

UPJ Bulletin #3

The Union for Progressive Judaism urges each of its member congregations to:

1. Cooperate fully with the recommendations provided by the Community Security Group's Crisis Management Teams in Australia and New Zealand
2. Take heed of the governmental health authority's guidelines:
Australian Government Department of Health: <https://www.health.gov.au/>
New Zealand Ministry of Health: <https://www.health.govt.nz/>
3. Minimise face-to-face contact

Below is a good summary about the importance of "flattening the curve", prepared by the University of Michigan.

How you can help

While we are all working hard to ensure that as few people as possible become infected and that health authorities have the best possible prospect of looking after those who are infected, we recognise the need to reach out to those who are vulnerable and need support.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry has put out a call for volunteers to assist the neediest in our community by delivering groceries to the elderly or placing regular phone calls to those living alone. Our Movement members have always stepped up to help. If you are able to volunteer in some capacity, please send your details to ECAJ Co-CEO Alex Rychin: 02 8353 8505, aryvchin@ecaj.org.au.

Inspiring podcast to listen to as we isolate

Before Rabbi David Saperstein departed (unfortunately sooner than originally planned), he gave an interview to Andrew West, on ABC Radio's "The Religion and Ethics Report". The interview ranged from the impact of Covid-19 to the fight for religious freedom. To listen to the podcast, go to:

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/religionandethicsreport/david-saperstein/12063484>

Reports from UPJ congregations in Australia

A number of congregations have shared their congregational communications with the UPJ; attached are four messages received from Beit Shalom Synagogue, Emanuel Synagogue, North Shore Temple Emanuel and Temple Beth Israel.

Here is a synopsis of what some of our UPJ congregations have reported (we will be providing updates as more congregations provide information) – but please note that our Rabbis continue to be available to support those who need their support:

Australia

ACT Progressive Congregation of the ACT Jewish Community: All activities, including the Communal Seder, have been suspended; an online Skype Seder will be offered; online services and classes will soon be offered.

New South Wales

Emanuel Synagogue: All face-to-face activities and events have been suspended; services, education and programs will soon be available online.

North Shore Temple Emanuel: All face-to-face activities and events have been suspended; services, education and programs will soon be available online.

Queensland

Beit Or v'Shalom (Brisbane): All services, Cheder and B'nei Mitzvah classes have been suspended, and the Communal Seder has been cancelled.

Sunshine Coast Jewish Congregation: Communal Seder has been cancelled.

Temple Shalom-Gold Coast: All services, activities and classes have been suspended, and the Communal Seder has been cancelled.

Victoria

Kedem: Shabbat service for 21 March cancelled; information about future services to be advised.

Temple Beth Israel: All religious services, educational programs and communal events have been cancelled. TBI will transition to an entirely “virtual” congregation, with live-streamed services through its website and YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/tbimelbourne>) including Bubs & Bagels, Netzer services, minyans and Shabbat services.

Leo Baeck Centre: Shabbat services continuing with social distancing practices in place, including chairs at two-metre intervals.

Etz Chayim: Decision to be advised prior to this Shabbat.

South Australia

Beit Shalom Synagogue: All programs and events suspended; interactive Shabbat candle-lighting on Friday evenings, online Torah study on Shabbat morning, online Cheder lessons on Sundays, synagogue staff and volunteers offering assistance to vulnerable members.

Tasmania

Hobart Hebrew Congregation: The Synagogue’s 175th anniversary events planned for 3-5 July 2020 have been cancelled. Public services are suspended.

Western Australia

Temple David: Shabbat morning service on 21 March celebrating a bat mitzvah will take place, complying with all social distancing guidelines. After this Shabbat service, all services will be live-streamed on Facebook; all classes, activities and events have been suspended, with online opportunities offered; the second-night communal Seder has been cancelled.

New Zealand

Beth Shalom (Auckland): Summer Soul Shabbaton has been postponed; services and activities have not been suspended at this time; congregation urged to refer to NZ Health Ministry guidelines, and the congregation is following those guidelines.

Temple Sinai (Wellington): Services and activities have not been suspended at this time; congregation urged to refer to NZ Health Ministry guidelines, and the congregation is following those guidelines.

Asia: Congregations have been closed since late January/early February

Jewish Community of Japan: While all activities, including the Communal Seder, have been cancelled, an online second-night Seder will be offered.