



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024





# THE JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF VICTORIA 2023–2024

The past year has been unlike any other for the Victorian Jewish community and the JCCV has stepped up to lead the community through its darkest hour.

## ON THE AFTERNOON OF OCTOBER 7 IN MELBOURNE, OUR PHONES LIT UP AS REPORTS BEGAN TO COME THROUGH FROM ISRAEL OF UNIMAGINABLE HORRORS.

As we learnt of the tragedy and devastation in our Jewish homeland, we came together in Melbourne.

On October 9, Caulfield Hebrew Congregation overflowed with mourners as we gathered for the first – of many times – to pray for Israel and for the return of the hostages.

On October 13, thousands of people stood proudly together in Caulfield Park in solidarity with Israel. Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan and Liberal Leader John Pesutto lit candles for those we lost, as did friends from the Catholic, Hindu, Iranian and multicultural communities.

That same week, the Victorian Parliament came together to “unequivocally condemn the attacks on Israel by Hamas” and to “stand with Israel and recognise its inherent right to defend itself”.

But while we mourned for Israel and campaigned for the hostages to be returned alive, we were confronted with challenges at home.

Reports of antisemitism sky-rocketed, the streets of Melbourne’s CBD filled each weekend with Israel haters, and Jewish Victorians were targeted with verbal abuse, threats and even physical assaults. Antisemitic graffiti infected Melbourne.

In response the JCCV moved to work with the State Government, Victoria Police, Victorian Multicultural Commission and other key partners to secure support for Jewish Victorians.

We met with mayors and local councillors to urge them to take steps to rebuild social cohesion rather than pass divisive motions. When the JCCV was able to intervene in time, we succeeded in ensuring anti-Israel motions did not make it onto council agendas, or were voted down if they did.

We helped member organisations facing challenges in their respective realms: the arts, universities, social justice, Jewish and non-Jewish schools. We ensured doors stayed open and our community did not need to retreat. We educated hundreds of people who had read a headline, but knew nothing about the reality.

We provided regular, reliable trustworthy communications to our Jewish community, via social media, emails and through free community forums. In exchange, we received dozens of messages of support and gratitude from Jewish and non-Jewish people.

We directed people who were experiencing antisemitism or discrimination to help. We found ways for Jewish people to stay safe and feel welcome at work and in the broader community.

The JCCV has proudly led the Jewish community through this difficult time. The board and staff thank our member organisations for their ongoing support.







# THANK YOU

Without your support, our work would not be possible.

## PATRONS

Anonymous

The Jakob Frenkiel Charitable Trust

Gandel Foundation

Erdi Foundation

Spotlight Foundation

Victor Smorgon Group

Daniel Aghion KC and Jenny Aghion

Grahame Leonard AM and Ruth Leonard

**GANDEL**  
FOUNDATION



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## MAJOR SUPPORTERS

Anonymous

Andrew and Natalie Bassat

Paul and Sharon Bassat

Lisa Farber and Justin Lieberman

Graham and Deborah Goldsmith

Hupert Family Foundation

Eytan and Debbie Lenko

Ronald and Kay Schweitzer

## JCCV KEY PARTNERS

Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council

Community Security Group

Executive Council of Australian Jewry

Monash University Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation

Victorian Government

Victorian Multicultural Commission

Victoria Police

Zionist Federation of Australia

Zionism Victoria





# WELCOME TO AUSTRALIAN JEWISH FUNDERS, COURAGE TO CARE, MELBOURNE JEWISH CHARITY FUND AND WIZO VIC. ALL NEW MEMBERS IN 2023-24.







# MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY POST-OCTOBER 7

Immediately after the October 7 attacks on Israel, the JCCV stepped up efforts to support the community like never before.

## THE NEED

- ▶ Credible and timely information for the community
- ▶ A response to the immediate and unprecedented rise in anti-Jewish hate
- ▶ Support from Victoria Police and other authorities to secure and reassure the community



## ACTION TAKEN

- ▶ On October 8, JCCV established a community-wide WhatsApp group to distribute regular, trusted and verified information.
- ▶ JCCV initiated a weekly email update from President Philip Zajac focused on providing essential information.
- ▶ JCCV hosted a series of forums with experts to address topical issues and provide an opportunity for community to have a voice.
- ▶ Met dozens of times with CSG, Police Minister, Victoria Police Chief Commissioner, and senior and local police to advocate for community protection.
- ▶ Partnered with 10 key Jewish organisations, coordinated with grassroots activists, and developed a case management model to connect community members with available services and initiatives.

