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# On its 72nd Independence Day, Israel's population numbers 9,190,000

## JWIRE

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) released its traditional statistics report on the citizens of Israel in honour of Yom Ha'Atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day.

**Israel has 9,190,000 citizens, more than 10 times its population of 806,000 at the time of the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948.**

On Israel's 100th birthday, in 2048, the CBS estimate that Israel's population will grow to about 15.2 million citizens. According to CBS projections, Israel's population will number 11.1 million at 2030 and 13 million at 2040.

The Jewish population stands at 6,806,000, 74 per cent of the entire population. Israel's Arab citizens constitute 21 per cent of the total population, numbering approximately 1,930,000. Non-Arab Christians and other religious groups constitute about 5 per cent of the population.

Since last year's Independence Day, Israel's population grew by 171,000, constituting a 1.9 per cent growth, including 180,000 newborn babies; 44,000 people have died.

Israel welcomed 32,000 new immigrants. Some 3.3 million people have made Aliyah (immigration to Israel) since 1948, making up 43 per cent of the total population.

About 78 per cent of Israel's population is Israeli-born, known as "sabras." In 1948, only 35 per cent were Sabras.

50,000 Israelis are older than 90.  
At the time of the establishment of the State

of Israel, only one city had more than 100,000 residents – Tel Aviv-Yaffo. Today, 14 cities have over 100,000 residents; eight of them have more than 200,000. They are Jerusalem, Tel Aviv-Yaffo, Haifa, Rishon Letzion, Petah Tikvah, Ashdod, Netanya, and Beer Sheva.

Israel's capital, Jerusalem, is the most populated city, with some 883,000 residents – almost 10 per cent of the population.

In 1949, Israel had merely 500 cities and towns. Today, it has over 1,200.

In 2019, over 70 years after the Holocaust, the largest Jewish population lives in Israel. This figure represents 45 per cent of world Jewry.



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# What would the world be like with no State of Israel?

By Jonathan S. Tobin

What scholars like to call counterfactual history is science fiction for those who prefer to ponder the implications of things turning out differently in the past rather than speculating on the future.

Such "what if" scenarios are behind television shows like "The Man in the High Castle," which imagined life after the Germans and Japanese won the Second World, or "The Plot Against America"—the dramatization of the Phillip Roth novel that imagined isolationists led by Charles Lindbergh keeping America out of the war and then instituting state-sponsored anti-Semitism in the United States.

But as Israel celebrates its 72nd birthday this week, it's relevant to point out that a lot of people have spent the entire period of its history wishing that the outcome of the 1948–49 War of Independence had turned out differently. At the heart of the nakba or "disaster" narrative and core principle of Palestinian nationalism is a belief that the creation of Israel was a crime that should have been stopped and without which the world would have been much better off. The debate about the future of the West Bank often causes observers to lose sight of the fact that the basic demand of Israel-haters is not a Palestinian state alongside a smaller Israel, but no Israel at all.

## What would a world without Israel look like?

One suggestion came from novelist Michael Chabon in his 2007 novel, *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*. It imagined a world in which the United States had opened the gates to Europe's Jews and allowed them to create a Yiddish-speaking homeland in part of Alaska. In Chabon's alternative history, the State of Israel was also defeated only three months after its creation in May 1948.

The plot of the book revolves around a murder linked to messianic extremists looking to blow up the Temple Mount and create another Jewish state.

Given his hostility to the real Israel—something made clear in his 2018 commencement address at a Reform rabbinical seminary—it's not hard to understand his interest in a world where it didn't exist. Since the novel's publication, Chabon has occasionally lashed out at Israel but moved on to other projects where he has used his imagination to promote less destructive visions, such as his role as the showrunner of the latest successful edition of the "Star Trek" television franchise.

But we don't need a novelist of Chabon's calibre or the fevered imaginings of the anti-Zionist propagandists of Gaza, Ramallah or Tehran to know what the world would be like had Israel lost the War of Independence.

Had the Zionist effort failed, there would not be an independent Arab state on the territory of what had been the British Mandate for Palestine. The Arabs there opposed a U.N. vote to partition the territory between Jewish and Arab states. And if newborn Israel had been defeated, it would have been due to the efforts of foreign invaders: the British-led Arab Legion of what was then called Transjordan, as well as forces of Egypt and Syria. The former Mandate would have been divided up between them.

Palestinian Arabs may delude themselves into thinking that a world without Israel would have been Eden rediscovered, but its creation has, if anything, served as a check on the barbarism of the neighbouring dictators and monarchs. Israel's Arab citizens have democratic rights not enjoyed by their neighbours. And neither Europe nor the United States would have found it easier to make friends in the region if Israel hadn't been around to complicate matters.

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Nor do we need much imagination to understand what such a defeat would have meant for the 600,000 Jews who lived in the country. In every instance where Arabs succeeded in defeating Jewish defenders during the fighting, the outcome was always the same. At best, Jews were merely thrown out of their homes. At worst, they were massacred, as was the case at Kfar Etzion, the Judean settlement overrun by the Arab Legion and local Arab fighters.

In the real war, hundreds of thousands of Arabs fled their homes—most under the mistaken impression that the Jews would do to them what they wanted to do to the Jews. Had the outcome been different, what would have followed would have meant another Holocaust with any remaining Jews in the country being treated as dhimmi, second-class citizens without equal rights, and with their holy places desecrated or denied to them.

But the impact on Jewish life would have been far greater than that.



Israeli founding father and first prime minister David Ben-Gurion declares independence beneath a large portrait of Theodor Herzl, founder of modern Zionism. Credit: Wikimedia

Israel's creation changed the life of every Jew throughout the world, whether they were Zionists or religious. It made everyone stand up taller and feel safer. And its continued survival led to a movement among the millions of Jews in the former Soviet Union to demand their rights after half a century of oppression.

