



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2023

BY: ADRIENNE JACOBSON

WITH SUPPORT FROM

Daniel Bloch, Josh Friedman and Mika Abramowitz-Visagie

September 2022 – October 2023

By Adrienne Jacobson, Chairperson 2022-2024



It has been a great privilege and honour to have chaired the Cape SAJBD for the past 14 months. Our leadership theme and style of this current term has been that of collaboration, inclusivity, participation, growth, transparency and robust, meaningful interaction and engagement.

Communities are dynamic and complex systems in a constant state of flux and growth, and those communities that thrive most, are those that are able to adapt and refocus easily during times of adversity. In fact, no one says it better than Charles Darwin “It is not the most intellectual of the species that survives, it is not the strongest that survives, but the species that is best able to adapt and adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself. “And even though Charles Darwin has never had the pleasure of meeting us, he would be proud of the Cape Town Jewish community. Community resilience is built primarily through relationships, not just between members of the community but between organizations and it is specifically in this forum, with our incredibly strong relationships with our affiliate organizations and community members that we are able to draw on this strength, vibrancy and connectedness of our community.

Since the events from the 7th October until today, these past 6 weeks have seemed longer than the entire year and it has been during this time that calm, measured and steadfast leadership has been called for. This has been modelled magnificently by our Executive committee who have steered us competently, mindfully and ethically, through the most challenging and toughest of times with the most considered and inspirational leadership.

I would like to thank our entire Council for their commitment, dedication, insights, leadership and friendship. Without your advice, assistance and cooperation we could not have steered the Board so successfully through the challenges of the past year.

The Cape South African Jewish Board of Deputies (“Cape SAJBD”)

is the representative body of the Western Cape Jewish community committed to:

- Safeguarding the religious and civil rights and status and welfare of the Western Cape Jewish community,
- Acting on behalf of this community in all matters affecting its relationship with Government and other relevant authorities.
- Promoting harmonious relationships between the Western Cape Jewish community and the larger South African population.
- Enhancing the quality of Jewish life in South Africa.
- Taking any lawful action, it may deem necessary in all matters affecting this community.

The vision of the Cape SAJBD is to ensure the continuity, protection and resilience of a proud Western Cape Jewish Community in an inclusive and just society, and to build coalitions between the community and external allies to address common issues and problems.

The Board works towards this vision by educating the greater public about Judaism with a focus on its history, religion and culture; robustly challenging all manifestations of antisemitism and related discrimination; and lawfully defending our community where necessary.

The Board seeks to promote unity and pride and promotes an inclusive Western Cape Jewish community who respect, support and protect one another.

To achieve these objectives, we apply the following strategy.

Our Strategy: **Engage** **Educate** **Empower**

Three key words imbedded in our logo epitomises our strategy moving forward. The Board aims to engage and partner with organisations to fight antisemitism. We will educate the Western Cape community as to the history and contribution of the Jewish community to the Western Cape and ultimately, we seek to empower our community to stand up to those who seek to prevent us from practicing our Judaism in a free and safe environment.



Fighting antisemitism – Educate non-Jewish communities and Empower our own community.

The Cape Board has a zero-tolerance approach to any attack on its community or contravention of our Constitutional rights. A comprehensive monitoring programme for incidents, statements and events featuring Antisemitism remains in place. Print and digital media are monitored and research efforts to identify new areas of concern continue on a daily basis. We have strong partnerships with various organisations – in particular with the CSO and our National body.

We will combat the culture of prejudice that allows for Antisemitism. Together with diverse partners, we will support programmes centred upon public education. Read more under the Antisemitism and legal subcommittee as to the projects and initiatives which we created in 2023 and will continue into 2024.

Engage: Coalitions, Alliances, Advocacy

Our advocacy programme is focused on the building of reciprocally respectful and harmonious relationships and continue to cultivate existing relationships with government, civil society, religious communities and thought leaders.

In order to achieve this goal, we continue to follow the strategy which has worked well over the years.

1. Playing an effective role in the Anti-Hate Solidarity Networks
2. Participation at Civil Society events and discussions
3. Hosting our own events
4. Working with Provincial Government
5. Working with Educational Institutions



Our Political Context

In 2023, our community in the Western Cape suffered a variety of antisemitic attacks under the guise of anti-Israel. More so since October 7th, following the devastating murderous attacks by Hamas. The anti-Israel lobby was even more hostile than in previous years and showed its true antisemitic character during this time, with Jews being threatened, outside our places of worship, educational institutions and on social media. We continue to monitor where anti-Israel or anti-Zionist sentiment crosses over into antisemitism.

The conflict in the Middle East is still affecting the South African Jewish community. BDS continues to use local issues to push their anti-Israel and antisemitic agendas. In 2023, Cape Town bore the brunt of the anti-Israel campaign in a reversal of 2021 where Gauteng was the main hotspot. BDS and its partners have demonstrated outside the Gardens Jewish Community Centre which is home to the South African Jewish Museum, the Holocaust & Genocide Centre, Café Riteve, the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation and various Jewish communal organisations, including the Cape South African Jewish Board of Deputies. The BDS supported by members of the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign, PAGAD and the UCT PSF, also protested more notably outside Herzlia High School during the Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations where members of our community were subjected to various offensive and threatening statements from the protestors. The protestors also made their way to the Labia Theatre for the screening of the Golda premier. Of greater concern is the re-emergence of PAGAD, who in the 1990's was linked with the bombings of Planet Hollywood, St Elmo's and the Wynberg Shul. More information is detailed below in the report of our **Antisemitism & Legal subcommittee**.

