



# AUSTRALIAN JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY (VIC) INC ANNUAL REPORT 2020 - 2021

## Committee of Management

President  
Vic-President  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Committee

Allan Jankie  
Max Wald OAM  
Bubbles Segall  
Rene Eisner  
Heshy Adelist  
Terry Ashton  
Rodney Eisfelder  
Helen Gardner  
Liz James OAM  
Clive Kaicer  
Bernie Kuran  
Ian Samuel OAM

## Honoured Life Members

Rodney Eisfelder  
Liz James OAM  
Allan Jankie  
Lionel Sharpe OAM dec.

[ajgsvictoria@gmail.com](mailto:ajgsvictoria@gmail.com)

[www.ajgs-vic.org.au](http://www.ajgs-vic.org.au)



Report edited by Rene Eisner

# Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic) Inc.

ABN 17 078 119 093

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## Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic) Inc.

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### 2021 PRESIDENT'S REPORT by Allan Jankie

2021 for the Australian Jewish Genealogy Society (Vic.) has been a strange experience, but one I'm fearful we're going to have to get used to for the short term at least.

The glimmer of hope that we were getting over the Covid Pandemic in October/November soon turned out to be nothing more than a mirage. But we soldiered on as you will read in the reports contained in this Annual Report.

Despite not being able to hold face to face conversations for much of the year, it has been a busy year for our Society. So many of our programmes and projects were affected by the now new normal of coping under Covid-19 pandemic conditions. Yet we still managed to achieve much of our core responsibility of aiding people from around the world in their Jewish genealogical research. One of the major ramifications of the Covid cloud is our switch to Meetings/Presentations via Zoom rather than face to face. The 'silver lining' has been our ability to schedule presentations with speakers from all over the world as well as have a wider audience listening/watching these experts.

One of the personal highlights for me of the past year was our AGM meeting and the delivery of the second Lionel Sharpe Memorial Presentation, again on DNA.

Contained in this Annual Report are reports provided by other members of our Society's Committee and I leave it up to them to provide you with a snapshot of what their year has been like vis-à-vis the Society's work. You will read reports about our ongoing projects like the School Roots program done in conjunction with the Jewish Day Schools and The Jewish Museum of Australia, the ongoing Cemetery Project where we are photographing Jewish Headstones, the Jewish Marriages Project, the new DoJR Project, and, of course our core task of aiding/assisting people in their Jewish genealogical research.

But it would be remiss of me not to publicly state that I am once again honoured to be part of this group and in awe of the sheer magnitude of

Continued) **PRESIDENT'S REPORT** by Allan Jankie

what these volunteers do on behalf of Jewish genealogy, especially in light of the difficulties emanating from Covid 19.

To the Committee:

Max Wald – Vice President  
Rene Eisner – Treasurer  
Rodney Eisfelder – Committee  
Bernie Kuran – Committee  
Terry Ashton – Committee  
Helen Gardner - Committee

Bubbles Segall – Secretary  
Liz James – Committee  
Ian Samuel – Committee  
Heshy Adelist – Committee  
Clive Kaicer - Committee

each of whom have been involved in some area of Society activity over the past 12 months and without their input we would be a poorer Society, unable to fulfil our primary mission of assisting people with their Jewish Genealogy research. Hopefully I will be able to catch up with you during the coming 12 months, most likely by Zoom meeting as unfortunately, as predicted by me last year, this appears to be the current state of play for the foreseeable future. I can assure you we are working on providing informative and entertaining sessions for you to join in with.



Stay safe

**Allan Jankie**, President



AJGS VIC - COMMITTEE 2020 - 2021

## **MEDAL (OAM) OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA IN THE GENERAL DIVISION**

We are extremely proud to congratulate two of our hard-working Committee Members, both of whom received an OAM this year.

**LIZ JAMES, For service to the Jewish community of Victoria.  
Australia Day 2021 Honours**



Liz's involvement is well known to us, as the keeper of the Resource Room, Guru with all the Family Trees, Maven with the Roots Project, and currently as part of the DoJR project.

"The biggest mitzvah I can do is to help people find their ancestors or even the original version of their family name. Reconnecting family members around the world is another way of helping someone find their past" she told J-Wire.

**MAX WALD, For service to the Jewish community of Victoria.  
Queen's Birthday 2021 Honours**



Max's expertise with the Cemetery Photography Project, volunteer with JRI-Poland, translating and indexing, and recently our Zoom guru, amongst many others.

