

Tax break a healthy shot in the arm

PETER KOHN

IN a major breakthrough for supporters of collaborative health research, donations to AUSiMED – the Australia-Israel Medical Research group – have been declared tax deductible by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

The ATO has designated AUSiMED as a health-promotion charity, placing it in the same category as the National Breast Cancer Foundation and the Diabetes Foundation.

Now with full deductible gift recipient (DGR1) status, AUSiMED can offer tax deductibility on all donations made to collaborative medical research it directly approves.

Ron Finkel, president of Hadassah Australia, which founded AUSiMED, sees the tax break as a significant incentive to Australian Friends groups of major Israeli research hospitals and universities working with Australian counterparts.

“We are truly stoked by this breakthrough. Major donors in the community will confirm that it is groundbreaking,” he told *The AJN*.

“Medical research is becoming increasingly collaborative and international, and the results show that

one plus one often equals three.”

The idea for operating AUSiMED as a DGR1 organisation occurred when Hadassah Australia studied the National Breast Cancer Foundation as a model for tax deductibility, Finkel said.

“The key thing to understand about AUSiMED is that it is organisationally agnostic. It is there to support quality medical-research collaborations from any Israeli institution and any Australian institution,” he said.

AUSiMED CEO Roz Kaldor-Aroni said the organisation is apparently only the third Jewish communal group to gain this status from the ATO, after the United Israel Appeal and the Jewish National Fund.

She said the tax reform would boost Australian funding for collaborative research in fields such as brain cancer, skin cancer, autism, Alzheimer’s, and familial dysautonomia, which affects the development and function of a child’s peripheral nervous system.

AUSiMED grew out of a 2004 visit to Jerusalem’s Hadassah Medical Centre by then premier of Victoria Steve Bracks, which resulted in the Victorian government deciding to fund a bilateral collaboration between The Alfred Hospital and Hadassah.



Legal eagles welcome new year

MELBOURNE Hebrew Congregation this week played host to the opening of the legal year, a ceremony which has become an annual tradition for the Jews of the city’s legal fraternity.

Rabbi Avrohom Jacks delivered a sermon to the wig-clad gathering of judges, barristers and solicitors. As part of the service, blessings were recited and the Torah was taken from the ark.

Pictured from left are Chief Judge Michael Rozenes, Simon Tisher, and Mark Moshinsky SC. Photo: Stephen Reynolds