

**The History of
B'nai B'rith Victoria
1945 – 2025**

Celebrating
80
years

**ANNIVERSARY
EDITION**



**B'nai
B'rith**

The History of B'nai B'rith Victoria 1945 – 2025

**Peter Schattner,
President**

May 2025

Acknowledgement

Garry Fabian

I thank Garry Fabian who wrote the previous B'nai B'rith history titled The History of B'nai B'rith in Australia & New Zealand, 1944 – 2004. That book provided the foundation for this one and I deeply appreciate his contributions.

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Introduction

What is this book about?

This book relates the history of B'nai B'rith Victoria starting from the beginnings of B'nai B'rith itself in New York in 1843 and its establishment in Australia in 1944. It is being published as part of our celebration of 80 years of existence in the state of Victoria. The history should help you to understand what B'nai B'rith has achieved over the years and how it has continued to evolve.

The first chapter explains the foundations of B'nai B'rith which began in the United States of America (USA) and was initially a vehicle for the support of new German Jewish immigrants. Chapter two then covers the period of the establishment of B'nai B'rith in Australia in response to World War 2. Then follow several chapters dealing specifically with B'nai B'rith Victoria, from the 1940s to 2024, including where we stand today.

Why was this book written?

However, the story does not end there. An 80th anniversary celebration would not be complete without some discussion of 'where to from here'. The Appendix therefore includes a summary of the recent strategic plan in which we try to anticipate how B'nai B'rith might celebrate ninety and possibly one hundred years. A glossary is also included to explain some of the key terms used in describing and understanding B'nai B'rith.

We hope that you find this book interesting. It tells you where B'nai B'rith has come from and suggests where it might be headed. It is also a record of our first 80 years and is therefore an important historical document in itself. We want it to be available to all members of B'nai B'rith and to anyone else in the community who wants to know more about this important community service organisation.

How was this book written?

This book was based on a publication written in 2004 by Garry Fabian. This was titled The History of B'nai B'rith in Australia & New Zealand, 1944 – 2004. The parts relevant to Victoria were extracted from the original and it was also necessary to update sections relevant to the last 20 years, from 2004 to 2024. The text from the original has been modified in many places as the style of this book is different. However, Garry deserves recognition as a substantial contributor to the content of the current publication which is extensively based on his original work.

The background material on B'nai B'rith International, including its founding in New York, and B'nai B'rith Australia & New Zealand (BBANZ), were taken from their websites. Many of the photos were copied from the original Fabian book and to these were added images from a video which was produced on the 75th anniversary of B'nai B'rith Victoria. More up to date photos have been included from various sources. The B'nai B'rith office staff also assisted in updating some of the material, especially the lists found in the Appendix.



Institution of Melbourne Lodge No.
1547 on 20 May 1945

What is B'nai B'rith?

The world's oldest and largest Jewish service organisation

B'nai B'rith is the world's oldest and largest Jewish service organisation. It is an international social and community service organisation which represents a wide range of religious beliefs within the Jewish community. Its basic tenets, created when B'nai B'rith was first established in the USA in 1843, are 'Benevolence, Harmony and Fraternal Love'.

In the USA, where B'nai B'rith International is located, there are a number of B'nai B'rith agencies such as Youth, Jewish Renewal, Aged Housing, Adult Education and Hillel Foundations. Some of these have multi-million dollar budgets, employ paid staff and also rely on a large number of volunteers.

B'nai B'rith as an international organisation

B'nai B'rith Australia & New Zealand, which was created in the early 1960s, now comprises New South Wales (i.e. Sydney), Victoria (i.e. Melbourne) and New Zealand (i.e. Auckland). It is now known as District 21. Districts sit below B'nai B'rith International which is located in Washington, D.C. There are districts in Israel, Europe, Latin America, the USA and Canada.

B'nai B'rith in Australia and New Zealand

Lodges were first established in Sydney and Melbourne in 1944. Then, in the early 1960s, Lodges and Chapters were established in Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth and later in Canberra as well as Auckland and Wellington in New Zealand. However, the organisations outside NSW and Victoria have now ceased functioning, although Auckland still has a small but viable Unit.



Institution of Melbourne Lodge No.
1547 on 20 May 1945



BBY Melbourne Committee 1959
Back Row L to R: Helen Feld, Paul Gardner,
Carmel Engelman, Laurie Bartak, Eve Novy, Ron Sharp
Front Row L to R: Harry Held, Peter Pulver, Sam
Moshinsky, Sylvia Seymour, Garry Fabian

The birth of B'nai B'rith in the United States of America

Creating an organisation that could unify all Jews

In 1843, German Jewish immigrants to the USA were faced with settling into a country with a different language, customs and culture. To add to their difficulties, they found themselves in a Jewish community that was fairly fragmented and often beset by bitter acrimony between different groups. There were few if any opportunities for these factions to meet or discuss common problems or concerns.

It was against this background that twelve Jewish American men of German background met and formed B'nai B'rith in 1843. Their vision was to create an organisation that could unify all Jews, irrespective of their national, social or religious origins.

The first meeting of B'nai B'rith took place on October 13, 1843, at Sinsheimer's Café on New York City's Lower East Side. Founded by Henry Jones and 11 other German Jewish immigrants, the fraternal society was dedicated to assisting new Jewish immigrants in adapting to their new community. All meetings were conducted in German. Isaac Rosenbourg, one of B'nai B'rith's founders, called out 'the deplorable condition of Jews in this, our newly adopted country'.

Thus, B'nai B'rith ('children of the covenant', or more correctly, 'sons of the covenant') was born.

It is from this basis of humanitarian aid and service that a system of fraternal Lodges and Chapters grew in the United States and, eventually, around the world.

Many of the earliest achievements of B'nai B'rith represented firsts within the Jewish community. This is a brief list of some notable early highlights:

- In 1851, Covenant Hall was erected in New York as the first Jewish community centre in the United States.
- One year later, B'nai B'rith established the Maimonides Library in New York, the first Jewish public library in the United States.
- Immediately following the Civil War, B'nai B'rith founded the 200-bed Cleveland Jewish Orphan Home, described as the most modern orphanage of its time.
- In 1868, when a devastating flood crippled Baltimore, Maryland, B'nai B'rith responded with a disaster relief campaign. This commitment to emergency aid preceded the founding of the American Red Cross by 13 years and was the first of many domestic and international relief programs that continue to this day.
- That same year, B'nai B'rith sponsored its first overseas philanthropic project, raising funds to aid the victims of a cholera epidemic in pre-state Israel.

Soon, B'nai B'rith Lodges were formed across America. By 1870, B'nai B'rith was represented in most American centres. In 1880, it crossed the Atlantic, with the first Lodge to operate in Germany being established in Berlin. The idea soon spread to other German cities and across Europe, where the order flourished and attracted Jews from all religious walks of life. The only country where B'nai B'rith did not flourish was Russia.

