's haggadah, with traditional items and customs but with a simpler meal. Thanks to our committee for much associated work.

April 24: Committee meeting at Chewton Town Hall, after another gathering and debrief on local Palestinian activism, attended by local residents.

June 9: Shavuot study session and service. Kangaroo Flat. Jerome Winston led a workshop on What is my responsibility as a Jew". Linda led a special Shavuot service which she had compiled. Kiddush, meal.

January-June: Work by Leah and other committee members, exploring funeral and taharah arrangement possibilities in the Goldfields area; supported by PJV and Beit Olam.

KSZ was not part of the conference in Perth this year. Bruce Sokel started his committee work with PJV. A professor from Israel, Sarid Orly, had communications with KSZ and sent a questionnaire, completed by some members.

Temple David – Perth, Western Australia

Rick Wolozny, President

Rabbi Kim Ettlinger will complete her third year at TD. She has been well-accepted by the congregation and continues to improve our offerings to current members and potential members. She is also developing innovative programs to add to existing offerings.

The growth in new members is very encouraging with more new member applications being received this year than we have had for many years. It is also pleasing that there are higher numbers attending services and events which is a reflection on our current position. Our growth is in part due to adopting a flexible and open approach to membership inquiries and acceptance of interfaith families and the LGBT community.

High Holy Days are expected to be well attended this year due to community support of TD combined with new members.

Numerous weekly programs were successfully run by volunteers at TD including Yiddish classes, Israeli dance, and improved Adult Education for new and existing Jews, run by our Rabbi.

The Temple David Religion School is steady however, we are keen to see continued improvement. We compete with sports activities and education classes by organisations such as Carmel School and other synagogues. We are reviewing concepts to increase participation.

We are fortunate to have been provided with a state government grant to improve security arrangements at TD. we have appointed an architect to obtain the most favourable outcomes for TD. The intention is certainly improved security plus using the opportunity to also improve the aesthetics and functionality. We are hoping that the fences and gates will be completed by early 2025. This grant has assisted the Temple David financial position along with bequests and fund-raising activities. We are certainly reliant on these sources of income in conjunction with donations by our members.

Ongoing work has been done this year to improve the Temple David buildings and grounds. Being an old building, there is a constant program of maintenance and improvement. We are fortunate to have regular income from the Caretaker's Cottage adjacent to the synagogue in addition to Station After-School Care facility on our premises.

Temple David's presence in the wider Jewish community is enhanced through physical attendance of events by the Rabbi, board members, and community members, such as a stall at Chanukah Fair and attendance at Pride March as through the Maccabean and social media. Our impact is being felt in all areas and we are being noticed.

Our Function Centre has had many events this year. It is an attractive facility with disabled access, fully equipped kitchen and city views. It has been available to members, friends and the wider community for events. Some TD events have been a sell out this year.

TD will hold its AGM on 24th November. This is later than usual due to attempting to adopt a revised constitution. All the Executive positions will be vacated and open to nominations at the meeting.

Beth Shalom – Auckland, New Zealand

Michelle Wise, President

The Board finalised our Vision and Mission statements this year. At our Board retreat last month, we encouraged all our leaders to develop 1- and 3-year plans.

Our 2023 survey was completed by over 100 people and the most common word used in the question about what was valued most about Beth Shalom was **community**; we wanted to make sure this was highlighted in our mission statement.

Our new-ish Jewish Learning Programme Yachad enrolled 22 students aged 7-12 this year. Yachad is the key priority for our Board, with the idea that if we educate our children to have knowledge and skill around Progressive Jewish values and strengthen their Jewish identity, and they become friends with their classmates, and their families get to know each other so they enjoy coming to shul - this is the foundation for growth of our community for years to come.

We welcomed Rachel as our Jewish Education Facilitator; she has coordinated the whole program to make it the success that it is. Our member Tali developed the Yachad curriculum and materials, creating lesson plans for all age groups based on the themes of Shalom Learning which have been contextualised for New Zealand.

This year we re-established a Jewish Learning Programme for our post-B'nei Mitzvah 13-15-year-olds. Tali runs monthly sessions for students where they learn together based on the themes explored in Yachad.

We welcomed 10 new members this past year; we have finally gotten our new Infoodle member management system up and running and aligned it with Xero, enabling us to tidy up our membership list; we have converted our office from Google to Sharepoint.

The Rabbinic Liaison Committee meets quarterly and is chaired by Viv. We have just completed a Mutual Performance Review with the Rabbi, based on resources from the UPJ.

We were successful in securing funding from WUPJ to develop a leadership programme for 18-50-year-olds which we will launch later this year, comprising some online webinars and an in-person retreat.

Progressive Minyan of the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation

Christchurch, New Zealand

The Progressive Minyan of the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation had a great past year.

We continue to maintain monthly (occasionally more frequent) Shabbat services, mostly Friday evenings though some Shabbat mornings.

Over the past year, we have been lucky enough to celebrate two B'nei Mitzvah for young members of our congregation. Preparing for a Bar Mitzvah is always a bit of a challenge here in Christchurch, as we do not have any staff or educators, which means a lot of the burden falls on the parents of the child to line up resources. We are very lucky to have the support of an individual from Beth Shalom in Auckland and one person in our community (formerly of Beth Shalom) who have been involved in preparing our B'nei Mitzvah, including coming to Christchurch to help run the service and celebrate with us.

In other life-cycle news, we had a triple baby-naming ceremony this year, but also a funeral which was officiated by Rabbi Jacqueline Ninio from Emanuel Synagogue in Sydney.

Rabbi Dean Shapiro, of Beth Shalom in Auckland, has visited CHC this year to run Shabbat services, as well.

We have a strong cadre of Shlichei Tzibur who run most of our services, and many of them double as instructors in our monthly children's education program. And a highlight of our year, of course, was being accepted for provisional membership in the UPJ, taking our place among the other communities in our region.

We are active members in the Progressive Jewish Council of New Zealand ("Kiwi PJ"), and even have stepped up for a rotation of chairing this group. It has been a great way to get to know the leadership of the other communities here in New Zealand and provide mutual support.

Temple Sinai of Wellington welcomed the "delegation" from CHC to their Shabbat services over the Limmud weekend back in June, further helping to build connections with the greater Jewish community here in Aotearoa.

Dunedin Jewish Congregation – Dunedin, New Zealand

Keren Segal, Co-President

In the previous (Hebrew) year, we have worked towards promoting three goals:

1. Strengthening our community from within;
2. Assessing our mission statement and values;
3. Fostering good working and caring relationships with other communities in Dunedin.

We began the year working together as co-presidents, Abby Spilg-Harris and myself (Keren Segal). Unfortunately, Abby had to resign for the rest of her term. Our community was extremely lucky to be led by a committed and active board, whose members are honoured to serve and work hard to promote our community and its continued activity.

Strengthening our community from within: We have held monthly services and cultural events. We had a successful community Seder, Friday night Services, High Holiday prayers, and celebrated many holidays together.

We have also put an effort in strengthening our members' relationships with the congregation by holding a Spring working bee, as well as inviting them to volunteer and take part in many aspects of our community's work. As always, we welcome new members and are pleased to have grown in membership numbers this year.

We are also proud to have led the Rosh Hashana services ourselves, allowing us more autonomy and self-sufficiency.

Our relationship with other communities within New Zealand remains friendly and strong. We have been supported, as always, by Rabbi JoEllen Duckor, from Temple Sinai, Wellington, and this year we have also established our connection with Beth Shalom in Auckland who recommended two of their members as our Yom Kippur service leaders.

Our mission for the coming year will be to incorporate newcomers into our community - to hold a safe space for all to celebrate our Jewish heritage within our community, and to help integrate new members and visitors within our congregation and its norms.

We invested special effort in the maintenance of our building and garden. Our building's condition has been evaluated and will require extensive repairs in the coming years to keep it going and for it to serve our community in the future.

Assessing our mission statement and values: We continued our community's strategic planning process and held a board planning day in which we evaluated our mission statement, and formulated core values that can align with our community's spirit and beliefs.

