



Y2i: Building

Jewish Lives,

Building Sydney's

Jewish Future

September 2023

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Executive Summary

Y2i (Youth 2 Israel) “inspires generations of young people with an understanding of their Jewish heritage, a love for Israel, and an enthusiasm to participate in their Jewish community.” Since its pilot year in 2014, Y2i has provided more than 2,000 students from New South Wales, the ACT, and Queensland with a \$5,000 discretionary subsidy toward the cost of participating in a Year 10 Israel program.

Y2i’s reach has been especially notable: in 2022, 92% of students in Jewish schools and 36% of Jewish students in non-Jewish schools—a total of 61% of all eligible young Jews—participated in a five-week or longer Year 10 Israel program.

While a rich set of anecdotal evidence has long testified to the program’s impact on individual participants, these impacts have never been systematically studied. Y2i’s leadership commissioned Rosov Consulting to carry out such a study. This exploration involved two parallel inquiries. One study focused on program alumni, specifically participants in Y2i’s 2015 and 2016 cohorts, 49% of whom responded to a survey exploring their attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors related to Jewish life and Israel. A second study looked at Y2i’s short-term impact, examining changes set in motion for participants in the summer 2022 cohort; 84% of these participants completed a survey both before and after their program.

Survey data makes clear that Y2i is a life-enhancing experience for its participants, and that its impact seems to last, at least for the six or seven years covered by this study.

For the participants in the BJE program—those who come from non-Jewish schools—this experience recenters their Jewish lives. Before the 2022 program, just 14% of them reported that most or all of their closest friends are Jewish. The program enables them to discover Jewish community and Jewish practices. More than three-quarters of BJE alumni who are actively involved in Jewish life today attribute their involvement to their time on a Y2i supported program. When it comes to their connection to and understanding of Israel, Y2i supported programs helps BJE participants become familiar with Israel and its story in quick time. Very large proportions of BJE alumni (between 85% and 100%) who reported high levels of connection to and understanding of Israel, attribute their current connection to and knowledge about Israel to their Y2i supported experience.

For participants from Jewish schools, Y2i supported programs help the many years of Jewish-school education click into place. For these young people, Jewish life gains additional positive meaning, and Jewish friendships formed in school now acquire much more value. Somewhat familiar with Israel before they start the program, Jewish-school participants come to more deeply understand and appreciate Israel. The program energizes their connection to the country, fuels their relationship to it, empowers them to advocate for it, and inspires them to return at regular intervals for even more intensive experiences. More than half of Jewish school alumni have returned to Israel twice or more since the end of their program, with half of these returnees having participated in a trip or program that lasted at least one month.

No other Jewish community in the world enables so many of its young people to participate in such a life-enhancing experience. Few match even half the proportions seen in NSW. The program adds substantially to the Jewish lives of its participants and their connection to Israel. Thanks to its remarkable scale, it surely builds the future of Jewish life in NSW.

Background

Y2i (Youth 2 Israel) “inspires generations of young people with an understanding of their Jewish heritage, a love for Israel, and an enthusiasm to participate in their Jewish community.” Since its pilot year in 2014, Y2i has provided more than 2,000 students from New South Wales, the ACT, and Queensland with a \$5,000 discretionary subsidy toward the cost of participating in a Year 10 Israel program.

Until now, Y2i’s success has been exhibited by its enrolment of growing numbers of participants. Y2i’s summer 2022 cohort consisted of 465 participants, including 342 Jewish school students (92% of their year group) and 123 participants from non-Jewish schools (participating through BJE), estimated to represent 36% of Jewish students in non-Jewish schools in their age cohort.¹ While a rich set of anecdotal evidence has long testified to the program’s impact on individual participants, these impacts have never been systematically studied. As it closes in on a decade of operation, Y2i’s leadership commissioned Rosov Consulting to carry out such a study.

Methodology

This exploration involved two parallel studies of Y2i’s impact. One study focused on program alumni, specifically participants in Y2i’s 2015 and 2016 cohorts, seeking to identify the longer-term contribution of a Year 10 Israel experience to their attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors related to Jewish life and Israel. The second study looked at Y2i’s short-term impact, examining changes set in motion for participants in the summer 2022 cohort.²

Alumni Study

Our team developed a survey designed to solicit reflections from Y2i alumni about their Jewish practices and involvements today, their connection to Israel, and how they think of themselves as Jews. Survey questions were formulated to enable comparison with studies of other Israel experience programs. The survey was distributed during April and May 2023 to 502 alumni of the 2015 and 2016 cohorts. We received 246 responses, a 49% response rate. The respondents included 85 alumni from 2015 and 161 alumni from 2016. The respondent sample was made up of 49 BJE alumni and 197 Jewish-school alumni. In addition, we also conducted 30–45-minute interviews with 20 survey respondents who expressed a willingness to talk about their lives today with the goal of seeing how alumni described in their own words the program’s Jewish and Israel-related outcomes. We include quotes from these interviews below.

Pre/Post Study

While the alumni study provides a strong sense of the longer-term influence of a Y2i supported experience, it lacks a clear baseline of the Jewish engagements and Israel connections with which participants came to a Y2i supported program. This is the gap filled by the pre/post study. In this instance, we developed and distributed a pre-program survey to all participants in the 2022 cohort shortly before they left for Israel. Then, approximately one month after they returned, participants were

¹ While Y2i supported programs are usually geared for Year 10 students, the summer 2022 cohort included several Year 11 students whose program had been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

² In addition, this study focused on participants in Y2i’s Yalla program, a one-off opportunity offered to high school graduates whose Y2i supported program had been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Given the unique nature of the Yalla program only operating three times (January 2023, July 2023 and January 2024) this report does not delve into the findings observed among Yalla participants, and instead focuses solely on alumni from the 2015 and 2016 cohorts and participants in the 2022 cohort.

asked to answer many of the same questions as part of a post-program survey. In this way, we did not have to rely on what respondents perceived to have been the impact of the experience; rather, we could track the extent to which their views actually changed over time. Overall, 96% of participants responded to the pre-program survey; 89% responded to the post-program survey; and 84% responded to both surveys, constituting 391 “matched pairs” of responses, the data set at the centre of our analysis. These 391 pairs include 292 students in Jewish schools and 99 students from non-Jewish schools.³

As with the alumni study, we also conducted 30–45-minute interviews with 10 survey respondents who were willing to talk about their experience on the program and its impact on them. We also include quotes from these interviews below.

