

VICTORIAN COMMEMORATION

## A unique remembrance

'Gathering together behind our screens was a powerful experience, demonstrating the strength and uniqueness of the Melbourne Jewish community'.

By [REBECCA DAVIS](#)

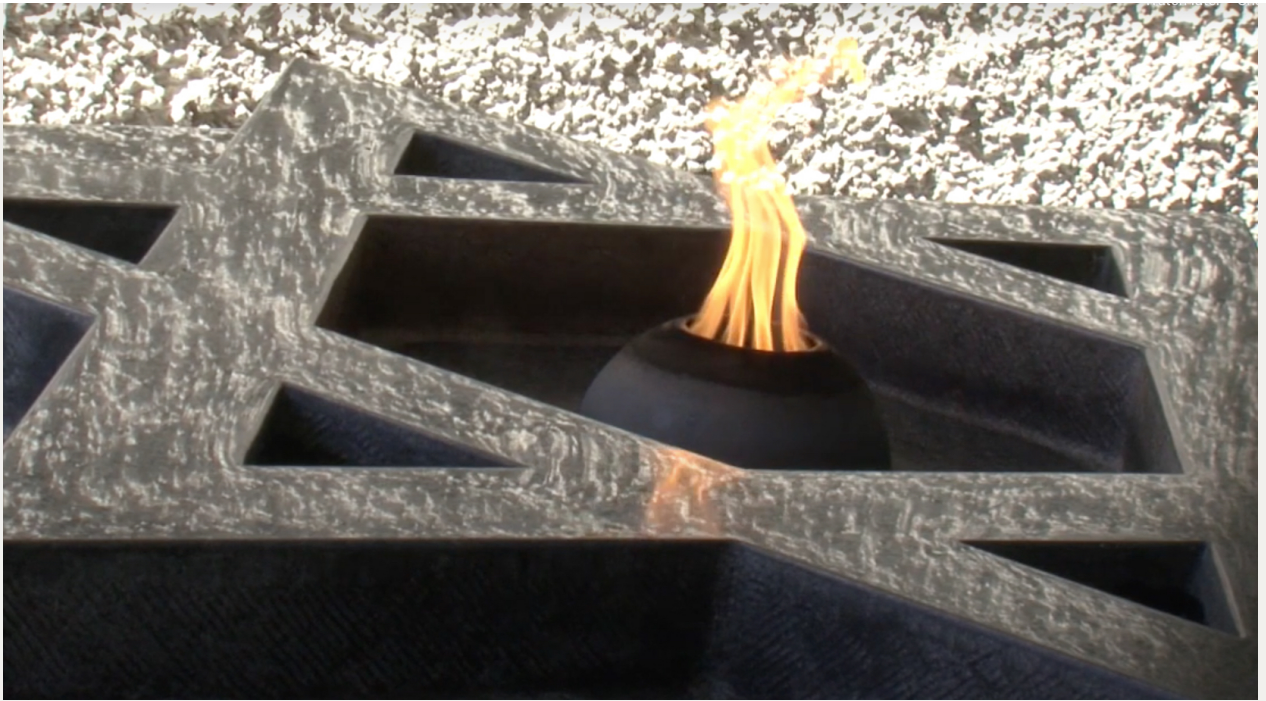
April 23, 2020, 12:20 pm

“REMEMBER ... Remember.”

Holocaust survivor Lusia Haberfeld’s poignant message on Yom Hashoah was simple as it reverberated across the J-Air airwaves in what marked the first ever series of remote communal remembrance events on Monday evening.

The special 45-minute broadcast to radio and online ‘Together We Remember’ was produced by the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) and commenced a unique array of Holocaust Remembrance Day commemorations as coronavirus isolation measures continue to prohibit physical gatherings.

Lusia – who endured the horrors of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Bergen-Belsen and Majdanek concentration camps – was one of six survivors who lit a candle in memory of loved ones lost and all victims, before sharing their messages to the world today.



A screengrab from the JHC's special Yom Hashoah online and on-air broadcast.

Narrating the broadcast, JHC museum director Jayne Josem acknowledged that while we are currently living in “unusual times” and “the coronavirus has deprived us of gathering together this year”, the “one thing it cannot stop is our commitment to remember the Holocaust and memorialise its six million Jewish victims”.

“And it will also not prevent us from connecting our unique community of survivors and descendants; each one of us in our own homes, coming together to remember.”

Immediately following the J-Air broadcast, the interactive Zoom event ‘Turning Memory into Action’ was hosted by LaunchPad in partnership with the JHC.

Approximately 500 people of all ages tuned in to the online intergenerational discussion. Facilitated by JHC education engagement manager Jennifer Levitt Maxwell, the forum saw survivor Phillip Maisel share his story before author Suzy Zail spoke on the evolution of her book *The Tattooed Flower* – a memoir based on her father’s Auschwitz experience – and urged others to document their family’s Holocaust histories.

Julia Sussman – managing director and co-founder of Youth HEAR, an organisation dedicated to bridging the gap between Australian youth and the memory of the Holocaust – also joined the conversation, and emphasised the importance of acts of kindness.

The virtual event concluded with Zoom participants lighting candles at home in memory of Shoah victims.

“Gathering together behind our screens was a powerful experience, demonstrating the strength and uniqueness of the Melbourne Jewish community,” LaunchPad innovation manager Natalie Herscu told *The AJN*.

“Our speakers across three generations inspired to preserve Holocaust memory and turn these memories into action. It is who we are from within and who we choose to be that is important in ensuring that we are taking the lessons that we learn from the Holocaust to make sure it never happens again.”

Later in the evening, the Jewish Community Council of Victoria together with the JHC screened 13 survivor testimonies on YouTube.

[Read more: Shoah survivors inspire online](#)



**Jewish Holocaust Centre**  
about 4 months ago



Meet Lusia Haberfeld, our fourth candle-lighter this evening:

Lusia was born in 1931 in Lodz, Poland. In 1939 the Nazis marched into Lodz, terrified and robbed the Jews and imposed a curfew. Jews had to wear yellow stars on their outer garments. The family escaped to Warsaw but was soon forced into the Warsaw Ghetto where they stayed until their arrest in 1943 during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Lusia stayed with her mother but was separated from her father and brother, whom she never saw again. They went to Auschwitz and were liberated from Majdanek concentration camp. We will be broadcasting our Yom HaShoah commemoration here 5:15pm tonight, or go to [www.j-air.com.au](http://www.j-air.com.au)

79  Comment  6

David Prince – a survivor of the Lodz Ghetto, Auschwitz-Birkenau and Friedland camps – implored the community to stand in solidarity over adversity.

“The only way to maintain our religion, our heritage and our existence is to unite and be proud of who we are. Only together can we combat antisemitism. Only together we can stop assimilation,” he said.

“And only together, we ensure: Never, never again.”

The powerful testimony by the late Kitia Altman was also played. Reflecting on her arrival at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Kitia relayed the moment where standing on the train platform she overheard a German guard say, “At Auschwitz, you enter through the gate, and you leave ...,” his voice trailing off as he jerked his head toward the chimneys.

“But we still did not associate that because [for] me, I stopped thinking. I remember, I said to myself, ‘Stop thinking and feeling.’”