We are planning to continue this process and bring the statement and values to the community, asking for their approval.

Fostering good working and caring relationships with other communities in Dunedin: Our community continues to aim to be open to the general community around Dunedin. We believe that our sense of safety and security relies on good and honest relationships with other groups in Dunedin.

At the outset of the war in Israel/Gaza we reached out to the Muslim and Palestinian community in Dunedin and expressed our condemnation of any form of violence, human suffering, and injustice. We received reciprocal messages, and much support from other communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

We work closely with the Dunedin Interfaith Group and are participating in the Week of Prayer activities for World Peace held by the Dunedin Interfaith Council. We will host a visit of the Dunedin Interfaith Council and the public to our shul in which we can introduce them to our culture and heritage.

I am grateful to our board of trustees for all their hard work and commitment. Their thoughts, care and support for our community, and many hours of work, have brought us to where we are today. I am humbled by the opportunity to have chaired our board this year.

Wellington Progressive Jewish Congregation - Temple Sinai – Wellington, New Zealand
Richard Stein, Board Chair

היכל סיני
TEMPLE SINAI

This has been a challenging year, particularly due to events overseas and heightened security concerns affecting Jewish communities throughout the world. However, somewhat ironically, as a congregation with widely divergent views, we have actually drawn closer as a community. Attendance at our Shabbat services has doubled from a year ago and enrolment in our Beit Midrash school programme has blossomed, from ten students two years ago to over thirty in our current term. We are also thrilled to have six young adults preparing to become B'nei Mitzvah in the coming months.

We are soon to celebrate our 65th anniversary as a congregation! Of course, we are also dealing with more mundane tasks: maintaining our beautiful synagogue, writing, updating, and adopting policies and procedures, including a new Code of Conduct and a comprehensive Health and Safety document, and the ever-challenging task of finding funding for our many projects We are in the final stage of setting up an Endowment Fund to help secure our Temple's future.

Reflecting on 2023-2024, it has been a very busy and rewarding year.

Our membership have been active leaders in the interfaith community, so important during this time when we need to foster understanding and connections across different cultures and religions. Representatives of our congregation currently chair both the Wellington Interfaith Council and the Wellington Abrahamic Council. We recently participated in the third annual meeting of the Ministry of Ethnic Communities' Faith Leaders Forum.

Our environmental group sponsors and participates in a multitude of community projects such as Reverse Tachlich, Tikkun Ha Yam (beach clean) ,weeding in Central Park, and managed the waste/recycling at Limmud NZ, resulting in only 2 small bags of actual non-compostable waste. Last year, through their leadership, our synagogue became a signatory to the Fossil-Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Kesher is our community group that fosters and responds to the value of Chesed. Its volunteers provide assistance, connection, and support to those in need. We have been actively participating in projects with such groups as the Women's refuge and Downtown Community Ministries.

We were also pleased with a very, very successful community seder, a joint Hanukkah celebration with our neighbouring orthodox synagogue and the Israeli Embassy, a clean-up of our local Jewish cemetery, and such secular events as our annual Quiz nNght and a well-attended movie outing to watch a screening of the film "Golda".

We are so thankful for all the volunteers who donate so much of their time who have made our congregation what it is today. Special thanks to members of our Ritual Committee, Education committee, Security Team, our administrative staff, and the past and current members of our Board.

We all look forward to a year of fellowship and peace.

Kehilat Beijing – Beijing, China

Scott Kronick, President, Roberta Lipson, Chairperson and
Jennifer Holstein, Community Coordinator

Kehillat Beijing has been serving the liberal Jewish Community of North China since the 1980's. Although there was a large turnover of the expat community in 2020 when many were caught outside of China at the beginning of the COVID outbreak, we have seen quite a resurgence in our numbers ever since. The Capital Club of Beijing which has been the home to our Shabbat activities since the early 1990's closed to public events starting in February of 2020. By the end of March, it became possible to have small gatherings at home and so Roberta Lipson and Ted Plafker began having services and Shabbat meal in their home for the few of us who were in town and those that started returning. Since the complete reopening of China borders in early 2023 Friday night services are held at the Lipson-Plafker home. For those looking for the location of our Shabbat celebration, please contact Roberta Lipson +86-13901367354, Shannon Rubin +86-13146527679, or Jennifer Holstein at +86- 13241968686.

Some long-term residents and newcomers to Beijing who were previously unaffiliated have become stalwart members of our community, finding that tradition and community are more important than ever in these troubled times. In addition to the spiritual celebration, the cuisine at our Shabbat gathering varies each week, themed to coincide with the most current ethnic or national celebration from countries around the world. For the 2024 High Holidays we were graced by the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Paul Jacobson, who was introduced by UPJ Australia. The Rabbi's visit was also made possible partially through a grant from UPJ, for which we are very grateful.

Founded in 1979, Kehillat Beijing is an egalitarian, unaffiliated, lay-led Jewish community organization devoted to sustaining and enriching Jewish life in Beijing, China. Our diverse, international membership gathers regularly for Shabbat and holiday services, special programming, and life- cycle events. In addition to services, Kehillat Beijing provides Jewish education and Torah study for members of all ages.

Our values include inclusiveness, participation, tzedakah and tikkun olam.

China's borders are now completely open, and visas have become easier for visitors, as relations with the West continue to improve, and the vibrancy in our cities have returned. We are looking forward to again welcoming Jewish visitors from around the world to celebrate Shabbat and holidays with us.

United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong

Elyse Silverberg, President

As Hong Kong emerged from the isolation of the Covid-19 pandemic, The United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong (UJC) redoubled its efforts to serve the religious needs of our Congregation and engage with our members through robust and comprehensive programming. Even though The UJC could once again hold Shabbat and holiday services, educational sessions including Shorashim, and other programming in-person, services and other programs continued to also be offered via Zoom and live stream to enable greater access to members irrespective of personal circumstances.

Reflective of the broader Hong Kong landscape with Expat arrivals slowing significantly, there was an increase of 2% in membership of the same period in 2022. Membership totaled 131 units including a considerable number of Non-Resident members who have returned to their home countries but still remained engaged with the UJC.

The UJC holds weekly Friday night Shabbat services in its permanent Sanctuary in the auditorium of the Jewish Community Centre and via Zoom. On Saturday mornings, Torah Study sessions are held in the Rabbi's apartment in Robinson Place and via Zoom. Shabbat B'yachad - An early Shabbat Service for families with young children, is held at least once quarterly. Further, the UJC again organised an active and diversified schedule of holiday and festival events during the past year.

Shorashim, the congregation's religious school, began its twenty-third year. Under the leadership of the Education and Programming Director, Shorashim continues to provide quality liberal religious and Hebrew language education to primary and middle school age children and their families. On average, 27 students were enrolled during the year and 10 teens served as madrichim.

Adult education included Scholar-in-Residence programs via Zoom with Professor Paul Liptz, Professor Magda Teter and Rabbi Burton Visotzky, and in person with Dr. Alan Morinis.

Additionally, we enjoyed talks by international and local speakers on various topics including Kenden Alfond, Hazzanit Rabbah Shani Ben Or, Yehudit Ben Or, Dr. Sarah Borwein, Dr. Kimberley Carder, Matt Friedman, Dr. Joel Hoffman, Ilissa Howard, Rabbi Gilad Kariv and Jean Eric Salata.

Our popular Tikkun Olam outreach project NETT Service Learning Project (Native English Teen Tutor) completed its thirteenth year and over 100 UJC members of all ages came together for the 12th Annual UJC Make a Miracle Mitzvah Day to do some hands-on Tikkun Olam and give back to Hong Kong. In additional to our traditional community activities, the UJC hosted a Mid-Autumn Festival Lunch and a Chinese New Year Celebration in recognition of our diverse membership. We also joined with friends from our neighbor congregation, Ohel Leah Synagogue, for an off-site visit to Kadoorie Farm and a Sukkot dinner and screening of the film "To Be Continued."

