

Hadassah Australia healing the divide

PETER KOHN

VISITING Australia, a senior Israeli hospital administrator shared a podium with the Palestinian Authority's Australian representative at an event hosted by Hadassah Australia.

Dr Osnat Levtzion-Korach, director-general of Hadassah Hospital's Mount Scopus centre in Jerusalem, addressed a Hadassah Australia gala dinner in Melbourne at the Grand Hyatt on October 15, briefing guests on the hospital's humanitarian activities.

During her Melbourne visit, Levtzion-Korach also spoke at a business lunch hosted by asset management group Investec, where she appeared with Izzat Abdulhadi, the Palestinian Authority (PA)'s Australian representative, who publicly spoke about the PA's intention to be a full partner in Project Rozana.

Abdulhadi said that "for the first time, two private Australian organisations, Anglican Overseas Aid and the Hadassah Australian Foundation

have established a partnership with the official backing of the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Health.

"The aim of Project Rozana is to build the institutional strength of the Palestinian health system which will contribute to the building of a Palestinian state. We learned from the Israelis because they started building their institutions before the establishment of a state," he said.

It was the first time the Palestinian representative addressed a Jewish communal meeting in Melbourne.

Named after Rozana Ghannam, a four-year-old Palestinian girl who was successfully treated at Hadassah after falling from a ninth-floor balcony in Ramallah, the project is an initiative of Anglican Overseas Aid, Hadassah Australia and Hadassah Hospital to raise funds to treat young Palestinians and train Palestinian doctors.

Addressing the gala dinner, Levtzion-Korach recounted her trepidation when she and her team visited Ramallah for an initial meeting with Palestinian health authorities to seek



Dr Osnat Levtzion-Korach at Hadassah's gala dinner.

Photo: Peter Haskin

endorsement of Project Rozana, which has since been secured.

"It was like going abroad [but] half an hour from home ... We were sitting with the minister of health, his deputy ... at first it was very tense ... but most of us were physicians and we [found

we] all shared the same idea, we wanted a win-win situation," she said.

Guests at the gala heard from James Larsen, former Australian ambassador to Israel, who had been an adviser to former foreign minister Bob Carr. Describing Hadassah as "a beacon of

tolerance and hope", he recounted a 2009 meeting of Israeli and Australian doctors at Hadassah, where he met an Australian acquaintance.

"That experience provided [him] the basis not only of a rich professional exposure and exchange but also an opportunity to see something of Israel behind the easy headlines which too often highlight war, terrorism and conflict," said Larsen.

Hadassah Australia's president Ron Finkel bestowed life membership on business leader Dr Elane Zelcer, a director of AUSIMED, a not-for-profit foundation established by Hadassah Australia that finances collaborations between medical researchers in Israel and Australia. She was also Hadassah Australia's executive director and vice-president.

At Sydney's Royal Randwick Racecourse, Levtzion-Korach spoke at a presentation of Hadassah Australia's 2013 Tikkun Olam Award to NSW Governor Professor Marie Bashir. She also attended private fundraising events in Sydney and Melbourne.

Leading indigenous Aussie women bound for Israel

AJN STAFF

TWO indigenous Australians will represent their country at the International Conference for Women Leaders in Israel later this month.

The Embassy of Israel in Canberra has facilitated the participation of Jacqui Payne and Ingrid Cumming at the gathering, which will focus on gender equality and women's empowerment within the context of the formation of a new global development agenda.

Mashav – Israel's Agency for Development Cooperation – is partnering with the UN Development Programme and UN Women to host the conference at Israel's Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Centre, one of the world's first adult education centres for

women from developing countries.

Meeting for five days, it will focus on "The Post-2015 and Sustainable Development Goals Agenda: Ensuring the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment in the next framework".

Payne, a magistrate, is a Butchulla woman from Fraser Island. Following a legal career spanning indigenous legal service, criminal law practice and advisory roles, she became the first indigenous person to be appointed to a judicial office in Queensland in 1999. She has participated in many national and international conferences with a focus on legal, indigenous and women's matters.

Cumming is a Nyungar woman from Fremantle. A graduate of Melbourne Business School's

MURRA Aboriginal Business Program, Cumming is emerging as a prominent leader within the West Australian indigenous community and is involved in indigenous media, advocacy and mentoring. She is also the CEO of Kart Koort Wiern, a consultancy that offers language and cultural awareness training as well as other advisory services to government and NGOs.

