

The Council of Orthodox Synagogues of Victoria (COSV)

ועד הקהילות בוויקטוריה



Who we are and our role in the Orthodox Jewish Community



COSV Member Shules

Beis Chabad Ohel Devorah
East St Kilda

Beit Aharon Synagogue
East St Kilda

**Blake Street Hebrew
Congregation**
South Caulfield

**Brighton Hebrew
Congregation**
East Brighton

**Caulfield Hebrew
Congregation**
Caulfield

Central Shul Chabad
South Caulfield

**East Melbourne Hebrew
Congregation**
East Melbourne

**Elsternwick Jewish
Community**
Elsternwick

**Elwood Talmud Torah
Congregation**
Elwood

Kew Hebrew Congregation
Kew

**Melbourne Hebrew
Congregation**
South Yarra

Mizrachi Organization
Caulfield

**Moorabbin Hebrew
Congregation**
Moorabbin

**North Eastern Jewish War
Memorial Centre**
Doncaster

**Sassoon Yehuda Sephardi
Synagogue**
East St Kilda

**South Caulfield Hebrew
Congregation**
South Caulfield

**St Kilda Hebrew
Congregation**
St Kilda

The COSV – Who Are We?

The COSV is the formally incorporated umbrella organisation of Orthodox Synagogues representing the interests of the Orthodox Jewish Community in the State of Victoria.

It is the central lay Authority responsible for coordinating and administering religious life within Victoria and provides the opportunity for involvement with the Rabbinic leadership in issues of mutual concern.



What We Do

Our Current Activities include:

- Melbourne Eruv
- Melbourne Beth Din
- Outreach Programs
- Torah Scholar in Residence
- Educational programs
- Youth Affairs
- Community Services
- Communal Liaison

The COSV traces its origins back nearly 50 years when the Federation of Orthodox Synagogues in NSW suggested formation of a similar body in Victoria. Simultaneously, a subcommittee convened by the President of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, John Mense investigated possible formation of a Victorian body.

In 1965, Dr Saul Weiner together with the presidents of various Congregations decided that establishment of such a body was an urgent imperative. Dr Weiner, who himself was at various times president of both the South Caulfield and Caulfield Hebrew Congregations, served as the COSV foundation president for nearly two decades. He was succeeded by Raymond Joseph (Melbourne Hebrew Congregation) and Peter Cohen (St Kilda).

An initial COSV focus was upon raising the standard required of barmitzvah boys. Over the last few decades the COSV also became involved in the controversy over appointment of Av Beth Din and acted decisively in preventing the Hobart Hebrew Congregation (the oldest active Shule in Australasia) joining the Progressive Movement. Under the leadership of President Romy Leibler, the COSV was revitalized and transformed into a new and more cohesive structure in 1996.

The nominal annual fee was replaced by a seat levy (currently \$25) enabling the COSV to take responsibility for administering initiatives on behalf of the Orthodox Community including the Melbourne Eruv and the Melbourne Beth Din, various communal educational and outreach activities and the appointment of a part time Executive Officer.

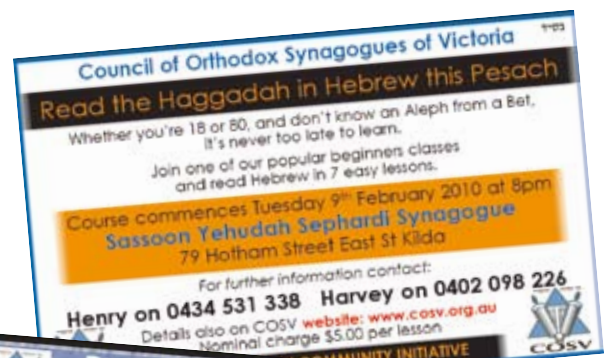
The COSV today has broadened its scope of activities to be involved in a whole range of communal activities and services for the broader Victorian Jewish Community.

Our Objectives

The COSV is a not for profit, community based organisation whose objectives are to act as a strong voice for the Orthodox Jewish Community in Victoria.

The COSV aims to assist Orthodox Synagogues to raise the level of awareness, interest and education of traditional Judaism and provide a range of services, infrastructure and facilities and act as a strong voice for Orthodox Judaism in the Victorian Jewish Community.

As a formally incorporated Company with a Constitution and Board of Management it is elected by the member congregations listed at left. Regular meetings are held enabling congregational lay leadership to raise matters of mutual concern to the Orthodox Community.



The Melbourne Eruv

Every week of the year, irrespective of weather conditions, the Melbourne Eruv's infrastructure (kilometres of wires and poles which form the boundaries) is physically inspected.

The Melbourne Eruv (Melbourne Eruv Pty Ltd) is an integral part of the life of the Orthodox Community in Melbourne. By facilitating so many activities that would otherwise not be permissible on Shabbat, it plays an important role in improving and enhancing the quality of life for much of our Community.

Whilst the capital costs of the Eruv were raised by communal appeal, ongoing funding is the responsibility of the COSV. In recognition of the role of the Mizrahi organisation in the original construction as well as its ongoing involvement therein, both Mizrahi and the COSV are shareholders in Melbourne Eruv Pty Ltd. This was incorporated for the sole purpose of administering and maintaining the Eruv on behalf of the two organisations on a daily basis.

Reflecting the demographic changes in an expanding community, the Eruv was expanded from its initial coverage of Caulfield, St Kilda, Elwood and Brighton to include Moorabbin, Carnegie and Bentleigh.