³ BJE participants are underrepresented in the “matched pair” analysis sample due to there being notably fewer BJE post-trip responses (n=109) than pre-trip responses (n=145). While BJE participants constituted approximately a third of Y2i’s 2022 cohort, they make up only a quarter of the matched pair sample. As such, the matched pair sample tends to be more Jewishly engaged than the fuller pool of Y2i participants (having prior Jewish educational experiences for a longer amount of time, having visited Israel more frequently, coming from homes where everyone is Jewish [vs interfaith families], and having more close Jewish friends). As such, when interpreting the results of the matched pair sample and extrapolating them to the fuller 2022 cohort, the findings from BJE respondents would have a higher weight than the findings from their peers who attend Jewish schools.

Participants' Profiles

At the time they responded to the survey, the 2015–2016 alumni were 22 or 23 years old. Nearly all of them (89%) were working in some capacity; 28% were married or partnered; and 18% did not live in Sydney, with 7% living abroad. The respondent pools for both the alumni and pre/post surveys were fairly balanced with regard to gender.

In terms of their Jewish profiles, the alumni and 2022 cohort generally resembled one another, for example, in whether they had ever attended a Jewish school (between 80% and 90%), whether all or most of their friends were Jewish (about 70%), and whether they were raised by at least one person who is not Jewish (close to 10%).

More striking are the differences in the 2022 cohort between participants in the BJE program and those who come from Jewish schools. The data in Exhibit 1 highlight the extent to which the BJE program, the Y2i supported option for students who attend non-Jewish schools, attracts a substantially different population from those who attend Jewish schools (referred to as “JS” in the Exhibit). It is noteworthy how few participants in the BJE group (just 14%) reported having close Jewish friends. Spending intense time with so many other Jewish young people is evidently a major dimension of a Y2i supported experience, besides what they encounter in Israel. A BJE alum and a recent returnee confirmed all these themes:

“I made a lot of Jewish friends. What was interesting about BJE is that it was different students from non-Jewish schools traveling on a trip together, so we got to make a lot of Jewish friends and I’m still connected to some of them today. I had no Jewish friends at school.” —2016 BJE Alum

“I have a lot more connections in the Jewish community now, I have friends from different schools and shuls... I feel more connected to Israel and to Judaism through the people I know. I realized that now I have people who are like me.” —2022 BJE Participant

Exhibit 1: Jewish Profile Data of 2022 Y2i Participants

	BJE (n=99)	JS (n=292)
Attended a Jewish school for at least one year	38%	100%
Previously visited Israel	40%	64%
Raised in interfaith home	20%	12%
Most or all of closest friends are Jewish	14%	92%
Participated in Jewish activities outside of school at least once a month in the year preceding Y2i	43%	58%
Often or very often celebrate Shabbat with family or friends in the year preceding Y2i	66%	87%

Program Outcomes

Both the alumni and pre/post studies paid close attention to two broad sets of outcomes: the participants' understanding of and relationship to Israel; and various dimensions of the participants' Jewish lives (their Jewish communal involvements, their Jewish practices and activities, and their self-identities as young Jewish people). We report on each of the themes below, synthesizing data from the two studies so that they can serve as useful supplements to one another.

Connection to and Knowledge About Israel

Y2i alumni express high levels of attachment to and understanding of Israel. Substantial proportions of the alumni attribute these attachments and understandings to their Y2i supported experience. And, indeed, pre/post data underline the extent to which these outcomes are associated with time spent in the program. In these respects, the Jewish school population and non-Jewish school population do not really differ from one another, a point confirmed by interviewees, as the following examples indicate.

"I basically knew nothing about Israel, so being there for six weeks and learning about everything was really good. We got to meet different sides of Israel—different types of people, a lot of places. Probably everything I know and think about Israel today was shaped on the trip." —2016 BJE Alum

"I was able to experience Israel first-hand, in a new perspective that is not related to my family. It made me appreciate Israel and Zionism and understand that they are part of me." —2016 Jewish School Alum

"Since I had never been to Israel, while speaking about Israel I always struggled to really understand what we are talking about, and I think that going on the trip created a connection to the land." —2022 BJE Participant

To start with alumni, as Exhibit 2 shows, former Jewish school students express a strong emotional attachment to Israel, with statements about caring for Israel and being connected to it prompting agreement from the highest numbers of alumni. Slightly fewer members of this population indicated that they feel secure about their knowledge of Israel but between half and two-thirds of them nevertheless express confidence about what they know. Generally, the responses from BJE alumni are less positive (consistently about 20% below those of the Jewish school respondents), but they still express high levels of connection and modest levels of confidence about what they know.

Exhibit 2: Percentage of Alumni with High Levels of Connection to and Understanding of Israel

	BJE (n=49)	JS (n=197)
Caring about Israel is a very important part of who I am as a Jew	67%	85%
I feel a strong sense of connection to Israel	74%	82%
I know about Israeli culture (music, food, art, etc.)	57%	79%
I feel a sense of responsibility to Israel and Israelis	59%	73%
I know about the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, religions, and languages represented in Israel	55%	68%
I understand the role that Israel's geography (borders, land, etc.) plays in Israeli current events	49%	67%
I am aware of differences in Jewish life between Australia and Israel	45%	67%
I am aware of similarities in Jewish life between Australia and Israel	39%	62%
I know about day-to-day life in Israel	45%	56%

Note: Attitudinal items were phrased as, "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements," with a scale of 1 to 7, where 1="strongly disagree," 2="moderately disagree," 3="slightly disagree," 4="neither agree nor disagree," 5="slightly agree," 6="moderately agree," and 7="strongly agree."

Knowledge/awareness items were phrased as "On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1="nothing" and 7="a lot," how much do you know about the following?" "High" scores are defined as 5, 6, or 7 on a scale from 1 to 7 (top three scale points).