While we worry about a revival of anti-Semitism in our own day in which Israel is the stand-in for traditional anti-Jewish stereotypes and scapegoats, without it, the fate of contemporary Jewry would be immeasurably worse. Those who grew up in the post-1948 world simply have no idea how much it changed the way Jews are thought of and treated. Israel was not merely the place of refuge for Holocaust survivors and nearly a million Jews from the Arab and Muslim world all seeking freedom; the creation of a home for the Jewish people also made it easier for Jews to live as equals even if they chose to remain in the Diaspora.

To its detractors, Israel is a disappointment because it fails to live up to some unrealistic standard of morality unmet by any democracy at war, as it has been for every moment of those 72 years. But the real Israel remains the only democracy in the Middle East, as well as a haven for the arts and the sciences, and a "startup nation" that is at the cutting edge of so many advances for humanity.

Israel is a beacon of freedom for Jews everywhere, as well as a guarantor that the cycle of hate, oppression and slaughter that characterized Jewish history for 20 centuries would finally end. As such, it deserves the support of decent people—Jewish and non-Jewish—everywhere. While some mired in the fantasy world of anti-Semitism may dream about a world in which it never existed, the hope for the eradication of the one Jewish state on the planet is a manifestation of hate, not science fiction.

**Jonathan S. Tobin is editor in chief of JNS—Jewish News Syndicate. Follow him on Twitter at: @jonathans\_tobin.**

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The park will transform an old wastewater treatment plant into an oasis, featuring picnic areas, cycling trail, recreation areas and playgrounds.

The park will also attract many rare species of birds on their migratory route.

The project will also involve expanding the existing water reservoir, taking waste water from the surrounding neighbourhoods and recycling it for agricultural use.

The park will lift the morale of Nitzana residents, enable the arrival of new families, support the growth in eco-tourism and contribute to building a viable future for the residents along Israel's Southern periphery.

With this campaign we can together help secure the ongoing sustainability and security of Israel's South.



# A duty to download? Ethical decision-making and the COVIDSafe app

By Hugh Breakey

ABC Religion and Ethics

All over the country, Australians are being asked to make decisions about whether to download the federal government's COVIDSafe app. Ethical concerns are central to this decision-making, because the reasons being put forward to download the app explicitly invoke the effect we can have on other people. "Help stop the spread and save lives," the app enjoins us.

This marks a difference from other similar requests that the government might make to us — requests like the use of its My Health Record system. In that case, the main beneficiary of using the system is meant to be the person using it. This means they could simply weigh up the perceived costs and benefits of doing so, and make their decision accordingly. This is a personal, rather than ethical, decision.

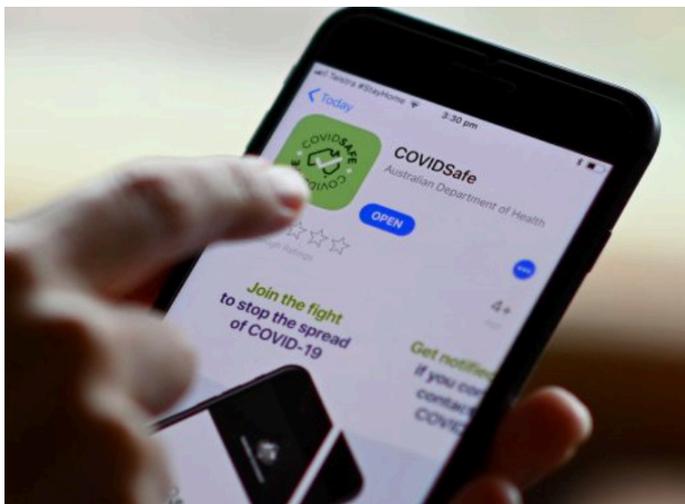


PHOTO: The civic duty to help others in this COVID-19 pandemic imposes a 'prima facie' duty on us — a duty that applies unless there are other, countervailing considerations. The question is: how ethically significant are these considerations? (Quinn Rooney / Getty Images)

With the COVIDSafe app, the situation is different. While there are some personal benefits for participating, the central rationale for using the app is to benefit the wider community.

Two major benefits are invoked:

The improved tracing offered by the app will help contain the virus' spread, leading to less contagion and fewer deaths.

The increased confidence health authorities have in being able to contain future outbreaks (through the improved tracing capabilities offered by the app) would allow the government to relax its social distancing restrictions. Since those restrictions are very onerous — socially and economically — this would have a huge impact on people's wellbeing.

Providing the app works effectively, these are clearly significant benefits. Ethically, we might think they impose on us a civic duty to download the app. But at best, these altruistic goods are only able to impose what ethicists term a "prima facie duty." This is a duty that applies provided all other things are equal. For example, you might promise your lonely friend that you will meet him for a chat at 5pm tomorrow (perhaps by means of Zoom, in our socially-distanced world). But an emergency arises where you must care for a family member. In this case, you still have a prima facie duty to meet your friend — you promised, after all. But the duty was not an all-things-considered obligation, as it was rightly trumped by other considerations. You can rightly skip your promised meeting, and your friend should understand you had legitimate all-things-considered reasons for doing so.

Similarly, the civic duty to help others in this crisis imposes a prima facie duty on us — a duty that applies unless there are other, countervailing considerations.

**What might those countervailing considerations look like?** Most of the most serious concerns surround issues of trust and privacy. Governments enter crises with the social capital — or lack of social capital — they have cultivated through their previous behaviour over the years.