In the wake of the horrifying attack on Israel on October 7, The UJC joined with six other Hong Kong Jewish organisations to form the Hong Kong Jewish Community Alliance. The Alliance has organised programming for the community, raised funds, and is supporting the members of Kibbutz Holit both now, as they recover from the events of October 7, and in the future as they rebuild. As part of these efforts, The UJC held The Amazing Race which raised funds to support Kibbutz Holit and gave community members a chance to meet young leaders from Kibbutz Holit who were visiting Hong Kong and hear their stories.

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 13 June 2023 elected the following UJC members to the Executive Committee: Sarah Abramson, Priscilla Adams, Sarah Borwein, Sergio Fernandes de Lima, Jonathan Isaacs, Elizabeth LaCouture, Joshua Lavin, Gahl Leddel, Jeremy Litt, Noam Noked, Alan Schiffman, Elyse Silverberg, Alexandra Solomon, Stuart Spencer and Barbara Thomas. The Executive Committee chose the following officers: Elyse Silverberg (President), Alan Schiffman (Vice President), Priscilla Adams (Treasurer) and Jonathan Isaacs (Secretary).

Rabbi Stanton Zamek, Education and Programming Director Rabbi Martha Bergadine, and Cantorial Soloist Ayal Ben Or provided spiritual leadership and developed and expanded programs for the congregation and the greater Hong Kong community. Nancy Lui,

Executive Administrator, and Charlene Hsia, Assistant Administrator, continued to make outstanding contributions to the operations and spirit of the UJC.

Jewish Religious Union (JRU) – Mumbai, India

Mr Benjamin Isaac, President; Ms Noreen Elijah, Vice-President; Ms Norma Survarna, Hon Treasurer
Submitted by Mr Elijah Jacob, Hon Secretary
Local membership: 63 families; overseas membership: 28 families

The year 5784 was ushered in with Rosh Hashanah services followed by Yom-Kippur. Rabbi Judith Green had to drop out due to medical reasons. This year since we had no overseas Rabbi officiating the high holyday services, the local congregation took on the responsibility. The Hebrew reading and prayers were recited by Richard Young and the Torah reading by Johnny Jhirad. The members of the congregation were allotted English portions of both services.

JRU organized a Sukkoth Retreat at Manas Resorts, Igatpuri from September 28th to October 1st, 2023. 26 participants had an enriching experience building a Sukkah, decorating it and conducting Shabbat prayers in it. The blessings over the Arba Minim were also recited, and their significance explained to members. In addition, educational sessions on Goals and Goal settings, Leadership & Community Development were undertaken by Elijah Jacob & Johnny Jhirad. Special Thanks to WUPJ & WZO for subsidizing the cost of the Seminar.

We were all in shock on hearing the news of the October 7, 2023 massacre in Israel and had a subdued Simchat Torah celebration at ORT premises.

Hanukah celebrations were conducted at the Jewish Community Centre (JCC) at Mahim and was attended by over 40 members.

Tu-Bishvat was celebrated on February 4, 2024 with a day trip to Lonavla followed by Malida ceremony and planting of saplings.

Purim was celebrated on March 23 at the ORT Premises at Worli with the reading of the Megillat Esther by Richard Young in Hebrew and Cheryl Tucker in English along with a Quiz Competition. 35 members attended the event.

On Sunday April 20, 2024, the JRU organized a heartwarming Pesach Seder at ORT India, Worli. The Event was a blend of tradition, community and culinary delights. The prayers were led by Elijah Jacob whose soulful rendition guided the community through the sacred rituals of the Seder. Each member of the congregation participated by reading various parts of the Haggadah, contributing to the communal experience. A key highlight of the evening was an eagerly awaited visit by Eliyahu Hannavi (portrayed by Ephraim Moses), blessing the congregation and adding a touch of spiritual reverence to the gathering.

Shavuot was celebrated on June 9, 2024 with an informative talk about the festival by Micah Joseph and a Marathi rendition of the 10 commandments by the Orot-ha-Tanakh Kirtan group of Mumbai.

We are fortunate that Rabbi Stacey Blank who is the Director of the Centre for Education and leadership Development, WUPJ, Jerusalem, Israel has kindly agreed to officiate at the High Holyday services this year (5785).

The year 2025 is going to be a special year for JRU. It is the Centennial year which was started by Dr. Jerusha Jhirad in September 1925. A special Committee has been constituted to plan various events during the Centenary year. A special souvenir and publication will be released to mark the occasion.

We wish the UPJ and its constituent members a happy, healthy and enriching New Year – 5785.

United Indonesian Jewish Community

Dr Benny Meijer/Rabbi Benjamin Meijer Verbrugge

The cost of local inter-island airfares has tripled due to high taxes levied by Indonesians on aviation fuel. The cost of a round-trip ticket from Jakarta to Papua has tripled, and it is now the same as that of a ticket from Jakarta to Tel Aviv in end of 2023 / first half of 2025. But because of the resources at my disposal, I could still fly to Manado early this year to officiate our Jewish members Yishai Otto's and Nitzevet's wedding in Manado.

To maintain strong interpersonal relationship quality among the leaders and members, all UIJC kehilot in eight areas of Indonesia conducted Shabbat Shacharit meetings over Video Line Messenger. More than 22 of our members can read and recite the Torah (as well as the Haftarah) from either the Chumash or the Torah Scroll. After some members completed laymen's (rabbinic) courses and studies, they started to take a turn, leading the Shabbat Shacharit, and reading Torah.

Despite receiving funding from the international Jewish community to support the rabbi's supervision trip to Indonesia, the arrangements were challenging. Rabbi David Kunin and his spouse, with the backing of the international Jewish community, 36ravelled to Indonesia to visit UIJC kehilot during a one-month visit (July 1 to July 25, 2024) as follows::

Beit Shalom Jakarta
Beit Yisrael – Manado – North Sulawesi
Amboina, Ambon Maluku
Beit Touro, Masohi – Seram Island, Maluku
Beit Ahavat Torah Sentani Jayapura, Papua
Beit Ahavat Torah Timika Papua
UIJC members in Bali

During this journey, we are appreciative for the donations from UPJ of AUD 500, KULANU of USD 500, and the Association of Rabbis and Cantors of Australia, New Zealand, and Asia (ARC) of AU$1665 to help with the cost of rabbinic support.

In Jakarta, along with numerous adult bnei mitzvah, we celebrated Ben Meyers' bar mitzvah in Jakarta. Ben Meyers is the youngest son of Rabbi Benjamin Meijer Verbrugge. Furthermore, we conducted a Jewish wedding ceremony for our two Jakarta Members, Louis (Yisrael Levy) and Chaterine (Rahel).

Rabbi Kunin brought a Torah scroll that Melrose Bnei Yisrael E-Manuel had contributed on this trip.

https://glensidelocal.com/former-elkins-park-synagogue-indirectly-gifts-torah-scroll-to-tiny-jewish-community-in-indonesia/

https://jweekly.com/2024/08/15/south-bay-rabbi-delivers-fourth-torah-scroll-to-indonesias-jewish-communities/

On July 5, 2025, this Torah scroll was then given to Kehila UIJC Bet Yisrael Manado-North Sulawesi. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kvKeHdjSMk

Rabbi David Kunin has been a great help to our Indonesian Jewish community with the delivery of this Torah scroll. Rabbi Kunin has brought four Torah scrolls in all, which have been placed in Kehila Jakarta (2018), Timika Papua (2018), Ambon-Maluku (2022), and Manado (2024). May the HaShem bless every significant mitzvah that Rabbi David Kunin has carried out for us from 2014 until the present. With the addition of Rabbi Benjamin Meijer's (2011) Torah scroll, our Indonesian Jewish community currently possesses five Torah scrolls serving the community.

For us, the Jews of Indonesia, this is a sign of triumph and a miracle, and it's a celebration of HaShem's presence in our community in the nation home to the world's largest Muslim population.

For a more thorough tour report, please check Rabbi Kunin's blog at https://tokyorabbi.blogspot.com/.

