

Overall though, for most the book will be a good read and a welcome addition for home libraries, especially for us oldies to give our younger family members as it shows that rabbis are human too.

Joe Kensell

## HAND IN HAND. JEWISH AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER

*By Anne Sarzin and Lisa Miranda Sarzin.*

*Sydney, New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, 2010. 205  
pages.*

This fascinating book began as the brainchild of Ilona Lee of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies and was nurtured and matured by two talented writers and interviewers, Anne and Lisa Sarzin. In their own words: 'The stories in this book are testimony to the determination of individuals to make a positive difference in some ways to the lives of others... Together, Jewish and Indigenous people discover the commonalities that add depth to their interactions...the values they share...and the profound commitment to being their brother and sister's keeper in a sharing society...' (p.195)

Their book surprises in many ways from the beautiful cover illustration of the 'wattle star' created by Jewish Aborigine Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver to the many wonderful illustrations of Jewish and Indigenous Australians working together over many years. Seventy-nine interviews were conducted and Professor Pulver's story is one of these which make you proud of both communities. The writing style is an intimate conversation between interviewees and readers and many amazing stories are told of community initiatives which have benefited both Jewish and Indigenous people. The book has been printed and bound by Alba Press in an easy-to-read format with contrasting colour in the chapter headings and running titles. Each chapter begins with an important quote from the interviewee and each illustration has detailed captions.

There are seven sections: historical connections, social justice, leadership, education [the largest], health, art and culture, hands across the land. Within each of these sections we meet various Jewish and Indigenous people whose lives have been changed; who have discovered shared values such as respect for land and oral

traditions, and respect for each others' beliefs. Some joint initiatives are well-known, others are known only within smaller circles. This book serves to show the Jewish and Indigenous community what has been done, is being done and can be done to bring harmony and understanding to people of different cultures. It deals mostly with New South Wales, but includes some Victorian and Northern Territory stories as well. The tribal connections of each Indigenous person are carefully noted in their stories.

The first story is one which has become better known in more recent times – it is the story of the Aboriginal protest to the German Consulate in Melbourne in 1938 in opposition to the oppressive treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany. Led by William Cooper, the group was refused entry but the protest is a matter of pride which is now causing interest at Yad Vashem in Israel. Another story highlights the 'Freedom Ride' from the University of Sydney in 1965 in which Charles Perkins and James Spigelman took part. The names of Hannah and Emil Witton, Ron Castan, Rabbis Kamins, Lampert, Apple, Kastel and Rosenthal, Mark Liebler, David Gonski, Peter Wertheim, David Knoll, Vic Alhadeff, Stephen Rothman, Diane Shteinman, Jeremy Jones, Margaret Gutman, Jennifer Symonds, David Bitel, Tom and Eva Rona, Robert Magid, Miriam Stein, Penelope Toltz, Amanda Gordon, Allan Cass, Ben-Zion Weiss, Colin Tatz, Hilton Immerman, Stella Cornelius, Marcus Einfeld, George Newhouse, Eddy Neumann, Ivor Epstein, David Rosenwax and Richard Potok appear among others from the Jewish community while from the Indigenous community we read of Michael McLeod, Lynette Reilly, Roberta Sykes, Rev. Minniecon, William Tjula McKenzie, Noel Pearson, Mick and Patrick Dodson, Josef McDonald, Clarence Stockes, Shirley Costello, Keith Smith, and others willing to share their knowledge of the old ways as well as learning the new. (The index contains many more names.)

Courageous programs are highlighted such as Derech Eretz, HIPPY, Closing the Gap, Shalom Gamarada Nginyani Yani, Yarnup, Courage to Care, NAB Yachad Scholarship Fund, Roberta Sykes Indigenous Education Foundation, Mazon Australia, Rona Tranby Award, Poche Centre for Indigenous Health, Indigenous Knowledge and Technology Centre, Aboriginal Legal Service, Aurora Project, Australian Indigenous Chamber of Commerce, Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council, Mawul Rom Project, Miwatj Management Development program, Yachad Accelerated Learning Project. The book deals with so many amazing initiatives making a difference to so many lives.

This is an uplifting book full of courage and optimism, written with great sensitivity, which hopefully will serve to encourage more

interaction among diverse communities and lead to even more initiatives and opportunities for our Jewish community to both teach and learn from others while continuing our traditions of 'tikkun olam' and 'tzedekah'.

Helen Bersten

*Hand in Hand* provides a different picture of Jewish/aboriginal relationships to that provided by Professor Colin Tatz, who has been very critical of the failure of the Jewish community to play a greater role in assisting the Indigenous Australians. As Tatz pointed out, at the time when William Cooper led the aboriginal protest in 1938 'there wasn't a single Jew involved in the Australian Aboriginal League in those days or in any form of pro-Aboriginal advocacy'.<sup>1</sup> However, as *Hand in Hand* clearly demonstrates, with the transformation of Australian Jewry from Anglo-Saxon conformity to multiculturalism, since the 1960s the Australian Jewish community has become involved with social justice issues in the broader community, including Indigenous affairs. Interestingly, Professor Tatz, himself, has been very involved in researching and writing about Indigenous matters and was a research fellow at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

[Editor's Note]

#### ENDNOTE

1. Dan Goldberg 'Jews pay tribute to righteous Aboriginal elder', *The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle*, 20 December 2008  
[http://www.jewishchronicle.org/article.php?article\\_id=11000](http://www.jewishchronicle.org/article.php?article_id=11000) accessed 2 May 2010.