



# Annual Report

## 2025 • 5785

**BJE** | YOUR  
JEWISH  
JOURNEY

# Dedication

## In Memory of the Bondi Victims

On 14 December 2025, during Chanukah by the Sea at Bondi Beach, fifteen precious lives were taken in an act of terror that targeted our community.

We honour their memory and hold their families, friends, and all who were injured or traumatised in our hearts.

**We remember:**

Edith Brutman  
Matilda Britvan  
Dan Elkayam  
Boris Gurman  
Sofia Gurman  
Alex Kleytman  
Rabbi Yaakov Levitan

Peter Meagher  
Reuven Morrison  
Marika Pogany  
Rabbi Eli Schlanger  
Adam Smyth  
Boris Tetleroyd  
Tania Tretiak  
Tibor Weitzen

Their stories reflect the breadth of our community—rabbis, survivors, volunteers, parents, grandparents, children, migrants, neighbours, and friends. Each one a light, extinguished too soon.





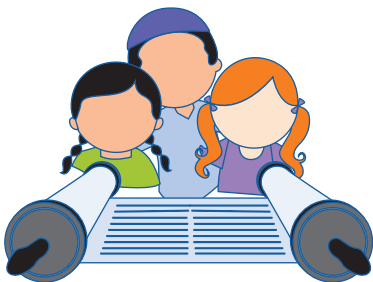
*May their memories  
be a blessing,  
and may their light  
continue to guide us.*



**In Solidarity & Remembrance**



2025  
5785



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# Message from the President

Dr Tahlia Gordon

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*A Senior Member of the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal, academic and Fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia, Dr Tahlia Gordon specialises in ethics and professional responsibility. Dr Gordon has served as President of the NSW Board of Jewish Education (BJE) since April 2017, leading BJE's strategic direction, policy development, and implementation of Child Safe Standards.*

## Strategic Leadership and Governance

The BJE Board continued to reinforce its role in guiding strategy, ensuring accountability, and maintaining community trust in 2025. This year, we took significant steps to strengthen governance and safeguard our students. We:

- Commissioned a Safeguarding Review by Halloran Morrissey Group to ensure best practice implementation of the Child Safe Standards and compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements.
- Adopted a *Statement of Commitment to Child Safety* and implemented a *Child Safe Code of Conduct 2026*, embedding child safe strategies and reporting across all BJE programs and activities.
- Recruited new Board Members to expand expertise and strengthen our governance capability.

- Participated in the JCA Observership Program, enhancing leadership capability and deepening community engagement.

These initiatives reflect our steadfast commitment to governance excellence, the wellbeing of every child in our programs and our sustainability.

## Executive Leadership

BJE's progress is driven by a strong Executive Leadership Team comprising:

- John Hamey, Chief Executive Officer
- Lianne Cohen, Director of Finance and Operations
- Ronnen Grauman, Head of Jewish Life

The leadership provided by the Executive is central to advancing BJE's strategic priorities and ensuring operational excellence.

## Financial Stewardship

The Board upheld rigorous governance across budgeting, audits, and risk management. We are committed to financial sustainability and transparency, ensuring every dollar we spend strengthens our impact in the community.

This year, we prioritised careful management of investment funds to safeguard long term

stability while continuing to invest strategically in program growth and educational innovation. This balanced approach protects BJE's future while enabling effective expansion and renewal.

## Recognition of Major Funding Partners

BJE is supported by generous partners who enable our important work to continue. Our funding partners ensure that every student who attends a non-Jewish Day school has the opportunity to experience BJE's core program offering, the BJE Jewish Journey. These partners include:

- The Jewish Communal Appeal (JCA) – Core communal support and strategic funding
- Y2i (Youth to Israel) – Enabling transformative Israel experiences
- Mosaic United – Strengthening global Jewish identity and connection
- Yael Foundation – Enhancing educator development and the ShinShinim Program
- The Education Heritage Fund – Supporting curriculum and Hebrew initiatives
- The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) – Security infrastructure funding

- NSW Community Languages School Program – Funding Hebrew language programs

### Community Partnerships and Advocacy

Collaboration with key stakeholders within the community is essential to BJE's vision and mission. This year, we strengthened partnerships with the following stakeholders:

- Central Synagogue
- Hatzofim Australia (co-partner in the ShinShinim Program)
- Maccabi NSW
- Mount Zion ELC (co-partner in the ShinShinim Program)
- NSW Jewish Board of Deputies
- Or Chadash
- PJ Library
- Shalom Collective
- The Jewish Agency for Israel
- The University of Sydney

These partnerships amplify our advocacy for Jewish education as a communal priority and expand pathways for engagement across all ages. We look forward to continuing to work with these stakeholders into the future.

In 2025 we continued offering our space to our key stakeholders. We welcomed Maccabi NSW onto our premises while their new home at White City is being developed, and we are delighted that Or Chadash continues to use our space on Shabbat. These partnerships reflect BJE's commitment to meaningful community collaboration.

### Strategic Achievements

Over the past 12 months BJE has worked tirelessly to implement measures to meet our strategic goals.

In 2025 our strategic achievements include:

- Infrastructure and security upgrades at our Bondi site
- Launch of the Parent Advisory Group
- Launch of the Youth Advisory Board
- Appointment of a Lead Educator for Pedagogy and Instructional Support to oversee curriculum renewal and educator development
- Approval from the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) as an accredited provider to deliver Out of School Hours Care (OSHC).
- Application for the Child Care Subsidy and Service Approval under the National Quality Framework (NQF).
- A comprehensive review of the Jewish Journey to identify opportunities for improved impact, relevance, and connection for students and families.

### Outlook

Looking ahead to 2026, the Board's key strategic priorities include:

- Renewing the BJE Jewish Journey curriculum and specifically, rolling out strengthened Hebrew and Jewish Life Enrichment programs.

- Expanding the BJE Hubs and enhancing pathways for youth engagement.
- Delivering comprehensive professional development for educators, with a focus on inclusive strategies for neurodiverse learners, innovative pedagogy, and meaningful integration of Information and Communications Technology (ICT).
- Delivering the Nesiah Israel Program, fostering deep connection to Israel, Jewish identity, and communal leadership.
- Identifying new funding streams to support program growth, sustainability, and reach.

### Closing Remarks

On behalf of the Board, I express profound gratitude to the BJE Board, our exceptional staff, dedicated educators, committed volunteers, generous funders, and the families who place their trust in us each year. Your partnership is the heartbeat of BJE.