Apart from the Shabbat gathering in Ambon, two Portuguese Jewish descendants families (7 people) finalised their conversion, and two individuals in Masohi Seram Island also finished their conversion 2 days later. We also had the chance to go to the indigenous Nunusaku and Waipia Seram Maluku groups, as well as seven Christian pastors who wished to converse and learn from the rabbi.

In Papua, we celebrated our members' bar/bat mitzvah and bnei mitzvah in the residence of our Jewish member near Lake Sentani Jayapura. They performed a lovely Torah chant. We celebrated the bar mitzvah of our senior member Dr Cliff Korwa (Anav) and his wife, as well as their Jewish wedding. At the Jayapura State School, under the direction of Dr Cliff Korwa, where the pupils are Papuans who dropped out of school between the ages of 14-74, we also got the chance to conduct sharing. We were happy to receive 12 newly converted Jews in Timika, Papua. A few kids celebrated bnei mitzvah on the day we arrived.

I have 20 students who I hope to convert between the end of 2023 and the end of 2024, primarily from the Ambon, Seram Maluku, and Timika Papua regions, and one student from Jakarta. I taught these students directly via Zoom, however they must participate fully in the closest kehilah under the supervision of my sub-team area leaders. Except for one student from Jakarta, almost all the students finalised the conversion process, in front of the Beit Din that Rabbi Kunin and I established in July 2024. For a more thorough report, please check Rabbi Kunin's blog at https://tokyorabbi.blogspot.com/.

I am currently teaching 12-14 potential converts from East Timor, Jakarta, Ambon–Seram Maluku and Bali. I hope they learn things quickly. We started our Talmud class with Rabbi Kunin since the first week of September 2024. We begin our own Hebrew School and Para Rabbi (Laymen) program this October 2024.

Though still a touch pricey, local ticket costs have begun to decline. I'll be again able to travel once more to attend holidays and lifecycles. There will be a Jewish wedding in Jakarta in February 2025. We will have member weddings in Ambon and Timika Jayapura on Pesach 2025.

Rabbi Elliot Baskin will visit our Jakarta Community under his 1000 Abrahamic Circles program by 14-15 November 2024. https://www.1000circles.com/post/circle-1-genesis

We, UIJC, hope to be able to send 8-12 members as our delegation to join UPJ/APJ Conference in September 2025, B'Ezrat HaShem.

United Hebrew Congregation – Singapore

Adam Neale, President

This past year was a year of change for the UHC, with the announcement in August that Rabbi Miriam and Rabbi Beni would be leaving the UHC in December, instead of June 2023 like they had announced previously, brought with it a sense of calm across the community that change was going to be happening but there was still struggle to get members to turn up for some programs and volunteer.

We did see numbers for services increase as the year went on, especially when the service was lead by Dan Kohane and the Gabbai team compared to the services that were lead by Dan and Rabbi Miriam when Rabbi Miriam came back into Singapore. We had six B'nai Mitzvahs over the year, one of them when the Rabbis were still with us, Rabbi Miriam flew in for four of the B'nai Mitzvahs and when Rabbi Miriam was in town she hosted Women & Wisdom and the communal Seder with Dan Kohane and we have Rabbi Nathan visit us for the final Bar Mitzvah of the year.

We were joined once again by Cantor Faith Steinsnyder to lead us through a spiritually enlightening High Holy Days, the Glickfeld hosted us once again for Sukkot, as a community we celebrated Hanukkah, Purim and Passover together.

As a community we came together to support our family and friends who suffered from the attacks in Israel on October 7th, we joined with the JWB for a night of reflection, in all of our services we say prayers for the IDF and the hostages. We had one member of the UHC community recalled by the IDF and I am pleased to say they are back safely in Singapore. I know Rabbi Miriam and Rabbi Beni spoke with many members of the community during this time offering any support that they could. This past year had seen a global rise in antisemitism, I know there has been some issue at some of the private schools here in Singapore, but in the wider Singapore community the MHA and the Singapore Police have worked hard to ensure there have been no protests and that we are safe to go about our business. The MHA working with Singapore Police have been present at many of our services/programs, often supplementing our own private security with up to 4 police officers to ensure our safety.

Membership numbers had an initial decrease when we went through membership renewal with only around 114 members renewing their membership. As the year progressed we attracted new members and some other ex-members renewed once the rabbis left Singapore; we ended the year with around 135 membership units. With the new membership fees structure last year was one of the first years we hit the 80:20 target for membership to cover operating costs. This year saw our operating costs come in at $278k we raised through membership and fundraising $357k giving us a surplus of $78k.

Jeremy Silverman and Ha Chuong, our Sunday School co-chairs, worked a miracle this past year as when we suddenly had to leave our previous home, not a single Sunday School day was lost. Thank you to the family who hosted us whilst they found our new location.

With Rabbi Miriam and Rabbi Beni leaving Singapore, Peter Sheren and Natalie Tarnopolsky formed a new Rabbi Search Committee, interviews started in December and candidates went through three rounds of interviews, the search committee narrowed down to Rabbi Guershon who was invited to come to Singapore, due to circumstances outside of all of our control this could not happen and we had to start to search again much to everyone's disappointment.

With Hagar leaving the Management Committee last year unfortunately meant we had no chair for Tikkun Olam, the Sunday School does have a community day and collects tzedakah weekly, but the wider community we were not able to, if you would like to take on Tikkun Olam for the UHC please reach out to myself.

Our administrator Nikkolette Wee left the UHC in July 2023, after a long search for a replacement administrator came up with no successful candidates, we looked at other opportunities and we were lucky enough to to find Hazel Gomeyac, Hazel works for the UHC from the Philippines and if you have sent the admin email or had questions about a payment Hazel would be the one replying. Hazel has done a fantastic job working with Jonathan Fein on our finances, and slowly taking on more

responsibilities within the community.

Taiwan Jewish Community
Ben Schwall, President
Taiwanjewishcommunity.org

This has been another year of rapid growth for our community. First off, our synagogue has a new name and even a new logo! The name, Congregation Lev HaMizrach – Taiwan ("Heart of the East") references our community's warm nature and the big hearts of our congregants. It also evokes our Taiwanese context—in the heart of Asia! In terms of our logo, the outer circle incorporates a traditional Chinese pattern, inside of which we have a blue Star of David with our Hebrew name. At the center, is the Chinese character 心 for "heart," upon the island of Taiwan. This logo reflects the interconnected relationship that our Jewish congregation has with Asian culture! While we will remain registered with the government as the "Taiwan Jewish Community," we wanted a Hebrew name that more accurately reflected the fact that we have such a thriving synagogue.

Additionally, thanks to a generous donation made by the Schechter-Tsao family, we have replaced the Birnbaum siddurim that we were praying from for decades, and now use Siddur Lev Shalem, which were shipped directly from the USA. This has made our services much more accessible to everyone, regardless of their familiarity with Hebrew or Jewish liturgy, and helped to make our services more inspiring overall.

We have also expanded our programming. Our new monthly adult Lunch & Learn, called "Bagels & 魚" (yu, fish), regularly has 40-50 people in attendance. It is also preceded by a weekday shacharit service, and features experts in various topics relevant to Jewishness or Asian society. We have also added a Bnei Mitzvah/Teen class to our Sunday School and have already had three youth bnei mitzvah this past year, and a number of adult bnei mitzvah as well!

Friday nights remain our synagogue's core function, which consists of Kabbalat Shabbat followed by a donation-based elaborate communal meal arranged by our board members. Typically, 30-50 people attend, and it is not unusual for some members to linger to chat until midnight or beyond. We also now have instituted a monthly Shabbat morning service.

We will be sending out teens to the BBYO Asia-Pacific Summit in Tokyo and have the highest number of teens going after the Tokyo group.

Last but not least, our synagogue is officially a preliminary member of the UPJ and will be sending our past president and rabbi as delegates to the UPJ Biennial Conference and the Assembly of Rabbis and Cantors (ARC) meeting in Canberra, ACT in November.

Holidays
Our largest events, which typically draw 200+ attendees, are our Rosh Hashanah Dinner, Hanukah Party, Purim Celebration, and Passover Seder.

