



B'NAI B'RITH PREVIEW



Message from the President: Mazal Tov to P/P Emeritus Prof. Ronald Taft AM (100 yrs) and B'nai B'rith Victoria (75 years)

B'nai B'rith Victoria was inaugurated on 20th May, 75 years ago and Professor Ronald Taft from Raoul Wallenberg Unit is turning 100 in June 2020. So much history during those years.

Ron was born into an established Jewish Australian family and he became an influential psychology and education academic and a respected community leader. He was Foundation Chair of the National Committee for Psychology in the Australian Academy of Science and his special interest was in multiculturalism and the adjustment and adaption of immigrant children and adults. At the age of 26, he joined his father in becoming a member of the 'Order of B'nai B'rith' and a year later he was asked to address the Lodge meeting in Melbourne on what B'nai B'rith meant to him.

His handwritten notes from that speech in 1947 were recently found by his family and were passed on to me. In these notes the young Ron wrote that BB gave him hope for the future and he analysed the aims of the new organisation. He was impressed with the aims of promoting human dignity and unity and that it promoted community service and philanthropy. The international links in BB, he wrote, gave opportunities for harmonious links with overseas Lodges. These points still sound familiar and are relevant today.

However, Ron went on to advise new Lodge members from overseas on integration and discipline matters, saying "I think that the overseas brothers should make every positive endeavour to obtain the opinions of the Australian members before insisting that this or that way is the right way to do things". He also advised all members against lax behaviour: "... such as smoking in the Lodge room before meetings, talking during Lodge sessions and not keeping your right hand on your lapel during debate and so on".

Remember this was 1947. What is glaring is that there was no mention in the speech of the Holocaust, or of the need to house the desperate survivors in the displaced person camps or supporting those souls who managed to make it to Australia. Nor was there any mention of the tensions in British ruled Palestine or the possible role of B'nai B'rith in all these momentous developments. B'nai B'rith seemed so insular here.

From my reading source material such the text book 'The Jews in Australia', vol 2, by W.D. Rubinstein and from talking to others, it is clear that attitudes among Australian Jews were so different in 1947 to mainstream views now. There were only about 36,000 Jews in Australia at that time and the leadership came predominantly from those with Anglo background, many of whom were non Zionists and they were worried about rising antisemitism if too many foreign Jews were let in. In 1946, only 700 were let in; during 1947, this rose to 2000 and to 3000 in 1949. (These figures exclude British Jews migrating here).

Did the Jewish community at that time, and those in BB, do enough for their brothers and sisters waiting overseas? This has been a very controversial question among leaders and historians. The immigration situation in Australia eased when Arthur Caldwell became Immigration Minister in 1945 and after Israel was established in 1948.

This is all part of our history - some parts are more comfortable than others. But all the more to reflect and celebrate with Ron Taft on his birthday and our 75th anniversary. Mazal Tov.



Dr Benny Monheit

Benny

*See comment from BBVic
historian Garry Fabian on P.8*

Message from the BBANZ President



Dear Members and Friends,

I still find it amazing, that despite being in partial social isolation and not being involved in as many activities that I used to be involved in during the good old days of 2019, how quickly the days still go by and before I know I receive a friendly reminder from Frances that it is time for another monthly report to be prepared. It is time that you say to yourself, well what has happened over the past month?

Well firstly I would like to congratulate the three Melbourne Units, Hatikvah, Melbourne Mitzvah and Raoul Wallenberg for combining to hold a joint Zoom meeting. Well done to Benny Monheit and to everyone who helped in getting this function going and for inviting Sue and me to be in attendance. It was lovely to see the faces of so many people on the screen and it was a real coup to have our International BB President, Charles (Chuck) Kaufman, in attendance.

The tributes to the late Professor Waller AO were very touching with his family in Israel being in attendance. It was that BB Victoria was going to hold its 75th Anniversary so it was very appropriate that Garry Fabian was able to reflect on that time. It was also interesting hearing Dr Paul Gardner answer questions in relation to his book "The Unsung Family Hero".

The next day, our bi-monthly Board of Governors meeting was held, also for the first time by Zoom. It also went very smoothly and it is always nice to see a face when a person is talking. Whilst the meeting was relatively short (around an hour) we all agreed that we need to keep BB active during this period and that with the help of Zoom, this can be done.