The Cape Board has strengthened relationships with the Mayor's office and the City of Cape Town and created new relationships with the South African Police Services, to ensure that the safety of our community, is of primary concern. We also have support from our friends at the US, German, Canadian, British and other consulates along with various political parties and other faith-based organisations, who continue to stand by our side during these times.

The National elections will take place in 2024 and political campaigning is well under way. Whilst the sense is that the ANC will remain in power and the DA in control of the Western Cape, we will continue to monitor proceedings carefully and how the elections will impact our community.

The Board believes in being the practitioners of careful, thoughtful and deliberate positive communication and encourages our community to adopt the same thinking. We believe there is No Place for Hate and that "Words Matter". The Board will continue to promote the 'Words Matter' campaign which addresses concerns both within our community and externally.

Involvement with Communal Organisations

NATIONAL

The relationship between the Cape Board and our National body remains steadfast. 2023 has been a challenging year for the Western Cape, and our National Board has provided unwavering support. Over the past year we have collaborated on a number of antisemitic cases, and leaned on each other for advice and support. The National Chairperson, National Director and Head of Communications and Marketing, have come to Cape Town for a variety of important meetings and functions. Reciprocally, our entire Executive committee, has been to Johannesburg for National Executive meetings and will also be attending the National Conference in November. Earlier in the year, myself, our National Vice-Chairperson, Tzvi Brivik and our Executive Director, Daniel Bloch, attended the workshop session hosted by the President of Israel, Isaac Hertzog. The Voice of the People: A Worldwide Jewish Dialogue, was attended by communal leaders and organisations from around the country and provided a unique platform to engage in discussion about the role of diaspora Jewry in relation to Israel. Our Executive Director will also be attending the SAZF National Conference in mid-October supporting our fellow communal organisations. Myself and members of our Board, attended the book launch of the Chief Rabbi in Cape Town in a show of support. I also attended the National Dialogue on Coalition Governments, hosted by the office of the President, at the University of Western Cape, delivering a prayer on behalf of the Jewish community.

SAUJS

Throughout 2023, the Board has worked closely with SAUJS to ensure the organisation has the support it needs to implement its plan for the year. SAUJS Chair, Erin Dodo has been an important part of the Board make up, contributing to the discussions during our monthly Council meetings. Myself, members of our Executive and Ms Dodo have held quarterly meetings with senior members of UCT in a bid to strengthen the relationship and ensure that Jewish students on campus are represented and protected. The delegation from UCT included the Acting Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Transformation, Director for Alumni and the Advisor to the Vice Chancellor – ensuring we meet with decision makers within the university. The discussions centred around Israel-Apartheid Week, safety on campus and Yom Tov exams. Whilst we have been able to resolve issues related to Yom Tov exams, having several rescheduled, the real challenge has been around the UCT PSF actions both on and off campus as well as the University allowing globally recognised terrorist organisations like Hezbollah and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, to engage with students either online or via pre-recorded messages. Whilst we have communicated our concerns directly to the University as well as releasing media statements, these have not been adequately addressed. The University is aware of the situation and how Jewish students may feel unsafe on campus. However, as our own government does not recognise these organisations as terrorist groups, it makes it difficult for UCT to ban these organisations from campus. We are exploring all avenues to ensure our students are protected on campus and that these extremists are denied access. We will also continue to engage with the University.


OUR AFFILIATES

The Board is committed to enhancing our Jewish way of life within our community. In order to achieve some of our objectives, it is important to partner with those organisations who currently work within the community. For this reason, the Board engaged with many of affiliates to understand their needs and the support required from the Board. The support offered by the Board includes marketing support for projects and initiatives, financial support to cover basic costs associated with projects, attended affiliate events, connections with government officials, improving interfaith relationships and more.

Over the past year, myself and members of the Council attended several affiliate functions including: the EOLI Graduation Ceremony, Nigel Savage discussion with EOLI, Nigel Savage event with Mensch, Moishe House Annual Quiz, Sephardi Shabbat Dinner with the Rondebosch Boys High Jewish Society, Jewish Care Cape AGM, the Shining Light Awards, UJC Top Donors function, Union of Jewish Women Exhibition, SAZF AGM, Yom Hazikaron, Yom Ha'atzmaut, Milton Shain's book launch entitled "Fascists, Fabricators, and Fantasists: Antisemitism in South Africa from 1948 to the present.", UJW AGM, SA Jewish Museum Official re-opening of the Old Shul, United Herzlia Schools AGM, ORT Jet Networking and Entrepreneur event, Mensch Networking Breakfast session, Synagogues of South Africa Exhibition, Panel Discussion on Yiddish Theatre in SA hosted by the Cape Town HGC, EOLI's Lunch and Learn Workshop, the Union of Jewish Women Book Launch of "*Women of Action: A History of the UJW*" hosted at the SA Jewish Museum, Sephardi Shul's commemoration service of the Rhodes Island Jews who were deported to the death camps in 1944, UOS Legacy Project launch, Breakfast Seminar with British Advocate, Natasha Hausdorff, breakfast with Gusti Yehoshua Braverman, EOLI Symposium, the Mensch Mandela Day Cook-a-thon and more.