BJE would not be who we are today without the devotion and support of our staff, key stakeholders and the community.



# Message from the CEO

John Hamey



*John Hamey brings extensive educational leadership experience to his role as CEO, having previously served as Principal of Moriah College. A passionate educator committed to inclusive leadership, he has dedicated his career to helping young people connect with their Jewish heritage through innovative programming and impactful community engagement.*

### **A Year of Growth, Connection, and Jewish Pride**

*“Judaism is not a religion of abstract principles; it is a way of life.”*

– Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z”l

This year, we brought that way of life into the BJE Jewish

Journey, the classrooms, programs, BJE Hubs and homes across NSW.

### **Impact Highlights**

Our impact this year was extensive. We have expanded our BJE Jewish Journey program offerings beyond expectation. Today we reach more students than we have in the 120 years of delivering educational programs to students in non-Jewish day schools:

- SRE Program: Over 1,448 students engaged across more than 64 public schools.

- Fee-Paying Programs: 220 students enrolled across BJE Hubs, the Hebrew Program and the Enrichment Program.
- Regional & Metropolitan Outreach: Expanded to Byron Bay and Canberra and welcomed new partner schools in Manly West and Killarney Heights.

With the support of Y2i and Mosaic United, we relaunched the Nesiah Israel Program—the first Israel trip since 2022 and the first following the tragic events of 7 October. Their support enabled 73 students to travel to Israel and

strengthen their connection to Jewish life through this transformative experience.

Across our programs, children learned not only prayers and traditions, but also the values that shape Jewish life—kindness, justice and responsibility.

Importantly, we supported several NSW public schools in responding to incidents of antisemitism, providing guidance, resources and education to promote respect and understanding. This work strengthened trust in our partnerships and helped ensure Jewish students and their families feel safe, proud and included.

### **Standing Together After the Bondi Tragedy**

This year was also marked by deep heartbreak. The horrific antisemitic attack at Bondi sent shockwaves through our community, across Australia and globally. For many families, students and educators, it shattered our sense of everyday safety on our doorstep.

In the days that followed, BJE played a key role in recovery efforts. We reached out to schools, families, community partners and police and offered support to the courageous first responders. We worked closely with the Community Security Group (CSG), the JCA and the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies to address security concerns,

provide access to mental health services and support those affected.

In moments like these, Jewish education becomes more than knowledge. It becomes a source of resilience—helping shape a generation grounded in tolerance, compassion and Jewish pride.

The response from the Bondi community was extraordinary. For thirty days, the community gathered in unity to honour the lives lost. Out of darkness came solidarity; out of grief came renewed purpose. This strengthened our resolve to build safe spaces where Jewish identity is embraced openly and confidently.

We carry the memory of those lost, and we deepen our commitment to protect, nurture and uplift every child entrusted to us.

### **Safeguarding Our Children**

Our commitment to child safety is unwavering. In partnership with Halloran Morrissey Group, we completed a comprehensive Safeguarding Review and embedded the *Child Safe Standards* across our operations. Key actions included:

- Adopted a *Statement of Commitment to Child Safety*
- Developing and implementing a new Child Safe Code of Conduct 2026.
- Delivering targeted staff training in safeguarding and inclusive practices.


- Strengthening child safe strategies and reporting protocols into all BJE's risk management planning, including camps, excursions and Hub activities.

Safeguarding is not a policy—it is a culture. We actively support a culture of safety by strengthening safe spaces and clearing pathways for young people to speak up about feeling unsafe.

### **Investing in Teaching Excellence**

We believe that great programs begin with great educators. This year, we appointed a *Lead Educator for Pedagogy and Instructional Support* to mentor teachers, refresh curriculum, embed inclusive practices and strengthen strategies for neurodiverse learners. We also appointed a Hub Coordinator to expand the BJE Hub program and enhance family engagement.

These initiatives are already delivering outstanding results. Student participation has boosted, the quality of our programs have improved, and we have created multiple ongoing opportunities for community connection. In recognition of our great educators, this year we introduced two staff awards. The first award, the *Award for Excellence in Teaching*, to honour educators who consistently go above and beyond their remit. The second award is the *Years of Service Awards* to recognise the



commitment of our educators to BJE. Many of our staff have been employed at BJE for a considerable number of years. We love that! The awards celebrate innovation, strengthen professional pride and reinforce our commitment to recognising great educators and delivering exceptional Jewish education.

### **Listening to Young Voices**

In recent years we have become aware that our young people want more say in what they learn, how they learn and how we communicate with them. In light of this knowledge, we have been working towards establishing a forum where our youth can vocalise their needs and desires. I am proud to announce that this year we established a forum dedicated to our youth. That forum is a Youth Advisory Board called “Keshet Council”.

The Keshet Council was established in August 2025 and has met on several occasions. The impact of the Council has been immediate. Students are shaping BJE’s programs and influencing content to meet their and the community’s needs.

Our Youth Engagement Team and the ShinShinim play a central role in our commitment to listening to young voices. They are the eyes and ears of our community, giving young people platforms to be heard

and connected. As new social media restrictions come into effect, we are exploring safe and creative ways to ensure students remain engaged and supported.

### **Partnering with Parents**

Parents and carers are central to the BJE Jewish Journey and we rely on their feedback to ensure that we are meeting their needs. This year therefore, we launched the Parent & Carers Advisory Group, to create a forum for parents and carers to share ideas and help shape our programs. The contribution of the Group since its establishment has been significant. We are grateful for their time, energy and desire to work with us whilst they juggle competing demands.

In addition to the Parent Advisory Group, we have strengthened our formal community feedback mechanisms. We have always sent out feedback forms and conducted surveys to ascertain where we can improve. However, in 2025, the feedback mechanisms we implemented were more targeted. The insights we have received from regular student, parent and carer feedback facilitates our commitment to ongoing improvement and ensures our offerings remain relevant and meaningful.

### **Strengthening Our Infrastructure**

To support our growing programs, we invested in the following essential upgrades to our Bondi premises:

- Enhanced security systems.
- Property repairs following severe storm damage.
- ICT upgrades, including improved internet infrastructure, networking equipment and updated devices.
- Furniture improvements to create a more welcoming environment.
- A new BJE website upgrade to improve accessibility and user experience.