## A duty to download?

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Unfortunately for their present purposes, the government's record on respecting privacy and protecting data is dreadful. Myriad instances of poor behaviour can be invoked at will — from the access given to agencies to personal data recorded under the mandatory data retention legislation, to the accidental release of personal health information, to raiding journalists' homes to locate their sources. Summing it up all too well, the deputy chair of the parliament's National Security Committee recently accused bureaucrats of having a "cavalier disregard" for agencies accessing Australians' personal data.

**The involvement of Amazon in the COVIDSafe system hardly improves matters. Not only does this raise the potential that US government agencies could access the data collected by the app, large multinational corporations themselves have consistent records of flagrantly exploiting the data running through their systems.**

To be sure, the government has acted on privacy concerns in important ways, through institutional, legislative and technological means. Most importantly, the COVIDSafe system keeps recorded data on the phone itself until a coronavirus diagnosis is made, at which point the user can consent to the data's release to health authorities. Critically, these system constraints can be subject to external scrutiny, especially if and when the app's source code is released.

Nevertheless, concerns with government misuse or mishandling of app data cannot be simply dismissed. There is every reason for concern.

How do those concerns translate into ethical decision-making? They are relevant in two ways. First, concerns that the government might abuse or mismanage a person's data significantly raise the personal risks associated with downloading the app. A person might reasonably wonder whether it is fair for them to be asked to shoulder those risks for the greater good.

Second, those risks can create a moral pressure which pushes back against using the app, such that a person might feel they are morally obliged to refuse. This may be driven by an ethical

concern that the government is over-reaching in an improper way by trying to expand its powers of surveillance. Or the concern might be that trust is a two-way street, and that the government should reap the distrust it has sowed. Alternatively, it might be thought that in offering to relax social-distancing restrictions in return for widespread use of the app, the government is presenting us with a devil's bargain, where genuinely voluntary, informed consent is impossible.

There are no easy answers to these concerns. The urgency and stakes of the coronavirus crisis are serious, but they do not simply negate people's rights to privacy. Equally, concerns with the misuse of data are reasonable, but they do not dispel the real-world effects of one's choices on others in the face of a raging pandemic.

There are no easy answers to these concerns. The urgency and stakes of the coronavirus crisis are serious, but they do not simply negate people's rights to privacy. Equally, concerns with the misuse of data are reasonable, but they do not dispel the real-world effects of one's choices on others in the face of a raging pandemic.

#### Can ethical theories offer guidance?

One helpful way of thinking through the issues can be to look to different approaches in ethical theory. These can assist us in looking at angles we may not have considered. They can also help us learn something about ourselves, and the way we approach moral questions.

#### Contemporary ethical theory uses three main approaches, each with a different focus: consequences, actions and character.

Consequence-based approaches look at the results of actions and the impact they have on the world. The most common form of this approach is the theory of utilitarianism, which holds that the morally right act is the one that maximises the sum total of happiness in the world. Acts that lead to widespread joy, peace and prosperity are lauded, and acts that create death, harm and discord are only allowed if they can reasonably be expected to lead to greater net happiness in the longer term.

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A utilitarian approach to decision-making about the COVIDSafe app will prioritise concerns with people's lives and health. Even if there are risks of data misuse, it's likely that the life-impacts of these on a few specific individuals will be outweighed by the potential goods on offer for the entire community. As such, the utilitarian thinker will probably opt for using the app as an effective way of altruistically pursuing the greater good.

Duty-based approaches focus on action-types (technically, the term for these theories is "deontological"). For these approaches, the end does not justify the means. Actions and choices can be intrinsically wrong or right, irrespective of their net consequences. These approaches focus on issues like rights, consent, desert and reciprocity. They are more likely to be wary of downloading the COVIDSafe app, questioning whether the government deserves our trust, whether we are in a position to give genuine consent, and whether our human right to privacy is being improperly encroached. That said, a duty-based perspective will incorporate countervailing considerations. After all, Australians are currently living under mandatory restrictions on our movement, travel, association and work.

**No less than privacy, these are all human rights. A duty-based response to ethical decision-making will have to make hard decisions about how far human freedoms should be restricted in the face of a crisis, and how trade-offs between rights can best be managed.**

The third approach looks at human character, focusing not about consequences or actions, but on who we are as people, and who we want to become. It focuses on the qualities of mind and heart — the virtues — that make us the best people we can be. A virtue approach would consider different aspects of the choice situation before us. On the one hand, this approach might see the app as an opportunity for us to work voluntarily with others to solve serious problems.

In fact, "solidarity" is one of the very few positive feelings (along with a litany of negative ones) that the coronavirus crisis has created in Australian communities. From a character-based perspective, this is a worthy result, and the COVIDSafe app presents a tangible opportunity to exercise and consolidate this valuable sense of solidarity. But from the opposing direction might come qualms with increased surveillance. Virtuous citizens should work to do the right thing because it is the right thing, and a world where our every movement is traced, recorded and checked is not one to encourage. Again, ethical decision-making will call for weighing up conflicting priorities.

**These three approaches can be seen as distinct, independent methods of ethical decision-making, and understanding them can help us better understand our own moral perspective on the world. It can also help us acknowledge the legitimacy of those who reason differently. Even though we might think it is patently obvious that we should download the app, others will adopt different approaches and perceive the ethical situation differently. For this reason, we need to be careful in our judgments of others' decision-making, and resist demanding that they follow our lead.**

It's worth stressing, in conclusion, that all the approaches direct our attention to morally relevant features of the decision facing us. From a common-sense ethical perspective, consequences like sickness and death are obviously bad, voluntary informed consent is clearly good, and human solidarity is a precious quality worth nurturing. All are factors worth including in your own decision making, as you work out what seems right to you.

