

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **One of the first permanent Human Rights Exhibitions to open in a Museum in Australia**

[www.sydneyjewishmuseum.com.au](http://www.sydneyjewishmuseum.com.au)

The Sydney Jewish Museum's new permanent exhibition, **The Holocaust and Human Rights** is one of the first of its kind in Australia and will be officially opened on Thursday 15 February 2018, by Mr Edward Santow, Human Rights Commissioner at The Australian Human Rights Commission.

This new space feeds into a global trend which sees many museums increasingly engaging with human rights. The exhibition focuses on key human rights issues facing Australia today and outlines various human rights achievements as well as ongoing challenges.

Norman Seligman, CEO of the Sydney Jewish Museum says; "After three years of research and development, we are proud to announce the official opening of the dynamic new **Holocaust and Human Rights Exhibition**. This exhibition will encourage thought and reflection as well as providing an opportunity to pose questions.

While we explore Human Rights issues, we also strongly encourage the concept of Personal Responsibility and the need for individuals to stand up and voice their concerns.

This now completes the Museum's major refurbishment, following the opening of the new Holocaust Exhibition last year and will be supported by ongoing Education and Public Programs".

The research for the exhibition was done in collaboration with the University of Sydney and partially funded through an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant.

Dr Avril Alba, Project Director, (assisted by A/Prof Barrett and Prof Dirk Moses) from the University of Sydney says, "The extent of Nazi crimes shocked member states of the United Nations (UN) and in December 1948, the UN General Assembly passed the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. However, there were limitations to both the Convention and Declaration as they omitted minority and indigenous rights (among others) and neither were able to seriously inhibit state sovereignty. However, they were and remain important statements of principle. Since their passing at the UN, human rights violations and genocide have continued to mark global society."

#### **The Holocaust and Human Rights Exhibition contains three main areas:**

- 1. A Timeline** of major human rights developments and violations, including two multimedia displays which show the evolution of international human rights law and continuing instances of genocide and mass atrocities in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. A dedicated section explores human rights developments in Australian history.
- 2. *Coming to the Table*** focuses on human rights achievements and challenges in the Australian context. Four multimedia table top installations each explore a human rights theme from a variety of perspectives. Themes include Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples, People with Disabilities, Asylum Seekers and Refugees and LGBTIQ Rights.

3. The final part of the exhibition is a questioning and **interactive space** that allows visitors to reflect and write down their thoughts and answers to questions such as: What do human rights mean to you? What can you do to promote human rights? What questions are you left asking?

**The Holocaust and Human Rights Exhibition** focuses on historic and contemporary human rights struggles in Australia and the region, exploring and questioning our individual, communal and national responsibilities in upholding human rights today. Opinions about the best way to address human rights issues can vary and, at times, clash. Protecting human rights requires the input of legal experts, nations, communities and individuals and is a complex and ongoing process.

The Sydney Jewish Museum invites you to join the debate and 'come to the table' and reflect on human right issues facing Australians today.