The beginnings of B'nai B'rith in Australia

Escaping to Australia in the 1940s

While the majority of B'nai B'rith members across Europe perished in the Holocaust, a relatively small number managed to find safe havens in many corners of the world, including Australia. These refugees and other Jewish immigrants had to struggle with a new language, earn a modest living, and re-establish themselves in their new country of adoption. They also wished to gain support from the familiar institutions and organisations that had played an important role in their lives in Europe.



Institution of Menorah Lodge No.
2259 in March 1960



BBY convention mid 1960s

Establishing B'nai B'rith in Sydney

The first formal move to establishing B'nai B'rith in Australia can be traced to Ernest Goldschmidt who, in 1941, placed an advertisement in the Sydney Jewish News calling on all former members of European Lodges to contact him with a view to setting up an Australian B'nai B'rith. The response to the advertisement was encouraging. Brother Goldschmidt, who had served as the President of the B'nai B'rith Lodge in Vienna in 1935, and Phillip Kantor, who became the first President of the Sydney Lodge, arranged a series of meetings with former B'nai B'rith members, including their wives, in private homes.

However, immigrants from Germany and Austria were deemed 'enemy aliens' during the second world war, so that security regulations severely restricted the possibility of holding many meetings. It was approximately another three years, in 1944, when regular meetings of interested people resumed in the then Jewish cultural centre of Sydney, the 'Tarbut', in George Street.

Soon, a group of forty men and women enjoyed a series of lectures and social gatherings which they had been used to in Europe. They were determined to create a more formal structure. A small committee under the guidance of Brother Goldschmidt was formed. They approached B'nai B'rith International (BBI) in Washington D.C. for a 'charter'.

The first reply from BBI was disappointing. It was a refusal, with the reply stating that, 'It was the policy of B'nai B'rith not to issue charters for new Lodges unless the majority of the petitioners were citizens or longstanding residents of the country where the Lodge was to be established'. However, this negative response was soon overturned and the first Lodge in Australia, the Sydney Lodge, was established in 1944.

B'nai B'rith Victoria

Beginnings

The same spirit that moved Ernest Goldschmidt in Sydney also existed in Melbourne where many former members of B'nai B'rith had settled. Sometime during 1944, Frank Togget from Vienna and Franz Lippmann from Hamburg discussed their prior commitment and involvement with B'nai B'rith, which they missed. They therefore placed advertisements in the Melbourne Jewish News and the Australian Jewish Herald which generated a response from some forty former members of B'nai B'rith. This group arranged to meet in the upstairs hall of Pinchover's Coffee Lounge in Little Bourke Street which was owned by one of the B'nai B'rith members who had replied to the advertisement.

Nearly all the participants at this meeting came from Germany or Austria. Suddenly an elderly man, who obviously came from a different background, arrived at the door of the meeting room. Franz Lippmann stood at the door to check the bona fides of each arrival by asking each one to fill in a form stating to which Lodge they had previously belonged.

When this other man arrived, Brother Lippmann was not sure he had come to the right meeting, so he asked the visitor if he could identify himself and state the watchword of B'nai B'rith. The man replied, 'Yes, I know the watchword, but how do I know that this is the right B'nai B'rith? Do you know the watchword?'. There seemed to be a momentary impasse which was eventually resolved when both agreed to write the secret word on a slip of paper and exchange it. This satisfied both men of each other's bona fides. The stranger in question was Isaac Landy who had been a member of B'nai B'rith in Safed, Israel, and later in Egypt. In the end, he remained a member of B'nai B'rith for a total of well over seventy years.

The Melbourne Lodge was formally established in 1945, not long after the start of the Sydney Lodge. The Melbourne Lodge decided that in order to create a strong and viable Lodge, it would welcome new members, that is, not only previous members of B'nai B'rith. Indeed, some were already third and fourth generation Australians. This prevented the Melbourne Lodge from becoming a German/Austrian 'Landsmanshaft' which was a society whose members came from the same town or village.



B'nai B'rith Melbourne Parents Home

1940s

The Melbourne Lodge was remarkable for its formality, with men dressed in dinner suits for meetings. There was also a separation by sex: Lodges for men and Chapters for women; however, these eventually united, leading to the formation of Units.

Nomination procedures for new members were also very strict in the beginning. Initially, the European concept of the 'black ball' was used; when a new name was proposed for membership, existing members cast a vote by placing a white or black ball in a box. If one black ball was in the box, it meant automatic rejection of the proposed person. However, this process was soon abandoned, and instead a prospective new member had to be nominated and seconded, and objections could be lodged. The proposed member was not supposed to know that they had been nominated and, only after acceptance, would they be notified.

The 1940s also saw the start of a B'nai B'rith youth movement which included national annual conventions. This informal group became the B'nai B'rith Young Adults (BBYA) by the 1950s.



Installation of District 21, 23 August 1962
L to R: Betty Pryer, International BB President
Label Katz, District President Hilary Pryer

1950s

March 1950 saw a national body emerging, with the first interstate conference of the Melbourne and Sydney B'nai B'rith branches held at the Darley Street Lodge Home in Sydney. A second interstate conference was held twelve months later in March 1951 in Melbourne.

In September 1954, Sydney founded the Aleph Zadik Aleph (AZA) division of B'nai B'rith to cater for younger members. This was closely followed by the establishment of B'nai B'rith Young Men's and Young Women's Chapters in December 1954. In December 1955, the first national B'nai B'rith Youth Convention took place.

Many lifelong friends, and also many marriages, resulted from this youth movement. In 2003, some 250 past members of BBYA and AZA gathered for a reunion. In May 1956, the formal institution of the Melbourne Women's Chapter took place with Dr Gertha Kroto becoming its first President; this Chapter had operated as an auxiliary since 1945.

In 1957, the second Lodge in Melbourne, the Lodge of Harmony, was installed. It drew its membership more from those with a Polish background, unlike Melbourne Lodge which remained predominantly German/Austrian and Anglo/Australian.

Another important event in 1957 was the purchase of a Lodge Home at 99 Hotham Street, East St Kilda, a Victorian house dating back to the 1870s. The official opening of the B'nai B'rith Home took place on the 22nd of June 1958.

Approval was granted from the Supreme Lodge in Washington D.C. for the establishment of the Australasian B'nai B'rith Council as the roof organisation. This foreshadowed the eventual creation of a formal District (21), and also its expansion across to New Zealand. The first conference of the new Australasian B'nai B'rith Council (ABBC) took place in Sydney in March 1958.