Our Executive Director with support from the professional staff and members of our Council, conducted important discussions with affiliates either to resolve issues or explore opportunities for collaboration on projects and initiatives. Some of these collaborative affiliate events included a Tu B'Shevat event which the Cape Board co-sponsored along with the SAZF, SAFI and Wizo. We planted trees at Camp Joy in Strandfontein which is a centre which educates and empowers 17-35-year-old victims of drug abuse and gangsterism. We were also joined by the City Cllr for the area, Elton Jansen, a CSO pre-IAW workshop for SAUJS students, addressing the students about their rights on campus and combatting antisemitism, an exclusive tour of the Union of Jewish Women's exhibition, an intercultural Youth Day Sports event at the Camps Bay Primary School which was co-hosted by the Cape Board, UJW Cape, Maccabi and the SAZF – Cape. This involved Jewish youth playing alongside the Silverstar Netball and Friends Football clubs arranged by the Noluntu Soup Project in Khayelitsha and The Board collaborated with the Eliot Osrin Institute and Kaplan Centre to host the JDC Entwine programme's international touring group of young Jewish adults at an introductory reception at the Kaplan Centre, UCT. The JDC Entwine Programme is an international Jewish community travel programme for young Jewish adults aged 23-30.

The Board often receives request for assistance from members of our community who are less fortunate. The Executive Director engaged with the Jewish Community Services in relation to these specific requests.



Throughout the year both the professional staff and lay leadership have engaged with many other affiliates including the SAZF, Herzlia, Rabbinical Council, Progressive Community, UOS, EOLI, South African Jewish Museum, Cape Jewish Chronicle, Ort SA, David Susman Community Foundation, UJC, WIZO, Mensch, UJW, CSO and others.


INTERNATIONAL JEWISH ORGANISATIONS


It is important to stay in touch with global Jewish issues. Throughout 2023, the Cape Board has been in communication with organisations across the globe sharing knowledge and best practice. Understanding how other Jewish communities operate and learning the do's and don'ts' s which if implemented correctly, can have a significant impact on our own community.

We have also engaged with other international organisations including the Anti-Defamation League (US), Mitzvah Day (UK), the Joint Distribution Committee (Israel), Bnei Brit Canada, the German Council for Jews, British Board of Deputies for Jews, JDC Entwine (US), the Board of Deputies for Jews Czech Republic, Australian Union of Jewish Students, Leeds Jewish Representative Council, AJC, Simon Wiesenthal Centre USA, Hillel International and various other institutions in Poland, Belarus, Argentina, Indonesia, Latvia, Spain

In November 2022, our Executive Director represented the South African Jewish community in New York, at the 2022 Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Summit on antisemitism and hate – *Never is Now*. This annual summit is the world's largest conference type event focused on creating greater understanding around - and ultimately the obliteration of - antisemitism and all forms of hate. The event took place at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Centre in Manhattan, and was attended by more than two thousand Jewish people from more than 60 countries. This event provided an Invaluable platform to learn about best practice from around the world, understand the trends in antisemitism, share experiences and more importantly, network with fellow Jews and forge new relationships. Daniel also attended a series of roundtable discussions with approximately 50 Jewish leaders from communities in Chile, Argentina, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Norway, Switzerland, Brazil, Panama, Finland, Australia, Italy and Colombia. There were panel discussions on global trends in antisemitism, new approaches in education to combat antisemitism, social media and the effectiveness of stopping online hate, data collection and how to use this and challenges confronting Jewish communities.

In July 2023, Daniel participated in a programme on *Jewish life in Germany*, organised by the German Federal Government. The German Consul General in Cape Town, Tanja Werheit, nominated Daniel to represent the Western Cape and ultimately the South African Jewish community. Daniel joined thirteen other communal leaders as they embarked on a trip to Berlin to learn about how this has become the fastest growing Jewish community in the diaspora, learn about Holocaust education and how they deal with the challenges of antisemitism. We have similar challenges related to antisemitism, shrinking communities and a lack of involvement from our young adults, however we are still committed to making each of our communities, the very best they can be.





What have we learnt from all these meetings, trips and engagements? South Africa is one of the safest places for Jews to live with one of the lowest rates of antisemitism anywhere in the world. We have also validated the work of the Board and realise whilst there is always room for improvement, we are doing things well and will continue to protect our community.

Our Messaging

Community Cares

The Board will continue to mobilise our Jewish community and others in the pursuit of building a more inclusive society, encouraging networking, volunteering, advocacy and philanthropic opportunities in the work we do. We believe the long-term prosperity and continuation of our community depends on those currently in the community showing they care, through outreach and upliftment. This messaging (**#CommunityCares**) has been used to underpin the various campaigns we have run throughout the year.

Know Your Rights


We created our Know Your Rights campaign to begin unpacking Chapter 2 of the Constitution into practical and comprehensive points for our community. In the past we have partnered with Herzlia to address the older grades who will be embarking on their journey into university life. We will continue to do this. Before Israel Apartheid Week, we partnered with CSO, SAUJS and Chabad on Campus to host a “Know your Rights on Campus” session. This messaging (**#KnowYourRights**) will also continue to be used extensively in our social media marketing to unpack the educational content into smaller bits for the broader community to engage with.

