



A JNF delegation, led by former Caulfield MP Helen Shardey, enjoyed Israel from the top to the bottom.

Shardey leads mission to see Israel through new eyes

TIMNA JACKS

TWO prominent non-Jewish figures in the Jewish community have come back from a Jewish National Fund (JNF) mission to Israel with a renewed understanding of Israeli life and Jewish culture.

Bill Appleby, chief executive office of Jewish Care was among 20 participants on a tour, from April 29 to May 12. The tour was led by Helen Shardey, ambassador at large for JNF Victoria and the former Member for Caulfield, and JNF Victoria president Sara Gold.

The mission travelled to Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, the Negev and the Carmel forest and Yarkon River, offering Appleby an authentic experience during his first visit to the country.

While Appleby has a Christian background, heading up Jewish Care has encouraged him to learn more about Jewish culture and diversity.

He is also encouraging other non-Jewish staff at Jewish Care to do the

same through a mandatory ethos program.

Appleby's quest for knowledge directed him to join the JNF mission, which offered a grassroots understanding of Israel and, in his words, an "amazing experience".

Appleby reflected on the images of barbed wire and being surrounded by armed young men, yet maintained that "despite the harshness, what struck me was the resilience of Israeli people and their optimism".

This perspective was extended to what he called, a "land of contrast", and Appleby laughed at the stark transition from the "humbling and meaningful experience" in Jerusalem to "night-club grunge" in Tel Aviv.

He described Israel as a "place of innovation", speaking highly of Israel's significant contribution to developing green technologies.

When asked how these experiences would translate to Jewish Care, Appleby responded that the trip has "influenced my understanding of the

community and will affect how we provide services".

The Jewish Care chief also extended his trip by a week so he could visit welfare providers and observe their processes first-hand.

He now has his eye on a partnership with Maccabi Health, to learn more about its top home help technology and biometric monitoring, and Yad Sarah, a not-for-profit organisation that distributes aids to the elderly. He said Yad Sarah provided "amazing stuff that we want to be a part of".

While Shardey has been to Israel before, this was her first time leading a mission and marked the beginning of her new role as ambassador for JNF.

Shardey reflected on the clever use of JNF projects in Israel's desolate areas, claiming that this was part of what "reinforced all I think is important in Israel".

She contrasted the pioneering village of Halutzioi, where she observed a thriving community operating in

harsh environments, with a forward-thinking, multi-religious kibbutz Kramim run by two women. She said the kibbutz was a good example for multicultural Victoria.

The JNF mission was designed to move through Yom Hashoah, Yom Hazikaron and Yom Haatzmaut so participants could experience the detailed nature of Israeli life and history.

Shardey explained the group attended the Yom Hashoah ceremony at Yad Vashem, which was also attended by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli President Shimon Peres.

She described Netanyahu's speech as "real perseverance, nerve, steel" and summed up his message, that "Israel is there for peace, will not be walked on and will claim recognition in return for giving anything".

What she learnt on the trip will be passed on to other JNF supporters when she addresses women's breakfasts in the coming months.

Hot tips for Israeli firefighters

NAOMI LEVIN

AUSTRALIA and Israel have a list of things in common; and another one to add to the list is a high risk of bushfires.

While Australia, particularly Victoria, has always grappled with bushfires, it is a newer problem in Israel due to the combination of newly forested land and increasingly dry conditions.

Following the fatal Mount Carmel fires in December, the Jewish National Fund invited Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) chief fire officer Ewan Waller to share his knowledge with Israeli firefighters and forest workers.

Waller and his colleague Alen Slijepcevic met their Israeli counterparts over two days and travelled to the site of the fires, near Haifa.

"We spoke about command and control attacking big fires and keeping people safe – both firefighters and civilians," Waller said.

"Israel has done a magnificent job replanting forests," he said. "But now they have a forest fire situation with dry conditions and they've got people living in and around the forest."

The DSE officer said his Israeli counterparts were enthusiastic to learn from the Victorians. "The loss of life just devastated them," he said of the Carmel fires. Just a few months after these fires, Israel had already changed its habits, Waller said. Different species were being planted and firebreaks had been put in place.

In order to learn more, DSE has already offered to host Israeli firefighters in Victoria. "Israel has a sound base to go off, but now they've got to work on it."

Holocaust denier fails to pay costs

PIETER KOHN

HOLOCAUST denier Fredrick Toben (pictured) is facing bankruptcy proceedings after failing to pay the \$56,000 bill slapped on him by a Federal Court judge in 2009.



The South Australian, who has been jailed overseas for denying there was a Holocaust, served a three-month prison sentence in Adelaide in 2009 after the Federal Court found him in contempt of court.

Toben was held to be in contempt for repeatedly breaching the Federal Court's 2002 order to refrain from uploading offensive material about Jews and questioning the Holocaust on his website.

Jeremy Jones, a past president of

Good economic forecasts more than just 'a string of numbers'

NAOMI LEVIN

SYDNEY Writers' Festival guest Daniel Altman is an economist with a difference. Altman, the author of *Outrageous Fortunes: The 12 Surprising Trends that will Reshape the Global Economy*, has made his mark looking beyond sharemarket trades, currency fluctuations and interest rate rises and falls. He focuses on trends that will shape our world for the next generations.

"Many forecasters make their economic predictions without understanding the deep processes that drive trends over the course of decades, not just months or years."

The Harvard-educated writer told good stories and then trying to guess the number will be. T



Daniel Altman visited Australia recently to discuss global economics.

sees serious challenges in Australia's economic future.

Altman, a former journalist with *The Economist* and *The New York Times*, said prices for goods and services in this country "are bound to go up" because of the huge mining profits.

He said there were two ways out of this: to put all mining windfall

earnings into a sovereign wealth fund to avoid inflation, or to use the wealth to expand and diversify the Australian economy. "The first strategy would make quite a few people worse off, at least in the short run. The second strategy would require more labor as well as more investment in capital, so immigration would be a necessity."

One of Altman's most controversial predictions is that cultural barriers will slow China's rapid growth over the next three to four decades.

"When China can no longer rely on waves of workers migrating to cities to keep wages for its exports down, and where there are no more technologies to copy from advanced economies, [China] will have to grow based on its ability to innovate and promote entrepreneurship," he said. "Right now, China is a lousy place for both of these things."

the Executive Council of Australia Jewry (ECAJ), filed bankruptcy proceedings with the Federal Court after not receiving the court ordered payments.

"It's very important that people understand these are not damage but costs that have already been incurred and were found to be owed by him. We're asking him to pay that money, and if he can't, the normal step is bankruptcy," Jones said.

The decision to pursue Toben for costs was carried at the last ECAJ annual meeting, he said.

On June 1, Toben asked for a adjournment to obtain legal representation, but Justice Anthony Besanko gave him only a minimum time to bring a lawyer to court, stating legal precedent did not allow bankruptcy cases to be adjourned.

The hearing is due to resume today (Thursday).