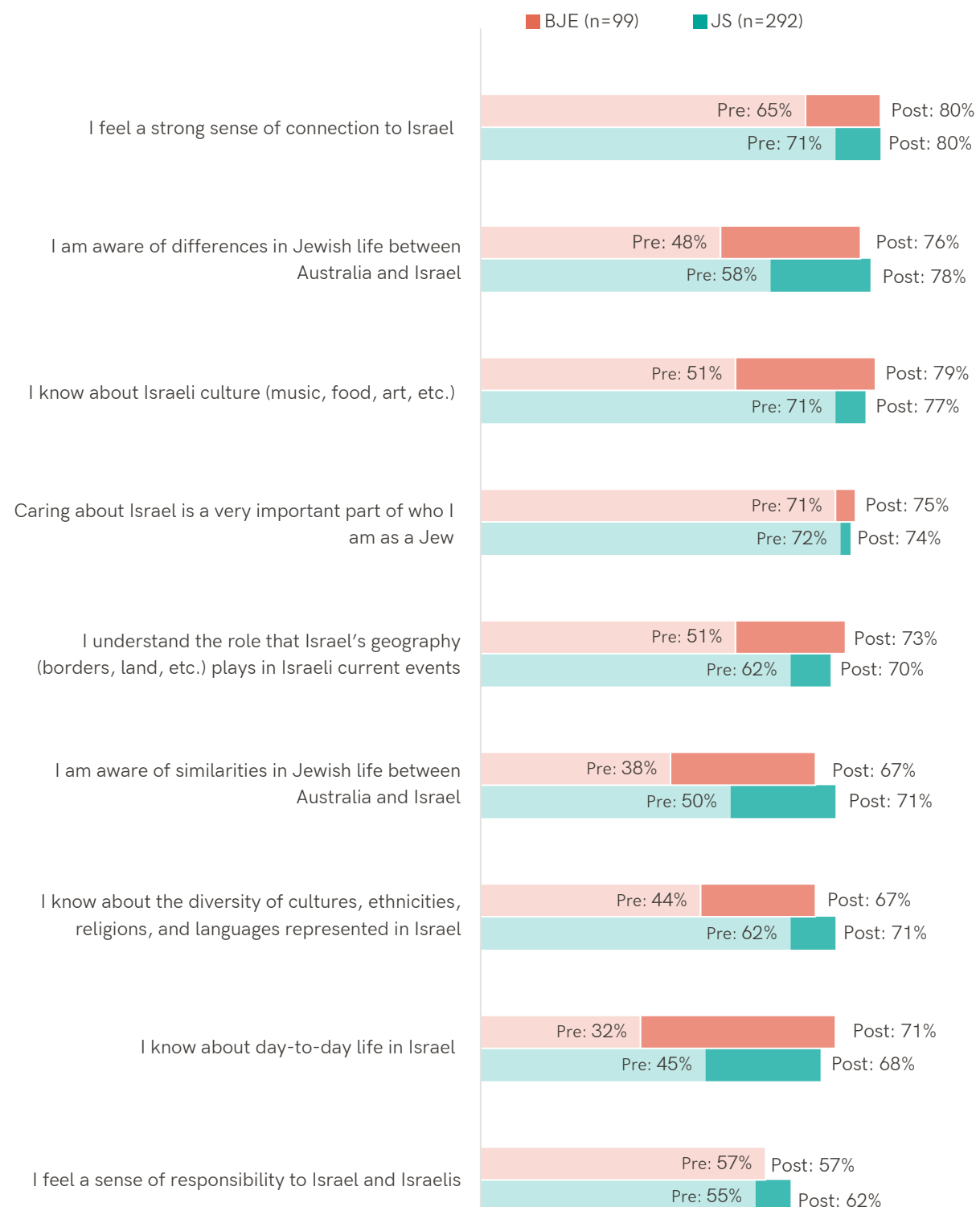
All of the differences between BJE and JS alumni were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), based on comparing the mean scores.

Very large proportions of alumni (between 85% and 100%) who reported high levels of connection to and understanding of Israel attribute their current connection to and knowledge about Israel to their Y2i supported experience.

The pre/post survey explored many of the same dimensions, and provided an opportunity to track the extent to which such changes occurred over the course of the program, albeit for a different cohort.

Exhibit 3 shows that while all participants are positively impacted by the program, change is greatest among participants in the BJE program, who in most instances begin from a lower starting point. In many respects, they catch up with their peers at Jewish school by the program's end, and even overtake them in a couple of cases.

Exhibit 3: Percentage of 2022 Participants with High Levels of Connection to and Understanding of Israel, Pre-Trip and Post-Trip



Note: Attitudinal items were phrased as, "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements," with a scale of 1 to 7, where 1="strongly disagree," 2="moderately disagree," 3="slightly disagree," 4="neither agree nor disagree," 5="slightly agree," 6="moderately agree," and 7="strongly agree."

Knowledge/awareness items were phrased as "On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1="nothing" and 7="a lot," how much do you know about the following?"

"High" scores are defined as 5, 6, or 7 on a scale from 1 to 7 (top three scale points).

In interviews, recent returnees help explain how such outcomes are produced through formative first-hand experiences that often undermine preconceived assumptions about what life is like in Israel:

"In my opinion, the best way to do it was when we actually got the opportunity to see what routine life in Israel looks like. For example, when we visited cities that were close to the Gaza border, we had a drill of running to a bomb shelter in less than 15 seconds. It was a really powerful moment to feel like the people who live there and to understand what their lives look like." —2022 Jewish School

Participant

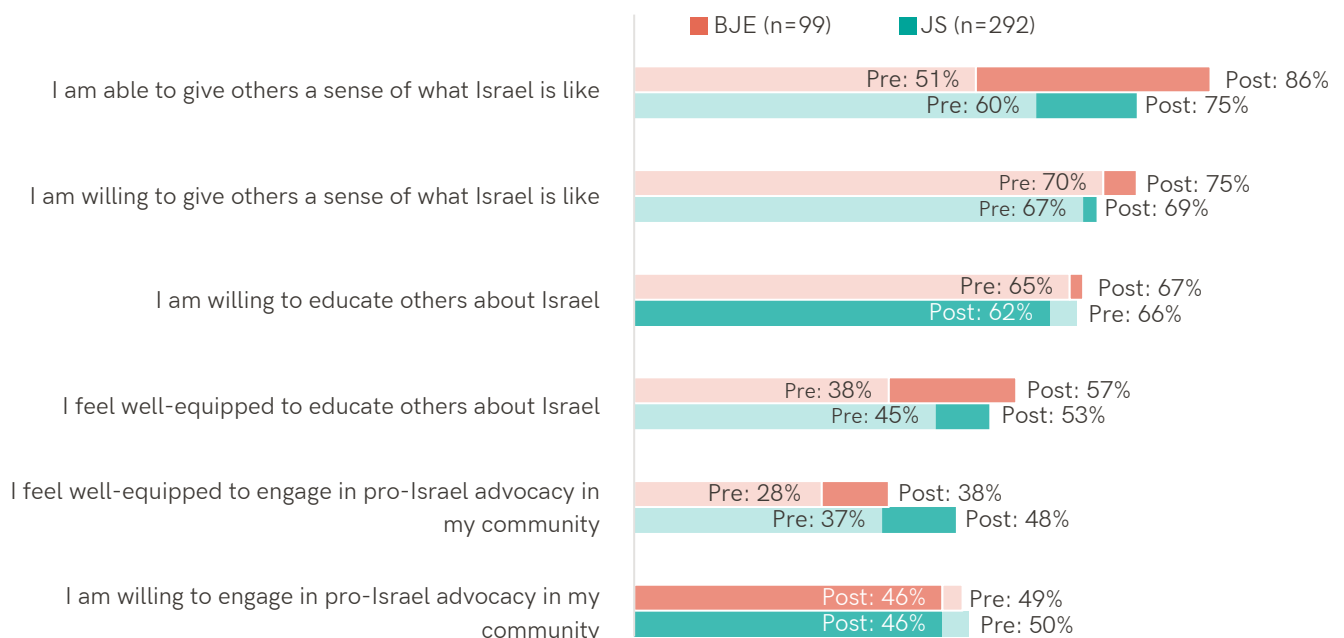
"A lot of the questions I had going into it were like, 'What's actually happening in Israel at the moment?' and 'How can we be pro-Israel, but also be able to understand the other side of the argument?' I really liked those discussions. You hear from the media that this is a war zone, and you hear from the Jewish community that it's a perfect place, so you don't know what's actually going on. Having been there and having the opportunity to see it makes you understand why it's so complex, but also understand why it's so important and why we need it. I was very surprised, I expected to be told at the hotel exactly where the bomb shelter was as soon as we got there. In practice, there were some hotels where if we were asked where the bomb shelter was, we wouldn't even know." —2022

