



## THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE SYDNEY

ק"ק בית ישראל

6 September 2020

### NEW PRESIDENT'S REPORT AND PLAN

I am both honoured and humbled to be appointed to the role of President of The Great Synagogue. I have the great privilege to stand on the shoulders of all the amazing women and men who have preceded me, not only in this role, but also all of the members of the Shule who have so generously given their time and expertise to our community.

#### **A Change in Leadership**

In particular I would like to thank our previous President, Mr Justice Stephen Rothman AM, to whom we all owe an enormous debt of gratitude for his strong leadership and sound guidance over the past six years. Prior to his tenure, The Great Synagogue was in need of significant change and was at a crossroad. Stephen together with the A-Team Executive of Ken Gresham (זיכרונו לברכה), Max Freedman and my wonderful wife, Caroline, skilfully navigated a sometimes difficult path to bring us to what is now a terrific platform for expansion. I am honoured that I am now charged to enhance their legacy.

Six years ago Stephen talked of a "process of renewal" for The Great Synagogue and it is absolutely clear that he, together with Caroline, Max and Ken, have delivered in spades!

I am delighted that Max will continue as Senior Vice President. We need his experience and deep knowledge to guide this new Board and we value the vast intellectual property he retains on our behalf. Together with Treasurer Simon Havas and VP Lauren Ryder, we offer a new vision and some 'youthful' energy that will enable us to direct The Great Synagogue to the next level.

Whilst I find it daunting to follow Stephen, I know that our Board remains strong with Eli Green, Daniel Abbott, Benjamin Hansen, Fay Frischer and Darryl Green all offering outstanding capacity. Together we will build on the success of the past and take our Shule even further.

#### **Vision for Change**

We have now almost finished the creation of The Great Synagogue Foundation with tax deductible status and we have also reconstituted the TGS Investment Committee so that it can more actively assist the Board to invest wisely and thereby maximise our resources. We will announce some new appointees to this committee after the Hagim and commence a reorganisation of our portfolio.

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*"The magnificent wheel window is a feature in the front which strikes every eye." - Illustrated Sydney News, 1878*

THE HEART OF OUR COMMUNITY

*Davidson*

The enhancement of the financial resources of The Great Synagogue will be one of my major considerations and whilst there are no guarantees at this stage, we have commenced working on some major initiatives that should deliver substantial change.

We have an unique opportunity to collaborate and work together as a whole community. Teamwork and joint involvement is the key, as innovation and growth is the result of a collective process and not the ownership by a small clique. There is so much more we can achieve together. We have experienced strong growth in the congregation, due in no small part to Rabbi Elton, and we can now build on this and involve you all in this next phase of our growth.

I would like to involve many more of our community and I will look to engage widely. After all, we are mere custodians and it is the community we serve.

### **A Family Affair**

Finally I would like to pay tribute to some of my antecedents.

As many of you aware the standard joke at The Great is that I am related to all of you! Well that is actually not too far from the truth. Our daughters Charlotte & Juliet are sixth generation members of The Great and my family were foundation members in 1878. In fact my family were members of both the York and Bridge Street communities.

Given our very early arrival in Australia, my Selig, Goldberg and Solomon family connections have delivered four previous Presidents of The Great all the way back to our first President, George Meyers, in 1878.

The wonderful David Newman (President 1990-93) to whom we are indebted for his tireless work managing all things related to our building, is my cousin – David's great grandfather, Harris Hymes Solomon (the King of Cardwell) and my great grandmother, Sarah Solomon, were siblings.

So, The Great Synagogue is not only firmly in my heart, it in my blood. I am eternally grateful to my ancestors who had the foresight to build and maintain this Shul I love and only hope that Hashem gives me the guidance to serve the community well and to play some small part in ensuring that our next 142 years are as Great as the past.



**David P. Lewis**  
**President**

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