The 1950s also saw the start of a number of projects, including:

- The Mother's Help Scheme which provided carers for invalids, young mothers and house-bound people. The scheme ran successfully for some 25 years.
- Scholarships for Jewish high school students with good scholastic records, whose families lacked financial resources. A similar program remains in operation today as Making a Difference (MAD).
- The Senior Circle which was established in November 1958. This provided regular functions for elderly Jewish citizens with afternoon teas and entertainment. Again, a similar program remains in existence today with Fellowship. Arguments have become something of a tradition in B'nai B'rith, and there were those who questioned whether 'entertainment' was really core business for this organisation or whether it should stick to a more serious community service role.

1960s

The 1960s ushered in a new era of expansion based on the greater spread of the work of B'nai B'rith and the growing Jewish community. Many post-war migrants had found their feet and were starting to participate in community organisations. A third Lodge was established in Melbourne in March 1960: the Menorah Lodge.

The same year saw the AZA Chapter for boys and the B'nai B'rith Girls Chapter chartered separately as these were the international rules at the time. However, in practice, they operated as an integrated group.

Harmony Women's Chapter was formally established in September 1960, although it had been operating as an auxiliary for two years prior.

July 1961 saw the introduction of the first Hillel Foundation in Australia, under the auspices of B'nai B'rith, at Melbourne and Monash Universities. Its first director was Rabbi Boris Rackovsky. The Hillel Foundations had been established in the USA for many decades and catered for Jewish students on university campuses. The Australian model differed from the American one in not being a residential campus facility. Its role was to provide counselling, a Jewish chaplaincy and to work with the Jewish student bodies.

The first national AZA convention was held in South Australia in September 1961. That year, Melbourne Lodge arranged an art competition which drew great interest in, and considerable crowds from, the wider Jewish community. A few years later, in 1966, the Victorian B'nai B'rith Council sponsored a public concert at the Melbourne Town Hall which was not financially successful. Cultural events continued to be debated within B'nai Brith; they raised the profile of the organisation but did not necessarily lead to the enrolment of new members.

On the 26th of April 1964, the first District 21 Convention took place in Melbourne, with Hans Spitz installed as the District President.

The Melbourne B'nai B'rith Parents Home in Inkerman Road, Caulfield, was opened on the 17th of December 1967. It offered self-contained accommodation for older members.



Triennial District Conference held in Melbourne, 23 April 1964
L to R: Hilary Pryer, Hans Spitz, Kurt Lippmann, H. Weinstock, Sid Muller

1970s

At the start of the 1970s, Henry Shaw took up his appointment as the Melbourne Hillel Director. Henry had been a very successful Hillel director in the United Kingdom for a number of years and brought experience and a warm personality to the job.

In May 1970, the third Triennial District Conference was held in Melbourne with Kurt Lippmann being installed as the District President. Later in the same year, Shalom Lodge was established in Melbourne, catering for a younger membership than existed at Melbourne Lodge.

Controversially, Unity Unit was established in September 1973, the first 'mixed' entity in Melbourne. Some conservatives were aghast at this as they thought that 130 years of tradition were being thrown out of the window and this was likely to lead to the end of B'nai B'rith. However, as time has shown, this view was wrong. Mixed gender Units are now taken for granted; Lodges and Chapters have disappeared.

The B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Committee was set up in this decade and this was soon elevated to the status of a Commission. It eventually became completely independent of B'nai B'rith. Further details can be found in the glossary.



Institution of Shalom Lodge No. 2827 on 26 September 1970



B'nai B'rith Lodge Home in Melbourne

The Menorah Awards were established in 1978 to honour those who had given exemplary service in various fields, working selflessly and without seeking the limelight.

The third Triennial District Conference was held in April 1979. The most acrimonious debate was on whether there should be one roof body for both men and women, or the continuation of separate organisations.

Brother Louis Waller, who headed the committee which had drafted a new joint constitution, spoke eloquently in favour of an amalgamated entity. Again, some thought that the break with B'nai B'rith's tradition would be the beginning of the end, but the majority of participants voted for change.

While it might seem hard to understand how people could support separate bodies, the arguments in favour of maintaining the status quo were:

- B'nai B'rith had always maintained separate men's and women's organisations (Lodges, Chapters and roof bodies)
- Men would dominate the political leadership, thus unfairly disadvantaging women
- Women's membership fees would rise excessively to match those of their male counterparts.

1980s

Units Akiba and Tamid were established in 1981. The B'nai B'rith Lodge Home in Melbourne was extended and refurbished to meet the growing needs of the members, and the new home was officially unveiled in June 1984.

Units continued to be established with Raoul Wallenberg Unit in July 1985 and Unit Mitzvah in August of the same year. As happened previously, some of the existing Units thought they would lose members to the new ones, and arguments were thrown back and forth.

A Holocaust exhibition was held in Sydney and then subsequently in Melbourne. This was one of the catalysts for establishing the Courage to Care program some years later. The B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Human Rights Orations also commenced during this decade; this attracted some very prominent speakers including Prime Ministers Malcolm Fraser and Bob Hawke.

The B'nai B'rith Foundation was created to provide a vehicle for tax-deductible donations.



BBI President visits Australia 1980s.
L to R: Ruth Figdor, Karen Nagley (Lutchner),
Seymor Reich, Sue Newman



Getting out beyond the formal setting – Unit Mitzvah 'Desert Discovery Tour',
Ayers Rock, June 1988



B'nai B'rith Youth Commissioners 1980s
- Joe Krycer, Sue Newman, Rifka Kaufman



Jack Leder enthusing the audience to 'dig deep'
at a gala fundraising function, April 1989

1990s

Unit Re'ut was established in September 1990 and Hatikvah Unit in October 1992. The latter has catered for members living in the eastern suburbs, such as Doncaster. Yitzhak Rabin Unit was set up in September 1997, catering initially for singles.

A major initiative was the creation of Courage to Care which is a travelling exhibition that not only pays honour to Righteous Gentiles who risked their lives during the Holocaust to save Jews, but also provides an educational program to schools. It emphasises being an upstander when confronted by examples of prejudice, rather than opting out as a bystander. Exhibitions have been staged in many country centres.

Under the auspices of Raoul Wallenberg Unit, the Yad Vashem Scholarships were established. These provide the opportunity for non-Jewish teachers to attend the Yad Vashem Holocaust courses in Israel; this program is now also supported by the Gandel Foundation.

A number of other projects were established during the 1990s. The B'nai B'rith Toastmasters group was set up during the 1990s to provide valuable experience in public speaking to members; unfortunately, as with many other B'nai B'rith initiatives, this eventually 'ran out of steam' and folded. The B'nai B'rith Jewish Youth Music Eisteddfod was another example of a project which was very successful in its day, but did not survive. Josie's Opportunity Shop, which distributed funds to many Jewish and non-Jewish charities, eventually closed, in part because of its ageing volunteers. On the other hand, the B'nai B'rith Jewish Youth Art Competition, which was founded in 1995, continues to achieve success.