Words Matter

The right to freedom of expression is fundamental to our democracy and allows us to engage in healthy debates on issues of community importance, exchange ideas and information and promote tolerance for one another. However, this right is not absolute and must be balanced against the other fundamental human rights — our right to human dignity, to equality, to freedom of religion, belief and opinion, to name a few. “Free speech” cannot and should not be a license to use derogatory or hateful words (and in some cases, where it incites harm and propagates hatred, constituting hate speech). We are simply saying that **#WordsMatter**.

No Place for Hate

In support of the existing and powerful educational campaign run by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in the US and globally which calls on students, educators and family members to play their role in “combating bias and bullying as a means to stop the escalation of hate”, we have used this messaging to speak out against discrimination and hatred, particularly when it comes to antisemitism. This messaging appraises our most current marketing collateral used at events.





Antisemitism & Legal Subcommittee - *Simone Sulcas (Chairperson)*

We believe the best way to promote harmonious relations between the Jewish community and all sections of the population in the Western Cape, is through education which builds understanding and commonalities in spite of differences. The effectiveness of work through diplomatic and legal channels has been proven time and again. In addition to our monitoring programme, we will continue to address antisemitism through an aggressive engagement strategy with government, media, academia and civil society to strengthen relations and understanding.

Between September 2022 and September 2023, we have received fewer than 30 reported antisemitic incidents. All were investigated and whilst most were deemed antisemitic and the matters resolved, several were not antisemitic. These included graffiti, social media posts, whats app messages between individuals and comments made during university lectures. During October 2023 however, we recorded 14 incidents via our antisemitism hotline. An indication of the increase in antisemitism due to the Israel-Hamas war.

Below are some of the key incidents which the Board dealt with.

Non-Jewish Schools

Over the course of the year and more specifically since October 2023, we have had several alleged antisemitic incidents reported. Following the 7th October terror attacks, we emailed public and private schools where Jewish students attend (that we are aware of). In every incident, the schools have taken appropriate disciplinary action, communicated with parents and students and defended the rights of those students who were discriminated against. If your children attend a non-Jewish school and you would like more information or guidance as to how the Cape SAJBD can assist, please contact us.

Israel Apartheid Week (IAW) and UCT

During Israel Apartheid Week, middle of March, the UCT PSF screened messages from both Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. We sent strong letters to the Acting Vice Chancellor at the time attempting to prevent these messages from being screened. Unfortunately, UCT would not intervene in student initiatives. Thereafter, we sent another letter conveying our outrage and disappointment at UCT for allowing terrorist organisations to appear on campus. This was followed by a press release to local and international media. A week and a half later, members of our Executive committee, together with the Chairperson of SAUJS, met with the Vice Chancellor and members of UCT leadership to discuss the IAW incidents. UCT committed to a thorough investigation of IAW. Several meetings followed where it was explained that any complaints directed towards students, should go through the Student Tribunal Council – this is not managed by the office of the VC. Unfortunately, this Tribunal, whilst independent, may not be

the appropriate avenue to lodge our complaints. A decision by our full Council was taken not to pursue further action, however we should continue to monitor the situation on campus.

South African Human Rights Commission

In 2022, a Jewish individual reported a case of antisemitism whereby his non-Jewish landlord made a statement “Hitler should have roasted you mother f###kers.” This was reported to the South African Human Rights Commission. After several meetings with the Regional Head of Western Cape, the matter was finally reviewed by the SAHRC. They held a mediation session with the landlord, Cape Board and the Jewish individual. The landlord admitted to the statement and apologised for offending the Jewish community. He agreed to a tour of the Holocaust and Genocide Centre and was accompanied by his two sons. All three were quite overwhelmed following the tour. The Jewish individual was satisfied with the outcome.

Herzlia

In May, the leadership of United Herzlia Schools was interviewed on Israel TV. A comment was made that after leaving the school, some matriculants go to Israel to study and join the IDF. This comment caused a major outcry amongst the anti-Israel movements. The Board met with Herzlia leadership to put a plan in place to safeguard the school as well as deal with the media fall out. In June, the ANC called for the de-registration of the school in Western Cape Legislature – this motion was dismissed by the Minister of Education. The Board continued to be the voice of the school in the media, denouncing claims against the school. Following the October 7th Hamas attacks, the school once again was under the spot light. The EFF threatened to close the school, should the Premier not do so. The Board together with CSO, addressed more than 300 concerned parents assuring them that the school was in no danger of being closed and that the necessary security protocols were in place to protect the children. During a Pro-Palestinian rally on 11 November, a member of the PAC made a highly inflammatory statement “the murderers come from Herzlia in Cape Town.” These words were condemned in the media by the Board as well as the Mayor and other political parties. Subsequently, the Board met with both the Mayor and the Premier who again gave assurances that Herzlia is in no danger of being closed. We are reviewing all legal options against both the EFF and PAC for the incitement against the school.

