

Looking Forward

At a time like this, when everything has been disrupted in ways we could never have imagined only a few short months ago, I think it's more important than ever to look forward and think of new possibilities.

It's easy to be overwhelmed by the negativity, stresses and anxieties of this period. I find it helpful to think of others who have faced even greater challenges – through wars, the Holocaust and personal loss – and am inspired by those who used that as a catalyst for positive change in their own lives or in making an important contribution to our society.

I also think of Israel – a country that for most of its existence has faced existential threat and significant adversity – but despite that has become a successful country recognised globally as an innovation powerhouse that has contributed to the advancement of our world in so many areas. When you ask in Israel how this has been possible – and why such a tiny country, in such difficult circumstances, has been able to achieve so much, the short answer is necessity or “no other choice” – and we all know the old adage that necessity is the mother of invention. Perhaps we can be inspired by this determination to move forward and achieve – against the odds – drawing on our own inner well of “chutzpah” to stare down this tough time and imagine what might be possible and then make that happen.

I draw inspiration from the miracle of Israel and the stories of others who have overcome terrible challenges to not let the threat of the pandemic and the crisis impacting our health, our economy and the well-being of our community overwhelm us. This pivotal time in our history will undoubtedly change us all in some way. The challenge is to think about using this time as a period of reflection and reinvention. As they say, you should never waste a good crisis. So as we approach Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, a period of reflection for all of us, let's take the opportunity to think how we as individuals, as organisations, as a community and even as a country might emerge from this time as a better version of who we were before COVID-19 struck.



**MICHELLE
BLUM**

Michelle Blum is Chief Executive Officer of the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce (AICC). Michelle is passionate about fostering bilateral collaboration and applying insights from the 'Start-Up Nation' to support the development of Australia's innovation and entrepreneurial eco-system. Michelle's background spans a range of management roles in the financial services, not-for-profit and education sectors. Before her appointment as CEO of the AICC in September 2016, she was General Manager, National Operations at the Australian Institute of Management, and before that, Director, Marketing & Business Development at the Financial Services Institute of Australasia. Her career has included stints working in Canada and London.

ABOUT THE ELUL PROJECT

An initiative aiming to share stories and teachings from Jewish women leaders in our community. Whilst many of us are stuck at home, or isolated from family over Elul and the High Holy Days, we hope this project will serve to inspire, nurture, and uplift during this difficult time.