## IMPACT

- ▶ Over 2,000 people joined the WhatsApp group, with many messages of appreciation for this service.
- ▶ More than 5,000 subscribers receive the weekly updates and thousands more view it on social media.
- ▶ Four community forums attended by over 1,000 participants.
- ▶ Police presence significantly increased in Jewish neighbourhoods.
- ▶ The relationship between VicPol and JCCV strengthened, establishing a direct line of communication.
- ▶ Built strong connections with grassroots groups to maximise impact.
- ▶ Created three community taskforces, including one focused on addressing antisemitism on university campuses. This culminated in support for students, such as participation in a rally at the University of Melbourne.







## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**"IN RESPONSE TO THE CHANGING NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY, THE JCCV EXPANDED ITS SERVICES AND LAUNCHED NUMEROUS INITIATIVES... TO ACHIEVE THE BEST RESULTS"**

— PHILIP ZAJAC, PRESIDENT

My first year as president of the JCCV has not been anything like what I had expected.

My first month as president, November 2023, saw the highest number of antisemitic incidents ever recorded in Victoria. And throughout my first year, at every meeting I attended, I wore a yellow pin to raise awareness for the hostages kidnapped by Hamas.

In response to the changing needs of our community, the JCCV expanded its services and launched numerous initiatives. All the time, we worked closely with other Jewish organisations to achieve the best results. JCCV's expanded services and initiatives have included:

- **COMMUNITY FORUMS:** The JCCV hosted four large community forums attended by more than 1000 Jewish people addressing critical issues, including antisemitism and the law in Victoria and antisemitism on campus.
- **ADVOCACY:** Engaged with federal representatives, state representatives, including the Victorian Premier, and representatives from 18 local councils to raise awareness around antisemitism in the community.
- **COORDINATION OF TASKFORCES:** Led the coordination of community taskforces in the areas of school education, universities and interfaith to enhance cooperation and reduce duplication.
- **SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION:** Supported staff, students and families at five government schools, and three universities, and provided more than 100 teachers and academics with training
- **CASE MANAGEMENT:** Provided case management for more than a dozen individuals and families impacted by antisemitism.

There has been no more productive relationship than that of the JCCV and CSG. As well as co-publishing the Victorian Antisemitism Report, JCCV and CSG partnered to effectively advocate at the highest levels of government and law enforcement for the required safety and security measures for our Jewish community.

The JCCV's flagship program, the Jewish Immersion Program, has expanded in 2023-24 thanks to support from the Victorian Government. With this support, we have provided essential

cultural sensitivity training to hundreds of service providers and elected officials across Victoria.

We also enjoy more and more trusted and mutually beneficial relationships with our member organisations. One of the JCCV's most important achievements has been supporting and guiding our member organisations as they have faced their own unique challenges due to the rise in antisemitism.

I would like to acknowledge two key communal accomplishments in 2024. The first is the way our community peak bodies worked together to provide leadership during our community's darkest hours. The JCCV has worked closely, constructively and collaboratively with our fellow peak body organisations – Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Zionist Federation of Australia and Zionism Victoria – with each working to their own strengths.

The second is the appointment of Jillian Segal AM as Australia's first Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism. The JCCV looks forward to working collaboratively with the Special Envoy in this important role. There is much to be done.

I would like to thank my executive, many of whom were new, like me, to the JCCV. They have worked tirelessly to support and strengthen the organisation and share our achievements with the community.

**Philip Zajac**  
President, Jewish Community Council of Victoria



# EDUCATING COUNCILLORS ACROSS MELBOURNE

As more local governments felt the pressure to comment on the Israel-Hamas conflict, the JCCV adapted its Jewish Immersion Program to reach out to more councillors in more areas of Melbourne.



## THE NEED

- ▶ A better understanding by local councillors and council staff of the characteristics and challenges of the Victorian Jewish community.
- ▶ Suggestions on meaningful ways for local councils to support local Jewish residents, workers and visitors and build social cohesion at a local level.
- ▶ An opportunity for local councillors to ask questions and discuss their experiences in a safe environment.