Kurt Lippman presenting award to Henry Kingsley



L to R: Les Heimann, Senator Barney Cooney and Fairley Nassau at the launch of 'Memonet', a community project which provided a consulting service for new arrivals from the former Soviet Union, May 1991

COURAGE TO CARE

Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust

An exhibition at the Jewish Museum of Australia



The Jewish
Museum of
Australia



Raoul Wallenberg
Unit, B'nai B'rith



The Jewish
Holocaust Museum
& Research Centre

1 JULY – 24 SEPTEMBER 1992

This exhibition is a small tribute to the few, but significant people who risked their lives during the Holocaust to help save Jews. These courageous individuals provided food, clothing and hiding places for hours, days, months or years to one or to many Jews and through their actions saved lives and through their moral stance ensured that some human decency remained in these dark and most brutal times.

This exhibition is planned to coincide with the 80th birthday of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swede who rescued nearly 100,000 Hungarian Jews by providing them with false Swedish passports. While the exhibition will look at Wallenberg's outstanding heroism, it will also highlight the deeds of Polish, German, French, Dutch and Belgian gentiles, ordinary citizens, the friend, the neighbour, the employer or employee, or the perfect stranger. We will focus, in particular, on those who later came to live in Australia and on the other hand, those Jews who were rescued and later immigrated here.

We will hear them speak on their experiences and they will share with us their memories and mementoes of this dark time in human history.

We examine the dangers involved in aiding Jews, we ask them what motivated them to risk their lives and those of their families – often again and again. These ordinary citizens who became heroes.

"All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light from a solitary candle."

The Jewish Museum of Australia
Cnr. Toorak Road & Arnold Street, South Yarra
Tel: 866 1922

GENEROUSLY ASSISTED BY THE VICTORIAN MINISTRY FOR THE ARTS.



MUSEUM HOURS
Wed. & Thurs. 11-4
Sunday 2-5

2000
-
2023

The 21st century saw the closure or, more commonly, the amalgamation of existing Units. The mean age of the membership continued to rise, and the number of members reduced from a peak of 1,000 to approximately 400 today. The youth and young adult groups, BBYA and AZA, folded.

The B'nai B'rith Lodge Home was becoming increasingly expensive to maintain, and, with the decline in membership, the majority of existing members voted for its sale. This took place in 2011. The decision was controversial, and many have continued to lament that B'nai B'rith does not have a home where members can simply drop in without having an appointment.

To try to professionalise its operations and image so that it could compete for attention in a community where many other organisations exist, B'nai B'rith Victoria appointed its first Chief Executive Officer in 2021.



The 50th Anniversary BBY/AZA reunion committee,
November 2003

2025

Where is B'nai B'rith Victoria today? Its four remaining Units are the cornerstone of its activities, with the vast majority of members belonging to one of the following:

- Melbourne Lodge No. 1547
- Gesher-Rabin Unit
- Unit Akiba, and
- Hatikvah Unit.

Melbourne Lodge, which was re-created in 2023 by the amalgamation of Melbourne Mitzvah Lodge and Raoul Wallenberg Unit, is the largest Unit but also has the oldest age profile of members. Hatikvah Unit caters for members in the north-eastern suburbs (Kew, Balwyn, North Balwyn, and Doncaster). The two other Units have members aged in their 60s and 70s. All the Units are very active and have many activities covering a wide range of interests.

It is not easy to precisely delineate which projects belong to B'nai B'rith Victoria and which belong to a particular Unit or affiliated organisation. There is a considerable degree of mutual support and overlap. However, the following groups of activities explain, very briefly, what they do and, where necessary, which entity has the primary responsibility for the project or program.

1) Building social cohesion and strengthening Jewish life

- A multitude of Unit activities and events – these help to bring people together; this social role is of major importance for B'nai B'rith.

2) Supporting those in need

- Fellowship Concerts – a series of entertaining concerts and afternoon teas for the elderly. This is led principally by Melbourne Lodge.
- Mitzvah Day – partnering with other organisations to create an annual day of social action through a range of volunteer projects for those in need
- Calico Dolls – an ongoing project of Hatikvah Unit to support sick children who attend the Royal Children's Hospital
- Making a Difference (MAD) – Melbourne Lodge provides bursaries to disadvantaged Jewish pupils in Years 11 and 12
- The B'nai B'rith Parents' Home – 18 flats separately managed as affordable independent living accommodation for older Jewish people. Legally, this is a separate entity to B'nai B'rith.



Mitzvah Day - Deirdre Wainrit, Ellen Hundley, Irene Kirschner, Leon Nissen and David Southwick

2025 contd.

3) *Celebrating our achievers*

- The Jewish Youth Art Competition – a consistently successful annual exhibition at the Glen Eira Town Hall gallery
- The Bernard Lustig Scholarship – providing grants to young, emerging leaders in our community
- Menorah Awards – publicly recognising our ‘quiet achievers’.

4) *Supporting human rights and fostering understanding*

- The annual Human Rights Oration – well-known speakers are invited to present topics which promote human rights
- Armchair Society – presenting a wide range of speakers on current affair topics
- B’nai B’rith Community History Project – collating documents which will help provide a history of Melbourne’s Jewish community.

5) *Supporting Israel*

- Partnering with the BBANZ Israel Commission – to support selected charities in Israel
- Partnering with the BBANZ Click and Connect program – to teach the English language to needy pupils in Israeli schools via videoconferencing. Other affiliated projects and programs include:
 - B’nai B’rith Ramblers – a fairly autonomous walking group.
 - Raoul Wallenberg Yad Vashem Teacher Study Grants – run by Melbourne Lodge in conjunction with the Gandel Foundation.
 - Courage to Care – an autonomous organisation which runs educational programs in schools, and which emphasises the dangers of racism, anti-Semitism, discrimination and bystander behaviour.
 - The Jewish Non-Fiction Book Club – a ‘club’ which includes people who are not members of B’nai B’rith.



Lesley Wise and Neil Mitchell at Armchair Society



Armchair Society - Bridget McKenzie, Ellana Aarons, and Ron James

The future of B'nai B'rith Victoria

With an ageing membership and a failure (so far) to attract younger people who can take up leadership positions, the future for B'nai B'rith in Victoria remains uncertain. Some programs attract a large number of participants but many of them do not wish to become members of the organisation. They are simply happy to attend whatever interests them, such as the Armchair Society presentations by well-known speakers, but being involved in a traditional form of membership is strongly resisted by many. Young people, that is, those from the age of 20+, are even less inclined to become traditional Unit members, although many are active with other Jewish community organisations and events.

It may well be that a cohort of pre-retirement people will join in the future. These are people who are in their late fifties or sixties who have worked out their careers and family lives and are now able to 'give back' to the community. It would not take a large number of them to be involved with B'nai B'rith to help ensure its future, as the organisation requires leadership rather than a large membership group that is happy to attend events but does not wish to be involved in running them.

