



Kadimah
קדימה

Championing
Yiddish Language,
Jewish Culture &
Theatre since 1911

2025 Annual Report



Championing Yiddish language, Jewish culture, theatre, and contributing to understanding, inclusivity and creativity.



We acknowledge the longest standing custodians of the land where we meet, the Boon Wurrung folk of the Kulin nation, and we pay respect to their elders (matriachs and patriachs), past, present and future.

מיר אָנערקענען די עלטסטע געזעסענע אָפּהיטער פֿון דעם
לאַנד וואו מיר טרעפֿן זיך, דאָס בון וועראַנג פֿאַלק פֿון דער קולין
נאַציע און מיר גיבן אָפּ כּבֿוד זייערע פֿאַרגאַנגענע, איצטיקע און
קומענדיקע אמהות און אבות



2025 in numbers

420 Yiddish classes and *shmues* groups

15 *kultur* performances

1640 audience members

2 film screenings, JIFF 2025

7 collaborative projects with Yiddish Australia, ACJC, JIFF, SKIF/BUND, Melbourne Klezmer School

1400 volunteer hours

81.4k views on Facebook

22.9k views on Instagram



Kadimah Yiddish Theatre

Yentl: 6-week London season

in March-April 2026

2 new works in development:

The Poet King and the Dreaming (working title) and La Dorada

5 Green Room nominations (Shrapnel)

1 Green Room Award (Shrapnel)

6 Sydney Theatre nominations (Yentl)

1 Sydney Theatre Award (Yentl)

Co-Chairs Report קאָפּאָרזיצערס באַריכט

Tayere mitglider un khaveyrim – Dear members and friends

This past year has tested our resilience, our commitment to championing our *mameloshn* and *yidishkayt*, and our determination to provide a platform for Jewish creativity to shine in a year that saw rising antisemitism across the world hit home with the horrific tragedy and trauma of the *Chanukah by the Sea* attack in Bondi.

In this challenging year, Kadimah remained steadfast: a welcoming home for Yiddish language, Jewish culture, theatre, learning and gathering. With a mix of resilience and chutzpah, we directly connected with creatives, scholars and students, volunteers, supporters, audiences, old friends and new.

Yiddish is the core of all we do. Our Yiddish classes and *shmues* groups were again fully booked out, and broader learning continued to grow through scholarships, music, and creative practice. The Doris and David Burstin Scholarship continues to support those seeking international Yiddish study opportunities, and the Rokhl Holzer and Paula Boltman Scholarship reflects Kadimah's commitment to nurturing the next generation of artists eager to embrace Yiddish language and performance.

There were many highlights in our 2025 cultural calendar: *It's better in Yiddish* brought new audiences a joyful reimagining of classic songs through a Yiddish lens; we saw the return of Australia's oldest and largest Jewish outdoor festival, *In One Voice*, co-presented with SKIF; Melbourne Klezmer School continued to attract enthusiastic musicians to its classes; and we were thrilled to honour the legacy of one of our true *oytsers* – treasures, with *All My Yesterdays Are Steps: A Soirée with Tomi Kalinski and Friends*.

Kadimah Yiddish Theatre continued to shine. *Shrapnel* received five Green Room Award nominations, winning one, and *Yentl* added a Sydney Theatre Award to its outstanding list of awards and five-star reviews, creating momentum for its London season in March and April 2026. These accolades demonstrate that Yiddish theatre resonates far beyond our own community and beyond our shores.



Financial and operational performance

The past year delivered a sound financial performance.

A consolidation of our financial management systems has reduced costs and allowed further focus on, and investment in, our operational and fundraising systems and resources. An essential component for all not-for-profit organisations is to engage effectively with our supporters and audiences. To this end, we are operating more effectively thanks to the leadership of our General Manager Jeff Robinson, and the contribution of his team: Shelley Seligmann, Office Manager; Shelley Krape, Marketing and Communications Consultant; and Don Perlgut, Fundraising Consultant. A special thanks to Hannah Greenberg who supports Kadimah as our Honorary Accountant.



Strategic initiatives

Kadimah Yiddish Theatre's successes have spawned new Works in Development, new collaborations, and new pathways for Jewish creatives. Our *kultur* team is engaging with local and overseas creatives, academics, and writers, and our library team continues to work tirelessly on preserving our unique literary collection and on the comprehensive Archive Project, digitising Kadimah's wealth of history and activity, creating a unique and accessible resource for all.

The biggest and boldest initiative is the Jewish Arts Quarter, the vision to create a new state-of-the-art home for Kadimah and The Jewish Museum of Australia: Gandel Centre of Judaica on the site of Kadimah's home at 7 Selwyn Street. As the project gains momentum, we are planning our move into temporary premises as we begin a new chapter in our 115-year history.

A hartziken dank Heartfelt thanks

As we write this message about the year that was, we are already four months into 2026 and so much has already happened. We farewelled Miriam Bass OAM as Director but are delighted that she remains actively involved, and we welcomed two new Directors earlier this year, David Zerman AM and David Brous. Both Davids bring a wealth of experience, a commitment to protecting Kadimah's unique legacy and to ensuring that we thrive as a relevant, vibrant cultural hub with *yidishkayt* at its heart. The successful 2026 *In One Voice* festival attracted crowds of over 4,000 and *Yentl* concluded an acclaimed six-week season in London performing to more than 10,000 theatregoers. We acknowledge Lin Bender's role as Chair of Kadimah Yiddish Theatre and her work as Co-Chair of Kadimah. Lin has now stepped away from the Co-Chair role to focus on Kadimah Yiddish Theatre, and Mikhaela Bourke joined the Kadimah Team as Cultural Producer in March.

Kadimah is energised by a dynamic group of dedicated directors, staff, contractors, and volunteers who nurture and sustain this unique organisation. Loyal and valued also are our Supporters, Friends and Members, our enthusiastic participants in Yiddish classes and *shmues* groups, the tens of thousands who attend our shows, our collaborators, and our partners.

And thanks to our dynamic creatives, Yiddish and *yidishkayt* are thriving!

Kadimah means 'move forward', and together we will indeed keep moving forward *biz 120 un vayter* – till 120 and beyond. *A dank far eyer untershtitsn der Kadimah* – thank you for your support and commitment.