*Hugh Breakey is a Senior Research Fellow in moral philosophy at Griffith University's Institute for Ethics, Governance and Law.*



## DOWNLOAD THE COVID SAFE APP NOW

As restrictions on social distancing are still vital and currently a necessity, the importance of the COVIDSafe app has increased. This app speeds up the current manual process of finding people who have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19.

This means people can be contacted more quickly if you are at risk.

The app reduces the chances of you passing on the virus to your family, friends and other people in the community.

I've installed it, along with many other members of our community and over 5 million other people across Australia.

[Click to find a link to download the app now.](#)

With communal greetings,

Paul Myers  
President  
Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies



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# I survived the Holocaust. Now I wait for freedom again

By George Szego

THE AGE

Nearly seventy-five years ago, on May 2, 1945, the US army liberated me from a concentration camp. As I anticipate the 75-year anniversary of that glorious day in spring, I find myself again in a kind of prison – waiting for release.



George Szego (centre) with his parents and uncle Max in their lounge room in Mezobereny.

When the Americans arrived at Muhlendorf-Mettenheim, a satellite camp of Dachau, my mind was dull and my body worn out from the terrible events that had occurred since the Nazis invaded my native Hungary a year earlier. I was a skeleton weighing only 34 kilograms. A recent bout of typhus fever left me so weak I could barely move.

The fact I was alive at all was thanks to the bravery of friends. First, the camp doctor – an old friend of my father's – slipped me extra food rations. Next, a friend from near my childhood village pulled me from a cart in which I'd been heaped beside the dead and moribund.

Still, that morning I dragged myself from the barracks to greet the tanks. On the other side of the barbed-wire fence the Bavarian countryside was beautiful in the tranquil sun, but also silent and empty.

In the following days my body grew stronger, my mind clearer.

I believed wholeheartedly that from now on life would be uninterrupted joy. It soon became clear this was naive and wrong and that even without barbed-wire life can bring hardship and tragedy. Within a few years the Hungarian revolution forced me onto the streets to cry, "Russians Go Home!" At one point I hid in the cellar, shaking at the sound of artillery fire from the Red Army.

I endured the challenges of being a new migrant in Australia, including getting my foreign medical degree recognised. And nearly seven years ago I held my dear wife's hand as she was dying of cancer.

Now, at 91 years old, I am once more fragile and ill – although this time it's simply the ravages of time and not the cruelty of humanity that's to blame. And it is also nature – the virus – that's largely to blame for my being a prisoner again: not in a camp but in my comfortable home.

**Even before the pandemic I wasn't coping well with ageing; now I'm totally obsessed with the fact of my ageing. One feels penalised for being old. Each time I read about a new death from COVID-19, the first thing I look for is the person's age.**

I am depressed at the prospect that if the hospitals get flooded with people struck with the virus, doctors might be forced to choose who gets ventilators and who doesn't. Thinking about this horrible scenario triggers memories of Dr Josef Mengele's infamous selections at Auschwitz-Birkenau. If he sends you to the right, you live (for now.) To the left, the gas chambers.

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While I cannot help thinking about these bizarre similarities between the nightmare past and our present predicament. I also accept that should doctors deny me a scarce ventilator in favour of someone younger and healthier – it's a fair decision.

**During the selection at Auschwitz I lost my family, suddenly. One moment my mother and grandmother were standing beside me. The next moment they were gone. Forever.**

At liberation I was 16 and alone. At 91 I am not alone. I know how much my family care about me. But we are at an ugly distance from each other: I can see them only from a few metres away, or through a window or a glass door.

Just as friendship saved my life 75 years ago, today I also draw strength from others. I have the strong support of my partner. I hope I live for a few more years to be with her and the rest of

my family. I want to spare my partner from grief for a little while longer. If I can offer any advice as a psychiatrist to a nation in quarantine it's to preserve relationships because we need each other to get through this.

Meanwhile, I wait. Not for the US Army, but for the authorities to relax quarantine restrictions.

In the afternoons I take a short walk in the street. Sometimes the odd person walks towards me, turns, suddenly, and crosses to the other side of the street. As if I'm a leper.

Just as I once looked through the barbed-wire, now I look through my bedroom window.

I see beautiful old trees and a lovely garden with flowers and tranquil autumn sunshine. And beyond my garden, the street. As silent and empty as the Bavarian countryside that momentous day.

I wait.

