

# SAC SPEECH 2023

Good Morning all and welcome!

I begin today by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather, and pay my respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

Its wonderful to be here together and to be able to THANK YOU for another very successful Sponsor a Child campaign.

Grateful thanks **to our hostess, Sharon Ivany!**

Sharon, we are so delighted to be in your beautiful home this year. Thank you for your hospitality and warm welcome.

Welcome to Federal President Michelle Spiro and to Past Federal President & World WIZO Honorary Life Member

Rony Bognar OAM

Welcome to Past Presidents of WIZO NSW

Esther Wakerman

Gloria Newhouse

AND TO HONORARY LIFE MEMBER OF  
WIZO AUSTRALIA

Elza Levin

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Invisible = hidden, concealed, unseen,

This year our Sponsor a Child Campaign focussed on the Invisible Children - those children who see and experience what no child should have to.

Who live in an environment that is harsh and often violent. Who have no voice and try to be unseen.

World WIZO estimates that 600,000 Israeli children are subjected to this life, and each one of them is known as **An invisible child.**

**These children are not victims of abuse, they are victims of the trauma created by witnessing abuse.**

These are the children you have helped us find, care for and hopefully steer to a much healthier life.

WIZO is an organization that adapts **very** regularly.

We adapt to the needs and changes of the whole spectrum of Israeli society. All the time.

Young Ukrainian refugees land in Israel . They are alone and empty.

*empty* – empty bags and empty hearts.

They are the children you gave hope to last year. WIZO offered them care and support and we are proud to say that most are adapting very well.

When some of the children at Ahuzat Yeladim had no home to go to for Shabbat, they felt once again that they were different. WIZO created **Shabbat Houses**.

Now they pack their bags on Friday afternoon and walk across to the Shabbat House where

they enjoy Kabbalat Shabbat with candles, food and a WIZO family. Beautiful.

The multifunctional Basketball court at Ahuzat Yeladim is more than a basketball court. It's a place where , as any of you who have children know, a lot of excess energy is spent and where bonding happens and where steam is let off.

The state of disrepair made it almost unusable so here in NSW, WIZO heard about this important need, and got to work. We planned, we fundraised.

The Basketball court has been brought back to life! It looks FANTASTIC.

Just over \$100,000 was raised in three months. The renovation took place and was completed before Pesach.

85 very happy students at Ahuzat Yeladim.

**So we adapt, change, modify,  
adjust.....depending on the need.**

Late last year on my trip to Israel, I visited Makom Balev in Bersheva, Ahuzat Yeladim in Haifa, The Joy Balkind Day CareCentre in Jerusalem and the Rebecca Sieff Vocational High School as well as the Women's Shelter in the same area.

It is hugely important to say, once again, just how vital it is to visit our projects when you are in Israel. You see for yourself how we **change lives. Seeing is most definitely believing.**

To witness WIZO's work first hand, have conversations with those who run the projects, to be in the environment with those in care.

There is nothing like it and it is something we can do a lot more of.

So if you do go to Israel please contact the office and we will do our very best to organise a visit to any project you would like to see. It's a game changer!

**Many of you** who are here today helped last year by supporting **the Safety Net Program**. I can confidently report back that the program is going from strength to strength. While dealing with the

**key issue of Domestic Violence**, the Safety Net program is specifically helping young women and families all over the country, wherever the need is greatest.

Counselling at the highest levels, training those who need to upskill to get back into the work force, earn a living and support their young families.

YOUR support enabled WIZO to achieve much.

WIZO NSW is **very lucky** to be the beneficiary of so much commitment and generosity.

I am very mindful of the huge responsibility WIZO NSW has.

We work **hard** to be the best **guardians**, **protectors** and **sponsors** we can be.

Clearly this is about people, commitment and team work.

The team players on top of the list are you! Our members and supporters- Thank you, because without you nothing would change or be achieved. Thank you for everything you do.

Now – over to our speaker – Kerri, thank you for agreeing to be here today, we are thrilled to welcome you.

Kerri is mother to three beautiful children, columnist at the Sydney Morning Herald, Sunday Life & Melbourne Age, author of five fabulous books: Kerri recently launched “The Secret Life of You”

I particularly like this excerpt from this book:

Our modern society has a severe (and severely unhelpful) bias against doing nothing. Being busy means that we are important and needed,

What we don't do very often is lie on the couch and daydream or go for a stroll and get lost in our thoughts. What we don't do very often is nothing at all, or even one thing at a time.

I love that and identify with it.

The uniqueness of Kerri is that she brings great intelligence, an abundance of humour and absolute reality in all her books.

We are delighted to welcome you to WIZO, Kerri – over to you....

