

ISRAELI MAYOR VISITS BONDI MASSACRE SITE

'We must strengthen each other'

GARETH NARUNSKY

THE mayor of an Israeli region devastated on October 7 visited the site of the Bondi Beach massacre on Tuesday morning, before presenting Waverley Council mayor Will Nemesh with a medal from his council.

Sha'ar HaNegev Regional Council mayor Ori Epstein, who lost his mother, two brothers-in-law, his nephew and his eldest son Netta on October 7, was given a tour of Archer Park by Nemesh.

"I feel we have a common experience, even here in Australia, because the basic reason for that attack, the October 7 attack, is that we are Jews," Epstein said. "We must strengthen each other."

He said the two councils could work together, particularly on mental health. "I see that after October 7 there is so much knowledge about how to deal with trauma and post trauma, and how you deal with it not as a hospital but as a process in the community. That is the new knowledge that we bring."

Asked for a message for Australian Jews, Epstein said, "You are not alone."

Nemesh said the visit meant a lot to the community and to him personally.

"Despite the fact that our communities live tens of thousands of kilometres apart, we were both



Waverley mayor Will Nemesh (left) and Sha'ar HaNegev mayor Ori Epstein at Bondi Beach.
Photo: Gareth Narunsky

struck by tragedy, horrific massacres that occurred both in Israel and here at Bondi Beach," he said.

Epstein, a lifelong resident of Kibbutz Kfar Aza who was elected mayor in December, 2024, is in Australia for JNF Australia's annual campaign, which also features international lawfare expert Natasha Hausdorff and former Israeli hostage and pianist Alon Ohel.

Speaking at a major donors' event on Monday night, Epstein told guests he wanted to begin not as a mayor but as a son, and above all as a father. Netta was killed when he jumped on a grenade to save the woman he loved.

"As a father there are no words that can describe that loss," Epstein said. "There is the life

before that moment, and there is the life after it.

"But I have learned that leadership in moments like these is about choosing, every day, to keep going."

Epstein invoked the vision of his predecessor Ofir Libstein, who was killed defending Kfar Aza on October 7 and had visited Australia with JNF in 2022.

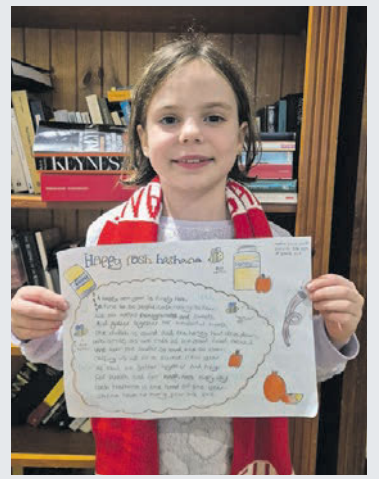
"We do not want simply to return Sha'ar HaNegev to what it was on October 6. We want to build the Sha'ar HaNegev of the next generation."

This year's JNF Australia campaign is raising funds for the Sha'ar HaNegev Community Village.

"We do not see your donations as charity. We see it as partnership," Epstein said.



Bina Shuchat.



Noam Saul Hevia.

ROSH HASHANAH CARD/POEM CONTEST

Mazal tov Bina and Noam!

THE AJN wishes a hearty congratulations to Bina Shuchat and Noam Saul Hevia, respective winners of our Rosh Hashanah card and poem competitions.