## ACTION TAKEN

- ▶ JCCV engaged with councillors and senior staff from 18 councils across Melbourne.
- ▶ JCCV modified the existing Jewish Immersion Program to create a bespoke program for small groups, particularly ahead of council votes on relevant resolutions.
- ▶ JCCV held three multi-council forums for elected officials and senior staff to discuss community challenges and answer questions.
- ▶ JCCV developed practical recommendations for councils to assist them to build social cohesion in Melbourne.



## IMPACT

- ▶ More than 60 councillors and senior members of staff from across Melbourne have had direct engagement with the JCCV and now better understand the local Jewish community.
- ▶ JCCV engaged with councillors from the City of Hobsons Bay to draft a motion on social cohesion locally.
- ▶ The JCCV was invited to participate in a roundtable discussion at the City of Melbourne to workshop ways to reduce disruptions from protesters.
- ▶ JCCV supported Jewish people who work in the City of Greater Dandenong, after the council passed an anti-Israel resolution, including making representations on their behalf to local councillors.
- ▶ JCCV has used these opportunities to foster strong relationships with local councils and plans to offer educational programs to newly elected councillors in early 2025.







# IMPACT BY NUMBERS

## FIGHTING ANTISEMITISM



**18**

Councils met with the JCCV to better understand the local Jewish community



**7**

Families with multiple children impacted by antisemitism provided with case management



**14**

Meetings with Premier Jacinta Allan and senior ministers, ensuring continuous dialogue with the government



**2**

Roundtables on antisemitism coordinated for the Premier and Victoria Police Chief Commissioner

## YOM HASHOAH



**1150**

Attendees at the community Yom Hashoah commemoration, the largest in recent memory



**100+**

Volunteers engaged in the commemoration and its planning



**12**

Jewish schools and youth movements participated in the commemoration

## ENGAGEMENT



**4**

Community forums hosted by JCCV on rising antisemitism, drawing more 1000 people to discuss and address pressing concerns



**60+**

Councillors and senior management participated in Jewish Immersion Programs (JIP)



**96%**

of JIP participants reported improved awareness and understanding of the Jewish community



**600+**

JCCV newsletter subscribers added since October 7

## COLLABORATION



**3**

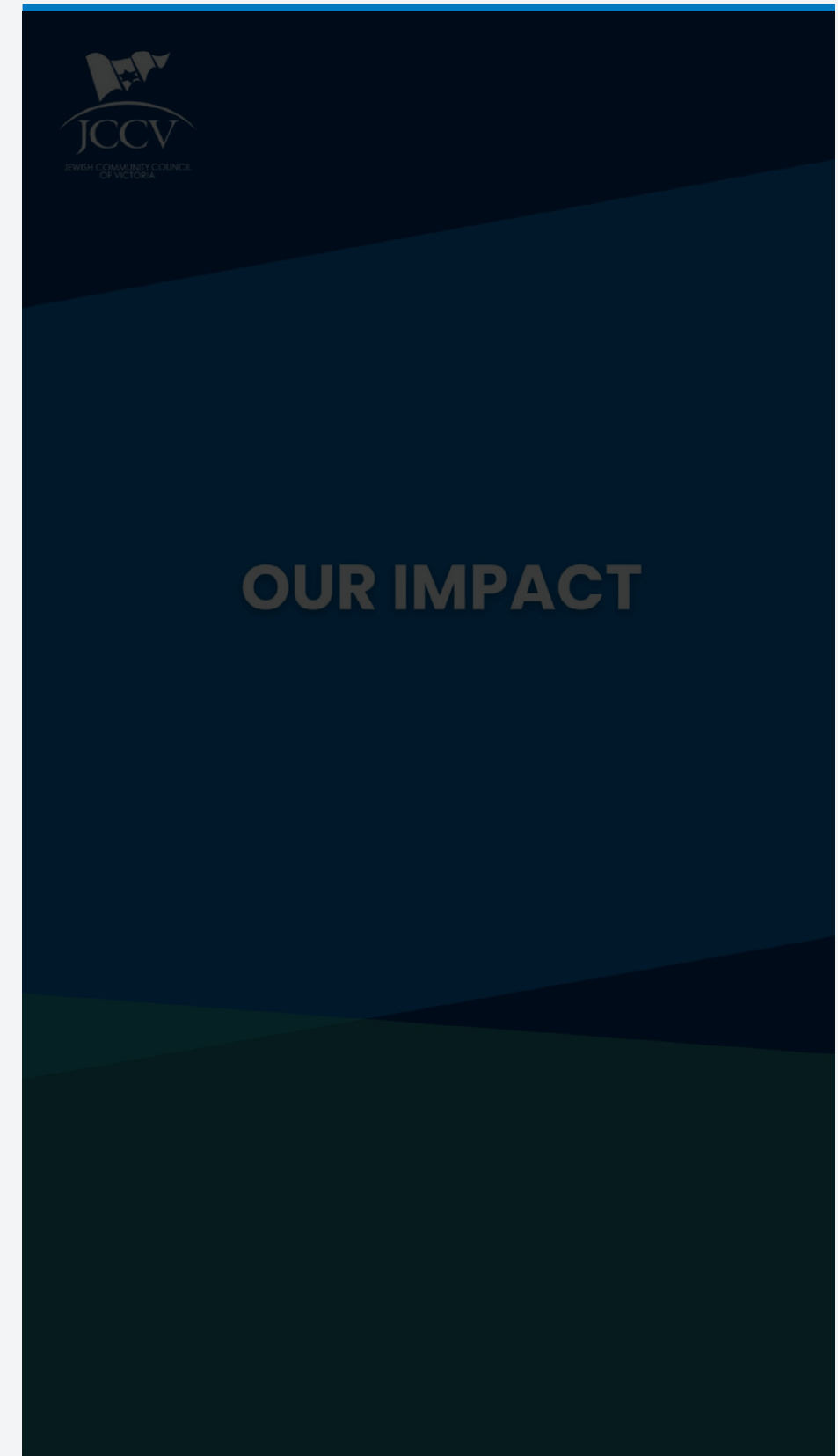
Taskforces created to enhance community cooperation in addressing community needs