I will sign off by wishing everyone good health and stay safe.

Zoom Joint meeting - Melbourne Mitzvah
Lodge, Hatikvah & Raoul Wallenberg Unit

David Samuels



Coming up in July:

Thursday 2nd July - BBVic Speakers Forum: 7:30-8:30pm Speakers Forum for Members & Friends. Guest Speaker Prof Peter Singer AC - Via Zoom. *All information in attached flyer.*

Thursday 30th July - BBVic AGM 7:30pm

RAOUL WALLENBERG UNIT

Co-President: Simone Markus
Co-President: Jacqui Dinor-Corry
Secretary: Minnie Kahan
Preview: Josh Kahan



rwu@bbvic.net

What's on in June:

Tuesday 2 7:00m - Zoom Meeting Memorial Service for Dr Reuben Glass and Dr Lewis Lustig. **Regular Meeting.** Speaker: Joel Burnie, Member of AIJAC. Topic: "Analysing the new Israeli Government... Power sharing in the Covid19 era".
Members will be notified shortly of all Zoom details

What's happening in July:

Thursday 2 7.30pm-8:30pm. BBVic Speakers Forum for members and friends (Via Zoom): Guest Speaker: Prof. Peter Singer AC. Topic: "Doing the Most Good: How to be an Effective Altruist". For all information see attached flyer.

A hearty Mazal Tov to P/P Emeritus Prof. Ron Taft AM on his very special birthday.

Mazal Tov to: Ruth Figdor on the birth of her great grandson in Israel; Adrienne Perch on the birth of her great grandson.

Thinking of you: We wish a speedy recovery to all those who have been ill. If you are unwell or know of a fellow Unit Raoul Wallenberg member who is not well and would like a friendly phone call or a visit, please call Ruth Figdor or Leah Black

Our history and how we came about, by Judi Schiff:

Raoul Wallenberg Unit... how it all began.

During the 1970's and 80's, a movement to change from Lodges for men and Chapters for women to Units for men and women resulted in mixed Lodges and Units worldwide.

Australia's first was Unity which closed after six years.

Shortly thereafter, a group of eight members, four couples from various Victorian Lodges and Chapters, met over dinner in a Camberwell restaurant and evolved to form a new Unit. The four couples were:

Marion z.l. and Kurt Lippmann z.l., Lisl z.l. and Fred Loewenstein z.l. Lisabeth z.l. and Steven Minz z.l. and Judi and Peter Schiff.

Work began immediately to attract members to the new group. The idea was welcomed by many B'nai B'rith members and also drew in new members all of whom agreed that the new Unit should be named Raoul Wallenberg Unit. There were 50 Charter members.

The institution of the Unit, an Initiation of new members and the Installation of the first Executive by the then District President, Hans Mueller, took place on Sunday, 14 July, 1985 at B'nai B'rith House, Melbourne.

GESHER-RABIN UNIT

Co-President: Karin Zafir
Co-President: Leon Nissen
Secretary: Sue Moskowitz
Preview: Tom & Karin Zafir



gesher@bbvic.net

Updates:

The Presidents wish all our members and their families good health during the Covid-19 crisis. If you need any support (or just want to chat) please don't hesitate to get in touch. Also, Jack Aghion is coordinating any assistance members might require.

What's on in June:

Every Sunday 11:00am "Get-Together" – interesting and entertaining discussion via Zoom on a variety of topics. Contact Karin if you'd like to join in and need help with Zoom. You will need to have Zoom installed on your device but there is no need to set up an account.

Every Friday 2:00pm Keep fit during lockdown - Exercise classes - Exercise adapted for all levels of fitness brought to you by our very own Gesher-Rabin Unit's Co-President Leon Nissen. To join the class, for assistance, contact Karin Zafir.

Coming up in July:

Thursday 2 7.30pm-8:30pm. BBVic Speakers Forum for members and friends (Via Zoom): Guest Speaker: Prof. Peter Singer AC. Topic: "Doing the Most Good: How to be an Effective Altruist". For all information see attached flyer.

Sunday 5 7:00pm - AGM and Installation/Initiation of new members – Caulfield Park Pavilion. Guest speaker Susie Shulsinger, musical entertainment by Eddie Moses. (May be conducted over Zoom if Covid-19 restrictions are still in place.)

