



GOOD PARENTING

Rubinstein named Father of the Year

FATHER’S Day was that extra bit special for Jewish Victorian Dr Arne Rubinstein (pictured), whom The Australian Fathers Day Council and The Fathering Project named as the 2025 Australian Father of the Year last Sunday.

The annual national Father’s Day awards are a celebration and a reminder that when fathers, and father figures, engage with love, intention and integrity, they change not only their own children’s futures, but the very fabric of society.

Rubinstein, a father of two and former GP, received the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in January 2024 in recognition for his service to youth, since co-founding the not-for-profit group Uplifting Australia in 2011, and the Pathways Foundation in 2000.

He founded the Rites of Passage Institute, serving as its CEO since 2018, and he is also the founder and coordinator of its “The Making of Men” camps, and camps tailored to the needs of teenage girls – which have been attended by hundreds of thousands of young people in Australia and around the world.

Rubinstein is also the author of several books, including the best-selling *The Making of Men: Raising Boys to be Happy, Healthy and Successful*.

“It’s a big journey being a father,” he said.

JNF VICTORIA

Eli Sharabi shares his horror and hope from time in hell

SHARYN KOLIEB

THE Jewish National Fund Victoria held its annual event in Melbourne on September 5, where around 1300 gathered at Melbourne Hebrew Congregation.

JNF is fundraising for over 20 projects to help rebuild communities in Israel’s south and north that were destroyed since October 7, 2023, including water reservoir restoration in Nahal Oz, therapeutic space at Nir Oz, mental health support in Kiryat Shmona, and replanting at Misgav Am.

During the event, former soldiers Uriel and Almog shared their story of deciding to help lead the rebuilding of Kibbutz Manara in the north, to honour the legacy of fallen soldiers – it has grown from five to 100 people.

Former Israeli hostage Eli Sharabi, who was held captive in Gaza for 491 days, spoke with journalist Nadav Eyal. Sharabi recounted the horror of being kidnapped from his home and taken hostage to Gaza, his pain at learning when he was freed that his wife Lianne and two daughters Yahel and Noiya had been killed by terrorists, and that his brother’s remains were held in Gaza. His book *Hostage* will be available in English on October 7.



Former hostage Eli Sharabi in conversation with Nadav Eyal at the JNF Victoria event on September 4. Photo: JNF Vic.

Sharabi remembers the details of his captivity – the faces of the terrorists, the tiny portions of food, the day he was ordered at gunpoint to step into the tunnel that was hidden in a mosque, the time he was beaten so badly he couldn’t breathe.

“You fear for your life every day, every minute,” Sharabi said. When he entered the tunnel, Sharabi said he made the decision “to live” and implored fellow hostages to focus on something positive each day.

Discussing how his perspective on life has shifted, Sharabi said, “Appreciate every moment that you have as free people, because freedom is priceless ... you have a lot of time to think and understand what

is really, really important in your life and it’s not material ... it’s not your house, it’s not your car, it’s not your bank account, it’s what really, really matters ... your loves, your family, your friends.”

Eyal remarked, “You managed to stay down there in the tunnels in the dungeons of Hamas with hope and resilience, and if you didn’t give up, how can we?”

The evening also heard moving songs by October 7 survivor Hagit Yaso who was the winner of Israel’s *Kochav Nolad (A Star is Born)* in 2011 including an emotional *Hatikvah*.

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