

A Message from the New President Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod



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Since our last conference in February 2010 and the AGM of the AAJS our executive and our journal have experienced some changes. It was with much sadness that the executive accepted the resignation of our long-standing and dedicated President, Dr Dvir Abramovich, in both his roles as President of the AAJS and as Editor of the AJJS. So too, did we accept the resignation of Dvir's Co-Editor, Associate Professor Ziva Shavitsky. Both Dvir and Ziva cited personal reasons and we respect their decisions, whilst lamenting the loss to the association. However, it goes without saying that we are enormously indebted to them both for their longstanding and untiring commitment to Jewish studies and to the maintenance and management of the only association of its kind in Australia. The newly reformed executive has inherited an association in very good health – and this is a testimony to all on the executive, both past and present and to the lifeblood of our association – its members.

In the wake of the above-mentioned resignations, nominations were made by the executive for all positions and all nominees were voted in unanimously by In the wake of the above-mentioned resignations, nominations were made by the executive for all positions and all nominees were voted in unanimously by the previous outgoing executive. Effective 1 April 2010 the executive of the AAJS is as follows:

Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod (President)
Assoc Prof Philip Mendes (Vice-President)
Dr Marianne Dacy (Secretary/Treasurer)
Dr Myer Samra (Editor *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*)

For my part, having served this association since 2002 as the NSW Vice-President, I gladly accepted my nomination. Having been extensively involved in Jewish studies over many years, particularly, in my role as an historian in Jewish history, as an educator and as a linguist, I am deeply honoured to serve the association and hope to build and refine its current strengths. Should you wish to view my academic profile, it can be found at:

http://www.sydney.edu.au/arts/hebrew_biblical_jewish_studies/staff/michael_abrahams-sprod.shtml

I am also very pleased to inform you that the executive is currently in the process of forming an editorial advisory board under the leadership of our journal's new editor, Dr Myer Samra. Once the board has been finalised, members will be duly notified in the Newsletter.

May I also at this time urge all of our members to forward on the 'Call for Papers' for our conference in 2011 (to be held in Canberra) to any potential interested parties. Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank all of our loyal members and supporters and to the dedicated volunteers of our association who perform a plethora of tasks to ensure the furtherance of not only our association, but that of Jewish studies in Australia.

Shalom,

MICHAEL

Australian Association of Jewish Studies

23rd Annual Conference

Religion and Politics

13-14 February 2011

National Jewish Memorial Centre

Canberra

Call for Papers

The Annual Conference of the Australian Association of Jewish Studies provides a meeting place for tertiary academics, Jewish educators, researchers, students and others devoted to the study of Jewish life, thought and culture.

The conference theme for 2011 is "Religion and Politics". We are seeking to create a forum in which to explore these two powerful concepts in the context of Jewish history, traditions, texts and cultures, social economic and political conditions, and the like of Jewish communities in Israel and across the diaspora.

Papers from a variety of disciplines are welcome, and these may discuss any aspect of the relationship of Judaism to religion and/or politics.

Papers on other topics will be considered but preference will be given to those bearing directly on the conference theme.

Submissions to present papers must be made by 6 September 2010. Acceptance of papers will be notified by email no later than October 2010. Submissions must include author's name, postal and email address, institutional affiliation, abstract of the paper to be presented and short biographical note. The abstract must be 200-300 words and the biographical note no more than 50 words.

The AAJS encourages students who are engaged in academic research to submit proposals based on their work to the program committee. Authors should clearly indicate their student status with their submission.

Presenters are invited to submit written articles for consideration for publication in *The Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*.

Proposals should be sent either electronically or by post to:

Dr Anna Hueneke
Anna.Hueneke@canberra.edu.au
Lecturer
Counselling
Discipline of Community Studies
Faculty of Education
University of Canberra
ACT 2601
Australia

PROPOSALS MUST ARRIVE BY 6 SEPTEMBER, 2010



CONFERENCE FOR JEWISH EDUCATORS AUGUST 2010

The seventh biennial Jewish educators' conference will be held on Sunday 15 and Monday 16 August 2010 at Bialik College, Melbourne under the auspices of the Zionist Federation of Australia. The conference will play host to several hundred teachers of Jewish Studies from most, if not all, of Australia's 18 Jewish day schools, together with professional Jewish educators from New Zealand and elsewhere. The two-day conference will incorporate a variety of streams across the broad spectrum of Jewish education to cater for the rich ideological diversity which characterises Jewish education in this country, and will encompass approaches to teaching and learning in the twin areas of formal and informal Jewish education.

