

Around the community



JEWISH NATIONAL FUND AUSTRALIA

Inaugural women's tour to Israel announced

AJN STAFF

JNF Australia has launched its inaugural Women's Tour to Israel, a leadership program aimed at deepening participants' connection with Israel and building a network of female advocates for the organisation.

Applications for the tour are open to women aged 35 to 60 and close on August 31. The program is subsidised by KKL-JNF Israel and reflects a commitment to strengthening women's Zionist engagement.

Participants will meet community leaders and changemakers in Israel, and take part in cultural and educational experiences across the country, including opportunities to connect with Israel's people, landscapes and stories. During the tour, the group will collectively choose a project in Israel to support, ensuring the experience translates into tangible impact on the ground.

Those who take part will commit to serving as a JNF Australia advocate for two years after returning home, with options including hosting community events, taking



JNF USA Women's Tour.

Photo: Supplied

part in fundraising, and bringing new supporters into the JNF network, depending on their own skills, interests and networks.

KKL-JNF Israel emissary (shlichah) Sarah Vanunu said the initiative represented something she had believed in "from the very beginning".

"I advocated for greater investment in women's Zionist leadership because I know the extraordinary impact women have in strengthening communities, inspiring philanthropy and building lasting connections with Israel."

She said the concept of women's leadership tours and dedi-

cated JNF women's engagement through KKL-JNF had received strong support from colleagues around the world when she first raised it.

"I am incredibly proud that KKL-JNF has now made this vision a reality by investing in programs like this, and that Australia

has been selected to deliver one of the inaugural tours," she said.

"This isn't simply a visit to Israel. It is about creating a network of passionate women who will return home inspired to lead, advocate and make a tangible difference in their communities for years to come."

JNF Australia executive director Tammi Faraday said the women being sought for the program "refuse to believe that someone else will take care of what matters most".

"This mission will open doors that very few people ever have the opportunity to walk through," Faraday said. "It will offer rare access to the leaders shaping Israel's future and to the communities where JNF Australia's work is transforming lives."

"But its true purpose begins when they return home. Because the measure of this mission will never be what they experienced in Israel. It will be what they choose to build because of it."

Places on the tour are limited. Book your spot jnf.org.au/wlit26

ZIONIST FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

Record conference draws more than 450 Jewish educators

AJN STAFF

MORE than 450 Jewish educators gathered at Mount Scopus Memorial College in Melbourne on August 16 and 17 for the Zionist Federation of Australia (ZFA) Educators' Conference, the largest of its kind outside Israel and North America and the biggest in the event's two-decade history.

The conference brought together 25 international and 45 local presenters, delivering more than 100 sessions covering the practical, pedagogical and philosophical dimensions of Jewish education.

Sessions ranged from puppetry and play, Hebrew language teach-



A session at the ZFA Educators' Conference. Photo: Jarrod Freeman

ing and techniques for teaching Jewish texts, to Jewish history, theology, educational leadership and how Israel education must evolve in the wake of October 7.

Participants included early childhood, primary and secondary school educators, alongside

informal and experiential educators from across Australia.

ZFA chief executive officer Alon Cassuto said investing in Jewish educators had rarely been more important.

"The quality of Jewish education ultimately rests on the people who bring it to life," he said.

"At a time when young Jews are confronting difficult questions about Israel, antisemitism, their Jewish identity and their place in the world, the role of our educators is more important than ever."

"Conferences such as this give us an invaluable opportunity to step outside the demands of the school day, exchange ideas, challenge our thinking, learn from one another and return to

our classrooms renewed."

ZFA president Jeremy Leibler said the events of recent years had reinforced both the success of Australian Jewish education and the need to consider how it must evolve.

"Amid the trauma of October 7 and the horror of Bondi, one thing has given me enormous optimism: the generation of young Jews who stepped forward," he said.

"Our schools should be places where difficult questions are welcomed, where nuance is valued, and where young Jews develop the confidence not simply to defend their identity, but to understand it deeply."

The conference was coordinated by ZFA education chair-

person and conference director Dr Miriam Munz and delivered in partnership with UnitED, an initiative of Israel's Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism.

Cassuto paid tribute to Munz's leadership in establishing the conference as an internationally recognised event.

"Miriam's vision, energy and commitment have put this conference on the international Jewish education map," he said.

Leibler told educators at the conference the deepest defence of Jewish life was forming Jews who are literate, confident, curious, connected and able to carry their identity into the world without fear or apology.

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