It would seem self-evident that a broad, social networking and community service organisation should have a role to play in the future Jewish community of Melbourne. After all, it is an organisation dedicated to strengthening Jewish life. We are vigorously pursuing options for a successful future, even if that will look somewhat different to B'nai B'rith's past and present.



Human Rights Oration 2025 with Alex Ryvchin



Bernard J. Lustig Memorial Scholarship Alumni
Isabel Gelb, Tali Borowick, Yaffa Bart



Art Competition





Glossary

Anti-Defamation Commission (ADC)

The Anti-Defamation Commission (ADC) is an Australian civil rights organisation whose mission is to fight anti-Semitism, combat all forms of racism and hatred, to counter the defamation of the Jewish people and Israel, and to promote and cultivate respect and understanding between people of all religions and backgrounds. The ADC is a not-for-profit Non-Government Organisation (NGO) and is registered as a Harm Prevention Charity. Funding comes from community donations and grants.

The ADC began as B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation committees in the 1970s in Melbourne and Sydney, and these led to the establishment of the Anti-Defamation Commission in 1979 following the triennial District conference. The committees continued to work at state levels for many years. In 2018, Dr Dvir Abramovich, as head of the ADC, managed to obtain considerable funding from the Gandel Foundation, and this appeared to lead to the organisation splitting from B'nai B'rith in that year. The two organisations now operate separately.

AZA

AZA stands for the Hebrew letters Aleph Zadik Aleph which represent Ahava, fraternal love, Tzedakah, benevolence, and Ahdoot, harmony. In Victoria, it became the teenage arm of B'nai B'rith in 1957, i.e. a few years after BBY was established (see BBYA below). It catered for teenagers approximately between the ages of 14 to 18. Although initially established by the children of existing adult members, others also joined and soon the large number made it necessary to have three groups of AZA. Unfortunately, as with BBYA, it finally 'ran out of steam' and stopped functioning in the 1990s.

It should be noted that there is an unrelated AZA in existence today. In 2001, BBYO (see below) split from B'nai B'rith International and became a separate, incorporated entity. The Grand Order of the Aleph Zadik Aleph (AZA) was originally an international youth-led fraternal organization for Jewish teenage boys, founded in 1924. B'nai B'rith Girls (BBG) was established in 1944. AZA and BBG became BBYO but only remained a part of B'nai B'rith till 2001.

B'nai B'rith Australia & New Zealand (BBANZ)

BBANZ is the 'roof body' of the Units in Victoria, New South Wales and New Zealand. Its Board of Governors presides over BBANZ and comprises an appointed President, Secretary and Treasurer, the Presidents of B'nai B'rith Victoria, B'nai B'rith NSW and B'rith New Zealand, plus additional appointed representatives from Victoria and NSW, the Chairs of the BBANZ Israel Commission and Click and Connect, and a representative of BB International.

The Supreme Lodge in Washington D.C. (now known as B'nai B'rith International) approved in September 1957 the constitution of the Australasian B'nai B'rith Council as the roof organisation for Australian and potential New Zealand Lodges. The first B'nai B'rith Lodge in New Zealand was established in November 1960. The Supreme Lodge then granted a charter in May 1962 for a District Grand Lodge No. 21 covering Australia and New Zealand; this became known as B'nai B'rith Australia & New Zealand (BBANZ).

BBANZ has two principal projects:

- 1) The Israel Commission - This began in the 1970s and was aimed at raising funds for charities in Israel, which has remained its purpose ever since. It is currently chaired by Danielle Schilling.
- 2) Click and Connect - This project arose out of discussions held in Israel around 2016 and in the following year it commenced in Melbourne with a group of volunteers. Morris Tobias, as President of BBANZ in 2018, decided that B'nai B'rith should take over the administration of this project and this was formally done in March, 2019. The aim of the project is to provide pupils from needy schools in Israel with opportunities to learn conversational English via videoconferencing, with the volunteer 'teachers' being B'nai B'rith members in Melbourne and Sydney.

B'nai B'rith International

B'nai B'rith International (BBI) is an American-based, nonprofit Jewish service organisation which was originally a cultural association for German Jewish immigrants to the USA. B'nai B'rith states that it is committed to the security and continuity of the Jewish people and the State of Israel, and combating anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry. BBI runs a number of projects and programs including:

- Advocacy – especially in the fields of national and global leadership in advancing human rights, fighting anti-Semitism and standing up for Israel. BBI is involved in bringing advocacy to political and national leaders, the United Nations and other forums.
- Senior advocacy and housing – BBI is the largest national Jewish sponsor of subsidised housing in the United States. Senior Advocacy work covers a range of seniors' issues, including social security, Medicare, Medicaid and funding for the ageing services network
- Humanitarian aid and disaster relief - since 1865, B'nai B'rith has responded with millions of dollars of needed assistance to help victims of hundreds of disasters – both natural and man-made – around the world, such as the 2023 Hawaii wildfire disaster and the 2023 earthquakes in Turkey and Syria
- Jewish identity and culture – promoted by a range of educational programs including podcasts, webinars and Holocaust commemoration.

The BBI Board of Governors has a Triennial Conference to which all the Districts are invited. Charters for new Units have to be agreed to by BBI and any Unit that closes has to return its charter to Washington D.C.

B'nai B'rith Victoria (BBVic)

B'nai B'rith Victoria is the 'roof body' for Units, projects and programs in the state of Victoria. It is sometimes difficult to sharply delineate what is BBVic rather than a Unit or project activity as there is considerable overlap. In general terms, BBVic has two core components: 1) the governing bodies (Victorian B'nai B'rith Council and its Executive) and 2) the BBVic office, whose staff comprise the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), a Project and Community Liaison Manager and an Administrative Assistant. Some of the main terms associated with BBVic are explained below:

- 1) Victorian B'nai B'rith Council (VBBC) – theoretically, this is the ruling body in Victoria. It is made up of the president and vice-president of BBVic, the secretary, the treasurer, presidents of the Units, representatives of BBANZ (president, and the chairs of its two principal projects, the Israel Commission, and Click and Connect), and others by invitation, such as the president of the Parents Home, and previous presidents of BBVic.
- 2) Executive – when there were far more Units than there are now, it was thought that having a smaller Executive to deal with issues as they arose would be more efficient. Over time, as the number of Units diminished and as the Executive increasingly took on a strategic framework for a unified Victorian organisation, the relative importance of the Executive, vis-à-vis the VBBC, has continued to grow.
- 3) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – principally involved in implementing the strategic direction set by the Executive and ratified by the VBBC.
- 4) Constitution – the legally binding document which explains how B'nai B'rith should operate in Victoria. A link to the current constitution can be found on the B'nai B'rith Victoria website.

BBYA (B'nai B'rith Young Adults)

In Victoria, the BBYA was established in 1954 when it was originally called B'nai B'rith Youth (BBY). A few years later it became BBYA and catered for those aged between 18 and 25, approximately. The earliest members were the children of existing members of B'nai B'rith, but they brought in their friends and the group enlarged. Unfortunately, it eventually 'ran out of steam' around the same time as the teenage group, AZA, which was in the 1990s.