Conference streams include Jewish values, Jewish history and culture, the Israel connection and Israel advocacy, information technology and Jewish learning, the study and teaching of Jewish sacred texts, Hebrew, informal Jewish education and early childhood education.

Several Israeli presenters will attend the conference, the broad-based theme of which is *Multiple Jewish Identities: History, Language, Culture, Politics, Religion*,

1. **Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz:**
Israeli-born internationally distinguished rabbi, legendary Talmudic scholar and philosopher.
2. **Rabbi Dr Howie Deitcher:**
Canadian-born former director of the Hebrew University-based Melton Centre, Senior Lecturer in the Hebrew University's School of Education, educator extraordinaire and surely well known to us all.
3. **Paul Liptz:**
Rhodesian-born Jewish educator and well known to Australian Jewish teachers. Lectures extensively in the USA. Served as a faculty member at the Tel Aviv University and teaches at the Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem.
4. **Michelle Rojas-Tal:**
American-born Israeli who has established an international reputation as an articulate advocate for Israel. Represents the *StandWithUs* organisation.
5. **Haim Aronovitz:**
South African-born former Director of Israel Seminars at the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School Institute, and Educational Director of the Melton Centre for Jewish Education.
6. **Ruth Gavison:**
Israeli-born law professor at the Hebrew University. Supreme Court nominee. Founding president of *Metzilah*. Member of the Winograd Commission. One of Israel's legal identities.

7. **Ron Ben-Yishai:**
Well known Israeli-born media journalist and seasoned commentator on political affairs.
8. **Scott Copeland:**
American-born Jewish educator. Graduate of the Mandel Jerusalem Fellows prestigious leadership program. Subsequently appointed Dean of the Fellows. Teaches at 'Makom' in Jerusalem.
9. **Naama Zoran:**
Israeli-born developmental psychologist and specialist in Early Childhood Education. At the forefront of the Reggio Emilia approaches to Early Childhood Education. Lectures extensively overseas.
10. **Yehuda Katz:**

Professional teacher, former headmaster and currently head of the English section of the Jewish Agency

To attend the conference, or for more information: dsegal@zfa.com.au or visit the zfa website

SHOAH REMEMBRANCE AT ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL

SHO'AH MEMORIAL SERVICE

FOR CHRISTIANS AND ALL PEOPLE OF

**COMPASSION
to REMEMBER**

1933 - 1945



This moving service took place in the crypt of St. Mary's Cathedral in Sydney in the evening hours of 2 May 2010. It was beautifully prepared by Sister Dr. Marianne Dacy. It is to her that we owe our thanks for her efforts to recall the suffering of the Jews, to make the world around us aware of it at a time when many prefer to turn their thoughts away and even pretend that it never happened. And most of all, for her tireless endeavours to unite Jews and Christians in combating the evils of antisemitism, racial prejudice and oppression. During the ceremony excerpts from the Psalms were read, accompanied by music, sung by the Schola Choir, all carefully and thoughtfully selected for this occasion by Marianne. Kaddish was said by Rabbi Jeremy Cohen. The presence of Her Excellency Professor Maria Bashir, the Governor of New South Wales and Chancellor of the University of Sydney, who at the end lit a candle and proclaimed "Never, never again!" highlighted the event and enhanced its importance. It is hoped that in the years to come, more members of the Jewish community will take part in this event, which after all, evokes the deepest emotions in the heart of every Jew. Thank you, Marianne, for all your wonderful work. This was one experience never to be forgotten.

Anna Rosenbaum

Professor Menahem Ben-Sasson visits ACJC

On 29 April, Professor Menahem Ben-Sasson presented a seminar at the ACJC. President of the Hebrew University and renowned scholar of the heritage of Oriental Jewry, Ben-Sasson gave a fascinating paper on the Cairo Geniza, a collection of almost 280,000 [Jewish](#) manuscript fragments that were found in the [geniza](#) or store room of the [Ben Ezra Synagogue](#) in [Fustat](#) (currently known as [Cairo](#)), the Basatin cemetery east of Old Cairo, and a number of old documents that were bought in Cairo in the later 19th century. Illustrating his talk with images of these priceless documents, and imparting his obvious passion for the subject, Ben-Sasson gave the attendees a rare view onto the ancient Mediterranean world.

The seminar was attended by Professor Rae Frances, Dean of Arts, Monash University, and other eminent members of the academic and Jewish community.

IRAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST - MONASH UNIVERSITY

Five-week Intensive Course: Iran, the Middle East and Asia: presented by Professor David Menashri



IRAN, THE MIDDLE EAST AND ASIA

Religion and Global Politics



Iran, the Middle East and Asia: Religion and Global Politics

The Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation and the Monash Asia Institute present a five-week intensive course by [Professor David Menashri](#), Director of the [Centre for Iranian Studies](#) at Tel Aviv University.

12 credit points, Level 3 and 4 (JWC3050/4050 JWM4150)

This 5-week course will examine the domestic challenges facing the Islamic revolution in its aspiration to 'implement Islam' as the cure for the 'malaise' of modern society. It will similarly examine the impact of Iran on the Middle East and Asia and the challenge it is facing in the global system -- from the ideological hatred towards the West and its opposition to American politics in the Middle East, including its determination to enhance its centrality in the region by wielding nuclear power in its hands.

CLASSES (Fridays, Building H, Level 8, Caulfield Campus, 9am to 1pm)

30 July: The Struggle for Modern Iran: The Monarchy versus the Mollahs?

6 August: The Framework of Revolutionary Politics: Radicalism versus Reformism

13 August: The Jews of Iran: Between the Monarchy and the Islamic Republic

20 August: Revolutionary Iran in the Global Scene; Iran's Quest for Nuclear Bomb?

27 August: Exporting the Revolution? Iran, Israel and the Arab Middle East

CREDIT

Students undertaking this unit for credit will write a reflective essay of 2500 words and a class paper of 1500 words. A 5000 word research essay will be due in October.

Students from other universities are responsible for ensuring that credit will be allocated to their degree structure.

To enrol, please go to <http://www.monash.edu.au/enrolments/resources/wes/index.html>

COST (for non-credit students)

\$300 (plus GST). Please go to

<http://ecommerce.arts.monash.edu.au/categories.asp?cID=80> to register and pay.

For further information, please email acjc@arts.monash.edu or ring 9903-5002.

www.arts.monash.edu.au/acjc

Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation - Caulfield campus, 8th floor, Building H,
900 Dandenong Road, Caulfield East, acjc@arts.monash.edu.au, +61 3 9903 5002,
CRICOS Provider Number: 00008C

Nadine Davidoff
Centre Manager
Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation
School of Philosophical, Historical and International Studies
Monash University



Recent photograph of A/Prof Suzanne Rutland and her students at the Sydney Jewish Museum

AUSTRALIAN LEFT JOURNALS AND THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

Overland and Arena Magazine are small Left magazines that speak to the intellectual Left of Australian academia. While their readership is small, both have significant influence on academics in significant segments of the university community.

Traditionally both journals have covered a range of perspectives in relation to Israel and the Palestinians. But Philip Mendes argues that in recent years the journals' perspective on Israel has become fanatically anti-Zionist, excluding balanced perspectives and even arguments for a two-state solution.

In this report he analyses recent coverage of Israel in Overland and Arena which he characterizes as "a particularly fanatical form of pro-Palestinian orthodoxy".

The full report is available in the May issue of the ADC Special Report No. 43 Associate Professor Philip Mendes is the co-editor of *Jews and Australian Politics* (Sussex Academic Press, 2004), and Vice-President of the Australian Association of Jewish Studies.

ADC Special Report is a forum for analysis of issues related to antisemitism and racism. Your feedback and submissions are welcome.

PUBLICATION OF MARIANNE'S BOOK

The Separation of Early Christianity from Judaism

In today's comparatively enlightened era when Jews and Christians are finding common ground and encouragement to discuss with each other issues of mutual interest it is not surprising to find a growing awareness among Christians of the extent to which Christian life derives much of its history from Jewish life and practices.