### **Looking Ahead**

Whilst 2025 was a big year for BJE, 2026 will be bigger. In 2026, we will be:

- Rolling out a new Modern Hebrew curriculum and refresh Jewish Life Enrichment.
- Expanding the geographical reach of the BJE Hubs.
- Growing youth engagement pathways, including exploring a dedicated teen Hub in Bondi.
- Deepening partnerships with communal organisations.
- Working to increase the number of ShinShinim, recognising their vital role in strengthening students' connection to Israel and Jewish life.



Our focus for 2026 is very clear: investing in educator development, expanding family engagement, strengthening our curriculum and amplifying authentic connections.

**A Shared Journey**

*"If you will it, it is no dream."* – Theodor Herzl

The BJE Jewish Journey is more than what children learn—it is about who they become and their connection to the community. It is the friendships formed at a campfire, the pride felt at a Rosh Hashanah fair, and the awe of standing before the Kotel for the first time.

Together—with our educators, volunteers, students, parents and carers and stakeholders—we are continuing to shape a vibrant Jewish future for Jewish students who attend non-Jewish day Schools and their families.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for all their hard work during 2025 in enabling BJE to be the success it is today.

**John Hamey**  
*Chief Executive Officer  
 NSW Board of  
 Jewish Education*



# The BJE Jewish Journey

## What We Mean When We Say “Jewish Journey”

At BJE, “The Jewish Journey” isn’t just a slogan — it’s the entire philosophy behind our work. It describes a child’s pathway from their very first day of school all the way through to young adulthood, supported by caring mentors, meaningful experiences, and a rich, age-appropriate curriculum. We proudly embrace the pluralistic nature of our community, ensuring every child feels welcome, respected and inspired.

From learning the Shema in Year 1, to mentoring younger students in high school, to standing at the Kotel on Nesiah in Year 10 — every stage is part of a continuum that shapes identity, pride, and lifelong connection. The Jewish Journey helps students grow intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. It’s about helping each child discover who they are as a Jew and who they are in the world. Through both formal learning and hands-on experiences, students graduate with a strong intellectual, emotional, and cultural connection to Judaism, Hebrew, Israel, and the wider Jewish community.

## What The Jewish Journey Is

### The Jewish Journey: A Pathway from Childhood to Young Adulthood

From Kindergarten through Year 12, every student at BJE travels along a thoughtfully crafted Jewish Journey—an arc of identity, learning, and connection that grows with them. It’s a full educational pathway that follows each child from their very first Aleph all the way to stepping confidently into Jewish adult life. Students grow through meaningful learning, friendships, leadership opportunities and key Jewish milestones.

### A Journey Guided with Heart

At the centre of this journey are our **Morah Derech** — teachers who guide with warmth, care, and creativity. They don’t only teach; they mentor, inspire, and build real relationships that help students feel anchored in their Jewish identity. It builds a lifelong connection to Jewish identity, community and purpose.

The Jewish Journey helps children not only understand their heritage, but live it, lead with it and make a difference through it.

*“The greatest gift you can give someone is your time and attention.”*

— Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Rimanov



# Growing Identity Through Every Stage

## Hebrew as a Living Language

From Kindergarten to Year 12, our students experience Hebrew as a dynamic, spoken language. Learning is active and immersive, utilising song, group discussions and games to explore Jewish festivals, ethics and Israel.

**Early Years:** Foundational learning through storytelling and play.

**Senior Years:** Advanced engagement with Jewish identity, history and antisemitism.

## A Vibrant Social Journey

The Jewish Journey thrives on lifelong friendships and community. From vibrant Chag (Festival) Fairs in primary school to camps, Shabbatons and peer networks in high school, we cultivate environments where students feel deeply connected. By opening our doors to all, we actively encourage friendships that extend far beyond an individual school's walls, bridging the gap to the wider Jewish community.

## Identity through History and Memory

"To be a Jew is to be part of a story that began before you and will continue after you." — Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Students connect deeply to their heritage through Biblical stories, Holocaust education and global Jewish history—developing resilience, continuity, and pride. Through flagship programs like Project Heritage, history transforms into a lived connection.

## Tikkun Olam

"Judaism is not a religion of abstract principles; it is a way of life."  
— Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

We translate Jewish values into real-world action. From foundational lessons in kindness and responsibility in primary years, to leadership and social justice in high school, we help students develop values such as kindness, responsibility, fairness and *Tikkun Olam*.

In **Enrichment**, learning goes beyond traditional scripture to challenge students to better themselves and actively repair the world around them.

## A Strong Connection to Israel

"If you will it, it is no dream." — Theodor Herzl

Israel is woven into everything we teach from Kindergarten to Year 12. It comes alive daily at the BJE Hub through activities led by our *ShinShinim* (Israeli emissaries), in Hebrew and scripture classes highlighting the significance of Jerusalem. Whether it's making falafel for Yom Ha'atzmaut or exploring history, students engage deeply with Israeli culture.

This foundation culminates in the Year 10 *Nesiah* Israel trip, providing a powerful, transformative connection to Jewish identity and belonging.

## Developing Future Leaders

Leadership develops gradually; from being Mensch of the Week in primary school to active mentoring and advocacy in high school. This growth is driven by our Madrichim who guide students through JNF and JCA fundraising appeals and collaborations with Adamama, Shalom and the ZFA.

This journey culminates in Years 11 and 12, where students attend the Ash Levi Leadership Camp, empowering them to learn and lead with confidence throughout life.

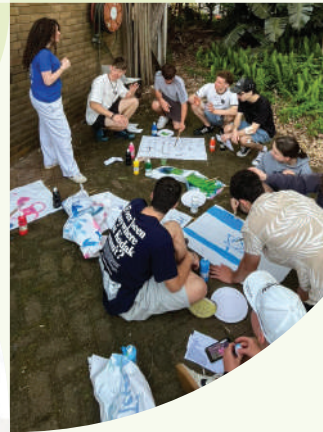


# Program Highlights

## Formal Education

Ronnen Grauman – Head of Jewish Life

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### Special Religious Education (SRE)

BJE plays a unique and essential role as the only Government approved provider of Jewish Special Religious Education (SRE) in NSW primary and some secondary public schools. Through our SRE Program, students explore Jewish beliefs, values, traditions and history within mainstream school environments—often in settings where they may be the only Jewish child in their year.

In accordance with the *Education Act 1990 (NSW)*, SRE is delivered during class time to students whose parents or carers nominate Judaism as their preferred subject on school enrolment forms. Our curriculum provides continuity, connection and visibility, strengthening Jewish identity and confidence

for students in primary and secondary public schools.