Serious investigative work and Halachic enquiries are currently being undertaken with a view to finally crossing Dandenong Rd which initially acted as a barrier to extension. This will allow it to encompass Malvern Chabad, the Cabrini Hospital in Malvern and The Avenue Hospital in Prahran.

The Melbourne Beth Din

A particularly significant achievement of the COSV has been the revitalisation of the Melbourne Beth Din (Melbourne Beth Din Nominees Ltd).

Following an establishment phase during which all the necessary legal, statutory and practical matters were finalised, new arrangements for the administration of the Melbourne Beth Din came into effect in 2004.

Administrative costs are now covered by the COSV utilising funds raised from its levy on seats. The costs associated with work of the Dayanim are paid from fees from the areas in which the Beth Din is currently involved – Gittin (divorces) and Geirut (conversions). The RCV takes responsibility for the halachic aspects of its work. The administration and Board calls upon the voluntary services of a number of lay people including Professor Louis Waller, Messrs Max Casen, Romy Leibler, Yossi Loebenstein and Ian Waller SC, while Rabbi Meir Shlomo Kluwgant represents the Rabbinical Council of Victoria on the Management Committee.

Scholarships

For the past few years the COSV has been involved in sending suitable candidates to Israel to undertake appropriate training courses and then return to Melbourne to carry out and assist congregations in various roles including outreach and education, and ability to act as Chazanim, Ba'alei Tefilla and Ba'alei Koreh.

Funds are available for further scholarships. All enquiries should be directed to the Executive Director.

Outreach

The COSV is conscious of its obligation to reach out to Jews who are not affiliated with any particular Congregation and is keen to undertake various educational programs in this area.

Activities already initiated include Beginners Hebrew, Siddur and Haggadah reading classes, Haftara classes, Pesach and Shabbat Hospitality services.

More advanced learning and educational programs drawing on the resources available across the community are planned for the near future including bringing together the increasing number of youth/outreach workers employed by individual member Shules.

Planned activities include Torah Oz conferences and seminars, sick visiting arrangements, leadership seminars, Shabbatonim including a 'Turn Friday Night into Shabbat' and participation in the Global Jewish Day of Learning.



The Charter

- to be governed by and act in accordance with Halacha – Orthodox Jewish Law;
- to be and act as the central authority for coordinating and administering the religious life of the Orthodox Jewish Community in Victoria including the creation and interchange of facilities and the interchange of ministers and teachers and other communal officials;
- to establish and maintain close and harmonious relations with the Rabbinical Council of Victoria;
- to assist Orthodox Jewish Synagogues in Victoria in the provision of ministerial and religious services;
- to assist, promote and encourage Jewish religious education and instruction, and in particular to assist Orthodox Synagogues to promote and encourage youth activities and to establish facilities and amenities therefor;
- to assist in the development, co-ordination and preservation of centres for religious activity in Victoria;
- to propagate the study of the Hebrew language and Jewish scriptures;
- to associate with and participate in any Jewish social, philanthropic, cultural, charitable or other public movement, undertaking or event;
- to promote the publication of and to publish newspapers, pamphlets, periodicals or other literature and to use such other forms of publicity for the aims and objects as set out herein;
- to assist in the provision of kosher food and meals and the supervision of Kashrut.





Donations are welcomed and should you be willing to contribute, please refer to our website.

The COSV also welcomes those who wish to assist in other ways including with the work of its various subcommittees.

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Torah Scholar in Residence Program

Another ambitious plan is to continue to draw on the talent of overseas Rabbinic and Torah scholars and to bring them to Australia with the objective of making them available to Shules in Australia for the purpose of giving lectures, conducting seminars, conferences and in-house programs. To date the COSV has brought out Rabbis Ephraim Buchwald and Abraham Trugman who each carried out a successful tour of Shabbatonim and conducted lectures across the schools and Shules of our community.

Website: www.cosv.org.au

An upgraded website features links across the community, regular Divrei Torah, a list of "what's on" and many other features of relevance to the Orthodox Community. Information regarding the Eruv is readily available on this site. Subscription to a weekly "Eruv Status" email can be accessed via the website.



Joint Communal Services

Almost since the establishment of the COSV it has been involved in organisation of annual intercongregational services on Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim. During the last decade additional combined special services have been held for reasons ranging from matters occurring in Israel to a joint prayer service following the tragic Victorian bushfires.

Finances

At present, the Income of the COSV is derived primarily from four sources:

- Membership affiliation fee based on a levy for each seat holder within the member's Synagogue.
- Contribution of a levy paid by non-member Synagogues.
- Funds received from private donations including the possibility of making contributions in the form of Corporate Sponsorship.
- Advertising on the website.

The Future

As we move forward, a key task facing the COSV is to review how to implement our Charter to better serve the needs of the Jewish Community. Some of these include;

- Promote and facilitate the lines of communications between Shules, Shule Presidents and the Rabbinical Council of Victoria (RCV).
- Change the current culture where each Shule 'does their own thing'.
- Improve the profile of the COSV in the general Jewish Community and more properly represent the Orthodox Synagogue Community at all appropriate forums;
- Introduce and facilitate a more effective interchange of manpower, resources and programs between Shules as required to achieve mutual benefit for them and the community;
- Secure and professionalise the administrative structure of the COSV including the establishment of a permanent office.

How Can I Help ?

The COSV is a not-for-profit community based organisation managed by a voluntary Board of Management financial and other assistance and support is always welcome.

Volunteer opportunities include assistance on our community services committee including visiting the sick, our Hebrew Reading and other educational programs, assistance with PR, marketing, our publications and help with administration and support services.

Enquiries or further information concerning any of the activities of the COSV should be directed to your local COSV shule member or the Executive Director:

