**Melbourne Jewish Book Week during CoVid 19**

Melbourne Jewish Book Week was raring to go with its 2020 Festival, scheduled for 2-7 May.

International and local writers were booked – more than 80 in total. Almost two years in the planning, the festival was going to include two full days of panels and workshops; opening and closing night galas; a performance at fortyfivedownstairs; a literary brunch with two leading writers from New York; and a keynote address.

As coronavirus spread, and governments started imposing restrictions, including the closure of borders, we held several meetings and on 12 March we decided that a live festival was not in the interests of our supporters – and we pulled the plug, with tears and heartache. We were one of the first festivals to do so, but in the days and weeks that followed, no-one had any other option.

We felt an obligation to our supporters, sponsors and writers to provide an alternative. We opted for regular on-line events using available technology, and decided not to commit to a live event until the heath risks were well and truly passed.

Six months later, we are delighted and proud of what we have achieved in the CoVid world. Starting with no knowledge of the technology, we are now familiar with all aspects of Zoom. We have established the second Tuesday of the month as Melbourne Jewish Book Week evening.

Our offerings (to March 2021) have been:

* **May 2020** Philippe Sands and Mark Baker
* **June 2020** David Isaacs and Elizabeth Finkel
* **June 2020 (extra)** Colum McCann and Mark Baker
* **July 2020** Ben Lewi and Jan Epstein
* **August 2020** Juliet Rieden and Bram Presser
* **September 2020** Paul Valent and Rachel Kohn
* **October 2020** Shais Rishon (MaNishtana) and Claire Coleman – moderated by Isabelle Oderberg.
* **November 2020** Summer Reading Guide with Tali Lavi, Elissa Goldstein and Bram Presser
* **February 2020** Arnold Zable and Tali Levi
* **March 2020** Open mic