Protests

Since March, the Samson Centre, which is home to a number of Jewish communal organisations, including the Cape SAJBD, was subjected to a number of Pro-Palestinian protests. Between March and May there were several protests with numbers ranging between 15-50 people. On May 18th, there was an aggressive protest where a variety of offensive and intimidatory comments were made by the protestors: “Kill them – shut this building down.” “Death to Israel” and “One Zionist one bullet.” Hamas, PIJ and Hezbollah flags were also displayed. We were fed up with the constant barrage outside our Jewish community centre which prompted us to release a strong statement calling out these protestors as antisemitic. The statement was featured all over the world and also resulted in live interviews on SABC and other radio stations. We also met with outside legal counsel to understand the options for preventing protests. Unfortunately, as per our constitution, everyone has a right to protest. Since then we have taken the necessary precautions to protect

the building and the people inside. Fast forward to October, and the Hamas terror attacks resulted in a major protest with more than 200 people. There have been a number of smaller protests outside the building in response to the ongoing war. We are in constant contact with both the City of Cape Town and SAPS to ensure that the safety of each person working and visiting the Jewish Community Centre, is protected and able to enjoy the Jewish way of life.



Community Engagement - Dawn Nathan-Jones (Chairperson)

Within the Cape Board's ambit of community engagement, it is necessary for it to continue connecting our community to the greater South African one, showing that we are a driving force for transformation within the country at large. We aim to keep our Cape Town Jewish community connected and engaged with issues affecting South Africa as a whole. Myself, the Executive Director and members of our Council, continuously meet with community leaders both external and internal. The purpose of these meetings is to remain plugged into the community, share information and form relationships which will benefit our community.

Embassies & Consulates

Throughout the year we have engaged with Consul Generals and Ambassadors from the following countries: United States of America, Israel, Canada, United Kingdom, Portuguese, Peru, Germany, Belgium, Greece, Switzerland and others. During these meetings we discussed the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, opportunities for collaboration and as well as challenges faced. In November 2022, together with the US Consulate, we hosted Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt at the Gardens Shul. The event was attended by more than 200 people. In July, the German Consul General, nominated our Executive Director, to attend a tour of Jewish Life in Berlin which he attended. During the month of October, we received many messages of support from various consulates – the US and German consulates attended the October Peace Rally.

Government

Throughout the year, we have engaged with the Mayor of Cape Town, the Premier of the Western Cape, various political parties, Ward Councillors as well as SAPS and City of Cape Town Law Enforcement to discuss matters pertaining to the Jewish community. The primary concern of all parties involved is that of safety. We have hosted a variety of initiatives in 2023 where by members of the above mentioned organisations have attended. We have also attended a number of government-organised events and initiative in order to ensure the Jewish community has a voice. During the month of October, we had several meetings and phone calls with the Mayor, Premier, SAPS, Law Enforcement and City officials in relation to protests, antisemitic graffiti and other issues resulting from the Hamas terror attacks.

Media

It is important for the Board not only to respond to antisemitic and social justice related issues in the media, but also use the platforms to showcase the work done by the Jewish community. The relationships formed with the various media organisations is important and allow us to remain connected to what is happening around the Province. We have fostered excellent relationships with several journalists, editors and producers from major media platforms. These include SABC, eNCA, Daily Maverick, Business Day, Heart FM, Prime Media, Cape Talk, News 24, INL and others. Our head of PR at the National Board, Charisse Zeifert and our Executive Director, Daniel Bloch, met with several of our media contacts in September to maintain existing relationships as well as grow new ones. We have featured in the media in relation to Israel Apartheid Week at UCT, Herzlia incident, pro-Palestine protests and of course more recently, the Israel-Hamas war. For a full list of interviews and articles, please see our communications section further down.



Country Communities - David King (Chairperson)

The Cape SAJBD, has a responsibility to protect the civil rights of all Jews living in the Western Cape which is why we connect not only with our community in Cape Town, but those communities which are considered to be more upcountry. Of concern is the ever-increasing financial burden of cemeteries of country communities. As more and more municipalities and local councils' budgets tighten, the responsibility falls on the community to ensure these spaces are maintained. The Cape Board has made provision to maintain some of these cemeteries and work closely with the active Jewish Country Communities as well as the surrounding communities.

Aside from cemetery maintenance, the Robertson cemetery was vandalised on several occasions. The wall has been repaired multiple times, the most recent in October 2023. These are not acts of antisemitism, rather locals stealing materials. SAPS has been informed however they cannot patrol the area 24/7.

We have been fortunate to celebrate centenary celebrations. In October 2023, the Stellenbosch Hebrew Congregation turned 100. They celebrated this occasion by hosting a Shabbos weekend in Stellenbosch. Our Executive Director, Daniel Bloch and Programme & Development Manager, Joshua Friedman, participated in the Friday and Saturday Shabbat services, assisting with the choir and addressing the 100 attendees. It was a wonderful simcha and the Stellenbosch community appreciated the Board's support. November and December will see the centenary of the Ceres and the Strand-Somerset West communities.



Generation Next - Justin Asher (Chairperson)

The Cape Board and its Generation Next portfolio is there to assist all communal organisations to reach young adults. We are there to encourage collaboration, interaction, and participation with all organizations to create engagement and awareness of the Jewish community for our young Jewish community.

Throughout the year, we engage with each of the Jewish schools as well as many of the non-Jewish schools where there is a concentration of Jewish students. Aside from assisting parents and students with antisemitic incidents on school campuses (covered under antisemitism), we have also hosted events in an attempt to connect these communities. Late 2022, together with the Sephardi Shul, we hosted a dinner for the 15 Jewish students from Rondebosch Boys Highschool. More than 40 people including the families attended and thoroughly enjoyed the Shabbat experience. In March 2023, together with Herzlia and EOLI, we hosted a 9x matriculants as part of the Matric Community Day. We showed them the work of the Board, took them to specific sites for discussion as well as an important meeting with the Mayor's office. The Board with Herzlia Weizmann hosted a book session entitled "Goodnight Golda" with the Grade 6 pupils facilitated by the book's author, Batyah Bricker

We also hosted an intercultural Youth Day Sports event at the Camps Bay Primary School. This event was co-hosted by the Cape Board, UJW Cape, Maccabi and the SAZF – Cape. This involved Jewish youth playing alongside the Silverstar Netball and Friends Football clubs arranged by the Noluntu Soup Project in Khayelitsha.

We have also engaged with SAUJS, Chabad on Campus, Ohrsom Students and individual students across various campuses. We have assisted with having Yom Tov exams moved – this is possible due to our strong relationships with both UCT and Stellenbosch. We have hosted a variety of sessions with students and young leaders in order to hear from the youth, empower them and connect them with communal leaders. In September 2022, we hosted a session with international Climate Change expert, Nigel Savage. Together with CSO, we hosted a pre-IAW session briefing students about what to expect and what to do on campus during this tough period on campus. We also hosted an online session with Miri Eisen to discuss the rules of social media and information sharing – also as part of IAW.

The Board collaborated with the Eliot Osrin Institute and Kaplan Centre to host the JDC Entwine programme's international touring group of young Jewish adults at an introductory reception at the Kaplan Centre, UCT. The JDC Entwine Programme is an international Jewish community travel programme for young Jewish adults aged 23-30.



Interfaith & Intercommunity - *Tzvi Brivik (Chairperson)*

The Cape SAJBD was extremely active in promoting interfaith and intercommunity collaboration. We created strong relationships with stakeholders who hold the Jewish community in high regard and we often host networking functions and attend stakeholder engagement forums.

In October 2022 and October 2023, we hosted our annual Sukkat Shalom luncheon. At these events we host various religious and faith-based leaders, political party members and consul generals. It is also a good opportunity to break bread with friends and share our culture and traditions.

Our Executive Director attended an interfaith meeting hosted by Turquoise Harmony and the Department of Justice in order to discuss the Equality Act. The Board also supported the District 6 Day of Reconciliation Interfaith Walk – an annual event. Mr Bloch attended the Religious Freedom & Rule of Law Conference which was in Stellenbosch. The event was attended by approx. 60 people from all over the world. It was interesting to see what Religious Freedom looks like in other countries. Mr Bloch attended a screening of the film “Stranger Sisters” followed by an interesting discussion on the role of Interfaith in the community. The event was hosted by the CTII and Turquoise Harmony Institute and attended by members of the Christian, Jewish (only Board), Muslim, Hindu and Bhai faiths. Josh Friedman attended an interfaith breakfast session of reflection and personal insights into tools to promote inner strength and peace hosted by the Brahma Kumaris organisation.


The Board is part of the Premier and Mayor’s Interfaith groups which holds regular meetings to discuss issues affecting the Western Cape and the role of the Interfaith community.



Social Justice

Instead of a subcommittee, we have decided to incorporate Social Justice initiatives into each of the other subcommittees. This has allowed us to participate and spearhead more activities whilst also streamlining things.

The Board has maintained and created new relationships with several organisations which fight against a variety of social justice issues. Over the past year we have engaged with the Congolese Civil Society, Rwandan Community and the Burundi Western Cape Community, the Angel Network, One-to-One, Hope



Cape Town, Koleinu, Scalabrini, Mensch, Mitzvah Day UK, Africa Unite, Islamic Relief SA, the SA Refugee-Led Network, Adonis Musati Project, UN Refugee Agency, UN High Commission for Refugees and others.

Throughout the year we were involved with several events. For Tu B'Shevat, the Board co-sponsored along with the SAZF, SAFI and Wizo and initiative. We planted trees at Camp Joy in Strandfontein which is a centre which educates and empowers 17-35-year-old victims of drug abuse and gangsterism. During World Refugee Day, the Board together with key stakeholders, Scalabrini, Africa Unite, Islamic Relief SA and the SA Refugee-Led Network, hosted the World Refugee Day - Finding Freedom Conference. The event was attended by several hundred members from the Congolese, Rwandan, Burundian, Somalian and other African foreign communities. We also co-sponsored the Mensch Mandela Day Cook-a-thon hosted at the Gardens Jewish Community Centre where we were able to feed 4000 hungry children. Board reached out to the Angel Network and supported their efforts to raise funds for those affected by the taxi strikes. We donated to the Angel Network – food and other essential items were distributed within the townships. Following the devastating floods in the Western Cape, the Board supported the Angel Network Western Cape by providing donations as well as promoting the Angel Network efforts on social media – appealing for donations and reaching out to various contacts for support.

Bursaries

The Cape BOD Bursary Foundation has once again played an integral role in assisting our Jewish community members and their goals for a further education. In 2023 we saw 30 students awarded a combined total of R834,640.00. This will assist them with their studies and ultimately the career.


Board Hosted Events


The Board has hosted a number of networking, information sharing and social justice initiatives throughout the year. Many have been mentioned throughout the report.

In October 2023 following the devastating Hamas attacks, the Board together with the SAZF Cape Council and the Chief Rabbi, hosted a Community Prayer Service at the Marais Road Shul – attended by more than 600 people. Later that week we together with the SAZF Cape Council, we hosted a Peace Rally at the Gardens Jewish Community Centre. Almost 3000 members of our community, supporters of Israel and promoters of peace attended. It was an incredibly moving initiative which featured speeches by communal Jewish and Christian leaders as well as songs and prayers for peace.

Yom HaShoah

On Tuesday 18 April, more than 400 people gathered at the Pinelands Cemetery to commemorate the six million Jews who were murdered during the Holocaust. The Yom Hashoah ceremony is a time where our community is unified in our Judaism and our fight against antisemitism.






This year was the 80th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and we are privileged to have a survivor from those awful times, living in our community. At 101, Ella Blumenthal is still sharing her experiences and spreading her message of hope, faith and forgiveness. The audience at the ceremony listened with rapt attention, whilst viewing the video of Ella in conversation with her daughter and granddaughter. The ceremony began as it does each year with the youth movements reading out the names of children who were murdered during the Holocaust. The Herzlia Vocal Ensemble, under the baton of Chazan Ivor Joffe joined performer Beverley Chait in singing songs like *Rozhinkes mit Mandlen* and *Hert zich Tzu*. Dr Veronica Belling then read out a Yiddish poem entitled *A Wagon full of Shoes* and Isaac Habib ended the first part of the ceremony with a poem in Ladino entitled *the Eternal Quest*.


Members of the community then placed stones inscribed with the names of loved ones who had passed away, around the Holocaust Memorial. Adrienne Jacobson, Chairperson of the Cape South African Jewish Board of Deputies, officially welcomed everyone and this was followed by Ella and Zola's speeches. "It has never been clearer that the seemingly simple act of remembering, has strengthened our collective commitment to standing up against hate and building a more humane and just world, where people are treated with respect and dignity." These were powerful words said by one of our community's young leaders, Taya Allardice, Head Student of Herzlia. The new Chairperson of the South African Zionist Federation, David Cohen, delivered a speech drafted by Israeli Ambassador, Eli Belotsercovsky who could not join us for the service. Ex-servicemen and women, representing various military and naval units, placed wreaths around the memorial whilst everyone stood for a few moments as the trumpeter played the *Last Post* and the *Reveille*. Cantor Joffe concluded the service with Kaddish and the singing of both the South African and Israeli national anthems.

Move Down to Cape Town

Over the past few years we've been increasingly aware of news items and articles relating to *semigration* (moving from one part of a country to another, as opposed to migrating to another country). There's always been a steady trickle of Gautengers making the move to the Western Cape, but with numbers having risen steadily since the Covid pandemic, semigration has evolved from a trend to a phenomenon. In October 2022 we hosted our Move Down to Cape Town Expo in Johannesburg. More than 20 communal organisations exhibited, 5x property developers and both the Premier and the Mayor spoke at the event. Read more about who was there and what happened - <https://cjc.org.za/2022/10/28/why-emigrate-when-you-can-semigrate/>

In January we hired a Project Manager to oversee a more comprehensive marketing campaign. which would run from January until August. In February we hosted our first Welcome Reception for more than 50 families and individuals who had moved to the Cape since just before COVID. We invited several of our affiliate organizations, which allowed the guests to interact and gain a greater understanding of what each organization in the community offers and how they can assist with their transition.





We have also created a marketing campaign which will feature short videos from many of our communal organisations describing life in Cape Town and within our community. This was going to launch later this year however due to the current war, this has been pushed over until the new year.

Entrepreneurs Network

Entrepreneurs' Network Cape Town (EN), a joint project of the Cape SAJBD, ORT Jet Cape Town, Entrepreneurs' Organisation (EO) and Over the Rainbow, has gained increasing momentum in the local SME Business space. It is a dynamic platform that has quickly become a catalyst for entrepreneur growth, skills development, and job creation. It achieves this through providing small businesses owners from diverse communities and cultures with networking opportunities, growth prospects, and valuable peer-to-peer learning experiences. EN was first established in November 2022 and the network's achievements in such a short time are impressive.

To date, EN has hosted five large-scale events, each attracting approximately 60 entrepreneurs. This included; A launch event with Simon Susman, previous Chair and CEO of Woolworths Holdings Limited, an event hosted at Deloitte where Alderman James Vos revealed the City of Cape Town's plans to mitigate load shedding and improve the ease of doing business (business registration), an engaging VC panel conversation, moderated by Lara Rosmarin, Head of Entrepreneur development at UVU Accelerate held at UVU Africa, a networking event held at Deloitte Cape Town's offices, facilitated by Dillon Jearey which included rotational sessions for the cohort to network with industry leaders and finally a summative event held at Isivivana Centre in Khayelitsha featuring a panel discussion with local entrepreneur heroes who shared their journeys of starting and flourishing businesses in Khayelitsha.