**33**

Organisations worked with the JCCV on a range of projects, including:

- 8 synagogues
- 20 community organisations
- 5 Jewish schools
- 3 non-Jewish schools







# ADVOCACY TO COMBAT ANTISEMITISM

November 2023 saw the highest recorded level of antisemitism in Victoria ever. The JCCV's role was to work with government, police and other key stakeholders to act quickly, firmly and effectively.



## THE NEED

- ▶ The Victorian Jewish community was facing antisemitism on a level never experienced before.
- ▶ In November 2024, Monash University research indicated 92% of the Australian Jewish population said antisemitism was a problem in Australia today.
- ▶ There was serious concern among the Victorian Jewish community that the State Government and local police were not responding to this problem.



## ACTION TAKEN

- ▶ The JCCV met 14 times with the Premier Jacinta Allan and other senior Victorian Government ministers in the months following October 7, as well meetings with Labor, Liberal and independent MPs.
- ▶ The JCCV met with Chief Commissioner Shane Patton, Deputy Commissioners and many senior Victoria Police.
- ▶ The JCCV coordinated two roundtable discussions with Jewish people impacted by antisemitism, one for the Premier and the other for the Chief Commissioner.
- ▶ The JCCV held regular briefings with staff in the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet, Department of Education, Department of Justice and Community Safety and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.
- ▶ The JCCV published the Victorian Antisemitism Report, in partnership with CSG, and presented it to more than 200 key stakeholders.



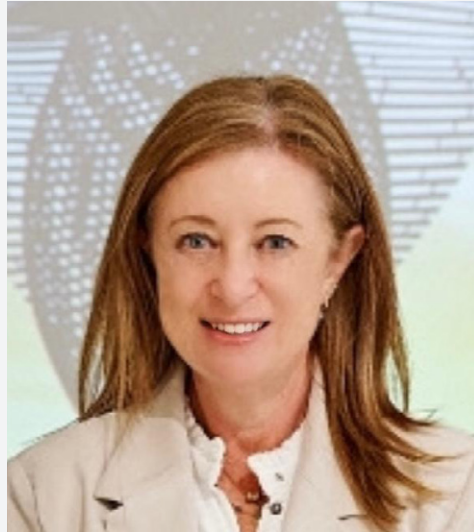
## IMPACT

- ▶ Victoria Police initiated Operation Park to protect and secure the Victorian Jewish community.
- ▶ The Premier Jacinta Allan has made multiple Parliamentary statements, written opinion pieces and made social media comments condemning local antisemitism, including condemning the doxxing of Jewish people, and violent graffiti on the Mount Scopus College fence.
- ▶ The JCCV worked with Jewish families and the Department of Education to address antisemitism in four government schools.
- ▶ The JCCV has made approaches to Victoria Police on a range of antisemitic incidents, one of which resulted in arrests and is before the courts.