Coming up in August (Tentative):

Sunday 16 8am to 4pm - Bunnings Sausage Sizzle
 Enquiries: Evelyn



Leon Nissen's exercise class

UNIT AKIBA

Co-President: Helen Fisher
Co-President: Peter Schattner
Secretary: Annette Gladwin
Preview: Henry Gladwin



akiba@bbvic.net

Unit Akiba is currently holding all of its functions through Zoom's online video-conferencing platform. If any B'nai B'rith member (other than Akiba members) would like to join any of our Zoom meetings below, please email Henry Gladwin for the link to the meeting.

Still on in May:

Sunday 31 2:00pm – Activities planning meeting.

What's on in June:

Saturday 6 TED talks function postponed to a date to be advised.

Wednesday 17 7:30pm – Executive Committee meeting.

Sunday 21 7:30pm – **AGM including election** of office bearers for 2020-21, followed by a trivia quiz and games night at 8:00pm. Contact person: Helen Fisher

Sunday 28 Activities planning meeting brought forward to Sunday May 31st (see above).

Coming up in July:

Thursday 16 8:00 - 9:30pm – **The Jewish Non-Fiction Book Club.** The meeting will review the book "The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness" by Simon Wiesenthal. Presenter: Evelyn Chizik. Contact person and enquiries re participating for the first time: Peter Schattner

Sunday 19 7:15pm – **Installation of the 2020-2021 Executive Committee**, followed at 8:00pm by our guest speaker Michael Cohen, who will talk to us on the topic "South African Jews Down Under, a Retrospective and some Reflections". His talk will highlight the impact of South African Jewry on Australian Jewish Life. Contact person: Suzanne Goldin

A Hearty Mazal Tov to: Ruth Figdor on the birth in Israel of her great grandson Yisrael Meir to Chaya and Aharon Simon; to Denise Le Bransky on the birth of her grandson Joshua Michael to Elliot and Deborah.

We wish a Refuah Shleymah: to any Akiba members who may be unwell at present, and hope to see you joining us online again very soon.

HATIKVAH UNIT

President: Paula Messer

Acting Vice-President: Claude Fromm

Treasurer: Orly Dar

Preview: Judith Steinberg



hatikvah@bbvic.net

Hatikvah Unit members are keeping in contact (electronically) as much as possible with Claude Fromm who is doing a superb job as our Welfare Officer and making many phone calls to check on us.

On Wednesday, 20 May, we had a Zoom joint meeting of our Activities and Executive Committees to discuss "where to from here" and we will keep the VBB office up to date.

Hatikvah wishes all B'nai Brith members good health in these difficult times and although we cannot hold functions yet, please take the time to keep in touch with each other.

What's happening in July:

Thursday 2 7.30pm-8:30pm. BBVic Speakers Forum for members and friends (Via Zoom): Guest Speaker: Prof. Peter Singer AC. Topic: "Doing the Most Good: How to be an Effective Altruist". For all information see attached flyer.

Thinking of you: Our best wishes for a speedy recovery to Ben and Betty Alexander who have both been unwell recently.

Where is your next travel destination? - Las Kitchenas , Los Lounges, Santa Bedrooms, Porto Gardenas, Los Bed, Costa del Balconia, St Bathroom, La Rotonda de Sofa

You're not stuck at home, you're safe at home.

B'NAI B'RITH RAMBLERS

Chair: Vardit Sacks-Davis

Secretary: Tania Tobias

Preview Secretary & Mail Out: Judy Winikoff

Treasurer: Irena Blonder



enquiries@bbramblers.org.au

What's on in June:

Wednesday 17 Morning: **Midweek Walk** along the Yarra, led by Julie.

Sunday 21 Morning: Evelyn will lead a **SOMW** in Churchill and Lysterfield Parks.

Sunday 28 Morning: Eitan will lead a **SOHW** walk in Werribee Gorge.

Please note special guidelines for safe walking to be given by walk leader

MELBOURNE MITZVAH LODGE

President: Garry Fabian

Preview: Russell Stern



mitzvah@bbvic.net

A message from our President, Garry Fabian:

We are slowly starting to adapt and cope with the new reality of restricted activities due to the Corona Virus pandemic and trying to function as normally as possible – hopefully for a limited time – running a number of our usual activities on Zoom or other social media platforms.