***George Szego is a retired psychiatrist and author.***

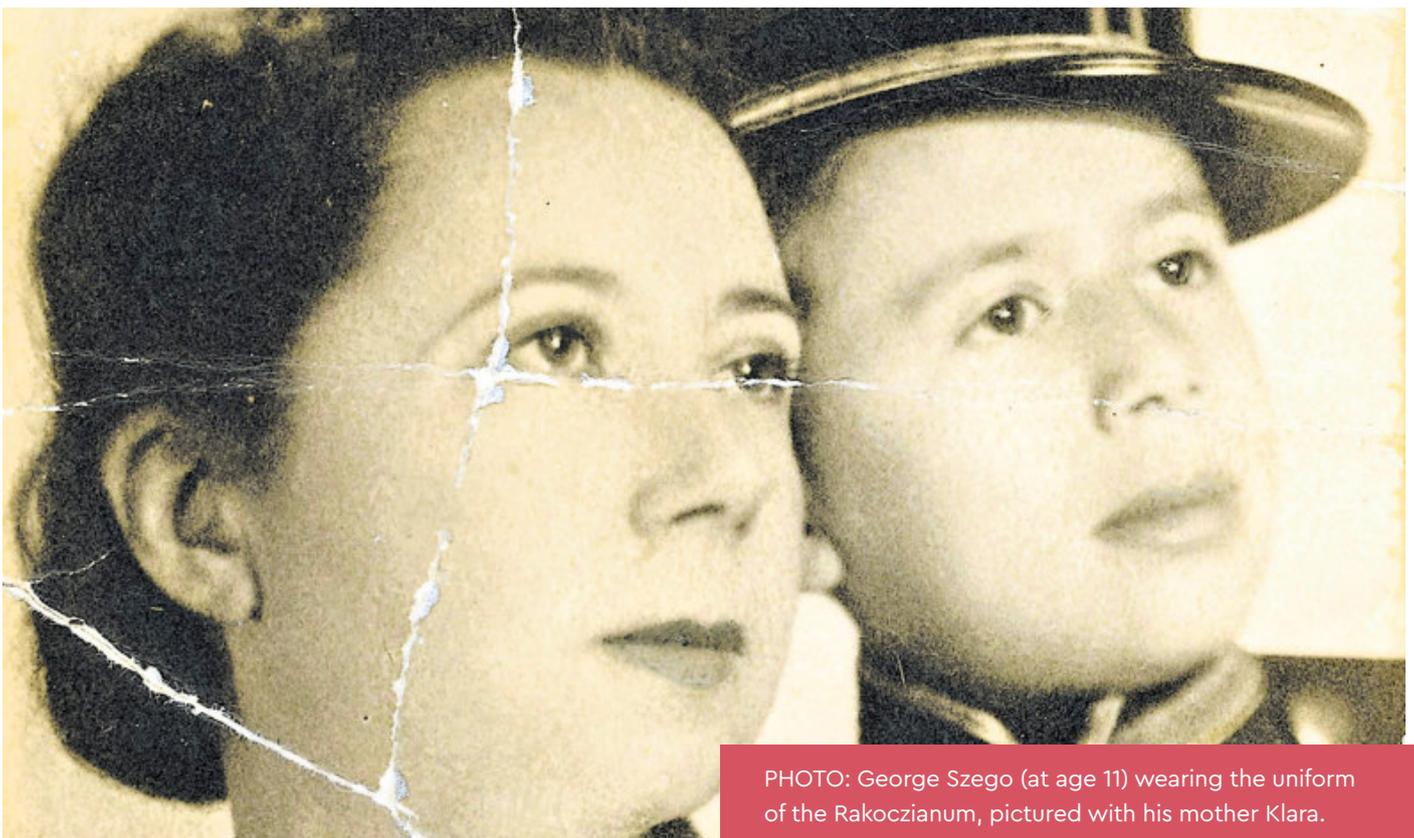


PHOTO: George Szego (at age 11) wearing the uniform of the Rakocianum, pictured with his mother Klara.

# The return of populist anti-Semitism

By Ben Cohen

JNS.ORG

To the lexicon of new terminology introduced by the coronavirus pandemic, we can add the latest entry: "Zoombombing," or the practice of hijacking private videoconferencing calls on the Internet by unwanted intruders.

In these long weeks of quarantining, self-isolation and social distancing, several Jewish organizational events held online have been Zoombombed by anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist activists. On March 24, for example, an online session of the National Council of Synagogue Youth in Boston was interrupted by a dishevelled-looking white supremacist, Andrew Alan Escher Auernheime, who pulled off his shirt to reveal a swastika tattoo. When the Israeli embassy in Berlin held an online commemoration event to mark Yom Hashoah on April 21, neo-Nazi activists broke in during a talk by Zvi Herschel, a Holocaust survivor, bombarding participants with images of Adolf Hitler alongside anti-Semitic slogans.

The Federal Association for Research and Information on Antisemitism (RIAS) in Germany has recorded six instances of Zoombombing by anti-Semitic agitators since the pandemic broke out. "People who disrupted offline commemorative events before the coronavirus crisis are now doing it online," said Pia Lamberty, the education officer of RIAS, in an interview with a German Jewish newspaper.

Lamberty also noted that there was a striking "overlap" of imagery that glorified the Nazis and messages that vilified the State of Israel. In one videoconference, she said, a Nazi swastika was displayed alongside a flag that declared, "Free Palestine."

The frequency with which these disruptions occur in future will be entirely determined by the quality of security around online events since there is clearly no shortage of disruptors out there willing to deliver the message that anti-Semites can attack on the Internet as well as off of it. Technology, then, will probably put these people out of sight sooner or later. But it manifestly won't put them out of mind.

This brings me to one of the key observations contained in the annual report on global anti-Semitism published last week by Tel Aviv University's Kantor Centre. With the onset of coronavirus, pre-modern beliefs about Jews as carriers of disease and as poisoners of the general welfare have returned with a vengeance, and sit comfortably alongside more recent fixations with Zionism and Israel. According to the report, so far "these accusations appear to be promoted mainly by extreme rightists, ultra-conservative Christian circles, Islamists, and to a minor extent by the far left, each group according to its narrative and beliefs."



Ben Cohen/JNS

## The return of populist anti-Semitism

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JNS.ORG

In Turkey, long considered a critical meeting point of eastern and Western cultures and beliefs, a website named Avlaremo—Judeo-Spanish for “Let’s talk”—as compiled a list of anti-Semitic incidents connected to the pandemic that synthesize anti-Semitic tropes from down the ages. In one example that was uploaded to Twitter, a video showed passengers on a bus in Turkey conversing with the driver about the coronavirus. Claiming that COVID-19 had been deliberately created by international pharmaceutical companies, the driver then asked, “And who do they belong to?” “The rich,” responded one passenger. “No,” said the driver. “The Jews.”

The conversation continued in much the same vein. “The Jews are doing everything to exterminate the Turks,” another passenger chimed in. “The Turks? No, the whole world!” exclaimed another.