Not generally appreciated, however is an understanding of how the relationship between Judaism and Christianity went so badly wrong over the course of two millennia, particularly in the wake of the European Holocaust. In seeking answers, multi faith scholar, Sr. Marianne Dacy examines the origins of the conflict. Searching for answers to a multiplicity of issues on this topic, the author of the 2008 published *Let us Rejoice: the Jewish Roots of Christian Feasts* has tackled the difficult task of seeking to cast new light on the separation of early Christianity from Judaism.

"*The Separation of Early Christianity*" delves into several documented areas often treated separately. Sr. Dacy's eminently readable study examines them in order to find evidence for this moving apart that can be tabulated, weighed and compared. The aim has been to find common themes that can be weighed and measured against each other

The author posits that there exists a plethora of literature that concentrates on the relationship between early Christianity and Judaism but confines its focuses to one or two issues. In the tradition of James Parkes, whose 1930s study of the break between the Church and the

Synagogue remains a classic, this new book takes on the larger relationship and shows how the separation evolved over time. Rather than pinpointing a specific date for the break, this new book broadens the context and looks at the wider issues, showing that separation took several centuries.

Six years in compilation, Sr. Dacy's exploration has involved considerable amounts of material on the relationship between early Christianity and Judaism, and made it palatable, clearly showing how the separation between the two emerged over time and examining the ways they continued to be related. The author pinpoints two pervasive issues that impelled the separation –the relationship of the early church to Jewish law and the increasing divinisation of Jesus. It deals in detail with the reasons for the failure of the Jewish-Christian movement, the Theodosian Code, the laws concerning Jews and the attempts to separate Christians from Jewish practices.

Particularly insightful is the treatment of the church's efforts to separate the Sabbath from Sunday and the question of imperial motives behind the move to make Sunday a day of rest as is the topic of Jewish roots of Christian liturgy and the developing christological focus.

A map and tables have been constructed to show the relationships between Christian and Jewish populations, leading to a critical analysis of what can be revealed from archaeology about separation based on material from Syracuse, Sicily and Rome.

The Separation of Early Christianity's author, Dr. Marianne Dacy, a Sister of Our Lady of Sion is the Hon. Secretary of the Australian Council of Christians and Jews. She holds a doctorate from the University of Sydney where she is in charge of the Archive of Australian Judaica. Her new book will equally be essential reading for scholars and the general reader and a helpful supplement to the libraries both of scholars and Christian and Jewish religious leaders.

[The book is being published by Cambria Press, Amherst, New York]

See <<http://www.cambriapress.com>>

Henry Mendelson
Executive member of the Australian
Council of Christians and Jews)

HAND IN HAND. JEWISH AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER*

By Anne Sarzin and Lisa Miranda Sarzin.

Sydney, New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, 2010. 205 pages.

This fascinating book began as the brainchild of Ilona Lee of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies and was nurtured and matured by two talented writers and interviewers, Anne and Lisa Sarzin. In their own words: 'The stories in this book are testimony to the determination of individuals to make a positive difference in some ways to the lives of others... Together, Jewish and Indigenous people discover the commonalities that add depth to their interactions...the values they share...and the profound commitment to being their brother and sister's keeper in a sharing society...' (p.195)

Their book surprises in many ways from the beautiful cover illustration of the 'wattle star' created by Jewish Aborigine Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver to the many wonderful illustrations of Jewish and Indigenous Australians working together over many years.

Seventy-nine interviews were conducted and Professor Pulver's story is one of these which make you proud of both communities. The writing style is an intimate conversation between interviewees and readers and many amazing stories are told of community initiatives which have benefited both Jewish and Indigenous people. The book has been printed and bound by Alba Press in an easy-to-read format with contrasting colour in the chapter headings and running titles. Each chapter begins with an important quote from the interviewee and each illustration has detailed captions.

There are seven sections: historical connections, social justice, leadership, education [the largest], health, art and culture, hands across the land. Within each of these sections we meet various Jewish and Indigenous people whose lives have been changed; who have discovered shared values such as respect for land and oral traditions, and respect for each others' beliefs. Some joint initiatives are well-known, others are known only within smaller circles. This book serves to show the Jewish and Indigenous community what has been done, is being done and can be done to bring harmony and understanding to people of different cultures. It deals mostly with New South Wales, but includes some Victorian and Northern Territory stories as well. The tribal connections of each Indigenous person are carefully noted in their stories.