Our educators are more than teachers—they are trusted Jewish role models whose presence ensures students feel seen, safe, proud and connected. For many families, BJE serves as their primary Jewish touchpoint during the busy school week. In non-Jewish environments, this presence becomes an anchor to connect to the Jewish community.

To further support students, we have worked closely with leadership teams at Killara High School and Rose Bay Secondary College, deepening our partnerships and advocating for inclusive, culturally safe environments. In 2025, we visited Killara weekly and Rose Bay fortnightly,

coordinating Lunch Club, engaging with students and launched a new Jewish Culture class. Offering SRE is a part of our commitment to safeguarding religious freedom and strengthening Jewish life in non-Jewish Day schools.

### Enrichment Program

The BJE Enrichment Program brings Jewish culture, values and traditions to life through dynamic, experiential learning. This fee-paying program complements SRE and runs before or after school at selected sites. Sessions include hands-on projects, festival experiences and creative activities that help students explore their Jewish identity in joyful and thoughtful ways.

A highlight of the 2025 year was our series of quarterly



Chag fairs with the Bellevue Hill Enrichment cohort. Students from Kindergarten to Year 6—and their parents and grandparents—joined us for the following fairs:

- **Pesach** (Term 1)
- **Purim** (Term 2)
- **Rosh Hashanah** (Term 3)
- **Chanukah** (Term 4)

The fairs were filled with energy, themed treats, competitions, craft stations, photobooths and plenty of fun and engaging activities. We are grateful to our community partners—Friendship Bakery, Print35, Maccabi NSW and the JCA—for helping make each gathering memorable.

Our educators are the heart of the Enrichment program. They design experiences that inspire curiosity and embed learning through creativity—whether students are crafting a *Har Sinai* display, making *Mishloach Manot*, or planting saplings for *Tu Bishvat*. Their passion transforms each session into a heartfelt Jewish moment.

We are pleased to advise that a refreshed and contemporary

Enrichment curriculum is currently in development and will be launched in 2026, further strengthening the program's impact and relevance.

### **Hebrew Program**

BJE's Hebrew Program provides students with a strong foundation in modern Hebrew reading, writing, speaking and comprehension. Lessons are interactive and engaging, using stories, games and real life language experiences to make Hebrew accessible and enjoyable.

We have a new stage appropriate, modernised curriculum, ensuring students encounter Hebrew learning that is relevant, motivating and aligned with educational best practice. Beyond language skills, the program nurtures cultural understanding and deepens students' connection to Israel and the wider Jewish cultural world.

### **Milkshake Madness**

What began as a simple engagement initiative has grown into one of the most

beloved experiences for BJE high school students. Milkshake Madness provides a relaxed, social and proudly Jewish space after the school day at a venue that sells milkshakes where students feel comfortable showing up as themselves. Informal conversations, games and friendships built during Milkshake Madness flow naturally into stronger classroom participation and deeper community connection. And of course—the free milkshake remains a highlight that adds joy and reinforces that Jewish life is fun, social and worth turning up for!

### **Lunch Club**

Lunch Clubs continue to thrive as weekly hubs of belonging during school. They offer Jewish students a safe environment to connect with peers, explore their identity, ask questions and build enduring friendships. For many students, Lunch Club is the first place they encounter a consistent and supportive Jewish community within their school.

## Social Activities

Across the 2025 year, students participated in a rich array of social and cultural activities—from BBQs and festival celebrations to *Havdalah* gatherings, camps and community events. These experiences, of which there were many, promote genuine connection, strengthen friendships and deepen students' emotional ties to Jewish life. They don't just introduce Jewish culture—they help it feel personal, relevant and joyful.

## Nesiah Israel Program

The Nesiah Israel Program remains BJE's flagship experiential offering for students in Year 10. In a changing global landscape, the significance of this experience continues to grow. Nesiah gives students an opportunity to encounter Israel with open eyes and open hearts, connecting deeply to Jewish history, peoplehood and identity.

The program builds self discovery, resilience, leadership and lifelong friendships. Students return with renewed pride and a clearer understanding of their place in the global Jewish story.

After a two-year absence, we were delighted to once again run the Nesiah Israel Program—a cornerstone of BJE's experiential education and a key milestone in the BJE Jewish Journey. With last year's Year 10 cohort unable to travel, the 2025 program brought together Year 10 and Year 11 students for a four week journey from 14 December 2025 to 13 January 2026. In a rapidly changing global landscape, its significance feels even more profound.

Nesiah offers students far more than a tour of Israel — it gives them the opportunity to step more deeply into their Jewish identity, history and peoplehood. Participants return standing a little taller, with a clearer sense of who they are and where they belong.

This year's group included 73 students from 27 schools across NSW, the ACT and Queensland. Notably, 18 of these schools were represented by just one student each—a reminder of the program's remarkable geographical reach and of how Nesiah brings together young people who may otherwise never have met or will meet.

The success of Nesiah 2025 and its life changing impact is evidenced in the incredible feedback we received from participants and their families. As one participant stated:

*"A highlight of the trip was dancing in Tzfat with strangers and spending time with friends in the Negev, being connected to my Judaism and finding an inner me."*

## A Journey of Meaning, Connection and Discovery

The Nesiah itinerary is as rich as it is transformative. Students explored Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and the northern and southern regions of Israel, experiencing both the diversity of modern Israeli society and the depth of Jewish history.

Alongside classic Nesiah highlights—climbing Masada, floating in the Dead Sea, wandering through Jerusalem's vibrant Friday markets and welcoming *Shabbat* at the *Kotel*—students enjoyed experiences designed to spark curiosity and joy.

These included designing personalised chocolate bars, riding camels and donkeys, and engaging with local Israeli teenagers.

Students also learnt about the events of 7 October through facilitated educational sessions, including a rare opportunity to hear from a released hostage. These experiences provided an important context for understanding contemporary Israeli life, approached with sensitivity and care.

Family time was woven into the schedule, allowing students to reconnect with relatives living in Israel. Following this, each participant selected one of two pathways: a three day hike through the southern desert mountains, or volunteering in the Arava, learning about its communities, agriculture and environment.

## Building Lifelong Jewish Friendships

One of the most powerful outcomes of the Nesiah Israel Program—beyond strengthening Jewish identity and the connection to Israel—is the community it builds. Students return to Sydney with friendships that last well beyond the four weeks in Israel. They form genuine bonds across the Jewish community and reconnect throughout 2026 at reunion events led by the BJE Youth Engagement Team, including the Ash Levi Leadership Camp in April.