## MESSAGE FROM OUR DONORS

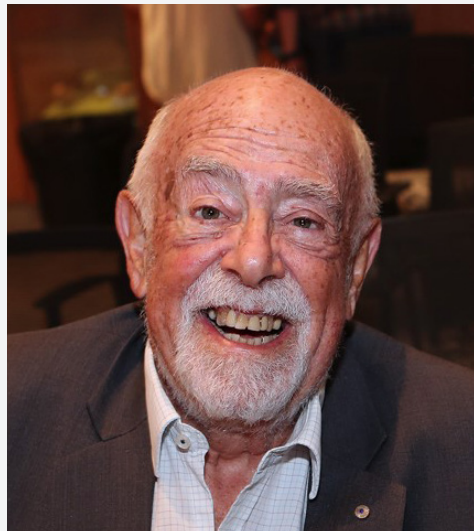


### NICOLE BRITTAIN

#### Grant Manager – Jewish and Israel Programs

Gandel Foundation has a simple yet impactful vision, to create a lasting difference in people's lives. We achieve this by empowering communities to deliver programs, activities and opportunities that create a lasting positive impact on the quality of life of people in Australia and the Jewish communities here and in Israel.

We are a proud supporter of the JCCV as we have seen the profound positive impact they have as the roof body and voice of the Jewish community in Victoria. Their support and coordination over since October 7 has been nothing short of extraordinary.



### GRAHAME LEONARD AM

#### JCCV Patron

Over the past thirty or so years I have had the privilege of being elected to many voluntary leadership roles in our community, including as the JCCV president. I understand and appreciate the importance of having an adequately resourced Victorian roof body that must have appropriate funding.

The JCCV operates on many levels and serves many roles on behalf of our community. It contributes to Victoria being one of the best regarded communities in the diaspora. The JCCV is recognised by government and institutions throughout Victoria as representing the views of the Victorian Jewish community. It coordinates and provides to our many community service organisations, minimising duplication and identifies gaps requiring attention. The JCCV represents us at the ECAJ helping shape the Australian Jewish community's policies and actions.







# #ACTIONNOTWORDS

In May 2024, JCCV ran the #ActionNotWords campaign against rampant anti-Jewish hate in Victoria.

## THE NEED

After months of rising antisemitic activity, culminating in the vandalising of Mount Scopus College with the words “Jew Die”, it was clear the community was highly frustrated and was demanding decisive action to ensure that Jewish Victorians could live safely and proudly in their identity.