BBYO

BBYO (B'nai B'rith Youth Organisation Inc) was formerly part of B'nai B'rith International but separated from it in 2001 to become incorporated as B'nai B'rith Youth Organisation Inc. In other words, it kept the name B'nai B'rith although it was a legally distinct entity. It is a Jewish teenage movement, organised as a non-profit organisation, which is headquartered in Washington, D.C. The organisation aims to build the identity of Jewish teens and offer leadership development programs.

BBYO came to Sydney around 2018 where it operates under the umbrella of BBNSW. In Melbourne, it was auspiced around the same time by the United Jewish Education Board (UJEB) and no formal link currently exists with B'nai B'rith Victoria.

Courage to Care (C2C)

As a registered not-for-profit organisation, Courage to Care (C2C) Victoria began in 1992 as an initiative of B'nai B'rith, the global Jewish service organisation, with a small exhibition at the Jewish Museum of Australia. This static display originated as a joint initiative between the Jewish Museum of Australia, the Jewish Holocaust Centre and the Raoul Wallenberg Unit of B'nai B'rith Victoria.

Several years later, in 2000, C2C developed an educational program to accompany the exhibition and made it available at several locations across the state. The education program was developed with the support of Monash University's Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation and the Victorian Department of Education.

In 2015, with the aid of C2C's principal partner, Gandel Philanthropy, C2C refreshed its exhibition to make it more interactive. Shortly after, it was made 'mobile' – adding an in-school program to the educational offering.

In 2018, the Upstander Program was launched in response to an approach from Victoria Police to help them transform workplace culture. Growing in reach year after year, C2C has now delivered Upstander Programs to more than 175,000 students.

Districts

Districts are a network of B'nai B'rith organisations across the world. On some continents (Europe and South America), a District is synonymous with a country's national B'nai B'rith. However, the USA has several Districts with each one involving a group of states. BBANZ is known as District 21 (i.e. the 21st international District) and now is only represented by BBVic, BBNSW and BBNZ.

Units, Lodges and Chapters

Units have both men and women, Lodges have men only and Chapters women only. It was not until the 1960s that B'nai B'rith Victoria started to combine men's and women's organisations and by 2000 only Units existed.

Appendix

Chronology of B'nai B'rith Development

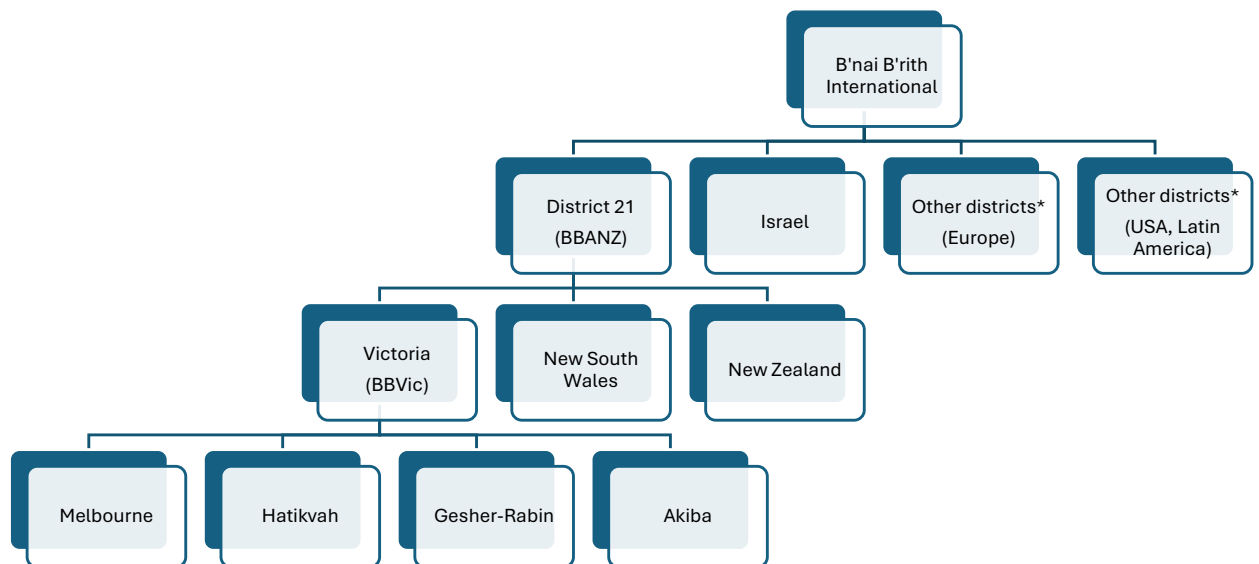
17 December 1944	Installation of the first Australian B'nai B'rith Lodge Sydney No. 1546 by Bro. President Ernst Goldschmidt.
20 May 1945	Installation of Australian second BB Lodge Melbourne No. 1547, by Bro. Franz Lippmann.
March 1945	Installation of the first BB Women's Chapter Sydney No. 494.
May 1946	Institution of BB Young Men's Chapter Sydney No. 76.
May 1948	Purchase of Sydney Lodge Home in Darley Street, Darlinghurst.
September 1949	Institution of BB Young Women's Chapter No. 263, Sydney.
March 1950	First Interstate Conference of the Lodges Sydney and Melbourne held at the Sydney Lodge Home.
March 1951	Second Interstate Conference held in Melbourne.
September 1954	Aleph Zadic Aleph (AZA) Sydney Chapter founded.
April 1955	BB Bulletin becomes joint publication of all Australian Lodges & Chapters.
December 1955	First B'nai B'rith Youth Convention in Sydney.
May 1956	Fourth Interstate Conference in Melbourne. Main decisions taken include: B'nai B'rith in Australia to expand by formation of Lodges in all capital cities; Preparations to be made for institution of a Regional Council; Allocation of funds for the establishment of Hillel Foundations at Sydney and Melbourne Universities.
May 1956	Institution of Melbourne Women's Chapter No. 887.
28 April 1957	Installation of Lodge of Harmony No. 2099 in Melbourne.
August 1957	Purchase of Melbourne Lodge Home in Hotham Street, East St. Kilda.
September 1957	Supreme Lodge approves of the Constitution of the Australasian B'nai B'rith Council as roof organisation of Australian and potential New Zealand Lodges.
March 1958	First Conference of the Australasian B'nai B'rith Council held in Sydney.
January 1959	Fourth B'nai B'rith Youth Convention held in Victoria. Formation of B'nai B'rith Youth Council.
March 1960	Institution of Menorah Lodge No.2259 in Melbourne. Second Conference of the Australasian B'nai B'rith Council. Formation of AZA Chapter No. 1244 and Melbourne B'nai B'rith Girls Chapter No. 1048 in Melbourne.
September 1960	Institution of Harmony Women's Chapter No. 1097 in Melbourne.
November 1960	Installation of the first B'nai B'rith Lodge in New Zealand - Wellington Lodge No. 2293.
July 1961	Introduction of first Hillel Foundation in Australia at two Universities in Melbourne. First Hillel Director appointed.