BJE Participant

Advocating for Israel

Pre/post data indicate that participants return from Israel feeling better equipped to tell others about Israel and to advocate on its behalf, with BJE participants feeling especially empowered. As Exhibit 4 shows, this does not mean that are more willing to do so, at least when they are still in high school.

Exhibit 4: Percentage of 2022 Participants with a Strong Interest and Ability to Advocate for Israel, Pre-Trip And Post-Trip



Note: For each of these items, participants were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1="not at all" to 7="very much." "High" scores are defined as 5, 6, or 7 on a scale from 1 to 7 (top three scale points).

Perhaps a willingness to advocate for Israel is something that people acquire over time or is a consequence of increasing adult confidence, because at least half of the alumni survey respondents

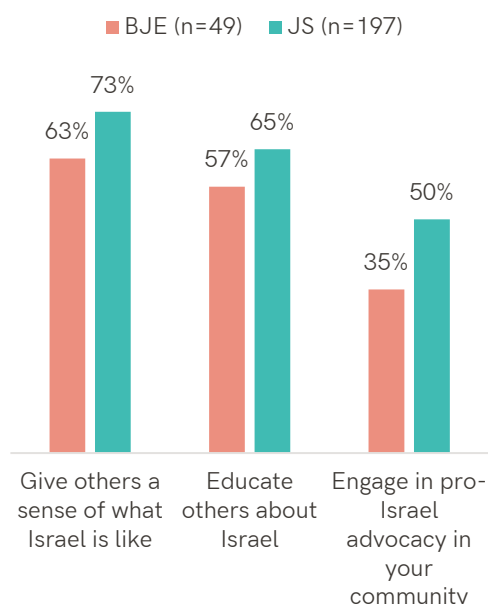
indicate that their Y2i supported experience contributed to their willingness and ability to educate and advocate for Israel, as seen in Exhibit 5. Alumni interviewees offered several examples of how the program inspired them to speak up and speak out:

"I became very interested in Israel right after my Y2i program.... Already a week after I came back from the program, I started writing articles, specifically while there were terror attacks. I continued doing that for several years." —2016 Jewish School Alum

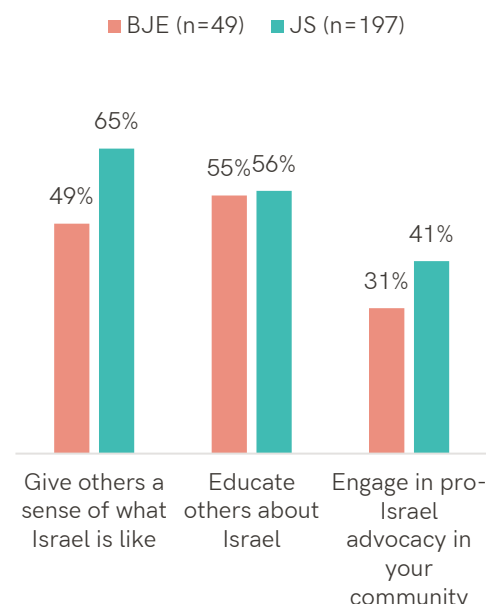
"I joined the Jewish society on campus [to combat] the anti-Israel [sentiment] that I felt in university, and I wanted to advocate for Israel and build a community around it. Y2i was certainly a springboard for my activity." —2016 Jewish School Alum

Exhibit 5: Percentage of Alumni who Report a Strong Interest and Ability to Advocate for Israel, as a Result of their Y2i Supported Program

a) As a result of your Y10 Israel program, to what extent are you willing to...



b) As a result of your Y10 Israel program, how well-equipped are you to...



Note: For each of these items, participants were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1="not at all" to 7="very much." "High" scores are defined as 5, 6, or 7 on a scale from 1 to 7 (top three scale points).

Returning to Israel

Y2i participants express a strong desire to return to Israel following their trip. The overwhelming majority of post-program survey respondents—84%—reported that they hope to visit Israel in the future.

"I'm thinking of going on a gap year, but it is very expensive. If I could get enough money I'd certainly go. Before Y2i I wasn't considering a gap year, my plan was to go straight to university." —2022 BJE Participant

Generally speaking, when returnees from Israel experiences express an appetite to return to Israel, these intentions are often assumed to indicate a "halo effect" that diminishes with time. Alumni data suggest, however, that participants may not be engaging in wishful thinking. Three-quarters of all alumni have in fact returned to Israel at least once during the six of seven years since they completed the program, despite the long periods when Australia was locked down. In particular, more than half of Jewish school

alumni and about a quarter of BJE alumni have returned to Israel twice or more, most commonly on vacation and/or to visit family or friends; half of these returnees have participated in a trip or program that lasted at least one month.