## ACTION TAKEN

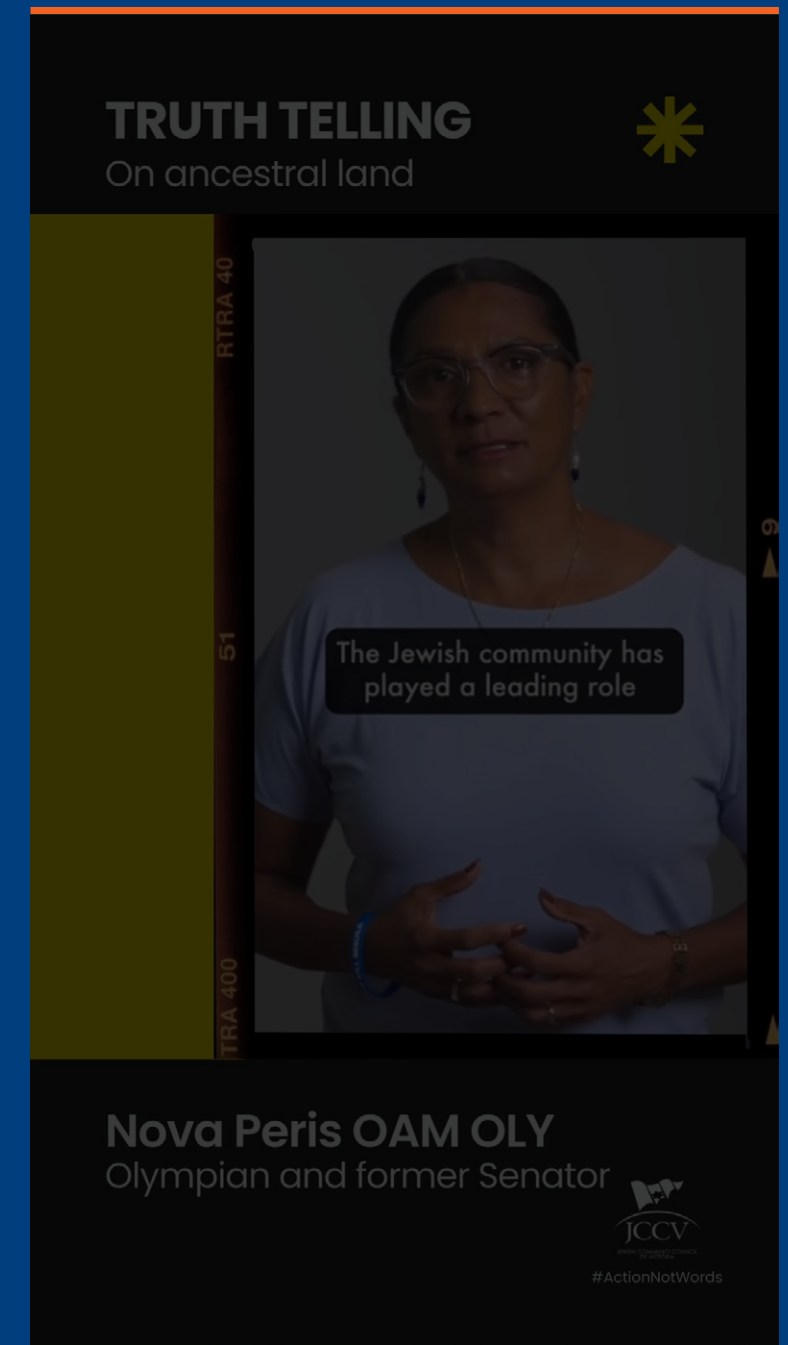
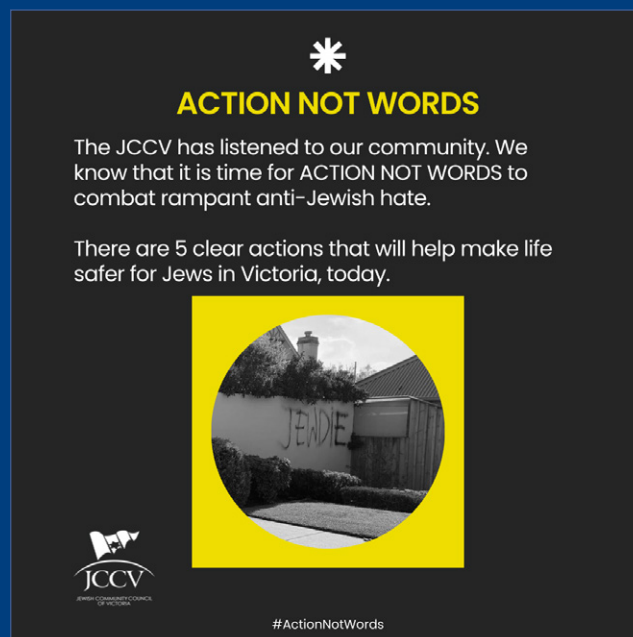
JCCV launched its **#ActionNotWords** campaign on social media and by directly communicating to key stakeholders in Victoria. The focus was on 5 key activities:

- (1) Maintaining moral clarity;
- (2) Consequences for government-appointed officers who cross the line;
- (3) Urgent law reform;
- (4) Security funding for schools;
- (5) An increased focus on education around respect, antisemitism and the Holocaust.

JCCV leaders raised the **#ActionNotWords** campaign in meetings with 21 Commonwealth and Victorian Ministers and MPs and local councillors from across the political spectrum, plus additional meetings with Departmental officials.

## IMPACT

- ▶ Broad acknowledgement that Victorian Jews are the target of prejudice and that antisemitism is unique and dynamic.
- ▶ Increased engagement by political leaders to quickly respond to antisemitism.
- ▶ Enhanced communication between Victoria Police and Jewish leaders.
- ▶ Strengthened efforts by Victorian Department of Education to proactively address antisemitism in schools in collaboration with JCCV.