This is an uplifting book full of courage and optimism, written with great sensitivity, which hopefully will serve to encourage more interaction among diverse communities and lead to even more initiatives and opportunities for our Jewish community to both teach and learn from others while continuing our traditions of 'tikkun olam' and 'tzedekah'.

Helen Bersten
Honorary Archivist
Australian Jewish Historical Society, INC

* A longer version of this review is published in the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, Vol XX, Part 1, June 2010, pp. 203-205.

RITA PRAGER – BOOK REVIEW

ANOTHER STORY OF JEWISH SURVIVAL

As part of the project, initiated by the Community Stories of the Sydney Jewish Museum, Mrs. Rita Prager has set out on a journey to record the story of her family. *From Wanda to Ruby and the century in between* is the result of her research, which is culminating in the publication of a family book, designed to retrace up to five generations of the Prager-Weizer family.

The family of Rita Prager lived in Germany and Poland. A few younger family members managed to leave Germany in 1938 but their parents, grandparents, cousins and a large part of the extended family perished during the Holocaust.

The untold stories of the families, who lived in Germany before World War II, were pieced together like a jigsaw puzzle. It started with the discovery of Rita's father in law, Lothar Prager's collection of close to one hundred photographs and documents in German from his life in Germany prior to 1938.

These papers included his emigration to Uruguay, South America, where he found refugee status, married and started a new life. They also include documents of his countless and unsuccessful efforts to get his parents out of Germany. Tragically, they perished in Terezín (Theresienstadt). The documents were kept by Rita but due to the fact that she does not read German, she stored them for over 25 years after his death. In 2005 Rita decided to find a

translator who was willing to work on them. She realized the importance of the documents and started putting them in date order. They revealed amazing untold stories of the Prager family which together with research of various databases provided an understanding of their lives both before and after the Holocaust.

As the stories were placed together Rita soon realized there was something special that guided her to write this book on her husband's family and then one day it just hit her! Her granddaughter Ruby Friedman and her great great-grandmother Wanda Prager, share something very special, their birthday: some one hundred and thirty three years apart.

This has been a great journey of discovery and now the documents can find a new home in the Sydney Jewish Museum archives for everyone to see.

Theresienstadt: Drawn from the Inside.

Works from the Jewish Museum of Australia Collection

It began with a telephone call to the Jewish Museum of Australia some twenty years ago.

An elderly voice said, "I have something I would like to give to you". A visit to the home of the caller was arranged. She turned out to be a lady in her seventies. She invited the Collections Curator into her spare bedroom where she proceeded to reach for something under the bed. It was an old suitcase. She unclicked the latches of the case and raised the lid to reveal the most beautiful paintings – delicate watercolours – over a hundred of them!

Before she donated them to the Jewish Museum of Australia, Regina Schwarz had long been the custodian of the paintings her husband Paul Schwarz and fellow inmate Leo Lowit had created during their internment, from December 1941, in the infamous Theresienstadt Concentration Camp. In October 1944, Paul, Leo, and Leo's wife Jindřiška were transported to Auschwitz where they were murdered. Regina survived and brought the paintings with her to Australia.

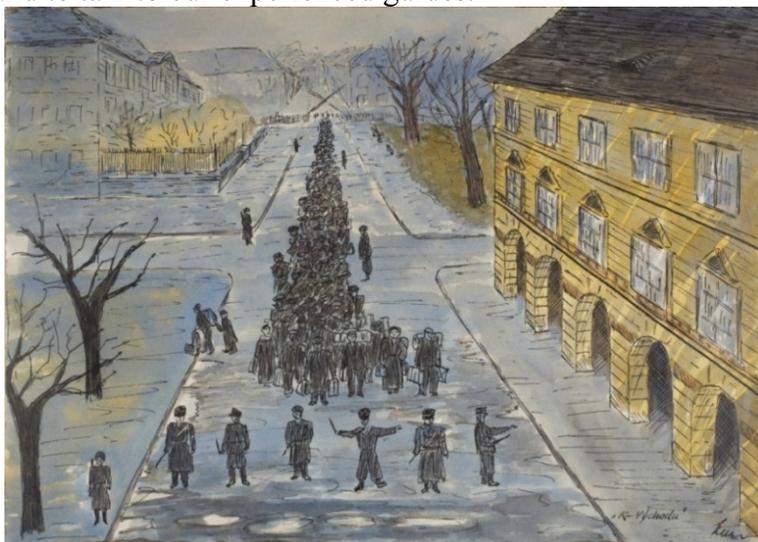


Guest curator Mera Brooks has created a fascinating exhibition at the Jewish Museum of Australia which displays these unique paintings alongside many primary sources including diary entries and poems offering a very real account of life in Theresienstadt.