We have held our monthly Executive meeting and our May Regular meeting with our standard ritual – with some adjustments – which seemed to run quite well. There is one area that presents challenges, as it appears that most potential guest speakers are reluctant to adopt the Zoom format, preferring to have a live audience in front of them.

With the relaxation of some restrictions now being introduced, we are considering holding some small face-to-face meetings for interest groups in order to maintain more personal contact and more importantly to consider future activities and projects.

It is important to maintain contact with each other and to ensure that members who need assistance continue to be looked after and most importantly maintain contact during this period when our normal way of life faces “a brave new world”.

Keep healthy and safe while we all look forward to when life returns to a semblance of normality in the hopefully not too distant future and we can meet each other in person.

As Garry has noted, notwithstanding the COVID-19 lockdown, Melbourne Mitzvah was able to hold its May 2020 meeting on Wednesday 13th. It was held virtually, per medium of ZOOM. Thanks to Giora, a picture of most of the participants appears in this Preview. There was a good attendance and participation in the proceedings by a number of our members. The meeting opened at 7.40pm with the lighting of Memorial Candles by John and Janet Kohn in memory of Janet's daughter, Bindi Machliss. This was followed by Devorah Zmood virtually lighting the candles of the Melbourne Mitzvah Menorah. In news of members, we were informed that Eva Rathner is still in Cabrini, and that Naomi Freedman is in hospital. Tony Weldon gave an update on the activities of Courage to Care prior to the onset of the lockdown, and Morris Tobias covered BB International. As the proposed speaker preferred not to speak through Zoom, our President, Garry Fabian spoke about his experiences of the end of the War in Europe.

What's on in June:

Wednesday 10

7.30pm - Please note this is your diary. It will of course be via Zoom. Guest speaker will be Tom Zafir. His topic: “Was the Kastner train a good or bad Idea?” For zooming information contact Alex Starr

Anyone who has knowledge of another members' birthday, special event, etc please contact:
Ruth Waisberg



B'NAI B'RITH COURAGE TO CARE: OUR 2019 ANNUAL REVIEW

We are delighted to announce that our 2019 Annual Review is now complete and being circulated both in hard copy and via email. We are proud of our past achievements and the significant progress we made in 2019. We could not have achieved any of this without the support of our wonderful volunteers and donors.

Even though we are all going through unprecedented disruption in early 2020, we are confident about the future of B'nai B'rith Courage to Care and excited about our 30/30 Vision through to 2022.



You can access our Annual Review at our website under Newsletters and Reports or use the link below.

<https://couragetocare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/C2C-Annual-Review-2019-web.pdf>

We do have hard copies available via our office on 9533 0955.

Happy reading!

Mike Zervos CEO

ceo@couragetocare.org.au

Letter to BBVic President: Comment from our historian Garry Fabian

Hi Benny,

Your article covers the bases well. There was a definite bias by the old established Anglo Australian Jewish community here against the German immigrants. In the late thirties, they stood out with their language, dress and strange briefcases, and they stood out while the established Jewish community kept a low profile and did not draw attention to themselves from the rest of the community. After 1945, the events of Palestine/Israel also was a very divisive issue. The Irgun bombing of the King David Hotel and the killing of British soldiers were decried by the Anglo Jewish community and was decried as an attack on the "Mother Country". Prominent figures including Sir Isaac Isaacs and Rabbi Jacob Danglow were vocal opponents to the establishment of a Jewish state. I think that Ron Taft's speech had some shades of this.

In fact, in the early years of Melbourne Lodge there was only lukewarm support for Israel. I suspect that this was in part driven with the idea not to alienate the Anglo Jewish membership and not to cause division in BB hope. This provides some background of the climate at that time while Isaac Isaacs never changed his stand and Rabbi Danglow became very supportive of Israel after the State became a reality in 1948.



Showcase: fostering Jewish musical talent

Dear friends,

Showcase committee has continued meeting. We have established a technocrats sub committee and we are currently negotiating with an outside company to provide a platform for Online Showcase 2020. It is an interesting time and we are on a steep learning curve.

The information booklet has been revised and you can catch up with the changes on the Showcase webpage. 2020 adjudicators have been contacted for their involvement. Our young people are interested and we have had 3 applications to date, but more are needed. Please promote Showcase among any young talented Jewish musicians you know.

