

An evening at St George's College

The Council's collaborative venture with the Winthrop Singers and St George's College was held this year on Thursday 21 May, commencing at 6:00pm with worship in the Chapel. As Dr Nicholas Bannan was on leave, the Winthrop Singers were under the direction of his deputy Lucian Watkins. The service was led by Dr Sarah Gador-Whyte, Co-Dean of Studies and Lay Chaplain at St George's College. For the Introit, the choir sang *Enosh Kechotzir Yomov* (Psalm 103:15–17) composed by Louis Lewandowski. Michael Sebbag, of Perth Hebrew Congregation, read the Old Testament lection from Isaiah 55:6–13, and this was followed by a beautiful rendition of Psalm 150, sung by the choir in English translation to a chant by Heathcote Statham. The New Testament lection, 1 Corinthians 13:1–13, was then read by Executive member Mrs Ann Smith, and the canticle, Psalm 100, was said antiphonally. For the anthem, the choir gave a marvellous performance of *Adonai roi*, the second movement of Leonard Bernstein's celebrated *Chichester Psalms*. The service concluded with prayers and a blessing, and the congregation sat to enjoy the organ voluntary, before lingering for some time in the Chapel. It was heart-warming to see Jews and Christians completely at ease with each other as they conversed in this sacred space.

CCJWA members and guests were then invited to the College dining room where the harmonious atmosphere continued, and we enjoyed an excellent meal in company with friends and students. We then reconvened in the Junior Common Room for the traditional Fireside Chat, which this time was a conversation between Dr Michael Champion, Lay Chaplain at the College, and Rabbi Dovid Freilich, of Perth Hebrew Congregation. A wide range of topics was covered in the interview, but Rabbi Freilich never strayed too far from his main focal points: that humankind is made in God's image, and the crucial importance of loving God and neighbour. He was gracious in his acknowledgment of Christian beliefs, and spoke very capably on the conflict between Israel and Palestine. The accompanying photo of him with Michael Champion is indicative of the rapport that was observed during their conversation, and captures the sense of respect and friendship that Council members hope to achieve in our engagement with those of different faiths. Indeed, we felt the harmony that we experienced throughout the evening — our third such gathering — was a sign that the “formula” of worship, table fellowship, and conversation, is achieving its purpose of drawing Jews and Christians together and facilitating the building of understanding, respectful relationships.

Dr Mary J. Marshall
Honorary Secretary, CCJWA Inc.