Jewish Involvement

"I didn't have Jewish education in my school, so when I went to Israel and saw that the weekend is actually Shabbat, I thought it was really beautiful. It made me realize that Judaism can be integrated into our daily lives and society, and I really appreciated that. It heightened my awareness of Jewish aspects that I hadn't been exposed to before in Australia." —2016 BJE Alum

Alumni indicate that today they are somewhat involved in Jewish life. As seen in Exhibit 7, the activities in which the greatest numbers of them participate often or very often (celebrating Shabbat, participating in conversations about Judaism) tend to take place with family and friends rather than within communal organisations.⁴

High proportions of alumni (typically three-quarters or more) perceive their Y2i supported experience to have increased their involvement in some way in almost all these activities. Different populations seem to have been impacted in different ways, and it is not always clear why. Thus, activities in which greater percentages of BJE alumni attribute their involvement to Y2i are indicated with an asterisk (*), while those where greater percentages of Jewish school alumni attribute their involvement to Y2i are indicated with a hash (#).

Exhibit 7: Alumni Involvement in Jewish Life

	Percentage of alumni who participate "often" or "very often"		Percentage of alumni who report that Y2i increased their involvement in each respective activity in at least "some" way	
	BJE (n=49)	JS (n=197)	BJE	JS
* Celebrating Shabbat with family or friends	55%	89%	76%	65%
* Participating in conversations about Judaism with family or friend:	53%	69%	92%	86%
Following news about Israel	57%	67%	81%	86%
# Participating in conversations about Israel with family or friends	43%	67%	79%	88%
Volunteering for local Jewish organisations (e.g., CSG, charities, youth movements, etc.)	27%	47%	84%	81%
# Spending time learning about Jewish life and culture	22%	40%	80%	87%
* Spending time learning about Israeli life and culture	18%	37%	100%	86%
# Attending your local synagogue for services and other activities	14%	34%	67%	90%
# Supporting Israeli causes or organisations in some way (e.g., volunteering, donating, etc.)	16%	31%	77%	90%
Taking a leadership role in Jewish life in your community	12%	30%	84%	84%
Participating in AUJS (Australian Jewish Union of Students) activities	8%	7%	75%	75%

Note: Regarding the right-hand side of the Exhibit, the survey asked alumni to what extent their Y10 Israel program increased their involvement in these activities. Answer options included "not at all" (1), "a little" (2), "somewhat" (3), "a lot" (4), and "very much" (5). The percentages of alumni who chose "somewhat," "a lot," or "very much" (3, 4, or 5) are displayed here. These questions/items were only displayed to alumni who had indicated in a previous question that engage in these activities "often" or "very often."

⁴ Additional data about alumni and the extent to which their Year 10 Israel program contributed to various aspects of their lives can be found in the Appendix.

In regard to the 2022 participants, we plan to track changes in their Jewish involvement when we survey them for a third time about 10 months after the end of their program, just before the end of the academic year. In the meantime, we can compare their *planned* involvements at the end of the program with their *actual* involvement prior to the program. As seen in Exhibit 7, after their return, more students are interested in being involved than were actually involved before the start of the program. This shift is especially marked among participants in the BJE program across all areas of activity. Evidently, their appetites have been whetted by their Y2i supported experience, and it will be interesting to see if the intentions they express are translated into actions.

Exhibit 7: Pre-Trip Involvement in Jewish/Israel Activities, and Desire to Participate Post-Trip (2022 Cohort)

	BJE (n=99)		JS (n=292)	
	Previous involvement	Desired involvement	Previous involvement	Desired involvement
Jewish community events	45%	66%	66%	60%
Jewish cultural events	20%	52%	30%	42%
Israel organisation or advocacy events	14%	46%	24%	39%
Jewish learning programs	33%	48%	41%	36%
Israel cultural events	15%	41%	23%	37%

For the moment, in the recent aftermath of their trip, some of the interviewees seem especially motivated to stay involved.

"Before Y2i, lots of my friends would never go to shul, but now that we are back, they all come every week, even if they don't keep Shabbat." —2022 Jewish School Participant

"On Y2i I got to know a lot of Jewish friends and realized that I had been missing out on many Jewish experiences so I decided to move [to a Jewish school]." —2022 BJE Participant

While exploring their plans to participate in the Jewish activities, we specifically asked the 2022 participants in both the pre-program and post-program surveys about their plans to be involved in aspects of Jewish life at university if and when they get there. We didn't observe any change among Jewish school students, about half of whom expressed that they planned to be "involved in Jewish life on campus" and "be involved with Israel on campus." We did find a substantial increase among participants in the BJE program: after the program, 60% expressed an interest in being "involved in Jewish life on campus" (up from 41% in the pre-program survey) and 44% expressed an interest in being "involved with Israel on campus" (up from 37% in the pre-program survey).

Jewish Identity and Community

"I come from a traditional but quite secular family, and I think that the Year 10 trip helped me build my Jewish connection. Being surrounded by such inspirational people and hearing speakers allowed me to have a deeper appreciation for our Jewish traditions and wanting to be a part of that as much as possible.... I joined Bnei Akiva once I came back from my Y2i program, because of the friends I made on the program and the madrichim that I had, which I had a great connection to." —2016 Jewish School Alum

A set of survey questions explored the Jewish sense of self among both the alumni and the high school participants. Among the alumni, former Jewish school students convey that they are quite strongly anchored in Jewish terms: they're strongly connected to their Jewish heritage, they feel a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish community, and many know how to get involved in Jewish life, as shown in Exhibit 8. On most of these measures, former BJE participants respond much less positively. The respondents from both groups (but more commonly the students from Jewish schools) also tend to perceive Y2i to have strengthened the ways in which they think about these matters. The items indicated with a hash (#) are the ones where many more Jewish-school alumni felt that Y2i had contributed to the strength of their response.

Exhibit 8: Alumni's Connection to and Knowledge about Jewish Identity and Community

	Percentage of alumni with high levels of connection to and knowledge about Jewish identity and community		Percentage of alumni who report that Y2i increased their connection to and knowledge about Jewish identity and community in at least "some" way	
	BJE (n=49)	JS (n=197)	BJE	JS
# I feel a strong sense of connection to my Jewish heritage	80%	90%	87%	93%
# I feel a strong sense of belonging to the Sydney Jewish community	43%	81%	67%	83%
# I am comfortable wearing Jewish imagery (e.g., Star of David necklace, clothing with Hebrew writing, kippah, etc.)	67%	74%	64%	73%
I know about different ways of being Jewish (including different expressions or practices of Judaism)	65%	70%	81%	84%
# I am aware of the institutions and organisations that make up my local Jewish community	49%	70%	71%	81%
I know how to get involved in Jewish communal organisations	47%	70%	78%	75%

Note: Attitudinal items were phrased as "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements," with a scale of 1 to 7, where 1="strongly disagree," 2="moderately disagree," 3="slightly disagree," 4="neither agree nor disagree," 5="slightly agree," 6="moderately agree," and 7="strongly agree."

