



WIZO NSW Inc.

Women's International Zionist Organisation

Consultative status on ECOSOC and UNICEF at the United Nations

The largest welfare
organisation in Israel

EXECUTIVE REPORT FOR BENITA KAM MARCH 2021

The year 2020 which was also WIZO's 100th Anniversary, was one of the greatest challenges, a year that will impact nations, organizations and all areas of life for a long time to come.

From the beginning of the crisis, WIZO's leadership has taken numerous measures to help deal with these challenges, to ensure that WIZO remains strong and continues to be a home for thousands of the organizations members, donors, volunteers and employees.

WIZO NSW had its own share of struggles, just like the rest of the world. Members and their children suffered, many losing jobs overnight, as the Pandemic was announced.

Due to the Covid 19 Crisis, the entire State of Israel underwent three lockdowns which included lockdowns of WIZO's day care centres for various periods of time. The turmoil created by this crisis was characterized mostly by the decline in numbers of children enrolled in the centres – 1,500 fewer children, a decline of 12%. The crisis experienced by the country includes an unemployment rate of approximately one million people, a part of which can no longer afford to pay for day care services, which has of course significantly impacted on WIZO's income.

Exactly one year ago NSW went into a lockdown, and our AGM was delayed by two months, and was then held via zoom – while much has, thankfully, changed since last year, we are all still mindful of social distancing, hence we are zooming once more....

With various other struggles together with covid, our membership numbers were most significantly affected in 2020, and while we appreciate the hard times that were being endured, it was a difficult time for WIZO.

When our discussions commenced around this time regarding our Sponsor A Child Campaign, the team ultimately made the decision to pull back, to allow our donors the chance to breathe, to regroup, to align themselves very firmly with their families – we decided not to send out SAC letters to the database, but simply to



WIZO NSW Inc.

Women's International Zionist Organisation

Consultative status on ECOSOC and UNICEF at the United Nations

The largest welfare
organisation in Israel

contact our existing Sponsor A Child donors to ask them, to implore them, to sponsor a child once again in 2020. Can you imagine just how grateful and delighted we were to hear that literally only two people decided to that they were unable to continue. We felt very blessed.

It should be noted that most of our boarding school children at Ahuzat Yeladim, those children without a stable family home, continued to live in our village. Special education continued to function as usual throughout the lockdowns, and this was ONLY possible due to the magnificent support of our donors.

It is indeed hard to imagine that from being in Israel for the Centenary festivities, that we now had children, babies and whole families locked up in homes, where often, violence was the norm –

With that in mind, the campaign launched last Winter to aid suffering people in Israel – to bring food to tables where there was none, to pay utility bills for families who had their electricity cut off – just to do what WIZO does best, to be where the need is greatest.

I am here to tell you that once again, WIZO NSW rose to the occasion. We didn't have a fancy event. We didn't run a huge ad campaign in local papers. We didn't hire comedians or send out fancy packs. We went bare bones. No frills. We simply asked from the heart. Now, more than ever, we need you. And you all stepped up. We raised such significant funds that we were able to help Israel in the most positive way. It was a blessing – you were our blessing.

In September, our friends at The Venue partnered with WIZO to deliver fresh soup and fresh pita bread to those in the community who needed it the most. I am proud to tell you that in addition to the soup pop up (hosted at the home of Esther Wakerman!!) an additional 87 local families suffering the effects of COVID received soup packs too. That is the essence of giving back. While we can't deliver in Israel, we can certainly do our part here.

To Judith Gilovitz Lewis from Lewis Continental Kitchen - Judith's honey cakes are delicious!! Volunteers delivered to 136 homes – many were to elderly who had



WIZO NSW Inc.

Women's International Zionist Organisation

Consultative status on ECOSOC and UNICEF at the United Nations

The largest welfare
organisation in Israel

been isolated for months. The joyful thank you emails we received made the planning, and packaging in Covid safe boxes, so worthwhile.

What an enormous boost our Annual raffle gives us! Not just fantastic prizes, but additional funds that are so needed. Our incredible sponsors who give tirelessly each year, our unsung heroes. We thank each and every sponsor and feel so grateful.

We must mention our famous Melbourne Cup events, which definitely raise an additional \$30,000 for us annually. In 2020 we had virtual cup events, a nonevent and one group, mindful of Covid numbers, hosted their event over three houses!

Don't ever say that WIZO Women cannot adapt to any scenario: from our incredible group Presidents, their committees, group members – we rise to every occasion, with WIZO's best interests at heart – with ruach, with passion, with love and dedication.

The year 2021 presents us with a wealth of new opportunities and hopes. The goals we set for ourselves are clear: We must keep WIZO at the very forefront, as an innovative, creative and enterprising organisation, one that operates in a dynamic and competitive environment, and one that continues to be a model for quality and excellence.

I take this opportunity to thank my fellow board members: in a year of great difficulty, we have stuck together metaphorically, and worked through all these challenges.