Chronology of B'nai B'rith Development contd...

May 1962	The Triennial Convention of the Supreme Lodge in Washington grants a Charter for a District Grand Lodge No. 21 for the District Australia and New Zealand.
23 August 1962	Institution of District Grand Lodge No.21 by President of BB Label Katz. P.P. Hilary Pryer installed as first District President.
September 1963	Institution of Menorah Women's Chapter No. 1179 in Melbourne. Formation of B'nai B'rith Youth Chapter in Wellington.
23 April 1964	First District 21 Convention held in Melbourne - Bro. P.P. Hans Spitz installed as second District President.
6 April 1967	District 21 Triennial and BB Women's Council of A & NZ Conferences held in Sydney.
17 December 1967	Official opening of B'nai B'rith Parents' Home in Caulfield, Melbourne.
26 September 1970	Institution of Shalom Lodge No. 2827 in Melbourne
September 1973	Institution of Unit Unity No. 5022 in Melbourne
August 1981	Institution of Unit Akiba No. 1595 in Melbourne
September 1981	Institution of Unit Tamid No. 5208 in Melbourne
July 1985	Institution of Unit Raoul Wallenberg No. 3245 in Melbourne
4 August 1985	Institution of Unit Mitzvah No. 3249 in Melbourne
September 1990	Institution of Unit Re-Ut No. 3337 in Melbourne
3 October 1992	Institution of Unit Hatikvah No. 3359 in Melbourne
September 1997	Institution of Unit Yitzhak Rabin No. 3390 in Melbourne

* For a more recent chronology, please refer to the section on units, lodges and chapters on page 32

Structure of B'nai B'rith (simplified)



* Note that Europe, the USA and Latin America each contain several Districts (or regions). In Europe, these are based on individual countries, but in the USA, they are based on groups of states.

Units, Lodges and Chapters in Victoria

Generally, Lodges are for men, Chapters for women and Units for both. However, Melbourne Lodge became an exception when it decided to keep the original name but admitted women to it in 1991.

Units, Lodges and Chapters	Date instituted	Date dissolved
Melbourne Lodge	20 May 1945	1991
Melbourne Women's Chapter	May 1956	1991
Melbourne Lodge and the Melbourne Women's Chapter merged	June 1991	2022 (merged with Unit Mitzvah)
Lodge of Harmony	28 April 1957	1991
Harmony Women's Chapter	April 1960	2003
Lodge of Harmony and Harmony Women's Chapter merged	June 1991	2003
Menorah Lodge	20 March 1960	2005
Menorah Women's Chapter	8 September 1963	2005
Lodge Shalom	26 September 1970	1990
Shalom Women's Chapter	16 October 1971	1990
Lodge Shalom and Shalom Women's Chapter merged	1990	2005
Unity Unit	8 April 1973	1979
Unit Akiba	21 June 1981	
Unit Tamid	8 November 1981	1987
Raoul Wallenberg Unit	14 July 1985	2023
Unit Mitzvah	4 August 1985	2023
Melbourne Lodge and Unit Mitzvah merged	2022	2023
Unit Re'ut	26 October 1990	2015 (merged with Unit Wallenberg)
Hatikvah Unit	3 October 1992	
Yitzhak Rabin Unit	20 March 1997	2019
Gesher Unit	2013	2019 (merged with Yitzhak Rabin)
Gesher Unit and Yitzhak Rabin Unit merged to become Gesher-Rabin Unit	2019	
Melbourne-Mitzvah Lodge and Raoul Wallenberg Unit merged – called Melbourne Lodge (again)	2023	

Executive summary of the B'nai B'rith Victoria Strategic Plan 2022

Preface

This preface has been written in April 2025 for the eighty year anniversary edition of The History of B'nai B'rith Victoria, 1944 – 2024. It might seem unusual to include a strategic vision document within a history book, but past history helps to explain the present, and the strategy document provides a guideline for the general direction in which we are going.

However, bear in mind that the Strategic Plan which appears below was written approximately three years ago. We have made significant progress in that time, especially in refining our purpose and mission. We have come to embrace who we are, which is a community engagement organisation catering particularly for those aged in their fifties and above. And while we do a wide range of activities, one of our most important roles is in providing social connections.

The 2022 Strategic Plan was a useful vision statement when it was produced, but time has not stood still. You might have another look at the earlier section on 'The future of B'nai B'rith Victoria' to see where we are going now that we have turned 80 years old.

Introduction to the 2022 Strategic Plan

The aim of this collection of papers is to describe the strategies that B'nai B'rith Victoria needs to undertake if it is to overcome the major risk to its survival given its ageing and reducing membership. B'nai B'rith needs to concentrate on activities that attract and engage with more people, and it needs to source additional funding by establishing multiple income streams including but not limited to donations. These papers are the culmination, but not the endpoint, of a process of analysing the organisation's options and are intended to make clear the current thinking of the B'nai B'rith President, its CEO and Executive. strength. Let us see how we go.

Who we are: B'nai B'rith's Mission, Purpose and Vision

B'nai B'rith is the oldest and largest international Jewish community service organisation and the principles of the Victorian branch are consistent with B'nai B'rith interstate and overseas.

Mission (What we do): The mission of B'nai B'rith is to unite people of the Jewish faith, harnessing our energy to work together for community service, advocacy and capacity building.

Purpose (Why we do it): The purpose of B'nai B'rith is to strengthen Jewish life in Victoria, reinforcing the community's sense of Jewish identity, and reflecting its shared humanitarian principles, cultural heritage and legacy of innovation.

Vision (What does success look like?): The vision for B'nai B'rith is for it to become a major contributor to the Jewish community's cohesion, creativity and capacity-building. Hence the motto (tag line) of B'nai B'rith is: Strengthening Jewish life.

Goals: The goals of B'nai B'rith are to: 1) Provide opportunities for social connection, 2) Deliver projects and programs with impact that a) support those in need, b) promote human rights and foster understanding, c) celebrate the Jewish community's achievements and talents, and d) support Israel, and 3) Support Jewish community capacity-building. These goals have specific strategies which are the projects and programs of B'nai B'rith.

Membership

Several steps can be taken to make current membership processes more efficient including to: 1) develop an online membership registration form, 2) use a centralised membership payment system, 3) develop a centralised membership database, and 4) create a better explanation (and marketing materials) on the benefits of membership.