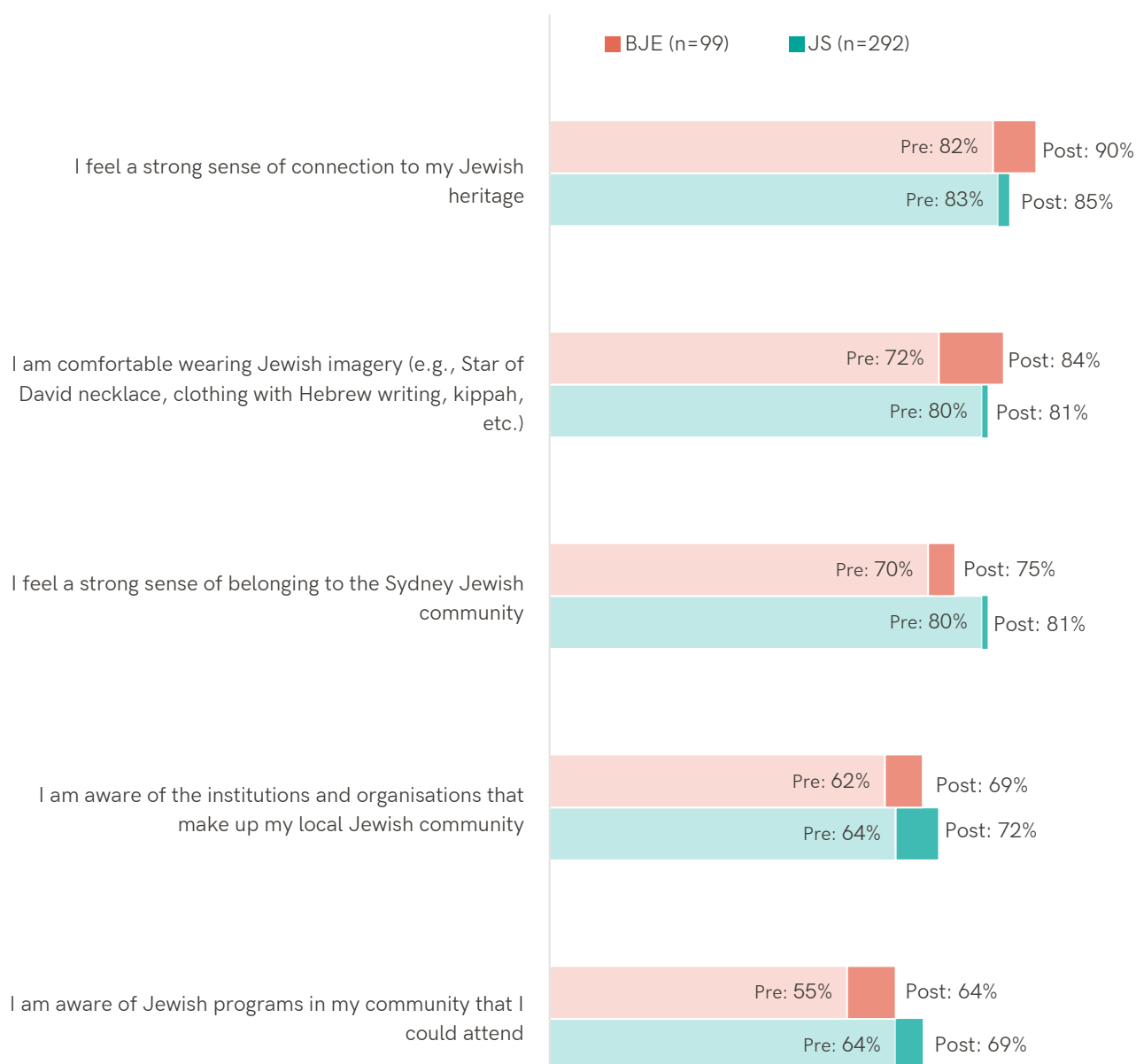
Knowledge/awareness items were phrased as "On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1="nothing" and 7="a lot," how much do you know about the following?"

"High" scores are defined as 5, 6, or 7 on a scale from 1 to 7 (top three scale points).

Regarding the right-hand side of the Exhibit, the survey asked alumni to what extent their Y10 Israel program increased their connection to or knowledge about Jewish identity and community across different dimensions. Answer options included "not at all" (1), "a little" (2), "somewhat" (3), "a lot" (4), and "very much" (5). The percentages of alumni who chose "somewhat," "a lot," or "very much" (3, 4, or 5) are displayed here. Questions/items were only displayed to alumni who had indicated earlier in the survey that they have "high" levels of Jewish attitudes, knowledge, and awareness (i.e., alumni who had selected 5, 6, or 7 [top three scale points] on the previous question).

As seen in Exhibit 9, the pre-program responses of the high school students (whichever their program) indicated that they came to their Y2i supported experience with quite a positive assessment of their Jewish selves: at least 70% expressed a sense of comfort and belonging, and more than half reported they knew about their local Jewish communities and opportunities to be involved. By the end of the program, the BJE participants had grown along almost all of these measures; the Jewish school students were essentially stable. The key point is that at the end of the program, the great majority of both populations responded positively to these question items.