## PARTNERING WITH GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS ANTISEMITISM

The JCCV has partnered with the Victorian Government to find evidence-based approaches to prevent and address antisemitism locally. The JCCV thanks the Victorian Government for its three-year funding commitment to support the JCCV, Zionism Victoria and Melbourne Holocaust Museum in this important task.

### RESEARCH

- [Victorian Antisemitism Report 2023](#), in partnership with CSG
- Defining antisemitism in Victoria – a practical guide
- Antisemitism in Victoria – the impact

### EDUCATION

- Provided Jewish cultural training to 80 teachers at a local government high school
- Reached out and worked with 60 councillors and senior council staff
- Devised multiple education delivery methods, including, on-site, off-site and online, to provide Jewish cultural outreach to as many organisations and individuals as possible.

### RESILIENCE

- Identified need among Jewish students at non-government schools
- Built a community partnership with United Jewish Education Board
- Funding to roll out in 2025







# 2023 AWARD WINNERS

## GENERAL SIR JOHN MONASH AWARD

### Pauline Rockman OAM

The **General Sir John Monash Award** is named after one of Australia's most distinguished military leaders and Jewish Australians, General Sir John Monash. This award is presented to an individual who has made an outstanding and lasting impact on the Victorian Jewish community.

Pauline Rockman OAM, the 2023 award recipient, was recognised for her exemplary contributions to the Victorian Jewish community, specifically through her longstanding involvement with the Melbourne Holocaust Museum. Joining the museum in 1994, she was the first woman on its board and served as President or Co-President for 17 years. Her work was inspired by Holocaust survivors' resilience and commitment to combating injustice and racism. She emphasised the importance of diversity and mutual respect in Australia and reflected on her father's role in establishing the North-Eastern Jewish Centre in the 1960s, highlighting her family's deep-rooted connection to community service.



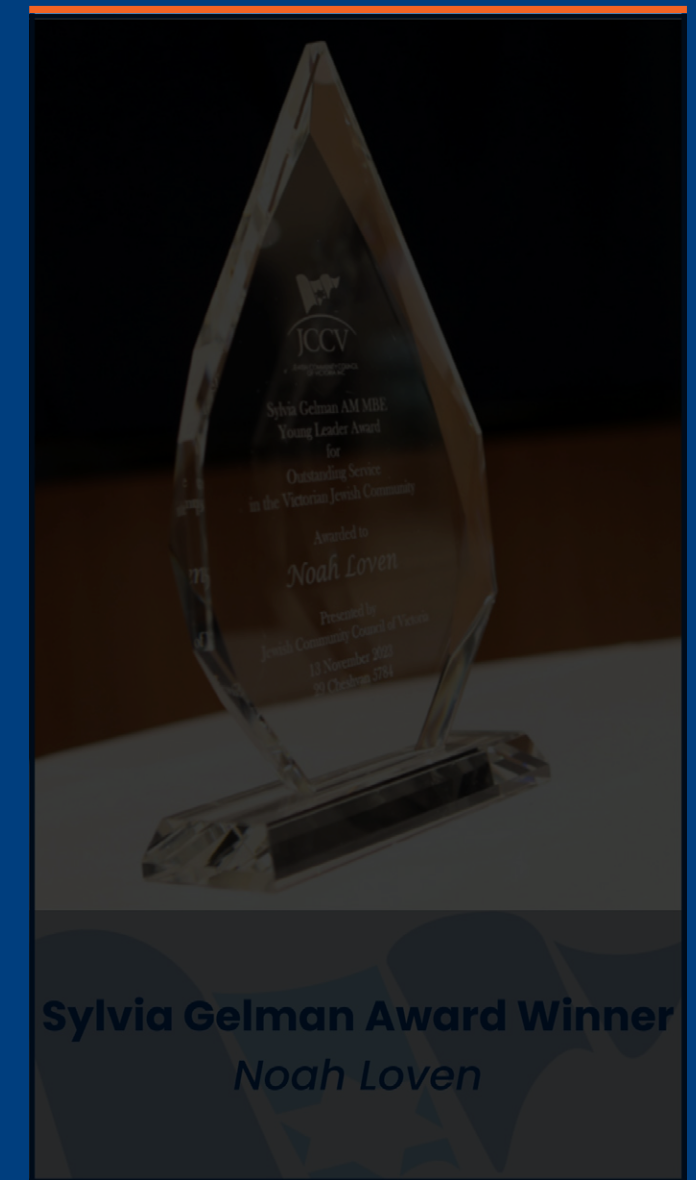
**Sir General John Monash  
Award Winner  
Pauline Rockman OAM**

## SYLVIA GELMAN YOUNG LEADERSHIP AWARD

### Noah Loven

The **Sylvia Gelman Young Leadership Award** is named after Sylvia Gelman AM MBE, an advocate for women's education and leadership in the Jewish community. This award recognises emerging young leaders who have shown dedication, vision, and potential in shaping the future of the community.

