

# SYDNEY JEWISH MUSEUM

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## **(Sydney Jewish) Museum Announces opening of New Holocaust Exhibition**

The Sydney Jewish Museum is pleased to launch its new permanent Holocaust exhibition, revealing the results of over five years of community consultations, academic research, curation and creative development.

The changes in the Museum are far from cosmetic, with the new exhibition deepening the historical narrative and ensuring that the voices of the Holocaust survivors remain a central feature of the Museum in perpetuity.

“This is the first major re-development of the Holocaust display since the Museum opening in 1992” said Dr Avril Alba, Project Director and Consulting Curator for the new exhibition. “Our mandate was clear from the start –to remain faithful to the Museum’s history while also demonstrating a key awareness for the necessity for change.”

The Museum has employed a wealth of techniques to achieve this goal, including the creation of ‘**Voices**’ - a custom curated app that will enable visitors to hear a series of testimonies from Holocaust survivors, perpetrators, bystanders, resisters and Australian Human Rights experts, including Gillian Trigs and Mick Gouda.

“Conceiving how to imbed the survivor voices in the new exhibition presented a conceptual challenge for all involved” says Alba. “The solution lay in sourcing new technology originally developed by the Museum of Old and New Art in Tasmania and adapting that in partnership with our creative team at X2 Design. Utilising the Museum’s vast stores of testimony, we have brought first-hand accounts to bear on every aspect and layer of the new exhibition.”

In addition to hearing these testimonies, visitors will be able to view **over one hundred new artefacts** from the Museum’s unique collection and **hundreds of images and footage** never before seen in Australia. These include black and white and colour footage of the vibrant and diverse landscape of Jewish life before the Holocaust as well as the confronting films of ghettoization and liberation.

Efforts have also been made to place the display in its Australian context, comprising consideration of Australia as a ‘bystander’ (the Evian Conference), ‘resistor’ (participation in Allied forces) and documenting Australia’s migration policy in the pre and post war periods.

Amid the innovation lies a concerted effort to retain the qualities that have made a visit to the Museum such a unique and affecting experience. The survivor founders (30 of whom still regularly share their stories with Museum visitors) will remain at the centre of an institution that is dedicated to history and memory whilst also encouraging contemporary reflection and debate.

“Studying the Holocaust is essential in terms of understanding the history of the twentieth century,” said Dr Alba. “But perhaps more importantly, it is essential to our humanity, sensitising us to the consequences of discrimination and strengthening our resolve to build and maintain communities free of racism and bigotry.”

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