Joe Tigel & Lin Bender AM
Co-Chairs



קאָ-פּאַרזיצערס באַריכט פֿאַר 2025

טייערע מיטגלידער און חברים,

דאָס פֿאַרגאַנגענע יאָר האָט אויסגעפּראָווט אונדזער אויסזויער, אונדזער איבערגעגעבנקייט צו פֿאַרזעצן דעם קאַמף פֿאַר אונדזער מאַמע-לשון און ייִדישקייט, און אונדזער אַנטשלאַסנקייט צו צושטעלן אַ פּלאַטפֿאָרמע פֿאַר דער ייִדישער שפּעפּערישקייט, עס זאָל שיינען. בֿפֿרט במשך פֿון אַ יאָר ווען דער וואַקסנדיקער אַנטיסעמיטיזם פֿון אַרום דער וועלט האָט אַריינגעקראַכט ביי אונדז אין דער היים מיט דער שרעקלעכער טראַגעדיע און טראַוומע פֿון דעם טעראָריסטישן אַטאַק אום חנוכה אין באַנדי. בעת דעם שווערן יאָר איז די קדימה פֿאַרבליבן פֿעסט ווי אַ וואַרעמע היים פֿאַר דער ייִדישער שפּראַך, קולטור, טעאַטער, לערנען און צוזאַמענקומען. מיט אַ געמיש פֿון פֿעסטקייט און חוצפה האָבן מיר זיך פֿאַרבינדן מיט קינסטלער, געלערנטע און סטודענטן, וואַלונטירן, שטיצער, עולם, אַלטע און נייע פֿריינט. ייִדיש איז ביים קערן פֿון וואַס מיר טאָן. אונדזער ייִדיש קלאַסן און שמועס גרופּעס זענען ווידער איבערגעפֿילט געווען. די ברייטערע לערע פֿון ייִדיש איז ווייטער געוואַקסן אַ דאַנק סטיפענדיעס, מוזיק און שפּעפּערישע פּראַקטיקע. די דאָריס און דוד בורשטין סטיפענדיע שטיצט ווייטער ייִדיש צושטייערס וואַס זוכן געלעגנהייטן צו שטודירן אין אויסלאַנד. די רחל האַלצער און פּאָלאַ באַלטמאַן סובווענץ שפּיגלט אַפּ קדימהס איבערגעגעבנקייט צו נערן דעם קומענדיקן דור פֿון קינסטלער, נייגעריקע צו פֿאַרנעמען זיך מיט דער ייִדישער שפּראַך און פֿאַרשטעלונג. אונדזער קאַלענדאַר יאָר 2025 האָט אַנטהאַלט נייע הויכפּונקטן אַריינגערעכנט: "עס קלינגט בעסער אויף ייִדיש", אַן אונטערנעמונג וואַס האָט צוגעצויגן אַ נייעם עולם דורך אַ לוסטיקן איבערטראַכטן פֿון קלאַסישע לידער דורך אַ ייִדישן אויגנלינדז. דעם יאָר האָט מען אויך צוריקגעבראַכט אויסטראַליעס עלטסטן און גרעסטן ייִדישן פֿעסטיוואַל אונטערן פֿרייען הימל: "אין איין קול", קאָ-פּרעזענטירט דורך דער קדימה און דעם סקיפּ. אויך די "מעלבורנער קלעזמער שול" ציט ווייטער צו ענטזיאַסטישע מוזיקערס צו אירע קלאַסן. אין אויגוסט האָט די אונטערנעמונג: "אַלע מיינע נעכטנס זענען טריט", באַערט דעם עזבֿון פֿון איינע פֿון אונדזערע "אוצרות" טאַמי קאַלינסקי OAM, אויף וועלכע זי האָט זיך אַליין פֿאַרגעשטעלט און דערציילט, באַגלייט פֿון אירע פֿריינט. דער "קדימה ייִדיש טעאַטער" האָט ווייטער אויפֿגעשטיינט אין יאָר 2025. די פֿאַרשטעלונג "שראַפּנעל" איז נאָמינירט געוואָרן פֿאַר פֿינף "גריין-צימער באַליוונגען" און געווינען איינעם, און "יענטל" האָט צוגעגעבן אַ "סידנעי טעאַטער באַליוונג" צו איר אויסגעצייכנטע ליסטע באַליוונגען און 5 שטערנדיקע רעצענזיעס, וועלכע האָבן געשאַפֿן אַן אימפעט פֿאַר אַ 6 וואַכן-לאַנגן סעזאָן אין לאַנדאָן אין מאַרץ און אַפּריל 2026. די באַליוונגען און לויבן באַווייזן אַז ייִדיש טעאַטער האָט אַן אַפּקלאַנג אַ סך ווייטער ווי נאָר ביי אונדזער אייגענע קהילה און אונדזערע ים ברעגן.



סטראַטעגישע איניציאַטיוון

די הצלחות פון דעם "קדימה ייִדיש טעאַטער" זיינען גורם געווען מיט נייע ווערק אין אַנטוויקלונג, נייע קאָלאַבאָראַציעס און נייע וועגן פֿאַר ייִדישע קינסטלער. אונדזער קולטור מאַנשאַפּט איז פֿאַרבינדן מיט היגע און אויסלענדישע קינסטלערס, אַקאַדעמיקערס און שרייבערס און אונדזער ביבליאָטעק מאַנשאַפּט אַרבעט כּסדר אומדערמידלעך צו אויפֿהיטן אונדזער אייגנאַרטיקע ליטעראַרישע זאַמלונג און אַרומנעמיקער אַרכיוו פּראַיעקט, צו דיגיטאַליזירן קדימהס עשירות פֿון געשיכטע און אַקטיוויטעט, צו שאַפֿן אַן אייגנאַרטיקן און צוטריטלעכן רעסורס פֿאַר אַלע. די גרעסטע און דרייטע איניציאַטיוו איז דאָס פֿאַרווירקלעכן פֿון דעם "ייִדישן קונסט קוואַרטאַל", דעם וויזיאַנערישן פּראַיעקט צו שאַפֿן אַ נייע מאַדערנע היים פֿאַר דער קדימה און דעם ייִדישן מוזיי, אויפֿן אַרט פֿון דער איצטיקער קדימה געביידע אויף 7 סעלווין גאַס. בשעת דער פּראַיעקט אַנטוויקלט זיך, פּלאַנירן מיר איבערצוציען זיך אויף אַ צייטווייליקן אַרט און גלייכצייטיק וועלן מיר אָנפֿאַנגען אַ נייעם קאַפיטל אין אונדזער 115 יאָריקע געשיכטע. אַ האַרציקן דאַנק.

