

## Advocate Speakers Represent Four Major Human Rights Issues in Australia in Dynamic Panel Discussion

On 14 June 2018, the Sydney Jewish Museum hosted an engaging and dynamic panel of speakers, who explored four major human rights issues facing Australia today; the rights of Indigenous people, refugees and asylum seekers, people with disabilities and the LGBTIQ community. These issues are highlighted in the Museum's recently-launched exhibition, *The Holocaust and Human Rights*.

Engaging an audience of 160 attendees from the legal field, activist groups, NGOs and the community, were speakers **Deng Adut** (refugee, defence lawyer and refugee advocate), **Brandon Srot** (psychotherapist, and sexuality and gender diversity trainer), **Professor Lindon Coombes** (Indigenous Chair for NSW Reconciliation Council), and **Rani Vincent** (co-founder of The Age of Ability and The Brain Injury Project). National Director of Amnesty International Australia, **Claire Mallinson**, delivered a compelling and erudite opening address to launch the evening, which drew upon her incredible, intimate field research and insights into current human rights issues occurring worldwide. In the face of rising incidences of crimes against humanity and hate speech, Claire expressed her optimism for the future of human rights. She said, "In the face of what can often seem like it's hopeless, and there's huge despair, it's up to all of us to do something. No matter how small that might be, we can all do something."

With diverse representation on the panel, the speakers and moderator **Emeritus Professor Andrew Jakubowicz** delved into complex, challenging and timely questions, some of which were fielded from audience members prior to the event. The line of discussion that ensued raised pertinent, emotive and empowering responses from the representative speakers. The panellists discussed their perspectives on the greatest needs of their respective sectors, both in terms of legal framework and public response, as well as the biggest impediments to success of the human rights within their fields of work and advocacy. The consensus amongst the speakers was that to move forward, we need to consciously re-frame the way we think and talk about people and groups who are outside of our own circles. "It is the dignity of the human being that is the most important thing", Deng emphasised.

The Sydney Jewish Museum is proud to have launched a forward-looking and universally engaging program to complement its new permanent exhibition *The Holocaust and Human Rights*. A capstone to the Museum's major, world-class Holocaust exhibition, this new, significant section of the Museum uses new technologies and approaches to explore local human rights issues, and is one of the first permanent human rights exhibitions to open in a museum in Australia.

The recent reception of 'Highly Commended' for *The Holocaust and Human Rights* exhibition in the 2018 Museums and Galleries National Awards affirms the efforts taken in the research, design and execution of the new exhibition.

The Sydney Jewish Museum will continue to bolster its educational and public programming surrounding the topic of human rights, to deliver contemporary, relevant and thoroughly interesting content to students, members of the public and new audiences.