This year, our originally scheduled Rosh Hashanah dinner was cancelled due to a typhoon. However, we quickly regrouped and held a belated Shabbat celebration. For Sukkot, this year we held our gatherings in our board president's apartment, which housed a sukkah. For Lag B'omer, we expected a low attendance of roughly 30 people but ended up with over 70 at our riverside BBQ. Our Simchat Torah celebration lasted until around 2:00am and was the highest attended in memory.

Public Profile

We have been raising our synagogue's public profile by engaging in more interfaith work, forging relationships with the Taiwan-Israeli Chamber of Commerce, and closely collaborating with the local Israeli Office. Rabbi Cody and his wife, Sonia, participated in a discussion panel during an Israeli peace concert in Taipei—attended by over 1500 people—at the end of which Sonia sang "Acheinu" for the hostages. Rabbi Cody additionally participated in the concluding keynote panel with a local Muslim Imam and Buddhist Nun at an interfaith conference at Taiwan's Museum of World Religions. Our synagogue also co-sponsored a press conference on the war with the Jeffrey D. Schwartz Jewish Community Center and Israeli Representative. In November, we will be cosponsoring a concert featuring "Silent Tears: The Last Yiddish Tango"!

Engagement

Our adult education program, "TNT: Torah n' Tunes" has successfully helped many of our congregants become versed in Jewish liturgy and ritual. This has resulted in not only more widespread engagement, but more and more of our congregants feel comfortable leading services when the rabbi is away. We also have a steady stream of congregants now both willing and able to read Torah and perform other ritual functions.

Looking Forward

Currently, there is no reason to doubt that our growth will slow. However, like every synagogue, funding is always a challenge. We charge no membership dues and are completely donation based. Given the diverse nature of our congregation, that consists of not only long-term expatriates and locals, but also a large transient and student population, we are always looking for new ways to keep our programming free of charge without compromising quality.

Thailand Progressive Jewish Community

5784 was the 10th year, and quite a momentous one, for the Thailand Progressive Jewish Community (TPJC). While we do not operate on a membership model per se, we did see quite a bit of growth in attendance and engagement amongst our members. Sadly, we estimate much of this was a reaction to the tragedy of October 7th and the subsequent need for connection that seems to have stemmed from it, but we are honored that we have been able to serve as a catalyst for that connection, providing comfort and community to those who need it.

We do not formally have members, but at last count our Meetup Group has over 190 members, with a further 50+ on our auxiliary email list, and 91 in our community's Line chat group. While the nature of our community is highly transient, we have seen a growth in the number of families with Hebrew School- and B'nai Mitzvah-aged children, which is driving us to find a way to service those needs. We will have several B'nai Mitzvot this year (made even more special by the addition of our first Sefer Torah) and are exploring a relationship with the Asian chapter of BBYO for those children once their B'nai Mitzvot are complete.

TPJC is also beginning to explore interfaith relationships with Buddhist, Sikh, and Christian communities (both Thai and expat) in Bangkok moving forward. In February, thanks to a connection facilitated by the U.S. Embassy's Office of Human Rights and Religious Freedom, several TPJC members met with the Venerable Nappan, head of the Institute of Buddhist Management for Happiness and Peace Foundation to establish a connection, and some of our members have been able to participate in their events, representing Progressive Judaism. On November 15th, TPJC President Alec Goldman will also be attending a celebration hosted by Siri Guru Singh Sabha, the Central Organization of the Sikhs in Thailand, again to represent the Jewish Community at the U.S. Embassy's suggestion. Finally, looking forward, there are a few Christian congregations that have expressed interest in working with TPJC on social action activities to help underserved communities in Thailand.

Participation/Engagement

We had record turnout for almost all of our events:

Shabbat Services

- Our monthly downtown Shabbat Services (lead by TPJC President Alec Goldman) and community meals averaged more than 20 people.
- While we were not able to have Shabbat services in the Northern suburb/expat enclave of Nichada Thani due to sporadic attendance, we did manage to hold several of them over the course of 5784.
- Several members have joined Temple Beth Am's weekly Torah Study sessions led online by Temple Beth Ami's (Silver Spring, MD) Rabbi Pokras.

Festivals and Holidays

- Our Hanukah celebration was attended by over 50 people – the largest in TPJC history.
- Our Purim party was also well-attended.
- Our Passover seder was attended by 53 people – the largest in our history
- Our High Holy Days services were attended by 59 people.
- During the High Holy Days, we had baby namings for the two newest members of our community.

Rabbinic Support

We were pleased to have Rabbi Jack Shlachter from Los Alamos, New Mexico, who is both a Rabbi and a Ph.D. Physicist, lead two Shabbat services remotely via zoom during the year, as well as contributing study sessions/D'varim Torah to several others. This culminated in Rabbi Jack traveling to Bangkok to lead our High Holy Day services.

Torah Donation

TPJC was honored to receive our very first Torah! This was a donation from the World Union for Progressive Judaism with refurbishing support from Daniel and Erika Casey and family of the ACT Progressive Congregation in Canberra, Australia. In addition to the Casey family, special thanks go to UPJ's Jocelyn Robuck and WUPJ's Andrew Keene for helping to make this possible, as well as to Sofer Neil Yerman for working to ensure we had the Sefer Torah in time for the High Holidays.

Finances

We raised roughly 381,000 Thai Baht (approximately $12,000 USD) mostly from our members to support these programs. This amount includes generous subsidies of $1,100 USD from the Association of Rabbis and Cantors of Australia, New Zealand, and Asia (ARC) to support part of the transportation costs for our rabbi to travel from the USA to Thailand for the High Holy Days, as well as $1,000 AUD from UPJ for our President Alec Goldman to attend the UPJ Biennial.

Looking Forward/Challenges

Over the next year we'll have several families through the U.S. Embassy whose tours will end and will rotate out of Bangkok. These have been some of the most active families in TPJC's 11-year history, and we hope to see new Progressive Jewish families rotate in after they leave, but there is a great deal of uncertainty surrounding that. We know this is the nature of the Bangkok community, but there is always concern when we come to this point. We are excited to see some of our younger children growing but are now facing the reality of how to set up consistent Progressive Jewish education for them. Additionally, the lack of a permanent home for the community makes things difficult, which necessitates the need for a discussion about the "ad hoc" structure and whether TPJC's needs justify some additional legal and accounting expenses to address that. That has been a contentious issue in the past and one that has been avoided, but it may now be time to face those conversations and the discomfort they will cause.

ARZA Australia

Ayal Marek, President, UPJ Vice-President,

ARZA stands for The Australian Reform Zionist Organisation, we are a small body of volunteers from different states, who strongly believe in the imperative of liberal Israeli society. ARZA is the affiliated political arm of the Union for Progressive Judaism.

ARZA advocates for the values of democracy, social justice, human rights, equality for women, LGBTQI, religious pluralism and disadvantaged groups for all residents of Israel, regardless of their religion or ethnicity. While maintaining the links of our community to Israel.

Together with our global affiliates, we are the voice of our Progressive Jewish and Zionist values in the World Zionist Congress. With your membership and support, we can block resolutions of the extremist groups on social and political matters, and pass resolutions reflective of our community values.

During the past year ARZA has been involved in a variety of activities to support Israel and our local community in light of the events of 7 October and the following aftermath.

ARZA Australia initiated and held the events “Kites for freedom” and “Postcards of hope” to help increase awareness of the fate of the hostages held in Gaza, and provide a source of support for Australian Jewish communities trying to come to terms with the atrocities and the rise in Antisemitism that followed. These events attracted hundreds of participants and received good publicity in (both Jewish and mainstream) newspapers, television and radio.

With the support of KKL (the JNF) and ARZENU, ARZA has been developing resources to support and empower younger members of our community, which we intend to launch by the beginning of the next University year, hopefully with support and uptake from across the community.