אַזוי ווי מיר שרייבן דעם באַריכט וועגן דעם פֿאַרגאַנגענעם יאָר, געפינען מיר זיך שוין פֿיר חדשים אינעם יאָר 2026 און אַ סך איז שוין פֿאַרגעקומען בעת דער צייט. מיר האָבן זיך געזענגט מיט איינע פֿון אונדזערע דירעקטאָרן מיריס באַס OAM, אָבער מיר זענען צופֿרידן אַז זי וועט ווייטער זיין אַקטיוו באַטייליקט מיט דער קדימה, און מיר האָבן באַגריסט צוויי נייע דירעקטאָרן דעם יאָר, דוד זערמאַן AM און דור בראַוס. ביידע דודן ברענגען מיט זיך מיט אַ שלל פֿון דערפֿאַרונגען, אַן איבערגעגעבנקייט צו אויפֿהיטן קדימהס אייגנאַרטיקן עזבֿון און צו פֿאַרזיכערן אַז מיר זאָלן בליען אַלס אַ רעלעוואַנטער און לעבעדיקער קולטורעלער צענטער מיט ייִדישקייט אין האַרצן. דער דערפֿאַלגרייכער "אין איין קול 2026" פֿעסטיוואַל האָט צוגעצויגן אַן עולם פֿון מער ווי 4,000 און "יענטל" האָט פֿאַרענדיקט אַ 6 וואַכיקן סעזאָן אין לאַנדאָן פֿאַרשטעלנדיק צו מער ווי 10,000 טעאַטער גייערס. מיר אַנערקענען לויבן בענדערס ראַלע אַלס פֿאַרזיצערין פֿונעם "קדימה ייִדיש טעאַטער", און איר מי ווי קאָ-פֿאַרזיצער פֿון דער קדימה. לויבן האָט איצט אָפּגעטראַפֿן אַלס קאָ-פֿאַרזיצער פֿון דער קדימה זיך צו קאַנצענטרירן אויפֿן קדימה ייִדיש טעאַטער. אויך מיכאַעלאַ בורק האָט זיך אָנגעשלאָסן מיט דער קדימה אַלס קולטור פּראָדוצענט דעם מאַרץ. די קדימה שעפט איר ענערגיע פֿון אַ גרופּע דינאַמישע און איבערגעגעבענע דירעקטאָרן, באַאַמטע און וואַלונטירן וועלכע ביישטייערן זיך אין זייערע געהעריקע ראַלעס צו נערן און שטיצן די אייגנאַרטיקע אַרגאַניזאַציע. צו אונדזערע מענטשן קען מען צורעכענען אַן איבערגעגעבענעם, טייערן קרייז פֿון שטיצער, פֿריינט און מיטגלידער, אונדזערע ענטזיאַסטישע אַנטיילנעמער אין אונדזערע קלאַסן און שמועס גרופּעס, די צענדליקער טויזנטער וואַס קומען אויף אונדזערע פֿאַרשטעלונגען, אונדזערע קאָלאַבאָראַטאָרן און שותפֿים. ייִדיש און ייִדישקייט בליען, אַ דאַנק אונדזערע דינאַמישע קינסטלער. קדימה מיינט "צו גיין פֿאַרויס", און צוזאַמען וועלן מיר טאַקע גיין ווייטער פֿאַרויס, ביז 120 און נאָך ווייטער. אַ דאַנק פֿאַר אייער אונטערשטיצן און איבערגעגעבנקייט צו דער קדימה.



Kadimah Yiddish Theatre

קדימה יידיש טעאטער



2025 was a milestone year for Kadimah Yiddish Theatre – KYT – marking 100 years since Kadimah staged its first in-house theatre performance of *Tseseyt un tsheshpreyt – Scattered and dispersed*, written by Sholem Aleichem in 1903.

It is fitting that last year was one of the most ambitious, complex, and consequential in the history of KYT. Rather than being defined by a single achievement, the year was characterised by a convergence of major undertakings: an international season of *Yentl* in London; the continued development of both *The Poet King and the Dreaming* (working title); the new Yiddish musical *La Dorada*; and the establishment of a scholarship program designed to secure the future of Yiddish performance.

The work has required courage and patience in equal measure, with financial discipline, careful governance, and sustained communication across continents. It has reinforced something fundamental about KYT: we are no longer operating solely as custodians of a cultural tradition, but increasingly as creators of new work with national and international reach.

Yentl

At the time of writing, *Yentl* had finished its run at the Marylebone Theatre in London, where it received fabulous reviews such as “*Nothing short of magic*” from TimeOut, and “*A superb theatrical coup*” from The Guardian. The final months of 2025 required careful coordination and pressure management. Contracts were finalised, cashflow closely monitored, marketing activity intensified, and media interest accelerated, all while ensuring our presence in London remained visible, responsible and strategically aligned.

The London season required us to raise approximately AUD 200,000 (c. £100,000) for the season’s cashflow. This was achieved through a combination of philanthropic contributions and social investment, demonstrating both confidence and pragmatism. It reduced immediate financial burden, while ensuring shared responsibility for success.

The efforts of Lin Bender and the KYT Committee in building relationships with local and international philanthropists have been exceptional, and have significantly elevated KYT’s profile and future opportunities.

The UK-based marketing and media team delivered excellent results, with substantial coverage across major Jewish publications and mainstream outlets, including *The Times* and the BBC. The tone of the coverage positioned the production as a

culturally significant theatrical event, and co-producers Wild Yak reported that in early box-office performance, *Yentl* tracked ahead of previous Marylebone productions.

The season unlocked previously unimaginable opportunities. Represented by Singer’s grandchildren and literary agent, the New York-based Isaac Bashevis Singer Trust attended opening night. Jewish Renaissance hosted a panel event, *The Yiddish Diva*, and discussions are underway with JW3, London’s leading Jewish arts organisation, regarding future collaborations. Additional invitations for speaking engagements further reflect the growing international interest in KYT’s work.

As was the case in previous seasons of *Yentl*, the production unfolded against a backdrop of global uncertainty. Conflict in the Middle East has led to airport and airspace closures, placing the attendance of some international guests at risk. While international events were beyond our control, they underscored the importance of KYT’s role in championing Yiddish culture and language and encouraging understanding, creativity and cultural inclusion. They also strengthened our sense of purpose and commitment to this work.



The Poet King and the Dreaming (working title)

While London was the major focus in the latter part of the year, the broader program remained active and productive. A highlight was the development in Darwin of *The Poet King and The Dreaming* (working title). Inspired by Anna Epstein's book, *The eccentric outback quest of an urbane Yiddish poet from Poland*, which relates the story of essayist and poet Melekh Ravitsh in the Australian outback, this project is one of KYT's most ambitious undertakings, bringing Yiddish and Australian history into dialogue with First Nations artists and collaborators.