We are open for business and all information is available and kept up date at our webpage: bnaibrith.org.au/our-projects/showcase

Please send enquiries via our email address: showcase@bbvic.org

Judy Firestone, Chair

B'nai B'rith Victoria Inc.
Showcase: fostering Jewish Musical Talent
 Woodwind, Guitar and Strings
 Piano, Vocals, Brass,
 Be part of Online Showcase 2020,
 our first online event.

ATTENTION Schools and Music Teachers: Encourage your students

REGISTRATIONS OPEN

COMPETITION FOR JEWISH MUSICIANS
AGED 8 - 25

Information booklet and entry forms available to download from:
www.bnaibrith.org.au/our-projects/showcase
 Email: showcase@bbvic.org
 Ph: 9523 0888

B'nai B'rith Victoria **tbi** **Milestones Books**

Registration closes on: Friday 26th June

Help us help others!

Please collect any unwanted stamps, spectacles (for Israel), hearing aids and hotel give-aways as well as batteries, compact fluorescent light globes and mobile phones.





B'NAI B'RITH AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND ISRAEL COMMISSION



Dear Friends,

We have all been through a very challenging and testing time and I hope that you are well. We are not over it yet, but in Australia we are fortunate to be able to say that we can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Unfortunately, in other parts of the world the people can't share our optimism and in Israel the Covid-19 weighs severely on a population which has been fighting for its survival for the last 72 years.

In Be'er Sheva one can find a lot of elderly World War 2 survivors. Most of them are under the poverty belt and live in isolation. They rely on charity for their existence. The Be'er Sova Soup Kitchen provides them daily with hot meals and food parcels to bring home. Their dedicated volunteers give them the care and attention they need.

Unfortunately, due to the Coronavirus crisis, the work of the centre has been either halted or made difficult.

Please read the following mail I have received from Elizabeth Homans, Manager of Be'er Sova. It would be wonderful if you could support her efforts in this very challenging time.

Thank you so much. Keep well. Keep safe

Kind regards,

Danielle Schilling - Chair

Please forward all donations to the Israel Commission account :

BSB 012 396

Account no 5011 15797

or by cheque

Israel Commission addressed to Margaret Fisher C/ B'nai B'rith Victoria 306 Hawthron Road, Caulfield 3162

Dear Danielle,

Be'er-Sova is in need of additional funds, with the dangers of the virus. The following will explain the plight of Be'er-Sova during these extremely difficult days. We provided meals and packages for Passover, and we returned to giving meals at door and/or delivered to their homes.

We are facing the challenges of coronavirus, with the distribution of 7 meal trays at the door of the Community Restaurant, rather than having diners sitting inside. Since we are also concerned about those who are afraid or unable to go out from their homes, a plan is being developed to deliver to their homes.

This is a very difficult time for everyone but particularly our vulnerable elderly, including Holocaust survivors. This crisis of providing lunches from the Community Restaurant, plus the distribution of Family kosher for Passover packages stretched our financial abilities to be able to provide the meals and packages as we have always done in the past.

On behalf of the board of directors, the staff and our clients, we thank you for your support of our Nutritional Security Program, now even more important than ever. Your contributions will be most welcomed, and may be directed through PEF Israel Endowment Fund Inc or through Israel Gives or directly to Be'er-Sova POB 6043, BeerSheva 8416001, Israel. You may also contact me directly for direct bank transfer information.

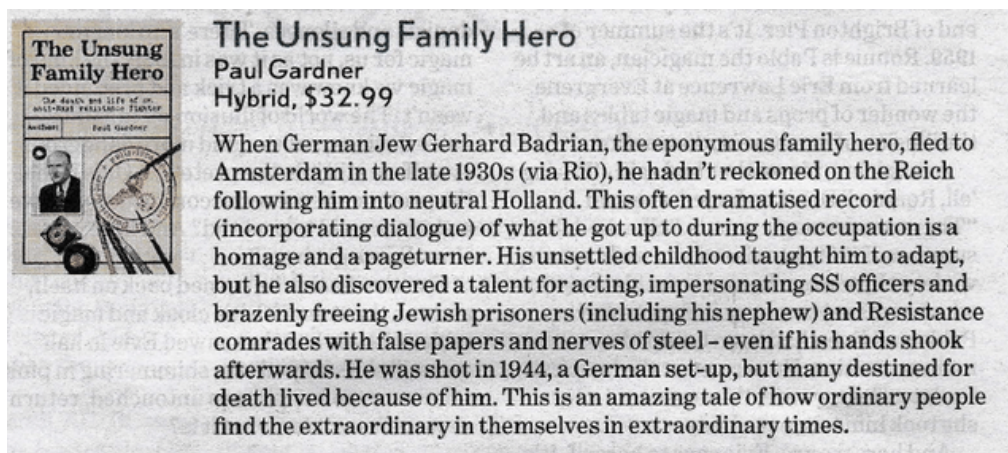
Our valued volunteers help those in need every day, and now during the crisis, their presence is priceless. We turn to you for additional support at this time.

