

## **SYDNEY JEWISH MUSEUM TO COMMENCE CONSTRUCTION ON MAJOR HOLOCAUST EXHIBITION**

The Sydney Jewish Museum will soon begin construction on a major new Holocaust exhibition at its premises in Darlinghurst.

The new exhibition is intended to renew visitors understanding of this unprecedented time in history, and to prompt consideration of the responsibility of each individual to building a fair, just and inclusive society.

Much has changed since the current Holocaust exhibition was conceived and constructed in 1992. The Holocaust Survivor founders have aged, many have passed away and societies' understanding of the period has been deepened by the work of dedicated academics and scholars. Tragically, national, ethnic, racial and religious groups have continued to be the victims of targeted violence, underscoring the urgent need for further and more effective education.

Speaking of the need for a new exhibition, Norman Seligman, CEO of the Sydney Jewish Museum said: "The new exhibition is primarily a response to inter-generational change. We are fast approaching a time when memory will move into history. It was essential that we find a way to ensure that the Survivor voices remained at the forefront of this space, retaining the deeply personal narrative at the heart of the Museum experience."

The exhibition has been developed in consultation with Holocaust Survivors, Jewish community and thought leaders and has been a major academic undertaking for Project Director Dr Avril Alba, who assumed responsibility for the overarching concept.

Dr Alba said "The new exhibition is a bridge between the Holocaust Survivors – who were devoted to commemoration and education, and ensuing generations, who seek to continue this mission while also engaging with the contemporary and universal implications of this tragedy."

"The project has also afforded us the opportunity to deepen the Holocaust narrative by incorporating the testimonies of witnesses, perpetrators and experts. The voices of these individuals reflect the many layers of complexity associated with this period of history."

The new exhibition will also highlight the immediate, physical and material connections we have to the past with over 100 new objects and triple the number of images incorporated into the new exhibition.

In tackling the project, Dr Alba was guided by the concepts of memory rooted in the Jewish tradition. She reflected that, "The Hebrew word *Zachor, Remember!* contains elements of both memory and action. At this moment of intergenerational change, we take our cue from this cultural precedent and seek to expand the Museum's original commitment to ongoing and active commemoration. As a result we have tried to create a space and exhibition that acknowledges the resilience and re-generation of the Jewish people, while telling a history that holds resonance for all peoples."

During the construction period, the Museum will continue to welcome visitors, with two temporary exhibitions *Anne Frank – A History for Today* and *Signs of Life – Letters of the Holocaust* on display.

The permanent exhibition, *Serving Australia*, which showcases the contribution that Jewish servicemen and women have made to the Australian armed forces, will continue to be accessible.

Norman Seligman said: “We are confident that our robust public program offering, combined with Anne Frank, *Serving Australia* and *Signs of Life* exhibitions will continue to offer visitors a worthwhile insight into Jewish Culture, traditions and history, and we are optimistic that the public will stand behind and continue to engage with us as we go through the process of constructing this exhibition.”

The new exhibition is scheduled to be opened in late 2016.

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