Supported by Arts NT and Brown's Mart Theatre, the first workshop was both creatively and culturally significant. Larrakia Elders welcomed the KYT team on Country, sharing language, stories and cultural protocols. The exchange has shaped the ethical and creative framework of the work and has led to momentum for financial support to hold a second collaborative workshop in Melbourne in mid-2026. This demonstrates a vote of confidence in the artistic and intercultural integrity of the work.

The next phase will mirror the generosity shown in Darwin with reciprocal immersion in *yidishkayt*. *The Poet King and The Dreaming* (working title) positions KYT within a national conversation about culture, language and belonging, exploring the dialogue between diasporic memory and Indigenous sovereignty. It is a complex and ambitious work that will require sustained support.

La Dorada

La Dorada, based on an original story by Tomi Kalinski OAM, continues to progress steadily. A detailed treatment has been completed, mapping the dramatic structure and musical direction. This enables us to move confidently into compositional collaboration, with conversations underway with local and international musicians and song writers.

Envisaged as a large-scale musical work with touring potential, *La Dorada* sits within the lineage of Yiddish-inflected storytelling while embracing contemporary musical theatre form. It aims to create a new work that can sit on major stages while retaining cultural authenticity. Securing development funding appropriate to this scale remains a priority.

Rokhl Holzer and Paula Boltman Scholarship

Formally established in 2025 with \$40,000 committed over three years, the program supports professional performers to undertake Yiddish language study, to participate in KYT projects, and to give public performances. It represents a critical investment in sustainability. We cannot create ambitious Yiddish theatre if we do not invest in artists capable of performing it. The scholarship ensures that the next generation of performers will have both linguistic grounding and practical experience.

A year of ambition and growth

2025 was a year of growth, with an armful of ambition.

It was not an easy year. It required resilience, adaptability, and careful stewardship. But it also confirmed that KYT is operating at a new level of ambition – preserving tradition while expanding it, interrogating it and placing it in dialogue with contemporary contexts in Australia and abroad.

Thank you

The outstanding support of the KYT Committee made this possible. On behalf of the Creative Team, we thank our Chair, Lin Bender AM, Jill Smith AM, Troy Sussman, and Jeff Robinson, our financial maven, Peter McCoy, who joined us late last year to help us navigate the financial complexity of *Yentl* in London, and our legal maven, Michael Frankel, for their expertise and guidance.

KYT is totally dependent on fundraising, without core government support. We extend our sincere thanks to our supporters for believing in our talent-rich, resource-constrained theatre company. The work ahead remains substantial. However, 2025 demonstrated that we have the creative capacity, strategic clarity, cultural relevance, and growing support base to meet that challenge.

Artistic Director Evelyn Krape & Executive Director Gary Abrahams



ביבליאָטעק Library

The Kadimah Library remains a vital part of its cultural life.

Recent improvements have strengthened its capacity to support study and research, while careful preparation continues for the digitisation of the collection. Cataloguing of new books and audio-visual materials is ongoing. The collection has been accessed by several interstate and international researchers this year.

We have also started digitising all periodicals particularly periodicals published in Australia. The Melburner Bleter (Melbourne Chronicle) and Undzer Gedank, will be available through Victorian Collections.

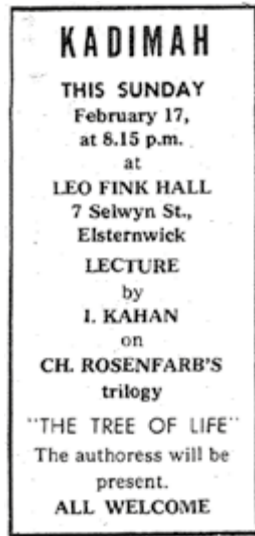
We have seen a significant increase in library borrowing. Donations continue to be received and are most welcome. Surplus Yiddish books are being distributed to the Yiddish Library in Perth.

Following best-practice archival procedures, we have continued documenting items to preserve Kadimah's cultural identity – historically and into the future. Key areas of focus include the Dovid Herman Theatre; the Melbourne Youth Yiddish Theatre and subsequent productions; Kadimah's institutional activities; significant individuals and events; and aged or fragile books and periodicals.

A critical priority is ensuring that all items are securely recorded and accessible. Detailed, itemised records are currently being compiled and stored in the Cloud, and an archive manual is in development to guide the collection's ongoing preservation.

The aim for the Kadimah Archive is to be accessible digitally and in-person for historical and genealogical research, and for broader engagement with our rich cultural heritage.

We extend our sincere thanks to our dedicated volunteers: Marlana Axel, Marlene Bronstein, Ruth Friede, Ann Kelmann, Kurt Langfelder, Sandra Rockman, Harry Schwarz, Meyrick Kaminski, and Rose Blustein.



לערנען זיך Learning

We offer a range of Yiddish language classes, advanced *shmues* – conversation, and reading groups.

Our teachers and *shmues* group leaders
אונדזערע לערערס און שמועס גרופע פֿירערס

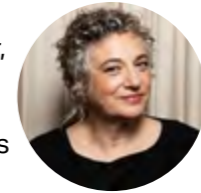
Alex Dafner OAM, was the first teacher of VCE Yiddish in Melbourne, worked for over three decades in Yiddish broadcasting at SBS, continues to present his Yiddish show on J-Air, and was the longest-serving President of the Kadimah. His advanced class, *Yiddish Amol un Haynt*, reads and discusses contemporary issues in Yiddish.



Beni Gothajner, native Yiddish speaker and trained teacher, leads a Yiddish literature reading and discussion group for fluent speakers. He believes "it is never too late to start" reading Yiddish. At the 2025 AGM, Beni was awarded Life Membership of Kadimah in recognition of his *ibergegebnkayt* – deep commitment – to Yiddish and Yiddish literature. A former Kadimah Board Member, he founded the Yiddish reading group to deepen engagement with Yiddish literary works, and it has been running successfully for over a decade.



Tomi Kalinski OAM, musician, performer, and teacher, uses songs, poems, literature, and idioms to deepen the *mameloshn* of those able to read and *shmues oyf yidish*. She aims to inspire others to explore and share the treasures of her 'dreaming' — the rich Yiddish-Australian cultural heritage she was fortunate to inherit.