**Max Wald** told J-Wire that he feels very honoured to receive his award. "The idea is very simply to help people with their memories because it is important to find your roots and look back. I get pleasure doing what I do and am humbled as I have never looked for, or expected such publicity" he said.

## VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT by Max Wald OAM

This has been another eventful and challenging year. Apart from Covid-19, we have had a very successful range of presentations. As we become more acclimatised with Zoom, it has enabled us to present speakers from anywhere on the globe.

The Society has been fortunate to present speakers on

- Hungarian Research by Andras Koltai in Hungary,
- Polish Jewish Cemetery research by Witold Wrzosiński Warsaw Poland,
- DNA by Louise Coakley in Queensland,
- Litvak research by Carol Hoffman in Israel,
- Using JRI Poland by Robinn Magid in California
- and many presentations of personal research from members in Melbourne, including Hannah Sweetman, Brian Lubner, Rodney Eisfelder and Paul Gardner.

The Society has maintained the ability to assist many members and non-members in their family research, often by person to person Zoom sessions.

We have updated Melbourne burials by Melbourne Chevra Kadisha on to JOWBR (Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Registry), which had not been done since 2017.

Another project underway, is to include photos of headstones from Fawkner, Brighton, St. Kilda and Springvale Botanical cemeteries into the Melbourne Chevra Kadisha website.

Also, the society receives many enquiries from overseas, where more often than not, a successful outcome is achieved.

Fortunately, we were able to successfully assist many school students in their Roots Projects.

**Max Wald**, Vice President

## SECRETARY'S REPORT by Bubbles Segall

Due to another year of intermittent lockdowns our committee has held their regular meetings on Zoom. We look forward to the day when we can meet again in person. We also look forward to holding our presentations at the Glen Eira Town Hall again and meeting our members face-to-face.

Last year the committee was kept busy answering queries from people in Australia and overseas researching their family history. The number has dropped extensively this year.

### **Bubbles Segall**

Honorary Secretary

## TREASURER'S REPORT by Rene Eisner

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 2021

Membership fees received for the financial year 2021 were \$4,866, with 128 members financial. Thank you to those members for their prompt payment of their fees.

**A warm welcome to our 11 new members.**

Donations totaling \$1966 have been received. Thanks to all, for your generous support.

This year, we have continued to have records scanned and recorded. Our income has increased this year with the gratitude of the researchers' donations.

For the financial year our net funds saw a net surplus of \$347.60 with a bank balance at 30<sup>th</sup> June at \$5,773.03.

### **Rene Eisner**

Honorary Treasurer



# Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic) Inc.

ABN 17 078 119 093



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## STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 2021

Membership Fees		4,866.00
total members 177 (49 unfinancial)		
Bank Interest Received		1.64
Donations Received		1,966.19
<b>Gross Income</b>		<b>6,833.83</b>
<u>Less Expenses</u>		
Affiliation Fees IAJGS	-	77.31
Archival Scanning	-	2,030.00
Consumer Affairs, Registration Fee	-	59.20
Donations annual to JewishGen & JRI-Poland	-	418.19
Zoom for Meetings	-	135.00
Library Books	-	418.60
Insurance Public Liability	-	683.00
Printing Brochures	-	59.75
Subscriptions to Genealogy websites	-	1,257.78
Website Upgrade and Email Maintenance	-	507.00
Lamm Library – maintenance of Library Catalogue	-	840.40
	-	6,486.23
		- 6,486.23
<b>NET SURPLUS for year</b>		<b>347.60</b>
Bank Balance at 1/7/20		<u>\$5,425.43</u>
<b>BANK BALANCE 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021</b>		<u><b>\$5,773.03</b></u>

## REPORTS 2021 by Liz James

### USSR –Applications for immigration to enter Australia.

The Jewish Welfare Society was the prime migrant resettlement agency in the Jewish community and had been since the 1940's. The Society was instrumental in facilitating the settlement of more than 1,200 Soviet Jewish Arrivals in Australia under the special humanitarian program, this project began in 1988.

Helen Gardner, Rachel Markus and I are filing these immigration applications and on completion there will be a database of approximately 12,000 names which will give us details of the Australian sponsor, their family wishing to immigrate and an historical record of the rest of their family branches.