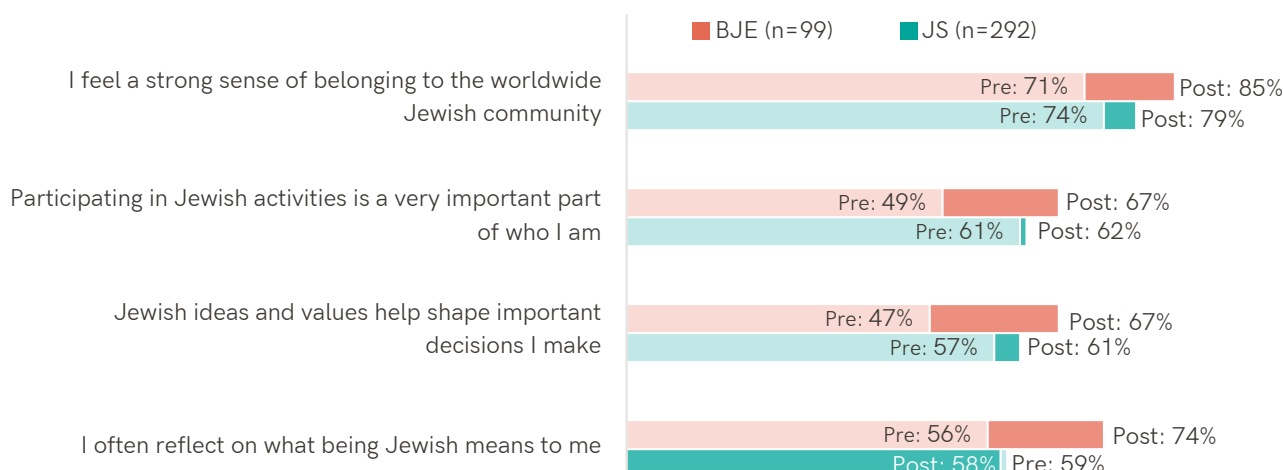
Exhibit 9: Percentage of 2022 Participants with High Levels of Connection to and Knowledge about Jewish Identity and Community, Pre-Trip and Post-Trip



Note: Attitudinal items were phrased as, "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements," with a scale of 1 to 7, where 1="strongly disagree," 2="moderately disagree," 3="slightly disagree," 4="neither agree nor disagree," 5="slightly agree," 6="moderately agree," and 7="strongly agree."
 Knowledge/awareness items were phrased as "On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1="nothing" and 7="a lot," how much do you know about the following?"
 "High" scores are defined as 5, 6, or 7 on a scale from 1 to 7 (top three scale points).

The pre/post study included some additional probes of the Jewish identities of the participants, in particular a series of questions that get to the heart of how the participants think of themselves as Jews. The data in Exhibit 10 underline the extent to which BJE participants grew in these respects. Before the start of the program, their Jewishness was much less salient in how they acted compared to the Jewish-school students. Their responses at the end of the program testify to a substantial change: in fact, many of these matters now seem more important to them than they do to their Jewish-school peers. The program seems to have recentered them in Jewish terms.

Exhibit 10: Areas of Marked Growth in BJE Participants' Jewish Identity (Percentage of 2022 Participants Who Report a Strong Sense of Jewish Identity, Pre-Trip and Post-Trip)



Note: Attitudinal items were phrased as, "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements," with a scale of 1 to 7, where 1="strongly disagree," 2="moderately disagree," 3="slightly disagree," 4="neither agree nor disagree," 5="slightly agree," 6="moderately agree," and 7="strongly agree."

"High" scores are defined as 5, 6, or 7 on a scale from 1 to 7 (top three scale points).

Jewish Identity and Continuity

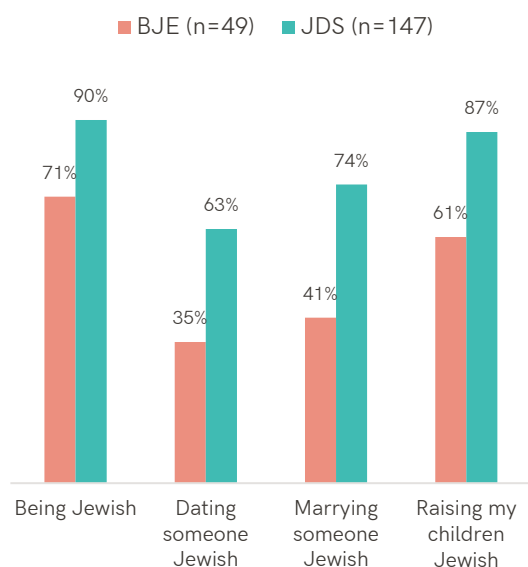
"After Y2i, I tried to keep Shabbat for a year; it didn't last for so long, but I still like to go to shul on Friday night.... I really love having Shabbat lunches with my friends. The trip helped me realize that it's possible to do all those things. Being there and seeing how things are in Israel made me want to give it a try. Y2i gave me lots of inspiration....Y2i made me realize that I want to raise my children as Jews." —2015 Jewish School Alum

A final set of survey questions provides an opportunity to explore participants' attitudes in relation to behaviors concerned with dimensions of Jewish continuity: young people's interest in dating and marrying Jewish people, and in building a Jewish family. Among alumni, there are consistent differences between those who attended Jewish schools and those who attended non-Jewish schools; these matters are all more important to the alumni of Jewish schools (Exhibit 11a). Jewish school alumni also responded more positively than did day-school students in the 2022 cohort at the end of their program. By contrast, alumni of non-Jewish schools tended to respond less positively than did the students at non-Jewish high schools in the 2022 cohort at the end of their program. These divergent patterns are difficult to explain, although they do help dismiss concerns about sample bias among the alumni respondents (in other words, that the alumni who responded to the survey were perhaps more engaged in Jewish terms than those who did not respond to the survey).

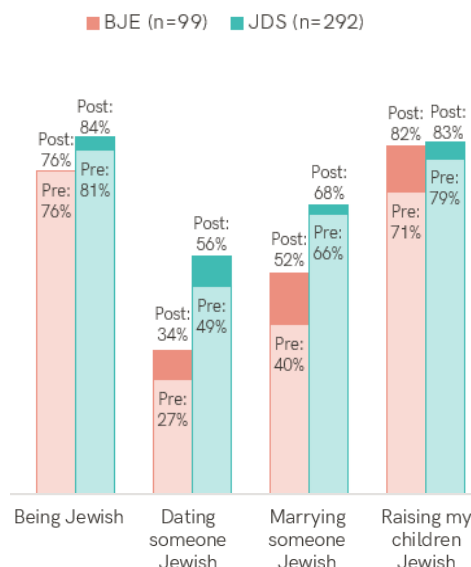
What is unquestionable is the positive shift in the responses of the participants in the pre/post study: higher proportions of participants in both day-school and BJE programs indicate that these matters were important to them by the program's end (Exhibit 11b). This shift is consistent with alumni's self-report when asked what had contributed to their views about the importance of marrying someone Jewish: 30% of BJE and 36% of Jewish-school alumni identified the contribution of their Y2i supported program as being particularly notable in this regard.

Exhibit 11: Importance of Jewish Identity and Continuity Among Y2i Alumni and 2022 Participants

a) Percentage of alumni who report a high level of importance (top three scale points)



b) Percentage of 2022 participants who report a high level of importance (top three scale points), pre-trip and post-trip



Note: The survey questions were phrased as: "On a scale from 1 to 7 where 1="not important" and 7="extremely important," how important is each of the following to you personally in your life?"

