



AUSTRALIAN JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY (VIC) INC ANNUAL REPORT 2024 - 2025

Committee of Management

President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer
Committee

Rodney Eisfelder
Bernie Kuran
Terry Ashton
Rene Eisner
Heshy Adelstein
Aaron Blicblau
Helen Gardner
Liz James OAM
Allan Jankie
Max Wald OAM
Viv Bayer
Yolande McNicoll

Honoured Life Members

Rodney Eisfelder
Liz James OAM
Allan Jankie

ajgsvictoria@gmail.com

www.ajgs-vic.org.au





Australian Jewish Genealogical
Society (Vic) Inc.
ABN 17 078 119 093

TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Report by Rodney Eisfelder	2-3
Secretary's & Presentations Report by Terry Ashton	4-5
Statement of Income and Expenditure	6
Treasurer's Report by Rene Eisner	7
Resource Room Report by Liz James	8
Roots Project Report by Liz James	9-11
Website Report by Aaron Blicblau	12
Documentation of Jewish Records (DoJR) By Helen Gardner	13-14
Reports by Max Wald (Burials, Zoom etc)	15
Facebook	16

Report edited by Rene Eisner

2025 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Rodney Eisfelder

This last year has seen a mix of talks, both zoom and in person, presented by international speakers, interstate speakers, local speakers and members of the committee.

We have had talks on the updated AJHS Website, several talks on personal research, on Sephardi research, Israeli Research, the Genealogy Indexer website, and a workshop. We staffed a table at the "In One Voice" community event, introducing ourselves to members of the community, despite very damp weather. We assisted numerous school children with their Roots projects for five Jewish Schools, and assisted both members and the general public to research their Jewish roots.

During the year we experimented with holding some of our in-person meetings at the Lamm Library on a week day evening.

We welcome feedback from our membership as to whether they prefer mid-week evening meetings at the Lamm or Sunday afternoon meetings at Glen Eira Town Hall.

At last year's AGM, Ian Samuel retired from the committee after fifteen years' service. He also served with the State Zionist Council and the Australian Jewish Historical Society, helping to liaise with those organizations. Within the Genealogy Society, he took a lead role in acquiring records for our marriage database, cajoling various synagogues to allow us to borrow their marriage registers for digital preservation. During the pandemic, he reached an agreement with the AHJS (Sydney) which greatly improved the NSW side of the database. However, poor health gradually reduced his ability to contribute. We awarded him with a Certificate of Appreciation at the end of last this year, and wish him well.

This year we have welcomed new members to the committee, Yolande McNicoll, and Mark Ellison as assistant treasurer.

At the time of writing, the committee consists of:

Rodney Eisfelder - President	Bernie Kuran - Vice-President
Terry Ashton - Secretary	Rene Eisner – Treasurer
Mark Ellison – Assistant Treasurer	Allan Jankie - Past President
Liz James - Committee & Librarian	Max Wald - Committee
Aaron Blicblau - Committee & Webmaster	Helen Gardner – Committee & DoJR
Heshy Adeliste - Committee & Social Media	Viv Bayer - Committee
Yolande McNicoll - Committee	

I thank all of them for their service and look forward to continuing the journey in the coming year.

All the best,

Rodney Eisfelder, President.



Rodney Eisfelder



Bernie Kuran



Terry Ashton



Rene Eisner



Max Wald



Allan Jankie



Liz James



Helen Gardner



Aaron Blicblau



Heshy Adeliste



Viv Bayer



Yolande McNicoll



Mark Ellison

SECRETARY'S REPORT AND PRESENTATIONS 2024-2025

By Terry Ashton

Committee meetings for 2024-2025 were largely face-to-face, occasionally held on Zoom during the colder winter months. During the past year our committee provided members with a variety of talks, with some presented as Zoom presentations when the speaker was from interstate or overseas.

The following is a summary of AJGS (VIC)'s 2024-2025 presentations.

October 27th 2024: "Yizkor for Rose: A Life Lost and Found: a memorial to a working-class Australian-Jewish woman."

Erica Cervini discussed the research that went into her book, "Yizkor for Rose: A Life Lost and Found: a memorial to a working-class Australian-Jewish woman."

November 24th 2024: In search of my Polish ancestors

AJGS (VIC) Honorary Secretary, Terry Ashton spoke about her trip to Poland, in search of Polish ancestors and recounted the organisation that went into preparing for the trip. She visited the former home of her maternal grandfather, Maurice Praszkiel in Kalisz; former family sites in Kalisz and Lodz and located the headstones of great, great grandparents, Chaskiel David and Henda Praszkiel. Other family sites included, Strykow, Blaszk, Lomza, Chelmno, Zdunska Wola and Krakow.



Headstone of Terry's great, great grandmother, Henda Praszkiel, Jewish cemetery, Zdunska Wola, Poland.

December 8th 2024: Setting Up a Free Family Website Using Tribal Pages



About 20 attendees gathered to hear Former AJGS (VIC) Honorary Secretary, Bubbles Segall give a very interesting talk on how to establish and organise a free family website using Tribal Pages (<https://www.tribalpages.com/>). Bubbles' talk is now available to hear under 'Events' > 'Past Presentations' on our website, <http://www.ajgs-vic.org.au/>

February 11th 2025: Leon Mann & Danny Mann-Segal and the long voyage of discovering relatives who survived the Holocaust.

Our first presentation for 2025 was held at the Lamm Library where approximately 40 attendees heard Leon Mann and Danny Mann-Segal speak about how their relatives Moritz and Henny, were saved during the Holocaust and meeting the descendants who saved them.



March 19th 2025: Resources for Genealogical Research in Israel

Rony Golan gave an overview via zoom, of genealogical resources available in Israel, both online and offline. He is a lecturer of Law at the Tel Aviv University, and before that he taught Law for many years at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He is also a forensic genealogist and has authored a number of articles concerning various aspects of genealogical research

May 22nd 2025: 'Uncovering Their Names and Stories: 300+ Years of a German-Jewish Family 1697-2024'



David Marlow addressed 40 attendees at the Lamm Library, describing his research, uncovering over 300 years of his family history back to 1697. He described his research, visiting 34 towns and cities, 23 cemeteries, 19 synagogues /sites, 18 museum and libraries and 2 concentration camps, collated and completed with the publication of his book by JewishGen.

June 15th 2025: The benefits of using Genealogy Indexer

Logan Kleinwaks spoke via a zoom presentation on the benefits of using Genealogy Indexer. Logan is Jewish Gen's Research Director for Danzig/Gdańsk; a former Board Member of Gesher Galicia and creator of online genealogy research tools such as Genealogy Indexer.

Terry Ashton,
Honorary Secretary

Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic) Inc.

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STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

FOR YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 2025

Membership Fees Received	4,205.00
Meetings Income	180.00
Donations Received	<u>6,038.00</u>
Gross Income	10,423.00

Less Expenses

Advertising- MDA Diary	200.00
Affiliation Fees IAJGS	103.24
Beth Weizmann (Lamm Library) Room Occupancy	2,670.00
Consumer Affairs, Registration Fee	49.00
Donations annual to JewishGen & JRI-Poland	338.31
Equipment Hire- In One Voice	349.00
Fees for using Square Tap and Pay	51.09
Hall Rental for Meetings	963.04
Insurance Public Liability	980.00
Lamm Library – maintenance of Library Catalogue	924.00
Printing & purchase resource books	423.79
Subscriptions to Genealogy websites	243.76
Website Maintenance & Hosting	816.75
Zoom & SMS for Meetings	<u>339.00</u>

<u>TOTAL EXPENSES</u>	<u>8,450.98</u>
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NET SURPLUS for year	1,972.02
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Bank Balance at 1/7/24	<u>\$14,707.86</u>
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BANK BALANCE 30th June 2025	<u>\$16,679.88</u>
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TREASURER'S REPORT by Rene Eisner

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 2025

Membership fees received for the financial year 2025 were \$4,205, with 123 members financial. Thank you to those members for their prompt payment of their fees.

A warm welcome to our 10 new members.

Donations totaling \$6,038 have been received. Thanks to all, for your generous support. It is amazing to know that our friends appreciate the work we do.

The Square facility for the payment of membership fees and donations via the website has been a great asset. **Please note that as from 1st July 2025, we will no longer be able to accept payment by cheque, due to the fact that the banks are discontinuing this facility.**

For the financial year we saw a net surplus of \$1,972 with a bank balance at 30th June 2025 at \$16,679.88.

After my call out to our members looking for a new treasurer, Mark Ellison has been accepted to our Committee for this role. I welcome Mark and I am sure everyone will also enjoy his contribution.

I will be stepping down from this honorary position as from November AGM after 13 years. I have enjoyed the interaction with our members in the past and look forward to continue seeing you at meetings.

Rene Eisner
Honorary Treasurer

RESOURCE ROOM REPORT

By Liz James OAM

Many thanks to Trevor and Heather Cohen for once again generously donating to the Society so that we could remain at Beth Weizmann. Their generosity and passion for history and genealogy has been appreciated over the many years. Thank you also, to Andrew and Judy Rogers for their very generous donation to the Society for the research and preparation of their extensive ancestry and descendant lineages.

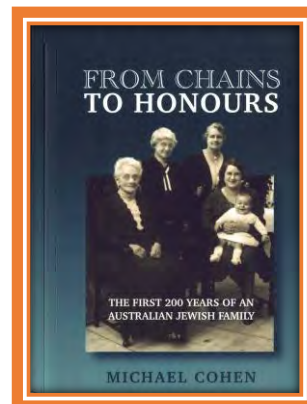
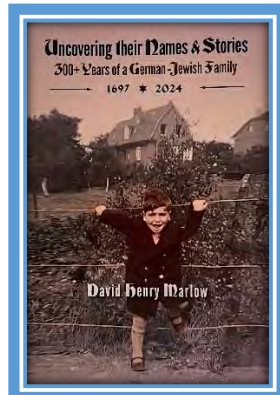
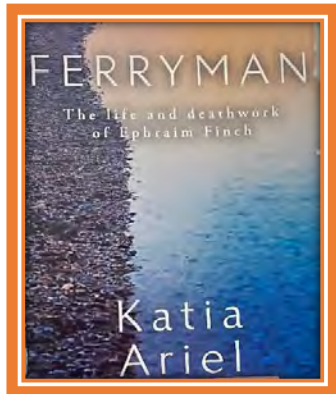
We continue to receive enquiries from people requiring assistance with their family trees, compiling family history books, help with using genealogical websites and guidance searching through the various archives for those elusive ancestors. All enquiries are welcome.

*Books recently added to the AJGS / AJHS collection:

'Ferryman' by Katia Ariel

'Uncovering their Names and Stories' by David Henry Marlow

'From Chains to Honours' by Michael Cohen



Please email ajgsvictoria@gmail.com for an appointment to use the resource room if you wish to do research or to simply browse. Hope to see you shortly.

Liz James OAM

ROOTS PROJECTS 2025

By Liz James OAM



Schools Participating -2025

- Mount Scopus - Year 8 - (5 sessions)
- Yavneh - Year 9
- Sholom Aleichem - Grade 6
- Bialik - Year 7
- King David - Year 8
- United Jewish Education Board - Batmitzvah Class - various schools

Locations -

- The Jewish Museum - Yavneh, Scopus, Sholem Aleichem and UJEB
- Bialik College Campus
- King David Campus
- Evening presentations at the Jewish Museum for Mount Scopus and Yavneh parents by Bernie Kuran
- Evening presentations at Bialik Campus for Bialik parents by Liz James

Presentation included -

- Assortment of documents available for Roots Projects / History of surnames-presented by Bernie Kuran (at Jewish Museum and King David - 11 sessions)
- Assortment of documents available for Roots Projects at Bialik - presented on campus - Liz James

Pre-Preparation - January -

- Rene Eisner prepared email handouts and business cards.
- Liz James updated Power Point presentation on finding documents, maps, photos, and the use of websites to support the data found on each family tree.

February -

- Participating School staff emailed with instructions and then students completed their four-six generation trees to send back to the Society two weeks prior to our visit.
 - Documents from National Archives of Australia, Melbourne Chevra Kadisha, Yad Vashem, USHMM, Bad Arolsen, Australian Jewish Historical Society, Miriam Weiner- **'Routes to Roots', JewishGen** - (various sites), Gesher Galicia and JRI Poland etc.
- were consulted for proof of - Birth, Death, Burial, Marriage, Census records, Holocaust testimonies, Military, Immigration, Newspaper publications, Residences and other relevant information. Where available these documents were attached to their six generation trees and returned to the students on the day of their session.
- Assisted by Liz James for Sholem Aleichem;
 - Rene Eisner and Terry Ashton for King David
 - Rodney Eisfelder, Helen Gardner, Viv Bayer, Max Wald and Liz James for Mount Scopus
 - Max Wald and Liz James for Yavneh
 - Liz James for UJEB Bat-mitzvah Class

Activity at Bialik-

- Based on their Ancestry, students were directed to search on JewishGen- (JOWBR) and Australian Jewish Historical Society websites to find the information for themselves.
- Assisted on the day by Terry Ashton, Max Wald, Bernie Kuran, Viv Bayer, Rodney Eisfelder, Rene Eisner and Liz James.

Students very engaged in this activity of using the internet to research their own families and were excited about their findings.

Evaluation -

- Sessions went smoothly, staff extremely supportive and interested. Students were very engaged.
- Preparing the trees before the sessions meant that students already had ownership of up to four generations and the rest could be discovered over time.
- As mentioned in my last report, the majority of the grandparents of these students were born approximately between 1950-1960 in Australia, South Africa, Israel, Morocco, Turkey, Brazil, Argentina, Rio DeJaneiro, USSR, Yemen and Ukraine.

There are very few documents available on the latter countries but JewishGen is now starting to include more areas for research (including Turkey). The Society will need to consider these countries of origin in preparation of an increased demand for documents and the ability to translate and assist these young students so that they can also begin their journey of discovering their own unique ancestry. ChatGPT can be useful in translating these documents but still has limitations with some accuracy.

‘One of the benefits of doing a Family Tree, is seeing history through the eyes of your ancestors’.

Liz James OAM - 2025

Australian Jewish Genealogical Society - Vic

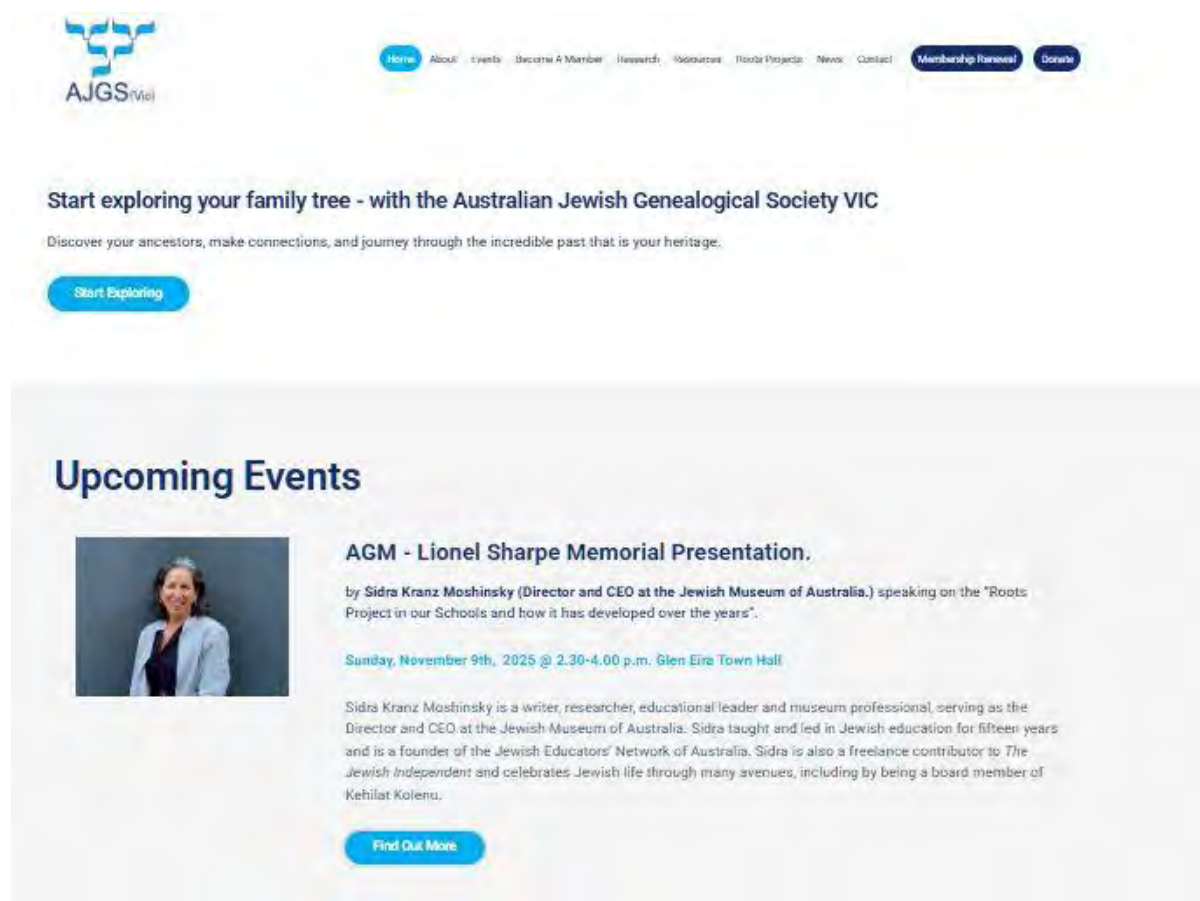
Website Report 2025

by Aaron Blicblau

The AJGS-VIC website has been redesigned to reflect the upcoming events on the front page. The membership application and renewal features have been well utilised. All other aspects are functioning well.

Future needs are for a 'Member only' section to be added.

Aaron Blicblau



Documentation of Jewish Records Worldwide (DoJR) Annual Report 2025

By Helen Gardner

Cataloguing

B'nai B'rith requested that their previously catalogued boxes be repacked into new boxes and this has been completed.

Cataloguing of Courage to Care archive boxes has been completed, and we have been given permission to use the completed file of their archives to show other organisations the level at which we work and the kinds of information we collect.

Archives at The Sephardi Shul and Kew Shul are currently being catalogued, and the Ketubot from Kew Shul have been scanned.

The project has been approved by the JCCV board, and a very warm and positive meeting was held with the JCCV CEO, Naomi Levin, who is very enthusiastic. Cataloguing their boxes will occur at a later date. Naomi is also happy to send out promotional material in which she will announce that JCCV is participating and they encourage other organisations to also participate.

Henry Greener from The Shtick TV has expressed interest in having the 800+ interviews he has done for the Shtick documented. He will provide us with his diaries, in which every interview is numbered, identified and dated and we can send parcels of them out for people to type them up.

Publicity

Helen Gardner was interviewed on J-Wire and J-Air, and articles on DoJR have been published in J-Seek (Vic), the JCCV news digest, and the Jewish Independent.

Team

Marcel Alter, Myer Bloom, Helen Gardner, Evie Katz and Manny Kingsley continued their roles. Max Sandler briefly joined the team, but then was awarded a scholarship to spend 2025 in China. He plans to rejoin when he returns. Henry Nusbaum and Sue Silberberg have both made valuable contributions.

Documentation of Jewish Records Worldwide (DoJR) continued

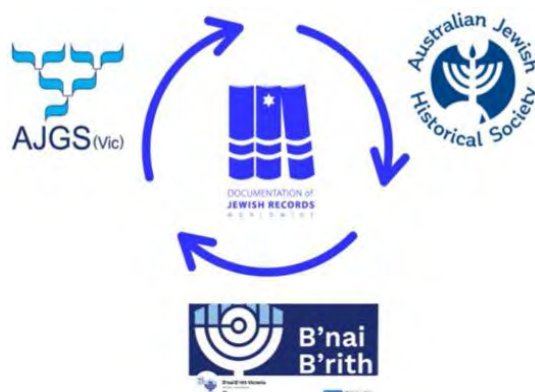
Essentials Guide to Jewish Genealogy in Australia

An “Essentials Guide” is an overview of the major sites, both Jewish and non-Jewish, where records of Jewish genealogical interest are likely to be found. An “Essentials Guide to Jewish Genealogy in Australia” has been prepared and sent to the US to be included on the L’Dor V’Dor Foundation website. AJGS NSW (now Genealogy@AJHS) made substantial contributions to the work.

Financials

AJGS VIC has provided DoJR with a \$250 seeding grant for expenses incurred by the project. We have created a “kit list” of items useful to take with us when we go out to catalogue boxes. Some of the AJGS VIC seed grant will be used for this purpose.

Helen Gardner
29 July 2025



Reports 2025

by Max Wald

BURIALS: I have concluded adding the headstone images that AJGS (Vic) took over the years on Mitzvah Day to the Melbourne Chevra Kadisha website.

I continue to liaise with AJHS biannually updating them on all the burials from Melbourne Chevra Kadisha and Adass Chevra Kadisha.

They have taken over the responsibility to liaise with JOWBR which gives them a complete list and records of Jewish burials of all cemeteries in Australia and New Zealand.

They, AJHS, continually ask about the Bet Olam burials. I have approached Bet Olam many times and they seem reluctant to oblige.

ZOOM: I continue to organize Zoom sessions throughout the year which has enabled the Society to stream experts from around the globe for our members.

When applicable we are successfully using the facilities at the city of Glen Eira Town hall for face-to-face meetings.

Max Wald

Facebook



Australian Jewish Genealogical Society - VIC >

🌐 Public group · **913** members

👤 **Joined** ▾

👤 **Invite**

You

Chats

About

Photo