A few of the heart wrenching reasons for application are listed below.....

*The family live in the high radiation zone, as a result of Chernobyl accident. Lack of normal food, the problem with political situation has created anti-Semitism.*

*'Receiving anti-Semitic phone calls, and the fear of possible assaults'*

*'Father is unemployed and they live off money sent to them from Australia and from selling their possessions Due to anti-Semitic incidents, the family is fearful of remaining in.....'*

*Single mother, cannot feed her family.....'I feel humiliation. I have no present nor future. Help me for God's sake if war breaks out in .....*

*Family want to come to Australia.... Son was hanged during his army service 'only because he was a Jew. He had been killed not during a war and not by enemies but by his mates who hated Jews and nobody, nobody had stopped them. Now my grandson is being mobilized into the Soviet army and we are terrified and scared to death that we could lose him in the same way, as the attitude towards Jewish people in the soviet army now is even worse than in 1977. Please help us, you are our only hope.'*

### TALK AT JEWISH MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

In May, I spoke to educators at the Jewish Museum of Australia where we discussed the feasibility of working together and sharing our resources for research projects

## ROOTS PROJECT



In conjunction with the Jewish Museum of Australia, we spoke to students at Mount Scopus, Sholem Aleichem and Yavneh about methods and websites to use on researching one's ancestors. I also spoke to the Yavneh parents at an evening session on the same topic.

Bialik and King David schools were visited onsite where we workshoped with the students and discussed how to access the various genealogical websites and databases.

Special thanks to the committee for their assistance and also to Tom Reisner, Esther Kahn and Judy Levron for assisting with the students from Yavneh.



## **LIBRARY - LIONEL SHARPE RESOURCE COLLECTION**

Over 200 new titles have been added to the AJGS/AJHS collection. Many thanks to Lauren Joffe and her library team for maintaining the catalogue entries.

We have not resumed to our former Sunday or Tuesday evening access sessions due to lockdown limits and lockdown closures, however, Helen Gardner, Bubbles Segall and I have continued our weekly DoJR cataloguing sessions either in person at the library or on zoom.

We continue to receive queries from the public for help with research, but once again access to our resource collection for verification is hampered by COVID restrictions.

We have not resumed to our former Sunday or Tuesday evening access sessions due to lockdown limits and lockdown closures, however, Helen Gardner, Bubbles Segall and I have continued our weekly DoJR cataloguing sessions either in person at the library or on zoom.

**DoJR** (see also report from team leader Helen Gardner)

### **Documentation of Jewish Records World Wide (DoJR)**

With my double connection to the AJHS and AJGS my part in the DoJR has been navigating our way to the location and listing of resources in both collections that have genealogical links. In that vein, I have organized a listing of all the Australian Jewish Historical Society – Vic. material which is housed in the State Library of Victoria to be included in the DoJR catalogue.

Over 500 book titles with genealogical content and their subject matter from the Lamm Library catalogue have also been listed for the DoJR catalogue. This includes titles from the Holocaust Centre, Kadimah, Australian Jewish Historical Society- Vic, Australian Jewish Genealogical Society – Vic and the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation collection.

### (continued) DoJR

We are presently, listing many of the articles published in the Australian Jewish Historical Society Journals with their relevant titles and subject matter of genealogical interest being added to the DoJR database.

August 2021

**Liz James**

## **DATABASE REPORT 2021** by Rodney Eisfelder

The society's marriage database continues to grow, although the rate of growth has slowed, partly due to the pandemic. Almost 3000 marriage records have been added since last year, and the project now covers over 60 congregations and/or rabbis, and just over 32,000 records. The information transcribed for each marriage has been expanded by a dedicated team.

**Rodney Eisfelder** - keeper of the marriage database.



Zoom meeting September 2020.

# DOCUMENTATION OF JEWISH RECORDS WORLD WIDE (DoJR)

An initiative of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies. [By Helen Gardner](#)

In summary:

- Its aim is to capture and catalogue every source of Jewish genealogical information throughout the world.
- Its premise is that, notwithstanding the millions of Jewish genealogical records held by JewishGen, Family Search et al., there exists a vast quantity of material of Jewish genealogical interest which is uncatalogued or known to only a limited number of people.
- Australian data is a prime example of information most people overseas know little about. However, even within Australia there exists Jewish genealogical data which is little known.
- The catalogue (JCAT) will collect and store details of what information is available and where to find it, as well as what media it is stored on, its condition (good or fragile), and its general availability.
- The base data itself will not be held in the catalogue, only a reference to what data exists and where to find it.
- Some resources will be open for all to see, while others will require a searcher to contact the holder of the information and request particular data.

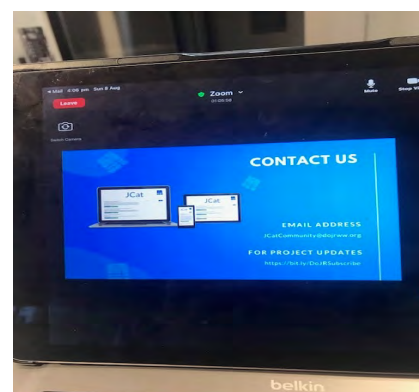


**AJGS (Vic)** took on providing information to DoJR as a project, with Helen Gardner (Team Leader), Liz James, and Bubbles Segall volunteering to work on the project. As first responders, the team has been partnering with Marlis Humphrey and the American team with four objectives:

1. To create a simple and easily useable template:  
The initial template for entering data was devised for the trial “proof of concept” research based on various levels of governmental data in Poland and Lithuania. It is far too complex and elaborate for entry by a JGS with non-governmental and not necessarily complete records sets. In the process of entering our data we are helping to establish easily understood definitions of the terms (eg who owns the data, who has custody of it; how to record if there is more than one custodial organisation); discover what information is generally not available (such as what geographical areas are covered by the data set – generally impossible to specify for data from countries like Australia, the US, etc where European or other Jewry immigrated) and hence not useful to ask for, and other issues that arise as we endeavour to enter data. So our cooperation as the first responder for data entry is helping to simplify the form for eventual use by other JGSs.
2. To enter our known Victorian and some Australian data
3. To approach Jewish community organisations to compile information on what additional information of genealogical information they hold which could be included in the catalogue.
4. To investigate non-Jewish organisations such as University Alumni, Professional organisations, The Australian National Archives etc. to see what information they hold of Jewish genealogical interest.

**Helen Gardner**

22 July 2021



DoJR committee during recording of information video.

# summary of our zoom meetings

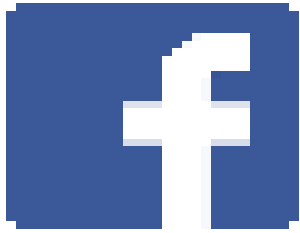


## AUGUST 2020 AGM MEETING

- 23 Aug 2020 – AGM -DNA by Louise Coakley in Queensland
- 13 Sep 2020 – Bialystok to Melb, Max Wald with Jenny Wajsenberg and Rebecca Albeck
- 25 Oct 2020 - Hungarian Research by Andras Koltai from Hungary
- 29 Nov 2020 - Hannah Sweetman, From Verona to London
- 21 Feb 2021 - Brian Luber, The Fate of German Jews
- 22 Apr 2021 - Polish Jewish Cemetery research by Witold Wrzosiński from Warsaw Poland,
- 30 May 2021 -Rodney Eisfelder, Stolpersteine Project
- 11 July 2021 - Litvak research by Carol Hoffman in Israel
- 15 Aug 2021 -Using JRI Poland by Robinn Magid in California



## FACEBOOK REPORT 2021 by Heshy Adelist



This year the AJGS Facebook page has grown. With a total of 337 members Facebook is the perfect place to ask questions, learn, and look out for any new things AJGS VIC has to offer!

This coming year we will be putting out weekly tips/ facts about Jewish genealogy. So please like and share our page.



### Australian Jewish Genealogical Society - VIC >

Public group · 337 members

Joined ▾

Invite



Group Activity

Rooms

Topics

## ROOTS PROJECTS 2021 by Bernie Kuran

Members of AJGS (Vic) Committee were invited again to present to students from Mt Scopus, Bialik, Yavneh, and the King David School. We were also delighted to have Sholem Aleichem College participate in the Roots program for the second time. A presentation on the Origins of Jewish Surnames wetted the students' eager appetites to enquire and research their family histories. They were able to ask questions from the Committee members there, and many took the opportunity to email enquiries to the Committee to assist with their research. Over 300 children participated this year, and we look forward to continuing our involvement with the schools next year.