The conference, which runs from November 3-8 will feature 60 participants including senior policy-makers, parliamentarians, academics and NGO/UN representatives. Payne and Cumming join other guests of Israel from the Australia Pacific region including ministerial-level representatives from Papua New Guinea and representatives of other countries such as Samoa.

Top thinkers to feature in Ci2013

PHOEBE ROTH

A HANDFUL of Jewish leaders, thinkers and innovators will be among the speakers converging on Melbourne for the Creative Innovation Asia Pacific 2013 global event (Ci2013) to take place at the end of November.

Ci2013 is the brainchild of Tania de Jong, soprano, social entrepreneur and innovation expert.

Now in its fourth year, this year's theme is "Race to the future E6" – looking at global mega-trends and innovative solutions for our environment, energy, economy, education, entrepreneurship and ethical leadership.

"We need to find innovative solutions to the great problems of today and make them opportunities of the future," de Jong said.

Among the Jewish speakers is Janet Sernack, founder and CEO of ImagineNation, an Israeli start-up

which allows leaders and organisations to develop their innovative and entrepreneurial leadership capability. She believes Israel is completely unique in its capacity to innovate, and will explore this in her masterclass at the conference, "Innovate like an Israeli."

Chancellor of Monash University, Dr Alan Finkel AM, will present "The Electric Planet: Seeing the possibilities of an electron economy over an oil economy", in which he will explore his vision for an electric planet.

Doron Ben Meir, CEO of Commercialisation Australia (CA), often labelled a "serial entrepreneur," will present "Navigating the Valley of Death: How to commercialise your innovation".

CA is an Australian government initiative providing businesses with access to funding and human resources tailored to help them bring their new intellectual property to the market.

Speaking to *The AJN*, de Jong said the style of this conference is anything but typical. "We use a whole lot of different techniques and a style of delivering the conference that, instead of people being outside for most of the conference talking to their friends, they're actually on the edge of their seats. They're engaged by the content, and they get enormous take-out."

Melbourne innovator Anthony Aisenberg was one of 10 Australians to win the opportunity to present his innovations to the conference, as one of the recipients of the Ci2013 Innovation Leader scholarships.

Aisenberg is the founder of CrowdSpot, which creates customised interactive digital maps for people to give input on geographic locations.

The Creative Innovation Asia Pacific global event 2013 will take place on November 27-29 at the Sofitel, Melbourne. For more information, go to www.ci2013.com.au.

Parliamentary Friends of Israel Qld launches

GARETH NARUNSKY

VISITING Israeli strategic analyst Efraim Inbar was on hand as guest speaker to launch the Queensland Parliamentary Friends of Israel at a special ceremony last month.

The group has been established with the assistance of the Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies (QJBD) and the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC). The launch was attended by 40 state, federal and local politicians.

Inaugural chairperson Steve Minnikin, MP for Chatsworth and Assistant Minister for Public Transport, said it was very important for Queensland parliamentarians to have a better understanding of Middle East issues, and to connect with the local Jewish community.

"The main feature in the Middle East is the grand failure – a colossal failure – of modernisation."

Professor Efraim Inbar
Israeli strategic analyst

"There are many things that we can learn from each other in areas such as innovation, biotech, agriculture and water treatment," he said.

AIJAC executive director Colin Rubenstein thanked and congratulated the members of the group, noting there were parliamentary friendship groups in Federal Parliament, New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and now Queensland.

"This level of engagement can only develop a more informed Parliament and create a better understanding of issues impacting the Middle East and at home," he said.



Efraim Inbar addressing an AIJAC gathering in Sydney.

Photo: Gareth Narunsky

Speaking at the meeting, Professor Inbar, the director of the Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies, encouraged the MPs to remain engaged with the many ongoing issues in the Middle East.

He outlined many of the more pressing issues at an AIJAC lunch in Sydney, including the continuing Arab Spring, the roles of Turkey and Iran in the region and the latter's nuclear ambitions, containing the threat of terrorism and the implications of the situation in the region for Israel.

"The main feature in the Middle East is the grand failure – a colossal failure – of modernisation," he said.

He said the Arab Spring was a result of collective frustration as a result and credited the rise of political Islam in the region to those regimes delivering on basic needs where the old nation-states had not.

He said Iran and Turkey were vying for control in the region: "Both countries represent old empires, old cultures ... and they are looking down upon the Arabs."

But he said the current situation meant the power differential between Israel and her neighbours had grown. "Their domestic troubles weaken them. The likelihood of a large-scale conventional war against Israel is much smaller," he said.