Helen Mizrachi, native Yiddish speaker and trained educator, leads two structured Yiddish *shmues* groups. "For me", she says "there is no other language that describes behaviour, personalities, emotions, and feelings as brilliantly as Yiddish."
Diane (Dine) Shonberg, native Yiddish speaker, completed VCE Yiddish in 2017. That year, she founded *yidish shmues*, Kadimah's inaugural *shmues* group, and now leads two structured Yiddish conversation groups.



Esther Singer, Kadimah Yiddish Language Coordinator, studied Yiddish in Melbourne, New York, and Warsaw, and holds a Master's in Applied Linguistics from the University of Melbourne, specialising in language revival, second-language learning, and sociolinguistics. Esther produces the podcast for Yiddish learners, *Proste Yiddish*.



Esther teaches four classes: Yiddish New Alef (beginners), Yiddish Beys (second year), Yiddish Giml (upper-intermediate), and *shmues un leyent*, where students read and discuss literature while working towards fluency.

Doris and David Burstin Scholarship

The 2025 recipient was Jacob Sacher. The scholarship enabled him to attend the six-week YIVO–Bard Uriel Weinreich Summer Program in New York, an intensive Yiddish language course. He is currently completing a Master's in Jewish comedy and intends to pursue a PhD focused on comedy in Yiddish. Jacob co-wrote the 2026 *Purim Shpiel*, contributing to Kadimah's ongoing tradition of original Yiddish performance.

Kultur – Cultural Program

קולטור פראָגראַם



Kadimah's 2025 Kultur program provided meaningful performance opportunities for Jewish creatives while engaging diverse audiences through song, theatre, talks, comedy, and film. It balanced offerings for long-standing supporters steeped in Yiddish language and culture with a deliberate expansion toward more accessible programming, welcoming audiences without Yiddish language and inviting them to connect with *yidishkayt*. Through inclusive, engaging experiences. In partnership with the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, the Bund, JIFF, and Yiddish Australia, the program strengthened both its reach and depth through collaborative initiatives. Across fourteen events, including a major community festival,

it showcased both established and emerging artists, alongside a commitment to innovation and the development of original work that resonates with contemporary audiences.

Kathy Laster AM and Renata Singer OAM
Co-Chairs, Kadimah Kultur Advisory Committee



CULTURAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS 2025



Melbourne Klezmer School מעלבוירן קלעזמער שול

During 2025, Kadimah and the Melbourne Klezmer School (MKS) continued to strengthen their partnership in nurturing the next generation of musicians. Under the leadership of Amy Zakar Banner and Adam Starr, MKS has attracted students of all ages. In addition to its weekly sessions at the Kadimah, MKS performed at the *In One Voice* festival in March 2025 and presented a sold-out First Anniversary Concert. To round out a year of vibrant performances and emerging talent, MKS also delighted audiences at Kadimah's Annual *khanuke* celebration in December.



It's Better in Yiddish עס קלינגט בעסער אויף יידיש

February 20, 22, & 23

A joyful celebration of music, language and performance, this production delighted audiences from start to finish. Who knew that songs by the Beatles, Leonard Cohen, and Dolly Parton could sound so good — perhaps even better — *oyf yidish*? Led by the incomparable Jude Perl as MC, and with Adam Starr drawing out the best in both experienced and emerging performers, audiences were singing, clapping and *kvelling* throughout. Across three sold-out performances, it was a resounding success and a vibrant showcase of the depth and quality of talent in our community.

Yiddish Talks יידישע רעדעס

As part of our mission to deepen knowledge and encourage the use of Yiddish, Kadimah hosted three well attended and warmly received talks delivered in Yiddish.



A conversation about Jews, the Left, and antisemitism, past and present

April 29

A timely conversation between Professor Jacobs of the CUNY Graduate Center with the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation's Professor Rebecca Margolis.



Poetic texts from the ghettos and camps with Dr Miriam Trinh

May 25

Dr Miriam Trinh of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem captivated a sold-out audience with her insights and homage to the creativity and endurance of those who clung to the written word. Miriam Trinh was in Melbourne as the guest of Yiddish Australia.



Old and new dybbuks in the cinema

December 11

Professor Rebecca Margolis, Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation at Monash University, traced the dybbuk's journey from Jewish folklore through theatre and classic Yiddish cinema to modern film and television, examining its evolving portrayal across genres ranging from horror to comedy. The event coincided with a Jewish International Film Festival (JIFF) program of Yiddish supernatural films.



In One Voice אין איין קול

March 14

Despite the rain, *In One Voice* was an uplifting celebration of Jewish culture, community and connection. Presented in partnership with SKIF, it is the one festival that brings the whole community together, with a wide range of community organisations represented and opportunities for people to connect across the day. The festival featured market stalls, an art exhibition, a bustling food court, performances from Jewish schools, and a line-up of professional musicians. Warm, lively and inclusive, *In One Voice* was a wonderful expression of the richness and diversity of Jewish communal life.



Love Blooms ליבע בליט

May 4

This production drew a full house at the Kadimah, once again demonstrating the enduring appeal of Yiddish culture. Written and directed by Anna Epstein, it captivated audiences with dramatic English renditions of Yiddish love stories, weaving together song, film, prose, and poetry into a rich literary tapestry. Lesser-known works were brought to light, including some newly translated, offering audiences a fresh and moving encounter with the Yiddish literary tradition.



Grigoryan Brothers

August 2

The concert featured music from the brothers' latest album, *Amistad*, and sold out quickly, reflecting the strong appeal of these ARIA-winning classical guitarists. A revealing post-show conversation offered audiences insight into their personal story and musical journey — from Kazakhstan to Melbourne, and from Melbourne to the global stage, with a special stop at Kadimah.



Night of the Murdered Poets: The Two Worlds of Leyb Kvitko

August 12

The program marked the 1952 execution of thirteen leading Jewish intellectuals in the Soviet Union, on false charges of treason. It explored the 'two worlds' of Leyb Kvitko, celebrated both as a Soviet children's writer and as a Jewish folk poet, offering an affecting reflection on his work, legacy, and the devastating history surrounding it. Presented by the Bund and Kadimah.



All My Yesterdays Are Steps – A soirée with Tomi Kalinski and Friends
אַלע מיינע נעכטנס זיינען שטיגן – אַ וועטשערניקע מיט טאַמי קאַלינסקי און פֿרײַנט

August 24

Some poems don't just speak; they take hold. For Tomi Kalinski OAM, a powerful creative force and beloved figure in the Yiddish cultural world, these poems arrived at just the right moment. Overwhelmed by their emotional depth and beauty, she felt compelled to set them to music.