Throughout these past 12 months we have also:

- Supported and promoted participation in delegations and solidarity missions to Israel
- Attended and participated in the World Zionist Council Vaad Hapoel conference in Jerusalem in February. (refer Appendix 1 for further details)
- Conducted a mental health support forum for young adults.
- Supported the formation of TAMAR a young Progressive adults forum to strengthen Jewish identity and relationship to Israel within an age group that is often less engaged. -Updated community members on events via articles and analysis in Jewish media and our ARZA newsletter, covering issues such as: the flaws of UNWRA, the risk of abuse of democratic freedoms by those attempting to undermine it, the rise in Antisemitism and anti Zionism (and the risk it poses to Israeli society); as well as raising awareness to the danger that extreme right groups in Israeli society pose to its democracy.
- Supported and participated in Erev Yom Hazikaron held by Zionism Victoria

(refer Appendix 2 for further details)

During the coming year we intend to continue our efforts to support and inform our community, and hope to strengthen relationships within our community. If you are not subscribed to our newsletter please get in touch.

In 2025 we have an election to the World Zionist Congress.

Emanuel School – Randwick, NSW

Andrew Watt, Principal

In 2023, Emanuel School celebrated its 40th anniversary – a milestone that set the scene for what was to be a year of celebration. Whilst I will report on this and other positive experiences, my writings are tempered by the horrific events of October 7, the brutal kidnapping of over 240 people, as well as the escalating conflict in Gaza, which changed the course of our collective history. In the aftermath of October 7, Emanuel School mirrored the broader Jewish community's shock and grief. The school community has come together with a number of meaningful activities and events to collectively mourn, support one another, pray for peace and for the release of all hostages. We are particularly proud of our whole-school musical. While the feelings of loss, devastation and despair remain, we must not forget to look towards the light and celebrate the many successes of 2023/24.

5-Star Employer of Choice

Emanuel School was honoured by The Educator magazine as a 5-Star Employer of Choice, positioning it among the top 20 schools in the nation for its exemplary workplace environment. This award underscores the School's commitment to creating a supportive, inclusive, and aspirational environment for its staff, recognising the collective effort and dedication of every staff member to uphold the School's values.

Opening of the B'Yachad Building

As a result of the highly successful Capital Appeal in October 2021, the B'Yachad Building was officially opened in November 2023. The story-themed, three-storey building provides a technologically rich, innovative learning environment for our Years K, 5 and 6 students, as well as the opportunity for all Primary students to explore, design and create in the new purpose-built Imaginarium. I am grateful to our 475 generous donors who helped make this dream reality.

A Tribe of Brothers and Sisters – an Emanuel School production

In Term 2, 2024, the whole-school immersed themselves in recording a very special rendition of Idan Raichel's hit song – Shevet Achim Ve'achayot, a Tribe of Brothers and Sisters. Comprising over 900 voices of students from Pre-school to Year 12, parents, grandparents and staff, the project affirmed our connection with the Jewish people, our tribe of brothers and sisters – in Australia, the Diaspora and the land of Israel.

Announcing our new Principal

In Term 2, 2024, I announced my retirement after seven years as Principal at Emanuel School. The School is delighted to confirm the appointment of Linda Emms as the next Principal of Emanuel School. Linda will commence in early January 2025, and all look forward to introducing her to the community.

A ray of sunlight

In September 2024, Emanuel School hosted the Inaugural Combined Jewish Primary Schools Mini-Choral Festival on Sunday. Whilst we are living through difficult and sometimes dark times, events like this where our Sydney Jewish Day Schools joined together, shed a bright light and brought joy to both our students and their audience. It was lovely to see the students from Mount Sinai, Masada and Emanuel mingle together so well, during both the rehearsals and the breaks, hopefully marking the start of many new friendships.

Welcome Rabba Adina Roth

In Term 3, 2024 our whole staff joined to celebrate and honour our Director of Jewish Life, Rabba Adina Roth who recently received her semicha in New York.cWe are privileged to have been part of Rabba Adina's personal, academic and spiritual journey. Our school and community have grown under Rabba Adina's guidance – her dedication to her calling and subsequent semicha has been inspiring.

Thank you

It is with deep gratitude that I recognise all the members of the UPJ and thank them for their ongoing support and advice over the past seven years. I am confident that my successor, Linda Emms, will continue to lead the School with compassion, strength and foresight.

Netzer Australia Progressive Zionist Youth Movement

Aimee Harris, Federal Mazkira (Chairperson)

We began 2024 with strategic planning for the year to come, as a result, 4 priorities were identified and then adopted by the senior movement and all madrichim/ot (leaders) including:

1. The chanich/ah experience: To hero federal connections between chanichim, and ground chinuch in Reform Zionist and Progressive Jewish ideology.
2. The boger/et experience: To emphasise personal growth, while focusing on positive and productive culture.
3. The kehila (community) experience: To entrench the feeling that Netzer is the youth branch of the Progressive community, extending our reach further to small communities.
4. The continual experience: To build and bolster structures that can guide Netzer.

I am proud to say that with 35 passionate madrichim/ot this year, we have worked towards these priorities, creating new initiatives as well as improving existing systems and projects. Some of the projects we have worked on in support of our priorities are as follows:

Machanot (Camps): Netzer began this year with Summer Camps, including our biggest Federal Camp to date with over 120 participants. Reaching 280 chanichimot (participants) from across Australia, we started the year with great excitement from everyone. Our Winter Camps were very successful with around 210 chanichim/ot split between Melbourne and Sydney. Chanichim/ot had the chance to delve deeper into their Jewish and Zionist identity, understand contemporary social justice issues, celebrate Shabbat and build meaningful Jewish connections. We continue to think creatively when planning camps to solve and prevent challenges.

Seminars: Netzer's madrichim/ot began the year with a planning seminar, having the opportunity to critically reflect on Netzer and bond as a united madrichim/ot body. We also had an amazing chinuch seminar in April and just concluded our second chinuch seminar, focussing on the themes of Progressive Judaism and Reform Zionism. Each theme was joined with hadracha (upskilling our madrichim/ot so they are prepared to be better leaders). The year 12s had a fantastic time away in April to speak about the possibility of shnat next year and their future in Netzer. Finally our year 10s and 11s just attended a federal hadrachah (leadership) seminar as they prepare to become madatzim/ot (junior leaders) in Netzer. We have our largest group of madatzim (40 junior leaders) currently, and this seminar was a pivotal time for education, training and connection.

Small Community Engagement: With support from the UPJ, we have been able to send madrichim/ot for an outreach in Perth, an outreach in Adelaide, an outreach in Canberra and our second outreach to Hobart this year. Additionally, we have been building a relationship with the Jewish community in Byron Bay, and are looking for new ways we can engage youth across Australia.

Hashoresh: Despite fundraising challenges, this year in Hashoresh has proved a great success as Netzerniks of all ages feel truly at home in the space and agency over their Jewish identity. We have been excited to host many different Jewish organisations and events at Hashoresh.

Increasing professionalism around child safety and risk management: This year, Netzer continued to closely comply with our new set of operational guidelines to govern our internal operations. We have also been working very closely with the Australasian Zionist Youth Council (AZYC) as they have appointed a new Board of Directors to support and guide the youth movements.

Shnat: This year, with the current war in Israel, Netzer Australia sent 3 shnatties to Israel to learn about our ideology and become stronger leaders. The program included an intensive Jewish and Zionist education at Machon L'Madrichei Chol, volunteering in the

youth community of Nitzana, practicing to lead at URJ Summer Camps in America (where 10 other shnatties joined them), and becoming part of the Kibbutz Harduf and Kibbutz Reim community. They have had an absolutely magical year and we cannot wait to welcome Shnat Shachar into our madrichim/ot body. Meanwhile, we have been working hard to send our Te'enah shnatties to Israel next year.

Public Presence: Netzer has enjoyed a wide public presence this year. With a goal to see a 'sea of green' chultzot in our community we have worked with the UPJ, PJV, ARZA, AZYC, ZFA, Schools and Shuls to bring Netzer's flare everywhere! We have worked with Tamar to find future pathways for Netzer bogrim.

Netzer's Shlichim/ot: It has been an incredible year with our Shlichah, Hadar, who has been the most incredible support for us. Hadar has helped us think outside the box, bringing in new initiatives and ideas. We are hoping to welcome another shaliach to Melbourne early next year.

Netzer Olami: Throughout this year we have strengthened our relationship with Netzer Olami and in turn developed new relationships with Netzer sniffim (branches) around the world. We have worked together to provide increased subsidies to families coming on camp as well as new opportunities to our bogrim. Additionally, we are excited to welcome the Mazkira of Netzer South Africa over our summer camps as part of the Netzer Olami Madrachim exchange. This initiative will allow us all to learn about each other's communities as well as provide opportunities for further collaboration across sniffim.

Rosh Kehila: The introduction of this new tafkid (leadership position) fits perfectly with our priority- 'The Kehila Experience'. Our Rosh Kehila will dedicate time to working with existing and new community organisations, enriching relationships and providing new exciting opportunities for our chanichim and bogrim. We are really looking forward to the positive impact this role will bring to our community.

Appeal: This year marked Netzer's most successful Appeal. Raising over $50,000 we were so excited to feel the support from our community. We look forward to sharing the ways in which this appeal will support Netzer in achieving our goals. I am so incredibly grateful for the support of our generous donors.

Continual Frameworks: Throughout this year, I have focused on making Netzer a space in which we have systems and frameworks in place to supplement our leadership structure. With leadership positions changing yearly, it is important for us to find ways we can capture the knowledge we have learnt and easily pass it on. Through a revision of our chafifah (training), and increased database of resources we have achieved this goal.

Thank you to our dedicated and passionate madrichim/ot, supportive community, eager parents and enthusiastic chanichim/ot for making all that we do happen. Netzer is truly a magical, vibrant, values-driven community of which I am extremely proud to be part.

Progressive Judaism Victoria

Maureen Barten, President

The last 12 months have presented challenges and opportunities to meet the needs of our community in significant measure against the backdrop of the ongoing war. Our focus has been to bring community together, advocate for and support collaboration blurring the Invisible lines that so often divide our Jewish community – right here at home.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

We continue to have meetings with Matthew McKenzie, Community Liaison Officer – Victoria Immigration Group Department of Home Affairs, Social Cohesion Jewish Community; Vivienne Nguyen AM – Chairperson Victorian Multicultural Commission; with Hon Jacinta Allan MP, Premier; Shane Patton, Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police; Michelle Ananda-Rajah MP, Member of the Australian House of Representatives; Giridharan Sivaraman, Commissioner Race Discrimination.

PESACH IN PARLIAMENT

PJV hosted a Pre-Pesach Seder in Parliament for Parliamentarians to come together and share in the celebration of Pesach and to learn about the current and devastating challenges including antisemitism, social divisions, and the growing isolation of Melbourne's Jewish community. Attendance was more than twice what was anticipated with over 60 MPs and numerous special guests in attendance. Rabbi Allison delivered a remarkable crash course in Jewish history and modern-day interpretations. MPs enjoyed boxed lunches complete with personal seder plates, pamphlets about Progressive Judaism, and take-home swag bags. This was the first Progressive Jewish event in Parliament in 25 years and received positive feedback, noted as "one of the best Jewish events ever."

PJV AGM

Our AGM at the end of May was very well attended with guest speakers including Vivienne Nguyen AM – Chairperson Victorian Multicultural Commission and a Michelle Ananda-Rajah MP, Member of the Australian House of Representatives. Michelle continues to be a good friend to the Jewish community and both she and Vivienne are regular attendees at our many communal events. We were also delighted to welcome Phillip Zajac, JCCV President. New appointments to the executive included Sue Zablud, Vice President and Vivienne Rosta, Secretary.

BEING SEEN

PJV together with Bet Olam are sharing editorial and ad space in the Melbourne Jewish Report for the last 5 months – our most recent editorial was a story about the upcoming UPJ Conference. This proves to be an opportunity for reaching unaffiliated and those who don't read the AJN.

NETZER

With Naama's vacancy, the Winter Camp leader –position of Shaliach/Shilcha was quickly filled by Simon Kuperman – previous Federal Mazkira for Netzer. He continues working with Netzer until a new Shaliach is found.

HEROINES IN GREEN – THE BATTLE FOR EQUALITY IN THE IDF

Hosted Lesley Sachs visiting from Israel, who very generously came prepared with a fabulous presentation that we organised to share at TBI. Heroines in Green – The Battle for Equality in the IDF. Lesley has been and continues to be a leading force for change in women's rights and religious freedom in Israel.

BEING HEARD

Radio J-Air interview highlighting PJV, our purpose, current accomplishments and challenges, and spotlighting the upcoming Rabbinic Panel orchestrated by Ashleigh Harris with the focus on dealing with Antisemitism on campus and in the workplace.

TOGETHER WE ARE ONE

Hosted Rabbinic Round table/community forum organised and chaired by Ashleigh Harris, about the different ways Judaism is practiced, for university students and young adults in the workplace. Rabbis from 5 steams of Judaism shared the stage expressing their unique points of difference and providing meaningful insights about how to deal with the rampant antisemitism that greets them on campus and elsewhere, every day.

PJV BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

We proudly published the PJV Book of Remembrance for Yizkor services – the first one in several years and very well received. We look forward to next year's edition which will include every one of our shuls.

BEING UNDERSTOOD

Our community is working beautifully together – building a much stronger visible presence of Progressive Judaism in Victoria. We are being seen, heard and UNDERSTOOD!

Huge thanks to all our affiliates, our clergy, many leaders, volunteers and participants – for placing such huge value on the importance of community.

Finally – to our executive and entire committee – my deepest thanks and appreciation for all you do.

The King David School – Armadale, Victoria

Marc Light, Principal

5784 was a mixed year for The King David School where we experienced the great highs of our rich school life and were struck with grief at the devastating events of Hamas' attacks on Israel on October 7 and the ensuing war which had a huge impact on our school community.

The school instituted a new structure for Magid Campus with the separation into two distinct sub schools. We were thrilled that Jayne Wise (Middle School) and David Robinson (Senior School) took up the roles and immediately positively influenced the culture and processes across the Campus.

Our academic results were again outstanding, with KDS once again among the top performing VCE schools in Victoria. We had a median study score of 36. Our dux was Jacob Kronberg who achieved an ATAR of 99.25. 98% of our students received a first round university offer from one of their top three choices. We believe that we continue to support our students to develop holistically to become well-rounded individuals with curious minds and big hearts who are ready to strive to make positive impacts on their immediate and wider communities.

In 5784 we expanded our Science of Language and Reading (SOLAR) program, an evidence-based structured literacy program that uses phonics to teach students how to read. In this program, students learn phonological awareness so they are able to identify the 44 combinations of sounds in the English language. This enables students to decode words without relying on existing vocabulary.

We also implemented our Writing Revolution framework which explicitly teaches Junior School students how to take notes, summarise information, create sentences, single paragraphs and linked paragraphs to create a story or an argument. Students build their comprehension skills at the same time as they learn how to create cohesive texts. These are skills students take with them to Middle and Senior School, and beyond. We have merged Units of Inquiry with English into a double subject called Integrated English, which teaches research skills and provides content for students to write about.

Of course as well as our rich academic life, we engaged students in the full range of Jewish life experiences, ensuring students are proud of their burgeoning Jewish identities. Each Rosh Chodesh, Chag and commemoration day presents wonderful opportunities to enhance our formal Jewish classroom learning with experiential programming. Our team of Tzev Lev (Jewish Life) educators worked closely with our Hanhagah (Year 12 student leaders) to ensure that our students mark each day appropriately. Most notably, we had extraordinary whole-day celebrations at school for Purim and Yom HaAtzma-ut, creating memorable moments of Jewish joy for our students to remember in years to come.

We enjoyed fabulous Musical productions with 13, Joseph and the Technicolour Dreamcoat and Back from the Future all wowing audiences. The School also enjoyed some wonderful success in the interschool BDPSSA and EISM sports competitions taking out a number of championships including our Years 5/6 Soccer team who won their championship; the Senior Soccer team who won their division; both our Junior and Senior Softball teams who came top of the table; and our Years 8/9 boys' Cricketers who took home their championship. To top this off, the Year 6 boys won the AFL 9s Jewish Schools' Cup, playing against Bialik in the final.