The Internet has also provided an unprecedented opportunity to spread similarly base anti-Semitic beliefs among children and teenagers. TikTok, a video-sharing platform owned by a Chinese Internet company with the full approval of the ruling Communist Party, has become a swamp of anti-Semitic content. Much of the hatred takes the form of humour—jokes about the Holocaust, cartoons featuring Jews with crudely lengthened noses, memes like “Sneaky Jew” and “Mega Jew.” All of this is available not on the darknet, but on a platform described by Vox magazine as the “defining social media app of Generation Z, not only in the U.S. but around the world in places like India and Europe.” And unlike Zoom, which is an American concern, TikTok—whose ties to

China’s national security establishment are currently being investigated by the U.S. Congress—has far less of an incentive to prevent racists, anti-Semites and sundry other bigots from using its platform to promote hatred not in totalitarian China, but in democratic societies.

The challenge going forward is daunting. Countering populist anti-Semitism is a matter of education, but not only that. It also touches on the regulation of the Internet, global restrictions on hate speech, national security measures and the prospect of tougher legal sanctions against both individual extremists and the platforms that host them. While those issues are debated in all their complexity, the stream of propaganda will continue, finding new arteries when old ones are suddenly cut off.

In that regard, the Tel Aviv University report on anti-Semitism in 2019 made the important observation that there is a “growing discrepancy between on-the-ground reality and governmental efforts.” As anti-Semitism has escalated during the last 20 years, a correspondingly modest governmental infrastructure has evolved in tandem. For example, both the U.S. State Department and the European Union have appointed senior officials to deal with anti-Semitism, while the German government has appointed a commissioner at federal level, as well as local commissioners in nearly all of the German states. All these appointments are welcome and have made a real difference when it comes to the more accurate reporting of anti-Semitic incidents, in addition to the provision of anti-Semitism awareness-training.

But even then, as the Tel Aviv University report remarks, anti-Semitic incidents are still underreported, while their perpetrators go unidentified in many, if not most, cases. On the Internet and off, we have a new, arguably more formidable, mountain to climb.

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PLEASE HELP US LOCATE THOSE IN NEED



**75** years

.....  
have passed since the Holocaust, an act of unimaginable evil and a continued stain on human history.

Although we can never forget and should constantly revisit this memory we can be proud that Judaism and Yiddishkeit has survived and continues to flourish today.

IN THIS SPECIAL YEAR WE WISH TO RAISE OUR PROFILE TO EXTEND OUR HELP AND SUPPORT TO THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST AMONGST US, PARTICULARLY HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS IN QUEENSLAND.

**If you know** of any survivor who is struggling in their old age, who needs support and care and who may not be aware of the existence and purpose of our organisation we would like to hear from you.



We remember all the survivors and although many have passed the few remaining provide us with an inspiration **TO NEVER ALLOW THE SHOAH TO OCCUR AGAIN.**



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PLEASE CONTACT 

**Brisbane and Queensland JCareQld:**

Howard Posner

Tel: 0424335969 • Email: Jcareqld@gmail.com

**NCJWA Gold Coast / Gold Coast Jewish Community Services Inc.**

Barbara Stewart-Kann

Tel: 0412 377 488 • Email: bkann@bigpond.net.au

# SYDNEY WOMAN BECOMES AN ORTHODOX RABBI

## J-WIRE

Rabbanit Judith Levitan has been granted smicha making the first woman in Sydney to be ordained as an orthodox rabbi.

Following three years of study involving travelling twice a year to New York, Rabbanit Judith passed her final exams having faced two examiners one in New York and the other in Jerusalem last week.

The legal aid lawyer had been studying with Yeshivat Maharat in New York with Rabbi Daniel Sperber from Jerusalem Israel being part of the examination process.

In Sydney, Rabbanit Judith attended classes in New York via Zoom 3-4 times weekly.

She has been a member of the Maroubra Synagogue for 11 years. She told J-Wire that she is not employed by the synagogue and does not hold any official position within its community.

Acknowledging the congratulations from Rabbi Yossi Friedman, Rabbanit Judith said: "I am an active of the Maroubra community I took this journey to smicha as a means of personal growth. I will have to explore what opportunities may arise in the future." She is not employed by the synagogue and remains a committed volunteer.

She said that Rabbi Moshe Gutnick is aware of her course and she has had ongoing discussions with the Sydney Beth Din.



Rabbanit Judith Levitan at work

## SYDNEY WOMAN BECOMES AN ORTHODOX RABBI

J-WIRE

**Rabbanit Judith continued: "I follow all the laws of Halacha and I do not wear a tallit or lay tefillin. I will not conduct a mixed service and I will not read from the Torah in a mixed service. But I can give Dvar Torah from the bima."**

People can bring halachic questions to the new rabbi who can also teach.

She said there could be problems and questions that people have which they may prefer to discuss them with a woman.

She said: "I see myself as an additional access point for this with something on their mind within Jewish law who might be uncomfortable on women's issues."

Rabbanit Judith Levitan is involved in many aspects of Maroubra Synagogue life one of which is teaching Bat Mitzvah girls, not only from within the shul's community.

Whereas the Rabbanait prepares brides for their weddings she will be working with the rabbis to explore opportunities to conduct a wedding. However, she can attend and speak at a shiva house but cannot officiate at a funeral.

Rabbanit Judith is involved in many aspects of community life and hopes to work with the Rabbis to explore further opportunities.

Rabbanat Judith said the course involved "rigorous study" of Jewish texts over three years.

Nine other women will graduate at the same time as Judith of the 27 currently doing the course.

The graduation will be held in Sydney on June 10. It will be a virtual graduation conducted over zoom involving students in the USA, Israel and Australia. The graduation will be coordinated out of New York at Yeshivat Maharat.

