

JNF VIC

Education as the heartbeat of resilience

In the months since the devastating October 7 attacks, JNF Australia has demonstrated that its roots run deeper than the trees it has helped plant across Israel.

When terror struck, children in Israel's south lost not only their homes but also their sense of safety and stability. JNF Australia, in partnership with local communities and municipalities, responded with more than immediate relief – it offered hope. Through nature-based healing programs, mobile education units, and sheltered learning spaces, displaced youth found a way to process trauma and reclaim a sense of normality.

One of the most moving initiatives of 2024 has been the Imagine Box Project, proudly supported by JNF Australia. Created for children affected by war and displacement, each box contains educational and creative materials – art supplies, books, puzzles and games – designed to ignite imagination, support emotional healing and promote learning.

Distributed to schools in Ofakim and Sha'ar HaNegev, these boxes have become more than an educational tool – they are a source of comfort, connection and hope.

Here in Australia, JNF's educational work has taken on renewed urgency. Across schools and youth organisations, students engaged in meaningful programs connecting them to Israel during an

uncertain time. These included dynamic guest speakers, interactive campaigns, hands-on volunteering, and partnerships with Zionist youth movements and camps. Through these experiences, students developed pride, purpose and a deeper sense of belonging.

JNFuture events and activities offer ways to connect with like-minded people and be inspired by the work of JNF in Israel.

Young adults in their 20s and 30s enjoy gatherings such as Yom Ha'atzmaut parties, JNFuture Shabbat dinners, trivia nights, paint-and-sip sessions, and even tours to Israel. These events foster lasting connections, deepen engagement with Israel, and nurture the next generation of Jewish leadership.

Much of this impact has been shaped by Eldad Shoham, JNF Victoria's Educational Officer since 2019.

With energy and dedication, Eldad has brought Israel to life in classrooms and youth movements across Melbourne. He's helped young Australians understand the mission of JNF, while inspiring a commitment to environmental stewardship and volunteerism.

As he prepares to return to Israel in early September, his legacy will live on in the countless students and educators he has inspired.

Eldad reflects, "It was a great honour to be part of this amazing community and a huge privilege to educate children and



strengthen their love of Israel."

Looking ahead, the upcoming JNF Educators Tour to Israel in December 2025 – January 2026 offers a transformative opportunity.

Australian educators will witness the impact of JNF-supported projects firsthand, connect with Israeli counterparts, explore innovative post-crisis education strategies, and return empowered to strengthen Zionist education in their own schools and communities.

This mission of connection and renewal will be brought into even sharper focus at the JNF Victoria Annual Event on Thursday, September 4, 2025, with freed hostage Eli Sharabi who will share his story of immense loss, unbelievable survival, and hope for a stronger and better future.

Don't miss out and book for this event at jnf.org.au/vicae

For more information, visit jnf.org.au or call 1300 563 563



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