Warmest regards,

Elizabeth

Brief review of Paul Gardner's book in The Age, Spectrum, non-fiction column, Saturday 16 May

At the Combined Zoom meeting of Melbourne Mitzvah, Raoul Wallenberg and Gesher-Rabin Units, Melbourne Mitzvah member Dr Paul Gardner AM was interviewed by Danny Gocs of the Australian Jewish News (AJN), the subject being his book "The Unsung Family Hero", telling the story of his relative resisting the Nazis in the Netherlands in World War II. The book received some wonderful reviews. Not only was there an extensive write up in the AJN earlier this month but on Saturday 16 May The Age newspaper reviewed the book in their Spectrum - non-fiction column. If anyone would like to obtain a copy, contact Paul directly for purchasing and postage details.



Art in the age of COVID-19

This year, the **BBVic Jewish Youth Art Competition** is celebrating its 25th anniversary. This is quite an achievement for one of BBVic's longest-running projects. In many respects, this year's competition will be very similar to previous years:

- All Jewish students aged 11 to 18 (as at 1st May 2020) are eligible to enter. Categories include painting / drawing, sculpture, digital, mixed media and photography. The Competition is being generously supported by BBVic and numerous other sponsors. Members of the judging panel are long-standing professionals in the local arts scene. Very substantial prizes are being awarded across all categories and age groups. The \$500 Thalia Hakin Memorial Award continues to be sponsored by Gandel Philanthropy. The Raymond and Leah Black Prize, initiated by BBVic last year, will continue in 2020. Due to the global pandemic, there are several substantial changes from previous years: Entrants will be required to register and submit photos of their artworks online. Photographs of all the entries will be exhibited in a virtual gallery. We are planning for the opening ceremony to be an online event.

The closing date for registering to enter the Competition is 4th June 2020. The deadline for submitting photographs of artworks is 15th July 2020. BBVic members should encourage their young relatives and friends to register. The BBVic website contains full, detailed information about this year's competition: <https://www.bnaibrith.org.au/our-projects/artcomp>

Mark Rubinstein, Chair – Organising Committee





Cut me out and put the calendar on your fridge

Coming up in June:

Tuesday 2nd - RWU Memorial Service and Regular meeting

Friday 5th - GRU Zoom Exercise

Candle Lighting @4:50pm

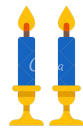


Sunday 7th - GRU - "Get-together"

Wednesday 10th - MML guest speaker

Friday 12th - GRU Zoom Exercise

Candle Lighting @4:49pm



Sunday 14th - GRU - "Get-together"

Wednesday 17th - Exec Meeting Akiba

Ramblers Midweek Walk

Friday 19th - GRU Zoom Exercise

Candle Lighting @4:50pm



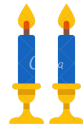
Sunday 21st - GRU - "Get-together"

Ramblers Morning SOMW walk

Akiba AGM

Friday 26th - GRU Zoom Exercise

Candle Lighting @4:52pm



Sunday 28th - GRU - "Get-together"

Ramblers morning SOHW walk

Coming up in July:

Thursday 2nd - BBVic Speakers Forum 7:30-8:30pm (Via Zoom)

Sunday 5th - GRU Installation

Sunday 19th - Akiba Installation

Thursday 30th July - BBVic AGM 7:30pm

Compiled and edited by Frances Stiglec & Teegan Slomoi on behalf of B'nai B'rith Victoria Inc.

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Members and friends of B'nai B'rith Victoria acknowledge the Boonerwung group of the Kulin Nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet.