



President's Report

After four years, my term as President of ARZA Australia is drawing to a close, as is my term as Vice-President of the Union for Progressive Judaism. It has been a pleasure and a fantastic experience to hold these positions.

The role of President, with the support of the ARZA team gave me the opportunity to help guide the Australian Progressive Movement's Zionist responsibilities in support of Israel and Progressive Judaism. This was complemented by being elected to the role of Vice-President for the UPJ. I believe these dual roles had many benefits. It meant that with the co-operation of the Moetzah, now the Assembly of Rabbis and Cantors, Progressive Judaism in Australia has been able to speak with ONE VOICE. In this regard our three Progressive organisations, ARZA, the UPJ and the ARC often combined publicly to express our views on issues in unison, through statements, press releases and occasional opinion pieces.

It is my fervent hope that this level of cooperation between our organisations will continue. With this in mind, Ayal Marek has been nominated for the position of President of ARZA and Vice-President of the UPJ. The journey for ARZA over the last four years achieved much, but I have no doubt the new president will take up the challenge to deliver much more. He is an Israeli Australian, and like most Israelis passionate about politics. He is a family man, married to Karen and runs his own successful business.

ARZA, being the political arm of the Australian Progressive movement, has particular responsibilities to fulfil each year. The most important role is to ensure the number of members is at a maximum so as to gain the largest possible representation for the ARZENU slate representing the world Reform/Progressive congregations and partners at the World Zionist Congress. Putting it bluntly, the greater the number of delegates from the Progressive Movement, the louder our voice will be heard, and the more likely our Progressive values and views will be reflected in the decisions made for Israel.

The next Congress will be held in 2025. As I am sure you are aware it may well be the Congress that sets the future for Israel for many years to come. Over the past year, the Israeli governing coalition representing mostly the right and hard right Ultra-Orthodox parties was led by a Prime Minister more intent on avoiding a jail term than serving the Israeli people. He and his extreme fanatical ministers went about trying to destroy the very foundations of the democratic institutions delivered to Israel in 1948 with the Declaration of Independence. The people of Israel (secular, religious and non-Jewish) came out in their thousands for months to protest and loudly proclaim their abhorrence for what their government was attempting to do.

The disaster that emerged in October and is continuing, is in no small part due to the complete failing of the Netanyahu Government. Its focus on everything but the security of Israel and the needs of the diverse population made the country weak and vulnerable - ripe for the butchering attack by Hamas on the communities near the Gaza border. Communities that many of us have visited and financially supported through JNF and KKL.

And so, we cry tears of frustration and mourning for the Jewish Homeland that should be there in safety and security for all the generations of world Jewry to come. For us, for our children, and for our children's children, through the ages. ARZA would like to see every single member of every Australian Progressive Shul a financial member of ARZA. This is why we encourage synagogues to add our membership to the invoices sent to synagogue members annually. The full amount is then banked on ARZA's behalf. We also warmly welcome those who are not members of synagogues, but who wish to have their voices heard in Eretz Yisrael in the name of the Progressive values we so treasure. Our membership fee is very reasonable and lower for Netzer members. It is available online and is protected under Australian and State Privacy legislation.

My personal challenge over the last four years has been fulfilling what I regarded as my obligation. That is to communicate with ARZA members and on a regular basis to keep our community up to date about what is happening in Israel; religiously, politically and socially. Helping our community understand the fundamental principles embedded in the Israeli Declaration of Independence and support actions to fulfill its ideals, particularly ensuring equality for all inhabitants, socially and politically irrespective of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation. I believe ARZA, in this way has encouraged a true Zionist commitment by our community. This is evidenced recently by the enormous expression of emotion and support for our brothers and sisters in Eretz Yisrael. For this we say thank you.

One of ARZA's greatest joys was seeing 28 young Jewish Australians go to Israel on the first ever Progressive Taglit Birthright tour early this year. While the opportunity for young people to travel to Israel is now very limited, I hope that Taglit and the Netzer Shnat program will return with peace.

I would like to offer a vote of thanks to Netzer, their leaders and Shlichim for the wonderful way they have worked with ARZA. Sefi and his wife Sara really helped us make the Taglit program happen. The Netzer Federal Mazkir, Avishai Conyer has shown true leadership, friendship and the ability to bring the adult and younger members of our movement together. I hope Naama and Hadar, our new Shlichim, also enjoy working with us and have a wonderful experience here in Australia.

Finally, I have just a few thank-yous. My role in ARZA and the UPJ would not have been possible without a great deal of support, encouragement and friendship from the board of each organisation (ARZA and UPJ) but also from those who had come before me and offered their sage advice and assistance.

It's been a pleasure working with David Knoll and the entire UPJ Board. I'm sorry I can't mention them all. David has an unusual sense of humour and works far too hard for his own good, but he's done a great job with the support of Brian and the team.

I would like to thank Steve Denenberg who was my predecessor, giving me great advice and being prepared to negotiate the ARZA mandates and chair some meetings at my request. I think he is still going to be the resident chair when needed. Tony Leverton as Treasurer has kept the books magnificently. We can't let him go just yet. That is until he finds his own replacement. Philip Levy, who retired last year as the keeper of the membership portfolio. We really miss him. Rabbi Fred Morgan, my Rabbinic Advisor and friend. I'm sure he'll hang around to be the voice of reason.

Finally, I thank those on the current board who have become part of the succession plan for the New ARZA. They are Ayal Marek; a fluent Hebrew speaker who is to be our new President. Ben James as Vice-President is also a fluent Hebrew speaker having lived and worked in Israel for two years. Cassie Barrett will continue as Secretary. She works for Jewish Care delivering community education programs, to provide training in many spheres. Avishai Conyer is an ex officio member of the board but intends staying on after his Netzer term finishes. He also speaks Hebrew, is studying law and has wonderful experience and been actively involved with the next generation of our movement.

I know these young people will attract others who they will inspire but still be supported by those on the ARZA board who have the benefit of experience. It will be a time for innovation and new ideas. Very exciting!



Helen Shardey OAM

ARZA Australia - President

Union for Progressive Judaism - Vice President

World Union for Progressive Judaism – Executive Board

HON. TREASURER'S REPORT 2022 – 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

This report covers the financial year 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

2. BACKGROUND

ARZA Australia is a not-for-profit organisation, affiliated to the Union for Progressive Judaism (UPJ) and the Zionist Federation of Australia (ZFA), that works to represent and promote the views and values of Progressive/Reform Jewish Zionists who want to help ensure that Israel lives in peace and security and that it is the democratic and egalitarian society described in its Declaration of Independence.

ARZA undertakes to use its best endeavours for the realisation of a full and free religious life for all Jews in the State of Israel. ARZA also works to strengthen the Progressive Movement in Israel, Australia and worldwide. ARZA continually looks at expanding our membership numbers within Australia and, through our world parent body ARZENU, promoting Progressive Jewish values and ideals at the international level with the World Zionist Organisation - founded by Theodore Herzl in Basle, Switzerland in 1897.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of ARZA is open to any Jewish person who subscribes to the principles of Progressive Judaism. Membership may be gained in two ways: 1. direct application / renewal, and 2. application / renewal associated with annual congregational membership payments. The latter is our preferred approach. We are, of course, most appreciative of the continuing co-operation with synagogues who support us in this way. For those UPJ member synagogues who have chosen not to include ARZA membership with their annual subscription renewals, I would urge you to reconsider, and choose an opt-out arrangement, whereby ARZA membership becomes automatic, unless the synagogue member chooses to opt-out. This arrangement helps strengthen ARZA within Australian Zionism and exercise greater influence in Israel.

Our paid-up membership number at the end of the financial year to 30 June 2023 stood at 1,736 (based on total subscription income divided by \$18).

4. STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

Result:

The Statement of Financial Performance for the year ended 30 June 2023 shows a net surplus for the year of \$20,300. This compares with a net loss of \$2,565 for the year to 30 June 2022.

The previous year's decrease came about because of an Executive decision in June 2020 to waive ARZA membership fees for the 2020/21 financial year. Congregations have differing financial year start / end dates and so this decision was applied according to each congregation's administrative cycle. This subscription waiver has now worked its way through and ARZA's income recovered, nearly to pre-waiver levels. What would, however, be of great assistance is enhanced support by congregations for an opt-out membership arrangement, i.e. ARZA membership subscriptions are automatically applied along with synagogue membership subscriptions, barring a wish by the member to opt-out of paying their ARZA subscription.