We must be realistic about how many new members of the traditional, Unit-based type B'nai B'rith can recruit, and we should therefore develop a broader concept of 'participation' which can be defined as follows: 1) Members, that is, people who are either traditional, Unit-based 'Members', or 'Members-at-large', i.e. people who join B'nai B'rith, perhaps to participate in a specific project, but who are not members of a Unit; and 2) 'Friends' of B'nai B'rith (i.e. 'non-members') – people who are on an email database but who do not pay fees. This category might be time-limited.

To facilitate all of the above, a member of the Executive has been appointed as a 'Membership Officer' which has its own position description.

Projects

In the past, projects were created within a Unit. Whilst several projects remain Unit-based, others, over time and for various reasons, have become 'B'nai B'rith Victoria projects'. There are also projects in partnership with B'nai B'rith Australia/New Zealand (BBANZ), i.e. the Israel Commission, and Click and Connect. A better way of considering projects is to classify them according to their principal purpose, namely: 1) provide opportunities for social connection, 2) support those in need, 3) promote human rights and foster understanding, 4) celebrate achievers, 5) support Israel, and 6) involve partnerships, collaborations and innovations such as 'incubator' projects.

The key requirements for B'nai B'rith projects relate to: 1) finance and governance, 2) clear reporting requirements, 3) annual planning, 4) using the B'nai B'rith branding guidelines, 5) clear communication responsibilities, and 6) agreed guidelines on administrative support from the B'nai B'rith office. Importantly, B'nai B'rith projects need to do more than serve their own needs; they need to support the strategic vision of the organisation as a whole.

Units

Units continue to play a vital role in social support for members and are the principal means by which fundraising for charities currently occurs. However, in assisting Units, we must realise that there are parallel challenges in play: the Units need to be supported so that they remain viable and effective while at the same time B'rith B'nai needs to ensure that it is strategically positioned for the organisation's long-term survival. These are not identical tasks, and this must be clearly understood as we work to find solutions to both.

The investment in strengthening the B'nai B'rith office provides an opportunity for increasing assistance as Unit members age, but the solutions must be developed in a cooperative way or they will not work. We must remain clear in the relative responsibilities of the Office and the Units and seek solutions to support the administration of the Units whilst allowing them the autonomy to support their members.

Finance

First, current financial systems must be improved. B'nai B'rith Victoria is not accountable for, nor does it have full transparency of all the money deposits of Units, projects and other entities. This is in spite of the presentation of the Annual Book of Reports of Units at the B'nai B'rith Victoria Annual General Meeting. To gain a better understanding of where B'nai B'rith starts and ends, we are currently compiling a complete list of the legal and financial status of all parts of the organisation. Two things should occur to improve the current financial systems: 1) Describe all entities and their financial holdings - the current holdings of money within the organisation should be comprehensively understood, including their compliance requirements; and 2) Create annual budgets for every entity, particularly for those for which B'nai B'rith Victoria is directly accountable.

Second, and even more importantly, B'nai B'rith needs to financially break even. In round terms, the annual income for B'nai B'rith Victoria is \$270,000, of which \$170,000 is received from interest on investments and \$37,000 from membership fees. The annual expenses are approximately \$370,000. This means that there is a budgeted deficit of at least \$100,000 and with the cost of living increasing in this post-Covid era (e.g. for the hiring of venues), then this deficit is likely to increase. Membership fees only cover some seven percent of the expenses and are resistant to rises beyond those brought on by inflation. This therefore leaves income from donations, bequests and possibly grants as the most obvious options. Significant donations would seem to be the best source of additional income but donors will only give if they are convinced the 'product' is worthy of their financial investment, and this will require building relationships with prospective donors.

Marketing

Before establishing a marketing plan, we must determine B'nai B'rith's unique value. What is the fundamental message that B'nai B'rith needs to communicate? What is our point of differentiation from so many other Jewish organisations? And similarly, what makes our organisation the only one of its kind? What is our unique value proposition? We need to think about what happens at the intersection of: 1) what's important to our audience, 2) what is our organisation especially good at, 3) what are we doing that nobody else does and 4) what does the community need?

This requires the development of a communication strategy which includes clear, concise, timely messaging that actively engages and inspires segmented audiences, for example, members versus 'friends' versus the general Jewish community, and based on their interests, not ours. We must utilise the best marketing tools (including social media) within a defined budget and level of resourcing, the results of which need to be tracked and reviewed.

B'nai B'rith needs a written marketing plan. To start with, it should be fairly simple, in the knowledge that at their most basic, the long-term goals are to increase membership or participation, as well as financial support for B'nai B'rith. None of this development can take place without a deep commitment to the mission and vision of the organisation – these need to be reiterated again and again, and form the backbone of the marketing plan.

Partnerships

Partnerships are important for B'nai B'rith. Some of the potential benefits include: 1) accessing new audiences, 2) sharing the costs and other resources in staging events, 3) gaining ideas and sharing skills, 4) delivering on areas of importance to B'nai B'rith's mission without the need to create new projects, and 5) networking for the organisation. However, it is important to ensure that B'nai B'rith becomes known to be able to offer more than just financial support to a partnership.

One current partnership is with Courage to Care which remains a very important project of B'nai B'rith, with many existing members directly involved in its program of education. Its success should be an inspiration to other B'nai B'rith projects. The relationship with UJEB and BBYO must be developed into a more formal partnership that engages not only their members but their families. Other organisations with which B'nai B'rith actively collaborates include the Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV) and Zionism Victoria. More strategic engagement with these and other organisations are necessary for B'nai B'rith's future.

Governance policies

In addition to branding guidelines which have been created by the marketing agency Sharp Instincts, guidelines have been produced in three areas to date. These are: 1) Media – publicity needs to be consistent and positive; in some instances this requires 'sign-off' by the President and/or CEO, especially when external media are involved; 2) Privacy - B'nai B'rith Victoria aims at all times to deal with the personal information of individuals in a way that is consistent with Australian Privacy Principles (APPs); 3) Communication - This policy seeks to clarify internal and external communication protocols including timing and frequency, tools and channels, responsibility for content and the use of B'nai B'rith branding.

Conclusion

B'nai B'rith requires renewal, and the steps along this path are to: 1) Affirm the organisation's mission and purpose – who we are and what we offer, 2) Allow people to participate in activities by means other than traditional membership, 3) Offer well-run projects which have meaning and minimise any barriers to participation by members of the broader Jewish community, 4) Allow Units to continue the significant work that they do and especially to support their vital role in promoting meaningful, social connectivity, 5) Obtain additional financial support for the organisation by ongoing, significant donations, 6) Market B'nai B'rith effectively so that the Jewish community is aware and inspired, and 7) Engage in honest partnerships that build community capacity and strengthen Jewish life.

MAKING AN IMPACT IN VICTORIA SINCE 1945



**B'nai
B'rith**



Connect | Engage | Empower

306 Hawthorn Road
Caulfield South 3162

03 9523 0888
admin@bbvic.org.au



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