**The course for women rabbis started in 2008. The Sydney Beth Din stated: "The term ordination, which normally refers to conferring of certain religious powers on a minister, does not correctly describe Smicha."**

With the conferring of Smicha, nothing changes in the way an individual performs religious functions. Instead, it is an acknowledgement of Torah knowledge gained.

Never the less, there remains a great deal of Halachic controversy around the awarding of formal Smicha to women.

That said, we applaud Rabbanit Judy for her incredible commitment to the study of Torah and observance of Mitzvot.

We are certain that with her newfound knowledge and skills she will continue to be an incredible asset to Orthodoxy in general and to our community as a whole."

Ellyse Borghi in Melbourne received Smicha from Yeshivat Harel in Israel last year.





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## SOCIALLY YOURS

### HAPPY 90TH BIRTHDAY TO FORMER BRISBANITE JULES HOFFMAN.

Due to the current restrictions Jules missed out on celebrating with his family in Melbourne, and also missed out on celebrating with his adopted family in Sydney (Inge Marcus and her family). Jules and Inge have been together in Sydney since October 2007, and Jules has been loved by his second family since then. Jules and his late wife Sarah (Lapidos) and Inge and her late husband Lou have been friends since they both grew up in Brisbane. Jules has just become a Great-Grandfather for the 3rd time, and Inge is waiting for her first Great-Grandchild from her Granddaughter Samantha (Sami), who is Debbie and Avi's daughter.

HOPE A LOT OF OUR FRIENDS WHO ARE STILL IN BRISBANE REMEMBER US!

SUBMITTED BY INGE MARCUS (SYDNEY)

# JNF BLUE BOX PESACH CAMPAIGN

**This Pesach, help build a viable and sustainable environment for the residents along Israel's Southern periphery.**

JNF's Blue Box campaign is raising funds for the development of the Nitzana Ecological Park in one of the most remote areas of Israel's Negev.

The project will involve expanding the existing water reservoir, recycling waste water from the surrounding neighbourhoods and transforming the old wastewater treatment plant into an oasis.

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<p><b>Please support the Brisbane Chevra Kadisha by:</b>  Annual membership, donations &amp; bequests, planning for the future, making your wishes known, ensuring details of your Jewish name and heritage are known.</p> <p>Funeral and monument costs are substantial (refer <a href="http://bck.net.au">http://bck.net.au</a>). We suggest community members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with <b>trusted advisers</b> to organise finances and insurances</li> <li>• <b>Join the Chevra:</b> We perform many duties when a Jewish person passes away and BCK (Tahara/Chapel) fees are part of overall funeral / burial costs. The BCK fee component is reduced for members (5 years continuous)</li> <li>• Work through the Chevra to <b>pre-purchase a burial plot</b> at Mt Gravatt Cemetery's Jewish Section</li> <li>• Consider the 'Guardian Plan' (<a href="https://www.guardianplan.com.au">https://www.guardianplan.com.au</a>), accessible through George Hartnett Metropolitan Funerals, as a way to <b>pre-pay future funeral fees at today's prices.</b></li> </ul>	

The Chevra is run by volunteers who meet with family, coordinate with George Hartnett Metropolitan Funerals and Brisbane City Council cemetery management, conduct Tahara, supervise the funeral and burial, assist with arrangements for a monument. We work with cemetery management to manage the Jewish section at Mt Gravatt. We operate the Jewish Chapel, maintain the Anzac Memorial Garden and Martyrs' Memorial and retain a watching brief over the Jewish section at the historic Toowong cemetery.



# WHAT I GET OUT OF BEING JEWISH

Every Jew has an attitude to Jewishness. For some it is negative; Heine said, "Judaism is not a religion. It is a misfortune."

But those who are negative are today very few. The 20th century has seen to that. The Holocaust confronted Jews with an ideology which sought to annihilate them; the threat strengthened their Jewish consciousness and now they echo Emil Fackenheim's words that it is forbidden to grant Hitler a posthumous victory.

The creation of Israel, the hope realised, the dream come true, has injected vigour and excitement into Jewish life. The result is an upsurge in Jewish consciousness everywhere.

Albert Einstein remarked, "I am sorry I was born a Jew... because it deprived me of the privilege of choosing to be a Jew".

I think this is a tremendous thought. My Jewishness is an accident of birth, but I do not regret it in any way. Indeed I am grateful for it.

## **I am part of an ancient people.**

I am descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; from Moses the lawgiver, David the poet-warrior, Solomon the sage, Isaiah who thundered against injustice; from Jews of faith and vision, courage and compassion; from martyrs and pioneers and leaders of thought – these are my people.

## **I have a rich heritage of culture.**

*Rabbi Raymond Apple was for many years Australia's highest profile rabbi and the leading spokesman on Jewish religious issues. After serving congregations in London, Rabbi Apple was chief minister of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, for 32 years. He also held many public roles, particularly in the fields of chaplaincy, interfaith dialogue and Freemasonry, and is the recipient of several national and civic honours. Now retired, he lives in Jerusalem and blogs at <http://www.oztorah.com>*

My heritage is the Bible, the inexhaustible mine of inspiration; the Talmud, the literary civilisation and eternal mental stimulus; and classics of poetry and philosophy, theology and thought, literature, liturgy and law, each of which could occupy me for a life-time – these are my treasures.

I have a challenging ethical tradition.

My belief in God means that we all have a common father and I am a brother to every other human being. My models are Levi Yitzchak, who had a good word for every sinner; Yisrael Salanter, who missed Kol Nidrei because a crying baby needed to be rocked to sleep; the Chafetz Chayyim whose work was to teach people to guard their tongue – this is my ethical example.