Noah Loven, the 2023 recipient of this award, had then served as the Public Affairs Coordinator for the Australasian Union of Jewish Students (AUJS) and is now nearing the end of his term as the organisation's National President. His leadership journey began with the United Jewish Education Board's (UJEB) youth BBYO program, where he participated, then served as a leader (madrich), and later as a Regional Adviser. Noah emphasised the role UJEB plays in connecting Jewish students attending non-Jewish schools to their cultural and religious identity and expressed gratitude for the opportunities AUJS has provided him. Noah is passionate about continuing his advocacy and leadership in the Jewish community.



**Sylvia Gelman Award Winner  
Noah Loven**



# YOM HASHOAH 2024

As the years pass, the JCCV has ensured the memory of the Shoah has not faded. In 2024, we delivered the biggest Yom Hashoah commemoration in recent memory.



## THE NEED

- ▶ A focus on the Shoah against the background of a very challenging year for Melbourne's Jewish community.
- ▶ A memorial program which underlined the resilience and unity of the Victorian Jewish community



## ACTION TAKEN

- ▶ JCCV enlisted a revamped volunteer steering committee to help develop the commemoration.
- ▶ The commemoration returned to Monash University after 5 years away.
- ▶ JCCV coordinated over 100 volunteers from the community's different organisations, including youth movements, schools and synagogues, as well as many of our community's amazing musicians.
- ▶ The re-establishment of the multi-school choir to perform the *Partisan Song* and *Hatikvah*.
- ▶ Bringing together 1150 members of our community to commemorate together against a challenging security background with an anti-Israel encampment just metres away from the hall.



## IMPACT

- ▶ The JCCV received overwhelmingly positive feedback from those who attended, including the following comments.
- ▶ "The event was so well done. It reflected the current mood while still staying focused on commemorating the Shoah. The speakers and performers were completely appropriate. The event felt directed to everyone, all parts of the community."
- ▶ "I have attended for 50 years. This was the best commemoration ever."
- ▶ "Our family thought that the night was incredible. We loved that the music was more uplifting while being so meaningful. Kol Hakavod on an amazing Yom Hashoah - It was the best so far. Thank you!"
- ▶ "I thought this was one of the best Yom Hashoah programs that I have attended. Well written, well balanced and well coordinated. Well done!"







# GOVERNANCE

## JCCV EXECUTIVE 2023–24



**PHILIP ZAJAC**  
President



**HAYLEY SOUTHWICK**  
Vice President



**HANNAH GREENBERG**  
Treasurer



**RACHEL FLITMAN**



**YOSSI GOLDFARB**



**FRANK GREENSTEIN**



**NATALIE GUNN**

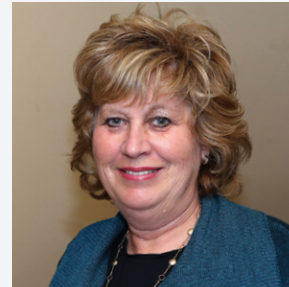


**RABBI GABI KALTMANN**



**ALISSA WOOLF**

## JCCV STAFF



**JUDY FETTER**  
CEO until October 2023



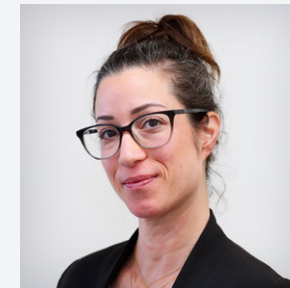
**NAOMI LEVIN**  
CEO from November 2023



**SHANI BURNIE**  
Communication and Events Coordinator



**JOSHUA GOODMAN**  
Community Engagement Manager



**SIVAN PREZMA**  
Office Manager



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JCCV acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land and community. We pay our respect to them and their cultures, and to the Elders, past, present and emerging.