Income:

Income for the year came primarily from ARZA membership fees (\$31,257) collected on our behalf by congregations. The timing of this fee income reflects the differing financial years that congregations work to and their timetables for membership fee collection and passing on to ARZA.

We also received a grant in November 2022 from the Progressive Jewish Cultural Fund for \$5,000, being provision for the bulk of expenses in organising the first Progressive Jewish Taglit / Birthright program in January 2023.

It is also very pleasing to report the receipt of two donations, each of \$250. Thank you to these generous individuals for assisting us in our work.

Expenditure:

Expenses for 2022/23 (\$16,471) increased from the 2021/22 level (\$6,121).

This year, our principal expenses items were – grants, travel and conferences, website management, accounting fees and contractors.

Grants were paid to two individuals (\$2,100 each) to administer and arrange different stages of the first Australian Progressive Jewish Taglit / Birthright program, commencing January 2023. A grant (\$1,200) was also made to Netzer to assist Avishai Conyer with costs to attend Veidat Netzer Olami, Tamar Olami, and WUPJ Connections (27 April to 6 May 2023).

A travel and conferences payment (\$3,500) was made as a partial reimbursement, in accordance with ARZA's policy, for the costs of ARZA President Helen Shardey to attend the World Zionist Organisation's 125th Anniversary of the First Zionist Congress and Va'ad Hapoel in Basel, Switzerland, in August 2022.

Website management costs (\$3,460) represented regular updating by our consultant, Uptime Computer Services, of the existing website and Facebook page (including posting articles and videos), together with associated website expenses, membership list updates and mailouts.

Accounting fees (\$1,338) represented our bookkeeper fee (Bookkeeping.com Pty Ltd), the Financial Statement audit fee, and financial system management fee (MYOB).

Contractors payments (\$914) were for interviews associated with Taglit / Birthright selections and associated costs reimbursements.

Statement of Financial Position:

Our bank balance at 30 June 2023 was \$147,800 (30 June 2022 – \$137,501).

5. CONCLUSION

I am again most thankful for the services of Janet Henrie as financial assessor and Debra Arnold CPA RCA (Director, Third Sector Management Solutions) as auditor of our accounts for this financial year. I am indebted to both for their professionalism, patience and persistence in ensuring our financial activity is correctly reported. It is of significant help to us. Debra's report, together with the Statement of Income and Expenditure, is attached to these documents.

I take this opportunity to record my sincere thanks and appreciation to them for their technical support and sound advice. ARZA is below the threshold requirement for financial audit, but Debra has kindly agreed to provide an independent oversight report, reviewing transactions and bank account details for the financial year 2023/24. This would be most helpful, given the broad membership base and the level of accumulated income.

Our accounts have been soundly managed over many years by Fran Freiman, Bookkeeping.com Pty Ltd, in Sydney. I am truly grateful for her continued professional assistance.

And finally, I take this opportunity to express my thanks to our President Helen Shardey and to all my fellow Board members for their support, advice and guidance.



Tony Leverton
Hon. Treasurer
November 2023

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the members of ARZA Australia Inc

I have audited the accompanying statement of income and expenditures of ARZA Australia Inc for the financial year ended 30 June 2023.

Responsibility for the Financial Report

The management committee are responsible for the preparation and presentation of this statement. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal controls relevant to the preparation and presentation of the statement that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the statement based on our audit. I have conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the statement is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the statement. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the statement, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and presentation of the statement in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statement.

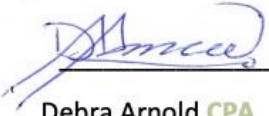
I believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Qualification

As the evidence available to me regarding income and expenditure was limited, my audit procedures with respect to cash receipts and disbursements had to be restricted to the amounts recorded in the bank account records. I therefore am unable to express an opinion on whether the recorded income and expenditure of ARZA Australia Inc is complete.

Opinion

In my opinion, the statement of income and expenditures of ARZA Australia Inc referred to above, presents fairly, in all material respects the income and expenditures of ARZA Australia Inc for the financial year ended 30 June 2023.



Debra Arnold **CPA**

Director

Registered Company Auditor # 45005

Date: 23 October 2023

