

Australasian Union of Jewish Students (AUJS) Reports 2014

Eli Shaul – AUJS two week leadership development programme in Israel and time in Argentina and the USA, 2013-2014

The experience exceeded my expectations. The quality of the programme was very high, and this was reflected in the access to great speakers, high calibre individuals who have either held, or are currently holding significant leadership positions in Israel and in Jewish communities. The way the programmes were run, the level of organisation, and the selection of material, reflected the high quality of the programme. In Buenos Aires, we learnt about the structure of the Jewish organisations and how they dealt with issues such as the economic crisis and rising levels of anti-Semitism in Argentina. Additionally, we discussed the impact the AMIA terror attack had on the Argentinian Jewish community. We got to meet with the Israeli embassy in Argentina for an analysis on the diplomatic relations with Argentina.

In Washington DC, we met with various organisations such as AIPAC and J-Street, that shared their insight and political analysis regarding topics concerning Israel and Israel-US relations. Furthermore, we met with political leaders and analysts such as Elliot Abrams at the Council on Foreign Relations who served (among other roles) as the Deputy National Security Advisor for Global Democracy Strategy during the Bush administration.

In New York, we visited several Jewish community organisations and met with the Israeli Mission to the UN.

Last year I was the Auckland President of the Australasian Union of Jewish Students (AUJS). This year I took on the role of the NZ President of the organisation and have been working to engage with Jewish and non-Jewish students on and off campus on issues concerning Judaism and Israel. Furthermore, I have been working to motivate other Jewish students to contribute to the organisation as well as pursue more leadership roles in AUJS so that they too can contribute to the Jewish community in NZ. I have already talked to several people about their leadership development and they have already applied for the AUJS LDP programme as well as assumed leadership roles in the organisation. This is great for AUJS as we are ensuring the continuity of the organisation and developing the leadership ability of young Jewish students who we hope will carry on contributing to the Jewish community once they graduate from university.

I am currently involved in AUJS and in CSG. My involvement with CSG will probably extend beyond my roles in AUJS. At this stage it is too early to say what the change in AUJS leadership will involve next year, but my pursuit of leadership roles in the Jewish community will continue into next year.

Alon Grinberg – AUJS Leadership development programme in Israel 2013-2014

My experience in Israel was another rewarding one. I meet with a number of key political organizations and meet a lot of new people from all over the world and this has contributed to my personal development and Jewish identity by making me more aware of the political climate in Israel as well seeing how other Jewish organizations around the world operate and contribute to their respective communities.

The Israel component of the AUJS LDP trip did meet my expectations which I had before the trip. One of the highlights was the various meetings which the group had with people and organisations that have a lot of influence on Israeli society and politics and it is fair to say that it was one of my expectations before the program began.

Although I have been back in NZ for a very short time I have already did security for the Wellington Jewish Community twice and I was active in getting AUJS involved in the UN Holocaust Memorial day ceremony on Monday the 27th of January. I look forward to being involved more in many ways.

One of the ways which I hope to contribute to the Jewish community in NZ is through helping youth movements and other organizations in Hasbarah and talking about Israel whether it will be on campus, their respective youth movements or even within the community. I also hope to be an ambassador of sorts for the NZ Jewish community and the State of Israel on campus whether it be the various campaigns which AUJS will run and being active on campus promoting the Jewish community and upholding its values.