All My Yesterdays Are Steps was the moving result, a heartfelt soirée of music and memory, honouring the people and the poetry that inspire her creative practice. MCed by Tomi Kalinski and Evelyn Krape, with musical direction by Tomi and direction by Eli Erez, this richly layered performance featured a distinguished cast: Anita Lester, Elisa Gray, Freydi Mrocki, Noa Coates, Karen Feldman, and the *Mir Kumen On* choir, with musicians



Gideon Preiss, Rachel Moshel, and Adam and Simon Starr. Two sold-out shows brought to life songs of loss, longing, hope, love, and childhood, a celebration of Tomi's artistry and her recent Order of Australia Medal, awarded for her lifetime of contribution to the Yiddish community, especially through music.

A night of language, legacy and luminous talent.

Mazltov to Tomi Kalinski OAM and her *khaveyrim* on an unforgettable achievement.



Kadimah and JIFF

November 9

This was our first Yiddish-themed double bill at JIFF, showcasing two remarkable films. *Jewish Voices: Resurrected Songs*, which tells the story of music recovered from two Berlin Jewish recording studios destroyed on Kristallnacht, was accompanied by three of these Yiddish musical treasures performed live in the cinema by Adam Starr, Galit Klas, and Josh Moshe. The second film, *I Have Sinned (Al Khet)*, back in circulation after generations and starring Melbourne actor Rokhl Holzer with comedy duo Dzigan and Schumacher, provided the perfect occasion to launch the Paula Boltman and Rokhl Holzer Kadimah Yiddish Theatre Scholarships, supporting new talent onto the Yiddish stage.

Finance פינאנסן

Kadimah – like many local and global Jewish organisations – operated within a challenging social, political and economic landscape in 2025. Despite this, Kadimah was able to maintain its productivity and programs to achieve a relatively stable and consistent financial position.

Total revenue for 2025 was \$869,790, with key funding received through the annual appeal and major donors who value *yidishkayt* and the role Kadimah plays in Jewish Australia.

Membership income remained strong, supported by engagement through Yiddish classes and shmues groups, with many participants also joining as 'Friends of Kadimah.'

Events revenue remained strong, supported by another year of sold out performances and events in the Kadimah Hall.

Grant income is a critical component for a community cultural organisation and continued to support key operational and program activity throughout the year.

Yiddish learning programs performed strongly throughout 2025, supported by expanded class participation and additional learning activity. Some language learning programs transitioned to online delivery during the second half of the year.

The year also saw a significant review and rationalising of equipment and non-current assets, resulting in increased depreciation expenses with obsolete or no longer held equipment being written down.

Key financial highlights during 2025 included:

- Strong growth in appeals and donations revenue
- Continued investment in Yiddish language learning and cultural programming
- Consolidation of administrative and operational structures
- Streamlining accounting arrangements during the year
- Reclassification of several expense categories to improve management reporting clarity
- Increased occupancy and operational costs reflective of current market conditions and maintenance requirements of our building and ageing infrastructure
- Kadimah continued delivery of In One Voice during 2025. Due to the festival's joint venture structure and differing accrual and cash accounting treatment, some associated income will be recognised in the 2026 financial year.

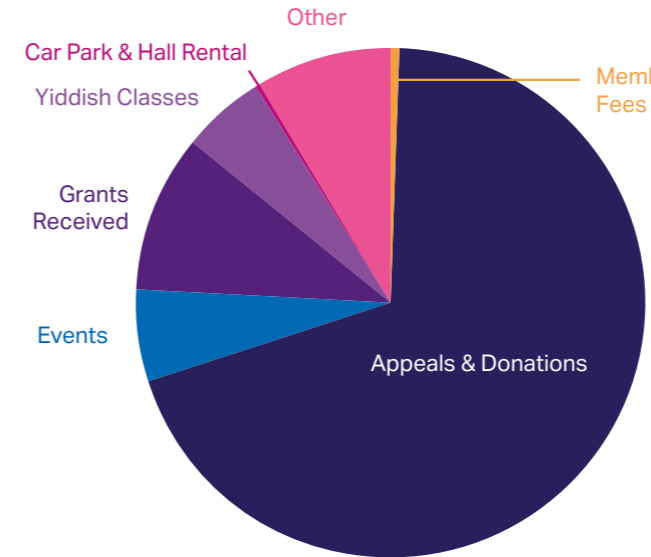
Operating expenses for the year totalled \$850,209.

Administrative and salary-related expenses reflected the resources required to support Kadimah's operational and program delivery needs throughout the year. During 2025, Kadimah transitioned some outsourced functions in-house, including marketing and communications.

Advertising and sponsorship expenses increased during the year, reflecting a stronger investment in audience development, communications and creative services.

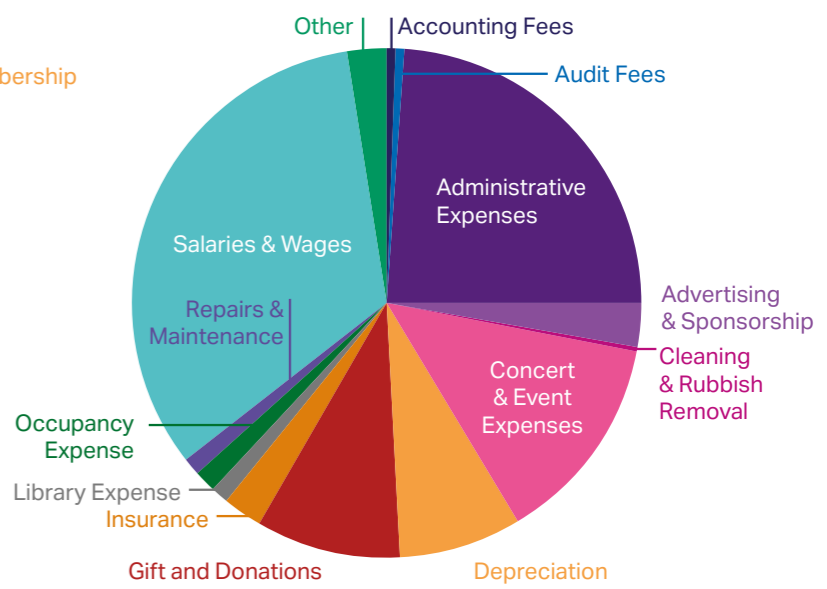
Gift and donation expenses include accounting adjustments associated with Equity Trustees, which manages Kadimah's corpus investment fund.

Kadimah remains committed to prudent financial management while continuing to invest in the cultural, educational and communal life of the organisation.



Income Analysis

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------|
| Membership Fees | \$6,578 | 0.8% |
| Appeals and Donations | \$603,966 | 69.4% |
| Events | \$50,310 | 5.8% |
| Grants Received | \$86,322 | 9.9% |
| Yiddish Classes | \$47,121 | 5.4% |
| Car Park and Hall Rental | \$1,406 | 0.2% |
| Other | \$74,088 | 8.5% |
| Total Income | \$869,791 | |



Expenditure Analysis

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------|
| Accounting Fees | \$7,016 | 0.8% |
| Audit Fees | \$3,050 | 0.4% |
| Administrative Expenses | \$202,077 | 23.8% |
| Advertising & Sponsorship | \$23,878 | 2.8% |
| Cleaning and Rubbish Removal | \$4,588 | 0.5% |
| Concert and Event Expenses | \$112,232 | 13.2% |
| Depreciation | \$65,413 | 7.7% |
| Gift and Donations | \$78,133 | 9.2% |
| Insurance | \$22,873 | 2.7% |
| Library Expense | \$8,080 | 1.0% |
| Occupancy Expense | \$12,127 | 1.4% |
| Repairs and Maintenance | \$10,551 | 1.2% |
| Salaries and Wages | \$279,457 | 32.9% |
| Other | \$20,733 | 2.4% |
| Total Expenditure | \$850,209 | |

Board of Management די פֿאַרוואַלטונג

Joe Tigel & Lin Bender AM, *Co-Chairs*
Mandi Katz, *Hon. Secretary*

Miriam Bass OAM (until May 2025),
Ordinary Member

Or Davidovich (from May 2025),
Ordinary Member

Kathy Laster AM, *Ordinary Member*

Renata Singer OAM, *Ordinary Member*

The following joined our board in 2026:

David Zerman AM, *Chair*
(as of April 2026)

David Brous, *Ordinary Member*

Rob Miller, *Board Observer*
(from January 2025)

Jake Fehily, *Board Observer*
(from January 2026)

Committees קאָמיטעס

Governance & HR Committee
Miriam Bass OAM (until May 2025),
Or Davidovich, Mandi Katz,
Jeff Robinson, Helen Slucki,
Joe Tigel

Finance Committee
Jeff Robinson, Joe Tigel,
Miriam Bass OAM (until May 2025),
Hannah Greenberg (Bookkeeper)

Development Committee
Miriam Bass OAM (until May 2025),
Lin Bender AM, Or Davidovich,
Jeff Robinson, Renata Singer OAM,
Joe Tigel, Reuben Zylberszpic

Kultur Committee
Kathy Laster AM, Rebecca Margolis,
Pip Mushin, Freydi Mrocki,
Gideon Preiss, Joshua Reuben,
Renata Singer OAM.

Kadimah Yiddish Theatre Committee
Gary Abrahams, Lin Bender AM,
Evelyn Krape, Rob Miller,
Jill Smith AO, Troy Sussman

We thank our former Committee and Working Group members for their dedicated contribution to Kadimah's 2025 activities and look forward to their continued participation.

Our Team דער פערסאָנאַל

General Manager Jeff Robinson

Administrator Shelley Seligmann

Development Manager Don Perlgut
(until March 2026)

Marketing & Communications Consultant Shelley Krape

Grants Manager Hannah Casey
(from 2026)

Cultural Producer Mikhaela Bourke
(from 2026)

Kadimah Yiddish Theatre

Artistic Director Evelyn Krape

Executive Director Gary Abrahams

Yiddish Language

Yiddish Editor Alex Dafner OAM

Yiddish Classes Coordinator
Esther Singer

Yiddish and Shmues Leaders
Alex Dafner OAM, Beni Gothajner,
Tomi Kalinski OAM, Helen Mizrachi,
Diane (Dine) Shonberg, Esther Singer

Our Critical Support Team די קריטישע שטיצע מאַנשאַפֿט

Kadimah gratefully acknowledges the work of the following external mavens who support our staff:

Hannah Greenberg
Honorary Bookkeeper

Crayon Creative
Helen Chambers and Eva Betts

Atticus Design Will Mahon

MegaPC Dexter Eugenio

LZR Auditors & Assurance
Michael Zylberman OAM Auditor,
Rebecca Rosario

Frankel Lawyers

Arnold Bloch Leibler Lawyers

Our Volunteers וואָלונטירן

Marlena Axel

Rose Blustein

Marlene Bronstein

Trevor Chambers

Alex Dafner OAM

Anna Epstein

Ruth Friede

Naomi Farberman

Beni Gothajner

Meyrick Kaminski

Ann Kelmann

Kurt Langfelder

Rivke Margolis

Pip Mushin

Freydi Mrocki

Gideon Preiss

Josh Reuben

Sandra Rockman

Harry Schwarz

Diane Shonberg

Esther Singer

Jill Smith AO

Troy Sussman

Reuben Zylberszpic



Thank You א גרויסן דאַנק

Kadimah gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the following Trusts, Foundations and Individuals in 2025.

Kadimah Patron

Irene Pletka

Kadimah Benefactors \$20,000+

| | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Erdi Foundation | In honour of Paula Boltman z"l | Krystal Fund | Singer Family |
| Gandel Foundation | Jeff Kaufman | Ralph Renard | |

Kadimah Visionaries \$10,000+

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Finkel Foundation | MARD Foundation | Morris Mrocki | The Skrzynski Foundation |
| Joe Tigel and Sharon Goldfeld AM | Michael Burstin Miriam Faine and Greg Shalit | Naomi Glennon Orwin Investments | Waislitz Family |

Kadimah Champions \$5,000+

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| A khaver (A friend) | Lisa Farber & Justin Liberman and family |
| Jakob Frenkiel Charitable Trust | Michael Kantor |
| Joseph Reich | |

biz120 Circle Leaders \$1,200+

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Miriam Bass OAM | Andrew Firestone | Helen Light | Lilly Stagoll |
| Lin Bender AM | Rachel Goldberg | Larry Light | Regine Szmulewicz |
| Sholam Blustein | Justin Foundation | Ben Mand | Vivien Wertkin |
| Annette Charak | Mandi Katz | Roslyn Rogers | |
| Anna Epstein | Leo & Mina Fink Fund | Linda Rubinstein | |

biz120 Supporters \$120+

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| American Friends of the Medem Library | Lynne Frid | Danny Leber | Rose Rosenblatt |
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| Chaim Bugalski | Gary Hearst | Leah Mann | Freda Salter |
| Peretz Burstin | Mary Hoenig | Andrew Markus | Naomi Saporta |
| George Butman | David Isaac | Deb Mendelson | Michael Sharp |
| Trevor Chambers | Caroline Isakow | Susan Milamed | Diane Shonberg |
| Rachel Chrapot | Susie Ivany | Henry & Roslyn Monkus | Mark Skurnik |
| Renee Coppersmith | Marcia Jacobs | Freydi Mrocki & Les Segal | Skyled Foundation |
| Alex Dafner OAM | Naomi Jacobson | Barbara & David Mushin | Albert Spilman |
| Michael Debinski | Pearl Joel | Sharon Nathani | Julie Steinbok |
| Susan Donath | Henrik Kalowski | Paul Nisselle | Leon Steinkoler |
| Sam Eichenbaum | Barbara Kamler | Charles Okraglik | Bev Walter |
| Jennifer Ferns | Molly Kaufman | Leon Piterman | Helen White |
| Elly Fink | Joseph & Yvonne Kay | Pratt Foundation | Bronia Witorz |
| Rosy Fischbein | Ann Kelman | Jeff Robinson | Lynette Zalberg |
| Estelle Fookes | Ada Kornhauser | Tom Romanowski | Harold Zwier |
| Arie Freiberg | Kathy Laster AM | Helen Rosenbaum | |
| | Tali Lavi | Barry Rosenberg | |

Grants

| | |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Bendigo Community Banking | Public Records Office Victoria |
| Executive Council of Australian Jewry | Sidney Myer Fund & The Myer Foundation |
| Glen Eira City Council | The National Library of Australia |
| Multicultural Seniors Support Victoria | Department of Families, Fairness and Housing |

Partner Support

Australian Jewish News
Classic Cinema
Melbourne Holocaust Museum
The Bund and SKIF
Browns Mart Theatre

Gifts Beyond the Stage

Hersh Burston
Andrea Katz

'Now, more than ever in our history of nurturing Jewish creativity and Yiddish language, Kadimah is programming to showcase our talented 'next generation' of performers, musicians and artists.'

KATHY LASTER AM &
RENATA SINGER OAM



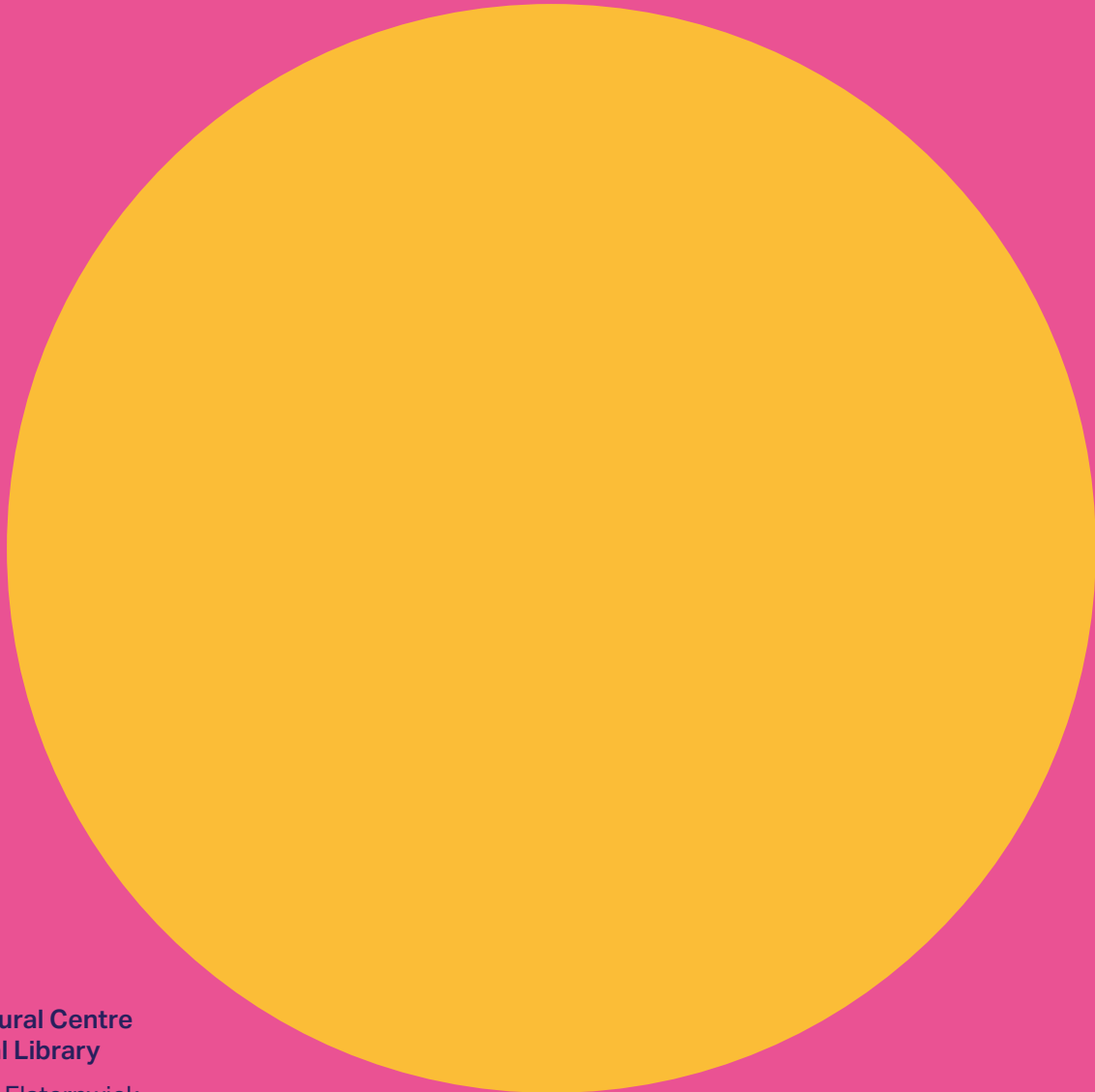
'Yiddish has always been my treasured love language, and sharing it through music and poetry, with people I adore is a true pleasure and I feel humbled and truly filled with gratitude.'

TOMI KALINSKI OAM



'Its a wonderful day to celebrate Jewish life!'

IN ONE VOICE
ATTENDEE



Kadimah
Jewish Cultural Centre
and National Library

7 Selwyn St, Elsternwick
Victoria 3185 Australia
Tel. 03 9923 7465
reception@kadimah.org.au
kadimah.org.au