Some incredible stats that have emerged from the Entrepreneurs Network:

- R10 million – New business transacted
- 10 + – new jobs created
- 52 – committed entrepreneurs
- 105+ – hours of learning
- 130+ – days of networking
- 50+ – volunteers, mentors and guest speakers

For more information please visit www.encapetown.com. Special thanks go to Dawn Nathan-Jones, Chairperson of our Associate Relations subcommittee for initiating, growing and driving this project.



Communications

Our 2023 communications and marketing strategy focused on maximising our reach through our digital platforms (currently comprising our website, [Facebook](#) page, [Instagram](#) page, and YouTube channel). We continuously share information related to our community and the work of the Board. We also feature every month in the Cape Jewish Chronicle where both myself and the Executive Director write columns and share information from the past month.

Following the October 7th attacks, our media and online engagement has increased significantly. We have written countless statements in response to issues affecting our community, antisemitic incidents, protests and more. We have also appeared on TV as well as radio for live and pre-recorded interviews. See below for more details. We also launched our Cape SAJBD Info Hub Whats App line where we share information on a daily basis – real time. We also launched our Community Wellness Helpline for members of our community seeking to speak to a trained professional.

Some of the key articles/statements/interviews:

- Semigration - '[Semigrating' to Cape is better than emigrating, says Cape Board \(sajr.co.za\)](#)
- UCT – Hamas messages - <https://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/opinion/cape-sa-jewish-board-appalled-by-uct-screening-of-terrorist-messages-4195c490-ed0a-4813-b616-77ff375dc3a>
- Yom Hashoah - https://youtu.be/kws_LDoRpQ?si=LURiL3rdh_thcNis
- Mr Bloch was interviewed by SABC News re to the protests at the Gardens Jewish Community Centre: [SA Jewish Board of Deputies calls for end to protests at Jewish places of worship - SABC News](#)
- The Cape Board released a media statement in relation to the protests at the Gardens Jewish Community Centre. http://fusion.ornico.co.za/Attachments/2023/05/25/2023_05_25_5543243.pdf
- Mr Bloch was approached by Rolene Marks of the JNS for comment on the recent Herzlia de-registration incident. The article has appeared in various global media (including the Jewish Chronicle UK and World Israel news): <https://www.jns.org/jewish-diaspora/jewish-education/23/6/27/298178/>
- The Cape Board's co-project, the Entrepreneur's Network, was exhibited in the July Cape Jewish Chronicle in the form of an interview between Josh Friedman and Dawn Nathan-Jones: <https://cjc.org.za/2023/07/02/empowering-entrepreneurs-fuelling-success-entrepreneurs-network/>
- The Board's article on the Youth Day Sports Event was published in the Cape Jewish Chronicle: <https://cjc.org.za/2023/07/02/uniting-youth-through-sport-celebrating-diversity-on-youth-day/>
- Mr Bloch provided comment to the SA Jewish Report on the recent attack on an Israeli family (caught in the taxi violence). <https://www.sajr.co.za/israeli-families-struck-by-cape-taxi-strike/>
- Live interview on SABC from the Peace Rally in Gardens - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M791i99Barw>

OPERATIONS

Our Professional Team

In March 2023, Craig Nudelman departed for Australia leaving a gap in our team. However as of May 2023, Joshua Friedman, joined our group of professionals and has settled in perfectly. He completes the team of three including our Office Administrator & Coordinator, Mika Abramowitz-Visagie, led by our Executive Director, Daniel Bloch. For a short period, this year, we also welcomed Saul Jackson who was heading up the Move Down to Cape Town Initiative.

Budget

I would like to thank my treasurer, Lester Hoffman who is always available to advise and assist us. He and Mr Bloch met with auditors. Apart from the affiliation fees which we receive from our affiliates and a few small donations, we are totally dependent on our budget from the UJC and the Allocations Committee. Mr Hoffman, Mr Bloch and I, gave a presentation on the Board to the Allocation Committee and I must express our thanks to them for always being appreciative of our work and for providing us with the financial support necessary to look after our community. Their work in collecting money to fund our community's increasing needs is becoming more difficult and more vital than ever.

Executive Committee

This past month has seemed longer than the previous year. What has taken place since October 7th until now as been overwhelming however we have managed to remain steadfast and calm in the decisions that have been taken. I have been privileged to work with an executive committee who offer unique viewpoints and varied solutions, which ultimately has led to these issues being resolved swiftly and favorably. We are committed and united and to date, has steered our community through probably the toughest of times to date. As chairperson of the Board, I am faced with daily complex challenges. If it were not for the advice, assistance and cooperation from my Vice-Chairpersons Glen Heneck and Simone Sulcas, my Treasurer, Lester Hoffman, past Chairs, Tzvi Brivik and Rael Kaimowitz and our ever-efficient Executive Director, Daniel Bloch, my job would have been all that more complicated. I thank them for their commitment and dedication over the past year and in particular over the past month or so, to both the organization and to this community. I would like to thank each of the committee members who have over the past year, debated, discussed, agreed, disagreed, prodded and suggested, and ultimately collectively guided this Board in the interest of the community. It has been a demanding first year for our newest members of the Council, however their input has been valued and greatly appreciated. I hope that the year ahead will bring peace and that our community may continue to flourish.

Yours faithfully,
Adrienne Jacobson, Chairperson (2022-2024)