

Executive Report Wednesday 23 03 2022

The beginning of 2022 started as 2021 ended. Filled with Covid, restrictions, uncertainty, and of course devastating news from World WIZO

It became clear that while things in Australia were pretty nerve-racking, the situation in Israel was DIRE.

Most of our Villages and day-care centres were temporarily shut down due to the pandemic – the staff and volunteers unable to be among the children that they love and care for year round – Jobs were lost, funding from worldwide Federations significantly down.

WIZO NSW had a huge and critical job to do, in order to raise funds to send: despite the hardships, despite the lockdowns, and despite the road blocks along the way.

I'd like to read out the highlights of a year in which the office often worked remotely for the beginning quarter, then from June back in the office often with no electricity, heating etc. It was definitely a challenge.

2022 Membership Campaign was launched in January and we morphed from “ I Am A WIZO Woman” into “We Are with WIZO - it most definitely struck a chord, because last year we had just under 1000 paid members.

Sponsor A Child Campaign

We traditionally launch Sponsor A Child campaign in March and 2022 was no different.

What WAS different last year though, were the urgent phone calls and emails coming through from World WIZO with the most shocking information.

Russia's barbaric invasion of the Ukraine, and refugees were arriving in Israel with little more than a rubbish bag filled with their worldly goods. Children, some of them orphans, were arriving at Ben Gurion and needed housing, food and support. It was unthinkable. Federations around the world were challenged to urgently send funds.

Yes. We change the whole raison d'être of Sponsor A Child - but isn't that why we're all proud to be with WIZO? In a real crisis, we go in where the need is greatest.

You rose to the ask, and I can report that last year we had a enormous increase in Sponsor A Child donors, and we are so grateful.

The Thank You morning tea was hosted by Ilana Moshal in her glorious home, and keynote speaker Kylie Moore Gilbert had the room spellbound.

The Big Move

The wonderful WIZO office that we all know and love, was growing old and dysfunctional - often no airconditioning, hot or cold, black outs on a rainy day - you can imagine that it became a difficult work place, not a conducive work environment.

After much discussion with financial advisors, building advisors and real estate agents, a building committee was formed and through the incredible generosity of Joy Balkind z'l a decision was made to return the house to its former glory, and then rent out on a permanent basis, bringing in a potential rent each week of around \$2,200. It was a decision based on sound fiscal responsibility. The hunt was on to find the best possible builders, architects, new office premises to rent, the list was endless.

Nilly led the team admirably - sorting through over 40 years of 'stuff'....the clearing committee worked tirelessly through June and July packing up the house, while at the same time preparing for a major function in August. It was a busy time for all.

The move to new premises took place the day before Melbourne Cup events. A challenge in itself! The new offices are bright, beautiful and a pleasure for the team to work in.

Beth WIZO will always be an asset for WIZO just as that core of WIZO women with the foresight to purchase the property, always meant it to be. Now it will bring in an income which will benefit the organisation and it will always be ours.

When 53 Edgecliff Road renovation is complete, we will video the interior and email to all so that you can appreciate the hard work that has taken place.

Pop up to the new offices to see our new digs - you'll be delighted by what you see

Major Function August

By June, and as we were planning our major campaign, the news coming out of Israel had not improved -- families, children, suffering the effects of covid - abuse, both verbal and physical was rife and women and children had nowhere to go, and then no way of getting back into the workforce, to break the cycle of abuse, and start new lives. Crisis calls to our centres was up by a huge 24%.

World WIZO asked us to support their latest campaign, Safety Net, that WE provide the safety net for all those who were unable to help themselves.

We hosted the remarkable Eve Barlow, a staunch online supporter for anything remotely anti-Semitic - an advocate who speaks around the world on how we can combat antisemitism online - a very contentious subject in this day and age.

It was an absolute joy to gather together once again after three year - a place to welcome our new Federal President Michelle Spiro for the first time, our new NSW President Nilly Berger, a room that was buzzing.

Later that night, Eve spoke to WIZO Aviv and WIZO Chai - a gathering of young people, Eve spoke for 1.5 hours and you could have heard a pin drop. It is heart-

warming to see the younger generation taking part in WIZO events.

Campaign funds wise, you were the ones that did the work - you gave generously at the event, called into the office with your donations, you went online and clicked on that very important safety net link.

And because of you, our donors, we were able to send more than significant funds to Israel, we helped countless abused women by taking them into vocational centres, giving them new skill sets, and a way to be able to support their own families. WIZO helped the women who were living in temporary shelters find new housing: babies and children were placed into new childcare, safe from harm, safe from the barrage of abuse.

Honey Cake delivery is definitely the gift that is most appreciated at Rosh Hashanah and this year was no different. So many wonderful community seniors were delighted when their slice of WIZO arrived. With grateful thanks to the anonymous donor who each year underwrites this initiative.

WIZO Raffle 2022/3

It is exciting to report that last year we ran the raffle online only, and raised \$5000 more than in previous years. It was a huge success and we look forward to running it again this year.

The tenacity of our management committee, presidents and group members, volunteers in the office – to constantly have WIZO at the fore front of their minds through these unprecedented times is simply remarkable and we salute you all.

I would also like to recognise the outstanding work of our WIZO office, the engine room of our organisation. To say we don't have a large staff contingent is not a joke. Lorna Berger has steered and navigated and persisted and pushed through all the storms with skill, experience and good humour. Thank you for all you contribute to the vital work. And now being assisted so ably by Avril Moss in our new premises it is smooth sailing ahead.

This organisation is a blessing to all who work within its walls, both figuratively and actually! – I am grateful to be one of those women – long may we have the passion, the wherewithal and the good fortune to say “we're with WIZO”

Over to Julie for the Treasurers report