## **Judaism brings poetry into my life.**

I gain such richness from the weekly Sabbath-evening scene in synagogue and home, the family table at Pesach, the colour and aroma of the sukkah, the magnetic tremor in the synagogue at Ne'ilah – Judaism gives me ceremony and symbolism, melody and mood, laughter and tears.

## **Judaism is moral courage.**

Judaism, said Leo Baeck, is the eternal dissenter. It cannot live at peace with a world where lands are filled with broken bodies, hearts and minds because of war, poverty, hunger and injustice. It must speak out. As the Perek says, "Where there are no men, you must be a man." A Jew must stand up and speak up.

## **Judaism is intellectual satisfaction.**

# **BRISBANE HEBREW CONGREGATION**

## REQUEST TO CURRENT AND FORMER MEMBERS

**155 YEARS AGO**, in 1865, The Brisbane Hebrew Congregation (BHC) became an officially recognized and formed entity.

**134 YEARS AGO**, in 1886, The Brisbane Synagogue in Margaret st., City was consecrated and officially opened.

**55 YEARS AGO**, in 1965, the Centenary of the BHC was celebrated and Morris Ochert (Z'L) compiled a detailed resume' of its first 100 years, which can be viewed on the BHC website.

In my role of Hon. Heritage Officer of the BHC, I am currently creating an anthology of the memoirs of current and former members. This will be collated and published in book form on completion. The project is designed to include personal memories of the BHC, the Margaret St. Shul and the Chedar which has been functioning also since 1865.

**I AM SEEKING THE ASSISTANCE OF ALL WHO HAVE/ HAD ATTENDED THE SHUL AND CHEDAR TO JOIN IN THIS INITIATIVE AND PERSONALLY WRITE UP THEIR MEMOIRS.** Unlike the "Centenary Review", I am placing maximum emphasis on people. their characters, their achievements, and their personalities, thus bringing a totally unique perspective and vitality to this project.

It is a sad indictment that our founding fathers are now but names with no record of them as the people and personalities they truly were.

**PLEASE JOIN WITH ME IN MAKING THIS A POSITIVE AND SUCCESSFUL RECORD OF OUR BHC HISTORY FOR TODAY'S AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.**

## **I NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE**

As is oft quoted from Hillel,  
"If Not Now, When?"

Photo of BHC Synagogue by Anna Jacobson

Dr. A. Michael Briner (Hon. Heritage officer, BHC)

**CONTACT FOR FURTHER DETAILS**

**EMAIL: [abriner@icloud.com](mailto:abriner@icloud.com)**

[www.jcareqld.com](http://www.jcareqld.com)



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If you think you might need our services, or know someone who might, please contact :



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# BRISBANE HEBREW CONGREGATION



**THE BRISBANE SYNAGOGUE**  
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Shabbas, Friday evening: Ma'ariv 6pm

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### MISHKAN ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE

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#### Regular Services

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Eli Saranga  
**Chairman**

Shlomo Cohen  
**President**

**Kabalat Shabbat 6:30pm**

Maariv 7:00pm

Shacharit 8:00am

Mincha 17:30 followed by Shiur until Maariv

Maariv 7:00pm

Shacharit 7:30am

Monday Evening: Shiur 6:30pm, covering the weekly Torah portion, the festivals and our sages

Email: [sarangaeli@gmail.com](mailto:sarangaeli@gmail.com)  
Mobile: 0434 724 052

Email: [Shlomocohen357@hotmail.com](mailto:Shlomocohen357@hotmail.com)  
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## ORGANISATIONS

### QUEENSLAND

<b>Jewish National Fund Qld</b>	07 3807 9212
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### GOLD COAST

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<b>Gold Coast Chevra Kadisha</b>	
Robbie Ventura	07 5596 6919

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### BRISBANE - REGULAR EVENTS

<b>Community Diary Bookings</b>	Kathy Gould
	07 3411 3664
	0402 497 413
	kathygould45@msn.com
<b>WIZO Aviva</b>	2nd Tuesday each Month (n)
	07 3715 6562
	wizoqld@gmail.com
<b>NCJWA Meeting</b>	3rd Monday 7:30pm

### GOLD COAST - REGULAR EVENTS

<b>NCJWA Gold Coast</b>	Monthly Meetings
www.ncjwa.org.au	7:30pm - 1st Monday of each month
	0412 377 488 goldcoast@ncjwa.org.au
<b>Temple Shalom Services</b>	Office 07 5570 1716
	Erev Shabbat 6:30pm Shabbat Morning 10am
	Oneg Shabbat 2nd Friday each month following services
	Se'udat Shabbat Last Shabbat each month following Torah Service
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	Mon & Wed 10am-12 Noon
	Friday 8-10 am
<b>Gold Coast Hebrew Congregation</b>	All enquiries call 07 5570 1851
<b>Services</b>	Friday Night Live
	Uplifting Service every Friday Night starting 5:30pm
	Shabbat Kiddish
	Following the service every Shabbat at 9am
	Kabbala and Jewish Mysticism
	Journey of the Soul,
	Monday evening at 7:30pm
	Talmud Classes
	Thursday evening at 7:30pm

**HAVE SOMETHING YOU WOULD LIKE FEATURED IN**  
*Socially Yours?*

[sociallyyours@shalommagazine.com.au](mailto:sociallyyours@shalommagazine.com.au)

## JULY DEADLINE

FRIDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020

Submission, letters and articles may be edited for publication.

COPY MUST BE PROOFED & PREFERRED BY EMAIL

**admin@shalommagazine.com.au**

When submitting photo by email make sure:

1. Set your camera to take high resolution shots (no less than 3 megapixels)
2. Email them as an attachment same size (high resolution) & not reduced for web (or screen) viewing or placed in word document