## Gratitude to Our Partners

Nesiah's impact is made possible through the generosity of our partners. We are sincerely grateful for the financial support provided by Y2i, whose commitment



inspires generations of young people to connect with their Jewish heritage, develop a love for Israel and participate actively in Jewish life. Through discretionary subsidies of up to \$5,000, along with additional support for Year 10 and Year 11 programs, Y2i ensures this transformative experience is accessible to as many students as possible.

We are also deeply appreciative of Mosaic United, whose global mission strengthens Jewish identity and connection. Their support helps ensure that programs like Nesiah continue to inspire and unite the next generation with our ancestral homeland.

### **ShinShinim Program**

Our ShinShinim, Yarden Hermoni & Yahli Karsh play a vital role in strengthening cross cultural understanding and global Jewish peoplehood. ShinShinim — a Hebrew acronym for Shant Sherut (Year of Service) — is a program that offers Israel's brightest recent high school graduates who defer their army service for a year to serve as emissaries in Jewish communities

around the world. Their presence brings authentic Israeli energy, personal stories and contemporary perspectives into schools. Through classroom activities, small group engagement and community events, the ShinShinim model resilience, passion and joy in Jewish life.

As their report reveals, this year, they participated in numerous community-wide activities.

We are deeply grateful to our key stakeholders of the ShinShinim program - The Yael Foundation, Mount Zion ELC and Hatzofim for enabling BJE's participation in this transformative program.

### **Illuminating the BJE Jewish Journey**

Like the enduring flame of *Chanukah*, the spark within each child shines brightest when nurtured with care, intention and love. BJE remains committed to fostering vibrant Jewish life across NSW—empowering every child to discover their path, deepen their pride and navigate their unique Jewish Journey.

Each program, each relationship and each moment of connection in the BJE Jewish Journey contributes to a strong and confident next generation. Together with families, schools and the broader community, BJE continues to illuminate the path forward—one spark, one child, one light at a time.





# Year of Impact

Across schools, community programs, office updates and public events, our focus has remained constant: strengthening Jewish pride, deepening connection to Israel and building personal relationships with young people through the BJE Jewish Journey.

This year reaffirmed the power of authentic encounters—and the unique role the ShinShinim Program plays in advancing BJE’s mission.

## Our Impact at a Glance – 2025

### SRE Students Reached

- **1,250 primary school students** received weekly Jewish education.
- **198 high school students** engaged throughout the school term.
- **1,448 students** supported across all SRE programs.
- Teaching delivered across **68 schools**.
- **142 SRE classes** taught each week—totalling **4,544 classes** across the year.

### Schools We Serve (SRE)

- **64 primary schools**
- **4 high schools**
- A total footprint of **68 schools**, ensuring Jewish education is accessible across a wide geographic area.





## Our Teaching Team

- **32 dedicated educators** delivering high quality learning across primary and high school settings.



## Program Highlights 2025

### Enrolments Across BJE Hubs, Hebrew and Enrichment

- **220 students** enrolled across the BJE Hubs, Hebrew Program and Enrichment Program.

### Hebrew Language Program

- **115 students** learned modern Hebrew this year.
- Classes offered from **beginner to advanced**, supporting learners from **Kindergarten to Year 12**.

### BJE Hub

- **46 new children and families** joined the BJE Hub, alongside 19 returning families.
- **30 primary school students** enjoyed hands on festival learning at the Matzah Factory, rolling, baking and creating together.

### Jewish Enrichment Program

- **110+ students** engaged in dynamic Jewish enrichment learning throughout the year.

### Nesiah Israel Program

- **73 students** participated in the Nesiah Israel Program.
- A **four week** immersive journey in Israel.
- **750 students** have participated in Nesiah in total to date.
- Students represented **27 schools** across NSW, ACT and Queensland.
- **18 schools** were represented by a single student—66% of all schools—highlighting Nesiah's reach beyond traditional feeder networks.



# Youth Engagement

## Idan Alhassid

Youth Engagement Coordinator



*Idan is studying Cognitive & Brain Science and Data Science at Macquarie University while serving as BJE's Youth Engagement Coordinator. He has been actively involved with HaTzofim Sydney since 2016 and spent a gap year volunteering in a youth detention facility in Israel—an experience that deepened his passion for mentoring teenagers helping them connect with their identity, community and Jewish story.*

### High School Program Highlights

#### Empowering the Next Generation: 2025 Year in Review

This year marked growth, momentum and reconnection for the Youth Engagement Team as we continued to inspire young people across Sydney's Jewish community. Through camps, school based programs, leadership development and consistent weekly engagement, we strengthened identity, belonging and Jewish pride—laying foundations that will support the next generation for years to come.

#### Ash Levi Leadership Camp – Building Emerging Leaders

In April, we brought together our Year 11 cohort for the annual Ash Levi Leadership Camp, building on the success of Camp Beseder in late 2024. Designed to empower emerging leaders, the camp focuses on personal growth, teamwork,

confidence, leadership skills and Jewish identity. It also provides space to deepen friendships and strengthen community connection. The maturity and commitment shown by this year's participants reaffirmed how crucial these opportunities for connection are at such a formative stage.

#### Nesiah Israel Program – A Milestone Returned

A major milestone this year was the return of the Nesiah Israel Program after three years. More than 50 students from 20 schools attended pre-Nesiah meet and greet events throughout the year—including a Rose Bay meet up, a community BBQ and a Bowling Bonanza—laying the groundwork for authentic friendships before the trip.

These relationships strengthened further at the pre Nesiah Camp in September, where 60 students prepared for the journey ahead. Led by our Nesiah leaders, sessions offered at the Camp explored personal and historical connections to Judaism and Israel, helping participants reflect on their Jewishness.

#### Weekly Engagement – Creating Jewish Spaces in Schools

While camps anchor our calendar, day to day

engagement remains at the heart of our work. This engagement includes:

- Weekly lunch club at Rose Bay Secondary College
- The Keshet Club at Kambala.
- An in-class program at Reddam Middle School.

In each of these engagements, participants discussed Jewish values, culture and peoplehood in ways that were accessible and fun. The weekly lunch club at Rose Bay Secondary College, for example, includes games, conversations, mentorship and a safe space to explore Jewish identity and Israel. The Keshet Club at Kambala offers a fun and thought-provoking space for participants to explore their identity, the community and Israel. The Reddam Middle School program provides an opportunity for participants to learn about Judaism in the curriculum.

