

AROUND THE
COMMUNITY

JNF

Together we rise with Israel: Eli Sharabi headlines JNF Australia campaign

This September, captivity survivor Eli Sharabi will visit Sydney, Melbourne and Perth as the keynote speaker for JNF Australia's 2025 annual campaign, Together, We Rise With Israel.

In the face of adversity, the people of Israel continue to rise. From the tragedy of October 7 to the most recent missile attacks from Iran, Israel has endured one of the most challenging chapters in its modern history. Yet amid the devastation, the strength, courage and unity of its people have shone brightly.

It is this spirit that inspired the 2025 JNF Australia Annual Campaign. At the heart of the campaign are calls upon the Australian Jewish community to stand with Israel as it rebuilds.

The campaign is being headlined by a man who has touched hearts all over the world. Held in Hamas captivity for 491 days, Sharabi's story is not only one of survival, but of a profound resilience that now fuels a broader message of hope and renewal.

Despite enduring unthinkable trauma, including the loss of his wife, Lianne, and two daughters, Noiya and Yahel, Sharabi, who is a Kibbutz Be'eri resident, has emerged as a voice of dignity and courage. "Surviving captivity has shown me the power of resilience, the necessity of hope and the unbreakable spirit of the Israeli people," Sharabi says.

Sharabi will share his personal story with Australians. His presence is expected to further galvanise the community and their deep commitment to supporting Israel. His words promise to leave the community inspired and uplifted, in what will be a series of truly memorable events.

"This journey is not mine alone – it belongs to all of us who believe in a stronger future for Israel," says Sharabi. "JNF Australia's mission to rebuild lives and communities echoes that same spirit – turning pain into purpose and devastation into strength."

The opportunity to hear directly from Eli will offer a profound experience to all who attend JNF Australia events. His story reminds us that behind every headline are real people, families and communities striving to heal.

Since his release from captivity in February this year, Sharabi has spoken widely, met with world leaders and shared his message with communities around the world. His journey is one of personal tragedy, but also of communal strength, echoing what Israel itself continues to demonstrate daily.

The 2025 JNF Australia campaign is more than a fundraising initiative; it is a declaration of shared purpose. It is about rising together with the people of Israel, with the memory of those lost and strengthening those rebuilding for the future.

"Together, We Rise With Israel is both a statement of solidarity and a call to action," says Doron Lazarus, JNF Australia CEO. "We've seen the pain, but we've also seen the extraordinary resilience of Israelis. Our mission now is to match their strength with our support." With thousands of Israeli families still displaced and communities in the north and south under constant threat, the campaign will fund urgent projects aimed at rebuilding communities, restoring wellbeing and reigniting hope.



Eli Sharabi (photo by Sharon Dery)



Ein Hashlosa green resilience space

As with every JNF funded project, the organisation is led by those people on the ground in Israel to ensure that they address the most urgent needs and priorities. With careful consideration, projects are funded to ensure Israel can rebuild, renew, grow and heal.

The projects that form part of the 2025 Annual Campaign include:

- The Water Reservoir Restoration Project at Kibbutz Nahal Oz, which is essential to reviving the kibbutz's agricultural foundation after the devastating events of October 7. With the main reservoir destroyed and fields damaged, restoring this critical infrastructure is key to the

community's recovery, resilience and long-term sustainability.

- The ImagineBox Learning & Treatment Space at Kibbutz Nir Oz is an immersive, therapeutic environment designed to support emotional recovery in the aftermath of October 7. It will serve as a vital resource for traumatised residents by fostering emotional resilience and healing through innovative, experiential learning.
- Therapeutic green space in Kibbutz Ein Hashlosa, providing nature-based trauma recovery for residents coping with extreme emotional distress.

- The Community Stress Prevention Centre in Kiryat Shmona, which is a vital initiative addressing the growing mental health crisis following October 7. As a national leader in trauma care and resilience building, the centre will deliver innovative programs that equip northern Israeli communities with long-term tools for emotional recovery and strength.

- The Replant for Growth & Regaining Resilience project at Kibbutz Misgav Am focuses on restoring the natural landscape and communal spaces after extensive war-related damage. Through reforestation, community gardens and outdoor recreational areas, the initiative aims to create a healing environment that supports the emotional and physical recovery of residents returning to rebuild their lives on the Lebanon border.

These projects are just a glimpse into the breadth of work JNF Australia is undertaking – building playgrounds, trauma centres, shelters, educational hubs and more. Other vital projects will be supported based on the evolving needs of its partner communities. Since October 7, JNF Australia has supported more than 60 strategic projects through the generosity of the Australian Jewish community.

"Rebuilding Israel is not only about infrastructure – it's about healing lives and restoring hope," says newly elected National President, Pam Krail. "Our goal is not just to return people to what they had before, but to help them build something even stronger ... even more vibrant."

This year's campaign comes at a pivotal time. With continued threats across Israel's northern and southern borders, Israel's frontline communities are under immense pressure. The partnership between the diaspora and Israel has never been more essential.

"What October 7 has taught us is that more than ever, we in the diaspora need Israel and Israel needs us," says Krail. "Our response must go beyond words. It's the action we now take that matters most."

As we are fast coming up to two years since October 7, 2023, the work ahead remains significant, yet the strength of the Israeli people, as embodied by Eli Sharabi, continues to be a guiding light. For many years, JNF Australia has supported various projects in Kibbutz Be'eri, and now, together with Sharabi's vision and determination, it will continue to undertake life-changing projects for the community.

"The missiles may have shattered homes, but not hope," says Lazarus. "We are committed to ensuring that the people of Israel not only recover, but thrive. Now is the time to turn our compassion into action. Together, we rise with Israel."

Eli Sharabi will be visiting Sydney on 2nd September, Melbourne on 4th September and Perth on 7th September. To secure tickets, which are \$72 each, by way of donation, and are on sale now, visit www.jnf.org.au or call 1300 563 563.