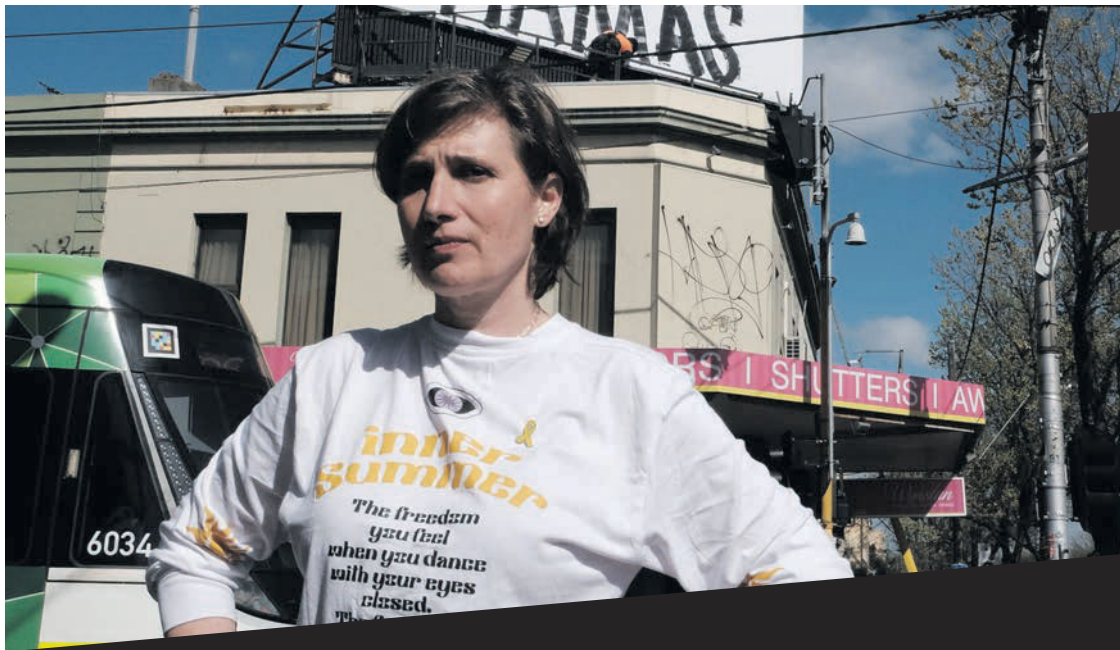
Both attend Kesser Torah College in Sydney.

"I was so so so excited. I was jumping up and down. I couldn't believe that I won," Bina said.

She said she included a bee on her card "for Matilda, and I hope that she's looking down and smiling at us, and I hope that she's seeing everyone's kindness".

Noam said, "I am very excited to share this poem with everyone, Shana Tova!"

*A Happy New Year is finally here,
A time to be joyful, with nothing to fear.
We eat apples, pomegranates and sweets,
And gather together for wonderful treats.
The challah is round and the honey that drips down,
We smile as we pass all the good food around.
We hear the shofar, so loud and so clear,
Calling us all to a sweet new year.
At shule we gather together and pray,
For health and for happiness every day.
Rosh Hashanah is the head of the year,
Shana tova to every Jew we see.*



THE Australian Jewish News
Celebrating 130 Years

Jewish International Film Festival

Tickets on sale now at jiff.com.au.

The AJN has 10 double passes to give away to each screening event.

To receive your exclusive double-pass to this special event, please email competitions@jewishnews.net.au with subject header 'JIFF Program Launch 2026' by Tuesday 1 September. You will be notified on Monday 7 September if you have been selected. This competition is exclusive to AJN subscribers only.

WIN

TICKETS TO JIFF PROGRAM LAUNCH AND SCREENING OF

CANCELLED

PROUDLY CO-HOSTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH NEWS

To launch the 2026 Jewish International Film Festival (JIFF), The AJN will be co-hosting an exclusive preview screening of the new Australian documentary, *Cancelled*.

A new documentary that observes key Jewish creatives as they navigate the rise of antisemitism in Australia in the wake of October 7. The film follows ARIA award-winning musician Deborah Conway, acclaimed visual artist Nina Sanadze and a group of creatives navigating a rapidly shifting environment, culminating in the Bondi Beach attack of December 2025.

The JIFF program launch event gives patrons a first taste of this year's film selection. JIFF screens nationally from 18 October – 26 November, 2026.

The JIFF program launch and screening will take place:

SYDNEY

Wednesday 16 September
7.00pm film, followed by a panel discussion
Ritz Cinemas, Randwick

MELBOURNE

Thursday 17 September
7.30pm film, followed by a panel discussion
Classic Cinemas, Elsternwick