It is the first time the Museum's education team has collaborated with the curatorial team to ensure the exhibition speaks directly to students: there is a separate narrative that runs through the exhibition, specifically created for them.

The exhibition offers a myriad of educational opportunities for students of art, history, Jewish studies, Holocaust studies, and genocide. The source material can be used to piece together a picture of life in Theresienstadt.

Students will be encouraged to draw their own conclusions, use the evidence to follow the life of an individual, and to talk to our experienced guides.



Jenny Better

Education Coordinator, Jewish Museum of Australia

If you would like more information about this exhibition or to make a booking for your students please contact the Jewish Museum of Australia.

03 8534 3600

26 Alma Rd, St Kilda VIC

info@jewishmuseum.com.au

< www.jewishmuseum.com.au >

Note from Marianne Dacy



I will be overseas from June 16th till August 1st, but any enquiries to Archive of Australian Judaica may be addressed to Ilana Cohen. I am attending the ICCJ conference in Istanbul.



The Student Journal of Canadian Jewish Studies

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Student Journal of Canadian Jewish Studies seeks articles and book reviews by students relating to the Jewish experience in Canada.

About the Journal:

SJCJS is web-based, peer-reviewed and is supported by the Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies at Concordia University, Montreal.

Our goal is to attract a diverse audience and to provide a forum for undergraduate and graduate students to contribute to the field of Canadian Jewish Studies. This is excellent opportunity for students at the undergraduate and graduate level to publish in an academic context.

Past issues can be found here:

<http://web2.concordia.ca/canadianjewishjournal/articles.htm>

Authors whose works are selected for publication will receive a stipend

Submission Guidelines:

1. Submissions must be 15 000 words or less
2. All papers must be titled, proofread and should conform to MLA guidelines (footnote system).
3. Papers should be accompanied by an abstract (max. 300 words) and a biography of the author.
4. On the top of your submission please include: your name, university and year; exact word count; class for which the paper was written (if written for a class); name of the professor to whom the paper was submitted.

Deadline for submissions is **JUNE 30TH, 2010**

Papers can be sent via email attachment to:

cjsj@alcor.concordia.ca <<http://alcor.concordia.ca/>>

All papers will be kept confidential by the editors.

Editor: Jennifer Zilm, Assistant Editor: Katherine Romanow, Publisher: Norman Ravvin

The Student Journal of Canadian Jewish Studies

SB-215, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, Montreal, QC, H3G 1M8

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Chair of Institute: Dr. Norman Ravvin

REMINDER FROM THE TREASURER

MEMBERSHIP FEES for 2010 for Australian Association of Jewish Studies

*Would you like to
become a benefactor
member?*

Fees are current from 1 January 2010–31 December 2010 , include the *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* published annually (early in the next year), AAJS Newsletter (online) book discounts, and discounted registration fee for the AAJS annual February conference)

Benefactor : \$250

Regular: \$60 (Aus)

Pensioner/ Full-time Student: \$25 (Aus)

Institutional: \$70 (Aus)

Overseas: \$80 (Aus) *All correspondence to: PO Box 233, Holme Building, University of Sydney NSW 2006*

NAME:.....

ADDRESS:.....

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TEL:.....

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FAX:.....

EMAIL:.....

If you have not paid your membership fees for 2010, it is time to pay, now. Those who attended the 2010 conference are already paid up members for 2010. Those who do not pay membership fees will regretfully be cut off from the mailing list, and will not receive the next journal for 2010.

Post your cheque to the above address/ or access and print and fill in the webform at : <http://www.aajs.org.au> and send us your credit card details for payment to our NAB account.

Newsletter edited by Anna Rosenbaum.