"High" scores are defined as 5, 6, or 7 on a scale from 1 to 7 (top three scale points).

Conclusion

Y2i is a life-enhancing experience for its participants, and its impact seems to last, at least for the six or seven years covered by this study. For the participants in the BJE program—those who come from non-Jewish schools and who typically have limited Jewish social circles before they enroll in the program—this experience recenters their Jewish lives; they discover Jewish community and Jewish practices, and in quick time they become familiar with Israel and its story. For participants from Jewish schools, the program helps the many years of Jewish-school education click into place. Jewish life gains additional positive meaning, and Jewish friendships formed in school now acquire much more value. Somewhat familiar with Israel before they start the program, Jewish-school participants come to much better understand and appreciate Israel. The program energizes their connection to the country, fuels their relationship to it, empowers them to advocate for it, and inspires them to return at regular intervals for even more intensive experiences.

No other Jewish community in the world enables so many of its young people to participate in such a life-enhancing experience.⁵ Few match even half the proportions seen in Sydney. The program adds substantially to the Jewish lives of its participants and their connection to Israel. Thanks to its remarkable scale, it surely builds the future of Jewish life in Sydney.

⁵ By contrast, 45% of American Jews between the ages of 18 and 29 have visited Israel. In Latin America, as geographically distant from Israel as Australia, 52% of students in Jewish schools have visited Israel by the time they graduated. Only in the UK do the numbers come close to matching those in Australia, with close to three-quarters of students in mainstream Jewish schools participating in a two-week school program in Israel.

Appendix: Additional Alumni Data

Exhibit 12: Y2i's contribution to alumni involvement with Jewish life and Israel

Percentage of alumni who indicated that participating in a Y10 Israel program increased their involvement in the following activities in at least "some" way

	BJE	JS
Supporting Israeli causes or organisations in some way (e.g., volunteering, donating, etc.)	77%	90%
Participating in conversations about Judaism with family or friends	92%	86%
Attending your local synagogue for services and other activities	67%	90%
Spending time learning about Jewish life and culture	80%	87%
Participating in conversations about Israel with family or friends	79%	88%
Spending time learning about Israeli culture	100%	86%
Following news about Israel	81%	86%
Taking a leadership role in Jewish life in your community	84%	84%
Volunteering for local Jewish organisations (e.g., CSG, charities, youth movements, etc.)	84%	81%
Participating in AUJS (Australian Union of Jewish Students) activities	75%	75%
Celebrating Shabbat with family or friends	76%	65%
Supporting Israeli causes or organisations in some way (e.g., volunteering, donating, etc.)	77%	90%

Note: The survey asked alumni to what extent their Y10 Israel program increased their involvement in these activities. Answer options included "not at all" (1), "a little" (2), "somewhat" (3), "a lot" (4), and "very much" (5). The percentages of alumni who chose "somewhat," "a lot," or "very much" (3, 4, or 5) are displayed here.

The question/items were only displayed to alumni who had indicated that they engage in these activities "often" or "very often". Due to the relatively small sample size for the individual items, we are unable to test for statistically significant differences between the BJE and JS alumni. However, we have shaded in purple areas where a greater proportion of BJE alumni note Y2i's contribution compared to JS alumni.

Exhibit 13: Y2i's contribution to alumni's Jewish attitudes, knowledge, and awareness

Percentage of alumni who reported that their Y10 Israel program strengthened/increased their Jewish attitudes, knowledge, or awareness in at least "some" way

	BJE	JS
Sense of connection to your Jewish heritage	87%	93%
Knowledge of different ways of being Jewish (including different expressions or practices of Judaism)	81%	84%
Sense of belonging to the Sydney Jewish community	67%	83%
Awareness of the institutions and organisations that make up your local Jewish community	71%	81%
Knowledge of how to get involved in Jewish communal organisations	78%	75%
Comfort level with wearing Jewish imagery (e.g., Star of David necklace, clothing with Hebrew writing, kippah, etc.)	64%	73%

Note: The survey asked alumni to what extent their Year 10 Israel program strengthened or increased their Jewish attitudes, knowledge, or awareness in different ways. Answer options included "not at all" (1), "a little" (2), "somewhat" (3), "a lot" (4), and "very much" (5). The percentages of alumni who chose "somewhat," "a lot," or "very much" (3, 4, or 5) are displayed here. Questions/items were only displayed to alumni who had indicated earlier in the survey that they have "high" levels of Jewish attitudes, knowledge, and awareness.

For the attitudinal items, there were statistically significant differences between BJE and JS alumni, based on an analysis of the mean scores ($p < 0.05$). These items are shaded in purple. For the knowledge and awareness items, the relatively small sample

size for each of the individual items made it unfeasible to test for statistically significant differences between BJE and JS alumni.

Exhibit 14: Y2i's contribution to alumni's attachment to and understanding of Israel

Percentage of alumni who reported that their Y10 Israel program strengthened/increased their attachment to or understanding of Israel in at least "some" way

	BJE	JS
Sense of connection to Israel	97%	93%
Knowledge of Israeli culture (music, food, art, etc.)	89%	94%
Awareness of differences in Jewish life between Australia and Israel	100%	92%
Sense that caring about Israel is a very important part of who you are as a Jew	91%	92%
Knowledge of day-to-day life in Israel	100%	88%
Sense of responsibility to Israel and Israelis	86%	90%
Knowledge of the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, religions, and languages represented in Israel	96%	87%
Awareness of similarities in Jewish life between Australia and Israel	100%	88%
Understanding of the role that Israel's geography (borders, land, etc.) plays in Israeli current events	88%	87%

Note: The survey asked alumni to what extent their Year 10 Israel program strengthened or increased their attachment to or understanding of Israel in different ways. Answer options included "not at all" (1), "a little" (2), "somewhat" (3), "a lot" (4), and "very much" (5). The percentages of alumni who chose "somewhat," "a lot," or "very much" (3, 4, or 5) are displayed here. Questions/items were only displayed to alumni who had indicated earlier in the survey that they have "high" levels of attachment to or understanding of Israel.

For the knowledge and awareness items, the relatively small sample size for each of the individual items, made it unfeasible to test for statistically significant differences between BJE and JS alumni. For the attitudinal items, there were no statistically significant differences between BJE and JS alumni, suggesting that Y2i has a similar effect or value-add for both groups.