Our Nitzan program for Year 9 students continued to foster resilience, independence and build life skills. Students learned a range of everyday skills outside of the classroom such as first aid, plumbing, bike repair, gardening, sewing, basic car maintenance, and woodwork. Students also volunteered with community groups such as the Posh Opp Shoppe, St Kilda Mums and Jewish Care to learn how to work with a wide range of people and give back to the wider community.

Our KDS family came together at King's Carnival (school fete) for the first time since 2019, showcasing the warm community spirit of our school, led by parent, staff and student volunteers who made this day happen. With delicious food, rides, sideshow games, fun arts and crafts activities, an entertaining stage show and plenty of bargains in the retail area, King's Carnival was a wonderful way to bring people together and raise money for the King David School Parent Association. DSPA.

After the tragic attack on Israel by Hamas by 7 October, the school community pivoted its fundraising efforts to supporting people in Israel. We held a combined fundraiser for Magen David Adom, who run the ambulance service in Israel, and The Joint, who provide support to displaced and marginalised families in Israel. The King David community generously raised more than $26,000 in just a few days for The Joint and Magen David Adom (MDA), who are doing vital work in Israel. In total, we raised $11,386 for The Joint and $14,781 for MDA. The donation to Magen David Adom allowed MDA to buy and equip a new medicycle in Israel which can respond to emergency situations more efficiently than an ambulance. In November, the Year 7 students held a bake sale, raising $631.45 for The Joint and MDA.

Unfortunately, due to the war in Israel and Gaza, it was not possible to send our Year 10s to Yesh.

We hosted three wonderful Israeli shlichim that enriched our school life – Snir, Ofer and Yael. They passionately led Jewish experiential and Hebrew classes and enriched our understanding of Israel's current successes and challenges. With their valuable insights, they fostered a deeper connection to Israel among students. The shlichim also spent time at the Junior School and the ELC, introducing our young learners to the wonders of Israel and weaving personal stories to create lasting connections.

We also hosted Yair and Ilai, two Israeli exchange students from the Leo Baeck Educational Center, our sister school in Haifa. Their visit here strengthened Jewish peoplehood and Israeli-Diaspora relations. Along with participating in regular classes, they also facilitated Israel-centred programming for younger students.

We continued to expand our innovative wellbeing program, which ensures students are able to thrive at school. This program is delivered through in-class curriculum and through a series of specially arranged guest speakers. We also continued to provide our parents with wellbeing education, including on body image, anxiety and emotional intelligence.

The King David School is blessed with staff who constantly contribute to an environment which is characterised by positive relationships and a love of learning. I believe that in 5784 every student benefited from having teachers who knew and understood them and this was supported by our non-teaching staff who ensured that our high professional standards and collegiate atmosphere was always maintained.

While it was a difficult year for all of our community, there is also much to celebrate. King David School has continued to offer an array of rich teaching, learning and life experiences and has further strengthened the bonds amongst our treasured community. I believe that this is the truest expression of our school's character.

UPJ Awards

The 2024 award recipients will be announced at the UPJ Biennial in Canberra.

Vatik Award: This award honours past presidents of congregations and affiliation organisations who have continued to give outstanding service and make valuable contributions to their congregation and the wider community for at least five years after the end of their term of office. We recognise these worthy individuals and their continued commitment to the community and furthering the Progressive movement in our region.

Vatik Award recipients through 2023:

Merrilyn Ades, Edwin Argy, Ken Arkwright, Arthur Berman, Philip Bliss, David Bloom, Helen Bryant, Philip Coleman, Julie Contole, Geoffrey Cowen, Phyllis Dorey, Alison Dwyer, Maree Findley, Joshua Goldman-Brown, Matthew Goode, Sam Granek, Phillip David Green, Ruth Gross, Sharene Hambur, Ron Hoenig, Hans Jensen, Susan Kadar, Kathy Kaplan, Peter Kolliner, Michael Lawrence, Kate Lesser, Tony Leverton, Joe Lewit, Larry Lockshin, Peter Marks, Stephanie Markson, Philip Mayers, Roger Mendelson, Frank Moore, Howard Nathan, Lynette Ninio, Eva Popper, Kelvin Ratnam, David Robinson, Jerry Rosenberg, Brian Samuel, John Schinasi, Norbert Schweizer, Sam Sharman, Jeremy Smith, Jonathan Taft, Michael Taft, Ted Waxman, Paul Wilton

Ner Tamid Award: Since the Biennial Conference of the Australia New Zealand Union for Progressive Judaism held in Melbourne in 1990, we have honoured the "Unsung Heroes" – members of congregations and affiliation organisations who perform exceptional service for our congregations and community, as well as the wider community.

Ner Tamid Award recipients through 2023:

Tony Abo, Fred Albert, Dr Libby Appelboom, Judith Arkwright, John Balint, Stan Benjamin, Albert Bentata, Keith Bittle, Rosie Block, Heinz Bohm, Garry and Nola Braude, Eric Briskman, Nicole Brown, Margaret Capkin, Sally Castle, Zvi Civins, Judi Cohen, Marlis Cohen, Arnold Cohn, Beatrice Coleman, Nathan Companez, Rachel Dennyss, Kathy Deutsch, Anthony and Diane Deutsch, Dr George Deutsch, Suzie Eisfelder, Noreen Elijah, David and Sue Esterman, Norma Survana Esther, Mick Fettmann, Judy Firestone, Jo Fletcher, Ben Fox, Ellen Frajman, Ted Friedlander, Andrew Gelbart, Bev Gelbart, Rachel Gillespie, Mark Ginsburg, Sydney Goldstein, Leon and Sue Goldwater, Katherine Goode, Liz Goodman, Mathi Gottlieb-Drucker, Sandy Graetzer, Dorothy Graff, Sidney Grant, Brian Green, Jennifer Green, Noel Hall, Rhondda Hall, Janet Henrie, Rae Hesling, Fred Hirsch, Albert Isaacs, Vicki Israel, Elijah Jacob, Lorraine Jacobs, Ailsa Jean, Naomi Johnson, Rebecca Kanthor, Barbara Karet, Alexandra Knopoff, Devorah Komesaroff, Rena Langberg, Sue Lefmann, Robyn Ann Levi, Harvey Livschitz, Alison Marcus, Charles Monat, Sue Morgan, Betty Mortimer, Myra Mortlock, Fred Mote, Joan Motta, Judy Myers, Dorothy (Dot) Nathan, Rhonda Nirens, Alan Obrart, Teresa Petrzelka, Eva Phillips, Amelia Rauner, Gena Reiss, David Rooseboom, Marsha Rosenberg, Peter Rosenfeld, Mavis Rudd, Mervyn Rudd, Ian Samuel, David Sharp, Chris Schiller, Nat Sharpe, Val Silberberg, Fred Silberstein, Harry Smith, Dr Leon Sterling, Linda Stern, Joe Stupel, Lisa Sylvan, Geoff Sussman, Michael Taft, Ruth Taft, Joan Taylor, Dot Theeboom, Dorothea Tropp-Boas, Reuben Urban, Robbie Ventura,Tanya Warms, Betty Watkins, Betty Waxman, Jerome Winston, Peter Wise, Peter Woolf, Sandy Zaccar

President' Award: Since the Biennial Conference of the Australia New Zealand Union for Progressive Judaism held in Melbourne in 1990, we have honoured the "Unsung Heroes" – members of congregations and affiliation organisations who perform exceptional service for our congregations and community, as well as the wider community.

President's Award previous recipients through 2023:

Judy Campbell, Sharon Davis, Phyllis, Dorey, Stephen Freeman, Sharene Hambur, Penny Jakobovits, Rabbi Jonathan Keren-Black, Peter Kohn, Michael Lawrence, Roger Mendelson, Joel Oseran, David Robinson, Michael Shnukal, Neil Samuel, Carole Sterling, Dr Rob Sward