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0521612853 - The Jews in Australia
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THE JEWS IN AUSTRALIA

Jews form only a tiny slice of the Australian population, yet their influence on Australian society has been immense. A dozen Jewish convicts arrived with the First Fleet in 1788. They were forerunners of a comfortable Anglo-Jewish community – which was dramatically challenged and enriched by a wave of European immigrants fleeing from Nazi persecution. In recent decades, new groups from places as diverse as the Soviet Union, Israel and South Africa have brought their own measure of cultural challenge and influence.

Among many remarkable individuals, Sir Isaac Isaacs was the first Australian-born Governor-General, and Sir Zelman Cowen a distinguished successor. The legacy of Sir John Monash, Australian commander-in-chief during World War I, continues at Monash University in Melbourne. A few names – Peter Singer, Arnold Zable, Frank Lowy, Henry Szeps, Professor Ron Penny, Richard Pratt, Slavor Gregorian – give a sense of the range of Jewish contribution today.

The Jews in Australia traces the community's history, explores what makes it different from others around the world, and draws fascinating comparisons between the Melbourne and Sydney components, each with its distinctive institutions and particular character. Though the very success of Jewish integration into Australia's diverse society has sharpened community debate about such key issues as intermarriage and the shifting roles of women, the dominant picture is of a thriving and vibrant community.

Suzanne D. Rutland is Chair of the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney. Her many books include *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (2001). She has been president of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, Sydney, and of the Australian Association for Jewish Studies.

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo
Cambridge University Press
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521612852

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First published 2005

Printed in Australia by BPA Print Group

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

National Library of Australia Cataloguing in Publication data

Rutland, Suzanne D. (Suzanne Dorothy), 1946–.
The Jews in Australia.

Bibliography.

Includes index.

ISBN 0 521 61285 3.

ISBN 9 78052161 2852.

ISBN-13 978-0-521-61285-2 paperback

ISBN-10 0-521-61285-3 paperback

1. Jews – Australia – History. 2. Australia – Ethnic relations. I. Title.
994.004924

ISBN-13 978-0-521-61285-2 paperback

ISBN-10 0-521-61285-3 paperback

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have worked in the field of Australian Jewish history since 1968, and this book is the product of my research over that whole period. There are so many people who have assisted me over the years and to whom I owe a debt of gratitude. With this present publication, there are two people whose names stand out and, indeed, they have been a constant source of help, encouragement and advice over many years. Professor Konrad Kwiet, Roth Lecturer in Holocaust Studies in the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney, read the manuscript not once but twice and his suggestions and comments have been most helpful. Helen Bersten, honorary archivist of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, Inc, (AJHS) also read the entire manuscript and contributed to its accuracy. In addition, other people kindly read and commented on sections of the text, including Professor Colin Tatz, Professor Gideon Shimoni, Dr Ron Weiser and Jeremy Jones. I would like to also thank the team of volunteers at the Australian Jewish Historical Society, particularly Mr Joe Ben Mayor, who scanned in most of the photographs, which come from the archives of the AJHS. In addition, I would also like to thank the Jewish Agency Research and Strategic Planning Unit and Department for Jewish Zionist Education for permission to use material from a survey commissioned by them on the recent Jewish waves of migration to Australia. My editor, Kim Armitage, and the publication team at Cambridge University Press, have also provided me with much support and assistance.

Suzanne D. Rutland
Sydney, 2005