#### SRE – Reaching Students Across Sydney

In 2025 our Youth Engagement Team supported SRE (Special Religious Education) at South Sydney High School, Killara High School and St Ives High School, delivering engaging programs about Judaism, values and Israel through maps, interactive activities and thoughtful discussions. The



impact of the team in the SRE program is significant according to the feedback we received from parents.

*“Scripture has had a meaningful impact on my daughter, Dana. Although Hebrew has always been spoken at home, Dana’s understanding of Jewish culture was initially limited. Scripture classes have given her valuable knowledge about Jewish history and traditions, helping her feel much more connected to her Jewish identity.”*

— Asher, Parent

### **Keshar Council – Youth Voice at the Centre**

This year we launched the Youth Advisory Board: Keshar Council. The Council comprises of six passionate high school students from five different schools. It collaborates with the Youth Engagement Team to plan enriching events and strengthen school based initiatives. The insights of the Council assist in ensuring our

programs genuinely reflect students’ interests, challenges and aspirations. The Council will continue to shape the direction of our engagement across 2026 and beyond.

### **Community Involvement and Volunteering**

In 2025, our students played an active role in the community, proudly representing BJE at community events and volunteering initiatives, including JNF Green Sunday and Friendship Circle programs. Their presence reflected a growing confidence in their Jewish identity and commitment to contributing to the broader community acquired through participation in the BJE Jewish Journey.

### **A Year Defined by Connection**

As we reflect on 2025, one theme clearly stands out: Keshar, meaning Connection.

Through camps, school programs, leadership pathways and the return of Nesiah, we

strengthened community and empowered the next generation of Jewish voices. In a global climate where anti Zionism and antisemitism is rising and Jewish students in non-Jewish Day schools may feel silenced, BJE remained committed to creating spaces where Jewish students and their families feel proud, supported and confident in their identity.

This year, our madrichim, ShinShinim and Keshar Council led initiatives that fostered belonging, kinship and Jewish pride—bringing students and their families together across schools and suburbs.

I am incredibly proud of our 2025 Youth Engagement achievements and look forward to expanding these opportunities even further in 2026. I want to acknowledge the unwavering commitment of the Youth Engagement team to their strategic goals and BJE. They are essential to BJE’s success and impact.



# A Focus on the BJE Hubs

Yulia Ilin - Bondi BJE Hub Coordinator



*With a background in early childhood education and administration, Yulia Ilin is committed to fostering a warm, supportive and engaging learning environment at the Bondi BJE Hub. She is passionate about strengthening family connections and hopes to expand Hub offerings into more areas across NSW.*

## Building Community Through Shared Experience

Throughout the year, the BJE Hubs were vibrant spaces where children didn't just learn about Jewish values—they lived them. Through partnerships, celebrations and hands on learning, each term strengthened their sense of belonging and deepened community connections.

## Lag BaOmer – A Joyful Start to the Year

In May, Lag BaOmer set the tone for the year with a lively open event at the Bondi BJE Hub. Families from the wider community were welcomed into the space, offering new children the opportunity to experience the Hub environment firsthand. A visit from the local firefighting

team added excitement and practical learning, with children exploring fire safety through demonstrations and enjoying a water hose activity aimed at designated targets.

Children also engaged creatively with the story of *Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai*, crafting cave scenes using natural materials—a hands on way to blend tradition, imagination and learning.

## Shavuot – Learning, Giving and Community Connection

In June, Shavuot provided an opportunity to blend Jewish learning with values led action. Open celebrations welcomed new families into the Hub, where children explored themes of Torah, community and giving. In partnership with





COA and Montefiore Aged Care, children created flower bunches to donate to elderly community members—an act that reinforced empathy, respect and intergenerational connection.

Later in the term, the Hineni Youth and Welfare team visited the BJE Hub, introducing children to leadership opportunities within the Jewish community. Through guided games and discussions, Hineni role models inspired children to see themselves as emerging leaders.

### Friendship Circle – Inclusion and Kindness in Action

In August, a visit from the Friendship Circle prompted thoughtful conversations about inclusion, kindness and support. Children learned about the organisation’s work and how communities thrive when every individual is valued. Hub families were invited to join the Friendship Circle Walk and Family Fun Day, extending learning from the Hub into the broader community.

### Rosh Hashanah – Tradition Brought to Life

Rosh Hashanah was celebrated with a hands on experience through the Chabad Youth Shofar Factory workshop. Children explored the

symbolism of the shofar by sanding, polishing and creating their own — bringing an ancient tradition to life in a memorable, engaging way.

### Partnership with Families

Building strong relationships with families remained central to the BJE Hub experience. Both the Bondi and Randwick BJE Hubs hosted open weeks, welcoming new families and inviting parents and carers to engage in craft, play and hands on learning alongside their children.

The year concluded with an open celebration for the *Shabbat Project*. Children participated in Shabbat themed activities including *challah* baking, craft and ritual learning, and took home *Havdalah* packs to continue the Shabbat

experience at home. This final open event reinforced the Hub’s role as a bridge between learning and Jewish life.

Across the Hubs, open weeks and shared celebrations strengthened trust, connection and partnership. This year, the Hubs welcomed new enrolments from both public and private schools—a reflection of our growing presence and reputation within the community.

### BJE Hubs Built on Connection

At its heart, the BJE Hubs are about connection—between children, families, educators and the wider community. This year’s programs and partnerships highlighted that when learning is shared, lived and celebrated together, it leaves a lasting and rewarding impact.





# ShinShinim Program

Yarden Hermoni and Yahli Karsh

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Since arriving in early August 2025, we have brought our personal stories, memories, traditions and warmth from Israel into every space we have visited. Our goal has been simple: to bring Israel to the students and communities we work with. Beyond the activities we run, we carry Israel through our personalities, humour and lived experiences.

This year, the ShinShinim Program emerged as one of the most powerful drivers of connection, pride and authentic Israel engagement across the community. From early childhood settings to high school classrooms, we brought lived experience, warmth, and genuine relationships into every environment we entered.

Our presence didn't just introduce Israeli culture; it sparked curiosity, inspired real conversations at home and created moments that students will carry with them long after the year ends. Through partnerships with schools, community organisations and families, the program strengthened Jewish identity—particularly in settings where many young people have limited Jewish touchpoints—demonstrating the transformative impact of peer led, personal engagement.

## The BJE Hubs

At the BJE Hubs, we worked with around 40 students each week, most of whom attended non Jewish schools. Each session became an opportunity to introduce Israel in a way that felt personal and joyful.

This year, we focused on Israel's geography, food, sports, holidays and culture. One memorable activity centred around Israeli athletes such as Deni Avdija and Linoy Ashram. Students learned about Israel's achievements in global sport and received collectible athlete cards—an interactive format that resonated strongly. Several parents later told BJE that their children continued researching Israeli sports at home and even watched games together. One student proudly arrived in the final week of term wearing a Zehavi soccer shirt — that was a moment that highlighted how deeply these encounters resonate.

We also introduced creative, hands on activities that helped students build their connection to Israel. A highlight was our three week Hebrew name project, where students learned to write their names in Hebrew, created personalised name boards and completed a treasure hunt activity to find the letters needed to build their names. We explored Israeli tastes too, including making *shoko b'sakit*, which quickly became a favourite.



### Mount Zion Early Learning Centre (ELC)

Our partnership with Mount Zion ELC grew especially strong this year. Working with 43 young children, we led a project called “Fly to Israel with the ShinShinim”, where each week we “landed” in a different part of Israel through stories, music, games and childhood memories.

The children created and decorated “passports” that we stamped weekly. Watching them proudly collect their stamps—and later receive their completed passports at a celebration ceremony—made clear how deeply they connected to the journey.

We also taught Hebrew songs, simple Hebrew words and explored stories from Jewish tradition, including Creation and Noah. Sharing personal memories from our own childhoods helped the children understand that Israel is not just a place on a map, but a living, familiar home.

### Schools

As BJE’s work is centred in non-Jewish school settings, we had the privilege of working with students from across NSW.

- At Rose Bay Public School, we assisted with Hebrew lessons.
- At Bellevue Hill Public School, we supported Friday morning Enrichment Program sessions.
- At Clovelly Public School, we stepped in to support classes when teachers were unavailable.
- At Woollahra Public School, we supported the after school Hebrew Program.

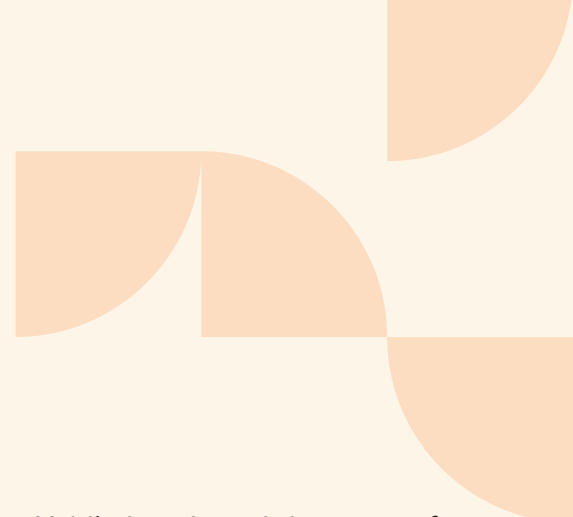
Across all these schools, we built strong relationships with both students and teachers. We brought youthful energy to lessons, facilitated Hebrew games, taught Israeli songs and shared stories about daily life in Israel. These sessions became highlights of the school week—demonstrating the unique impact of young Israeli role models.

Throughout the year, we joined the Youth Engagement Team at high-school Lunch Clubs, creating special and enjoyable touchpoints for Jewish students. We visited Rose Bay Secondary College each week and attended Kambala fortnightly, building familiarity, trust and ongoing connection with the students we supported.

Earlier in the year, we also helped lead the pre-Nesiah Camp, preparing participants for their December Israel journey. The camp gave students the chance to meet one another, explore themes of identity and peoplehood, and gain the confidence they needed for the transformative experience ahead.

One of the most impactful moments of the trip was the visit to Kibbutz Dan, Yarden’s home community in the Upper Galilee. During the conflict in northern Israel, Kibbutz Dan endured repeated rocket attacks, sustained significant damage and experienced a months-long evacuation. Sharing this story firsthand allowed students to understand





resilience not as an abstract idea, but as a lived reality.

Walking through the kibbutz, seeing the restored spaces and hearing how residents supported one another, provided students with a powerful, personal insight into contemporary Israeli life. It offered a deeper understanding of community strength, courage and the everyday challenges faced by families living near the northern border.

Upon returning to Australia, we continued working closely with the Nesiah participants, hosting reunion events and strengthening the relationships formed on the journey. These follow-up connections ensured that the impact of the trip endured well beyond the four weeks spent in Israel, helping students carry their learning, friendships and sense of identity into the year ahead.

### Israel Updates & Community Work

Every Tuesday, we presented a short “Israel Update” to the BJE team, sharing personal reflections, news and stories from home. These moments helped staff feel connected to Israel in a human and grounded way.

One update focused on Yarden’s family’s evacuation

from Kibbutz Dan. This prompted the introduction of *Some Peas and Quiet*, a children’s book written by evacuated families from the kibbutz. We created an English version to help Australian students engage with the story in an accessible way.

We then visited Bellevue Hill Public School each Friday, reading the book to classes from preschool to Year 5. Students wrote heartfelt letters to the evacuated children—messages such as “I hope you find peace and return to your safe place” and “Australia is far away, but we are thinking of you here too.”

Yahli also shared the story of Yuval Halivni, a soldier killed on 7 October, whose dedication and spirit continue to inspire her. Sharing his story offered students a powerful example of leadership and values.

In September, we led the Musical Connection initiative, broadcasting songs and dedications from Sydney families to Israeli radio—creating a heartfelt bridge between communities.

We also spoke at a major community event marking two years since 7 October, representing BJE before an audience of 7,500 people and sharing the perspective of our generation.



# Annual Staff Awards

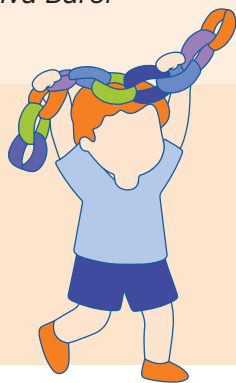


Our celebration included the presentation of the Annual Staff Awards, recognising individuals who model excellence, integrity and leadership in their everyday work.

- **Kol Yachol Award**  
*Heidi Turner*
- **Derech Eretz Award**  
*Libby Raichman and Jennifer Harris*
- **Hineni Award**  
*Aviva Barel*

These awards honour staff members who go above and beyond, foster positive relationships and step forward with presence and purpose whenever needed.

Together, the Staff Service Awards and Annual Staff Awards express BJE's deep appreciation for the people who bring Jewish learning, identity and community to life. Their dedication reflects the strength of our organisation and the heart of our mission.



## Annual KNA Campaign

In the 2025 reporting year, the KNA Campaign raised approximately \$60,000. These funds directly support the delivery and expansion of BJE's educational, cultural and community programs. Our donor base reflects a healthy mix of major supporters and loyal contributors.

## Major Gift Recognition

This year, BJE was honoured to receive a significant donation made in loving memory of Erna and Harold Frankfurter z"l. Harold served as an Honorary Life President of BJE, and Erna as a Life Member—both offering many years of dedicated service to our organisation.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Frankfurter family for their generosity and for choosing to support BJE's mission in such an important and enduring way.



# Celebrating Commitment

## Launch of the BJE Staff Service & Annual Awards Program

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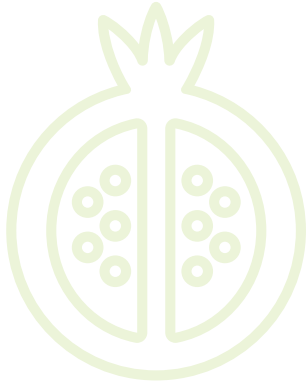
In 2026, BJE proudly launched the Staff Service & Annual Awards Program, establishing an important new tradition of recognising the dedication, impact and longevity of our teachers and staff. Rooted in Jewish values and inspired by the teachings of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt”l, the program reflects BJE’s belief that educators are “the guardians of our social heritage”, shaping lives and strengthening community through their work each day.

This inaugural year marked our first formal celebration of Years of Service milestones, honouring individuals whose devotion, passion and professionalism enrich the learning experiences of our students and strengthen Jewish connection across NSW.



# 2026

## Years of Service Honourees



### 30 years

Lorna Jacobson

### 26 years

Judit Rubinstein

### 12 years

Libby Raichman  
Aviva Barel



### 3 years

Sue Levy  
Brenda Selikman  
Lauren Gilbert  
Dennis Epstein  
Shterna Althaus  
Idan Alhassid  
Ronnen Grauman  
Heidi Turner

### 7 years

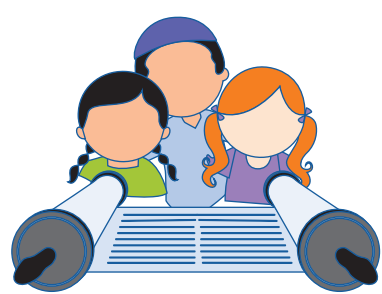
Jonathan Lipppa  
Jenny Harris  
Terry Hirschowitz  
Sandy Hotz

These honourees represent a wider team of dedicated educators and staff whose collective commitment enables BJE to thrive.

Every member of our team contributes to the strength, warmth and continuity of Jewish education within our community.



2025  
5785



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Support the organisations  
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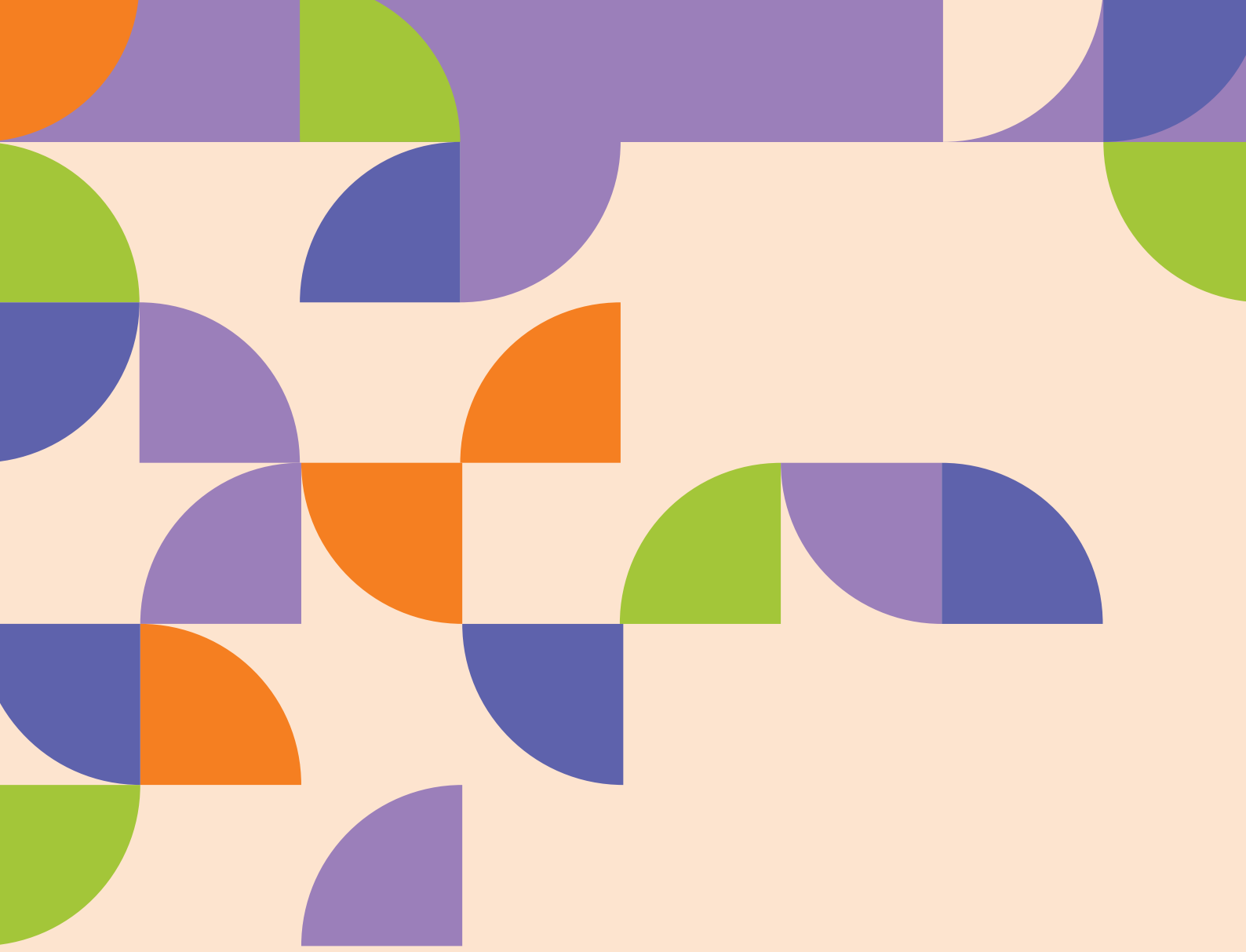


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