GANDEL FOUNDATION

# Annual Review

# 2024-2025

2509120743-01-GANDEL-2024-25-AR-20p.indd 1 27/3/2026 07:05

# Gandel Foundation

Gandel Foundation is one of Australia's largest independent private family philanthropic funds. It has been the vehicle for charitable giving by the extended Gandel family since its formation as the Gandel Charitable Foundation back in 1978.

John Gandel AC and Pauline Gandel AC are co-founders of Gandel Foundation.

They are actively engaged in their philanthropic initiatives and are universally recognised for their generosity, commitment and passion in supporting both Jewish and general causes. Through Gandel Foundation, over the years they have invested more than $220 million in the community, supporting various charitable organisations in Australia and overseas.

John Gandel AC and Pauline Gandel AC

## Vision

Stronger, resilient, vibrant and inclusive communities.

## Purpose

To create a positive and lasting difference by powering the delivery of programs and activities that improve quality of life in Australia and Israel.

## Trustees

John Gandel AC,
Chairman

Pauline Gandel AC

Lisa Thurin

Steven Gandel

Graham Goldsmith AO,
Deputy Chairman

Barry Fradkin OAM

## Team

Adam Ognall
Chief Executive (from April 2025)

Vedran Drakulić OAM
Chief Executive (to October 2024)

Nicole Brittain
Senior Program Manager,
Jewish and Israel

Drossos Haramantas
Finance Manager and
Company Secretary

Bridgette Hardy
Program Manager, Australia
(from December 2025)

Rhylla Mitchell
Grants Administration Officer

Gandel Foundation
Annual Review 2024-2025
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2509120743-01-GANDEL-2024-25-AR-20p.indd 2 27/3/2026 07:05

Gandel Foundation respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and we recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, and communities. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders past and present.

Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this document may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.

# Contents


| | |
|---|---|
| Year of Impact in Pictures | 4 |
| Year of Impact in Numbers | 6 |
| Chairman's Report | 7 |
| In Focus: Wellbeing and Mental Health | 8 |
| Flagship Grants: Gandel Rehabilitation Centre | 10 |
| Major Grants: GenV at MCRI | 11 |
| Community Grants: Wonderbox at Arts Centre Melbourne | 12 |
| In Focus: Combatting Antisemitism | 13 |
| CEO's Report | 14 |
| Gandel Foundation Strategy 2026-2029 | 15 |


Cover image: An extract from "The One" Holocaust Gallery Walk Program at Viewbank College. The initiative engaged Year 9 students who delved into the individual stories of survival, hope and resilience experienced by those who lived through the Holocaust. The project was led by two Viewbank College teachers who had participated in the Gandel Holocaust Studies Program for Australian Educators.

# Karrkad Kanjdji Trust

Karrkad Kanjdji Trust (KKT) was established by Traditional Owners of the Warddeken and Djelk Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) in 2010, to support their vision for healthy Country.

Today, KKT is a shared resource to eight First Nations community-controlled organisations in Arnhem Land. Their work spans 50,000 square kilometres of land and sea Country and encompasses traditional land management; on-Country employment; carbon abatement; bi-cultural education and the preservation of Indigenous languages.

Gandel Foundation has previously awarded a Flagship Grant to KKT's partner, the Nawarddeken Academy: a community-owned school delivering on-Country education for children and young people in the Warddeken IPA through a bi-cultural, place-based curriculum. This year, the Foundation supported the Nawarddeken Academy's Early Learning Program with a vehicle that is now providing vital access to on-Country learning.



2509120743-01-GANDEL-2024-25-AR-20p.indd 3 27/3/2026 07:05

# Year of Impact in Pictures

Photo: Nitzan Zohar

1.
September 2024

## Guide Dogs Victoria

As part of Guide Dogs Victoria's state-of-the-art campus redevelopment, Gandel Foundation supported the establishment of the Gandel Sensory Garden, designed to enhance the sensory experiences of people with low vision and blindness through play, training and reflection. The garden features thoughtfully designed elements, including musical instruments, providing a serene space where people with low vision or blindness can connect with nature.

2.
November 2024

## Monash Scholarships

We hosted the recipients of the John and Pauline Gandel Scholarship, and the William Cooper Indigenous Leadership Scholarship, which honours the legacy of the Aboriginal human rights activist, in our offices. Students met with John Gandel AC, Pauline Gandel AC and Graham Goldsmith AO. Since establishment, 36 students have been supported through this initiative that remove the economic barriers to higher education.

3.
December 2024

## Hadassah International

John Gandel AC spoke at Hadassah's Gala at the Tower of London. He shared the decision to support the Gandel Rehabilitation Center:

"They are an innovative and compassionate medical institution with talented, professional, qualified and caring staff…living and breathing every single day their stated mission to bring hope and healing to the world, and extend a hand to all, without regard for race, religion or ethnic origin."

4.
January 2025

## Gandel Holocaust Studies Program

This professional development program for Australian secondary teachers recommenced for the first time since 2022.19 participants from across Australia convened in Melbourne for a deep immersion into Holocaust education led by Yad Vashem, the International School for Holocaust Studies based in Jerusalem. Through this immersive experience, teachers gained extensive knowledge and skills to bring to their classrooms and extended communities, supporting the program's aim to build social cohesion via education.



2509120743-01-GANDEL-2024-25-AR-20p.indd 4 27/3/2026 07:05

5.
January 2025

## All Things Equal

Gandel Foundation supported All Things Equal, a social enterprise that empowers people with disability through award-wage employment, training, and pathways to careers in hospitality, to operate a food and beverage outlet at the 2025 Australian Open. The outlet was the first for a social enterprise and the 23 trainees served thousands of people.

6.
March 2025

## Courage to Care

Gandel Foundation hosted an evening in the Gandel Gallery that celebrated the volunteers in Courage to Care's Upstander Programs that educate about the dangers of racism, antisemitism, discrimination and inspired bystander behaviour. The event heard from Nova Peris OAM OLY.

7.
May 2025

## Sleep at the G

On any given night, over 7,600 young Victorians aged 12-24 are without a safe place to call home. Team Gandel joined almost 900 other compassionate Victorians in makeshifts beds on the concrete floor of the MCG on Thursday 15 May, helping to raise over $682,500 to help end youth homelessness.

8.
June 2025

## Eat Up

Each week, Eat Up makes and delivers over 40,000 free lunches directly to schools for vulnerable children. Gandel Foundation supported the purchase of 'Belinda' a new refrigerated van as the charity looks to support the 1 in 3 Australian students at the schools they support who need an Eat Up lunch.



2509120743-01-GANDEL-2024-25-AR-20p.indd 5 27/3/2026 07:06

# Year of Impact in Numbers

**99**
Grants allocated to 93 organisations

**18**
Flagship Grants

**23**
Major Grants

**52**
Community Grants

Average grant size:
**$155k**

Median grant size:
**$38k**

**83%**
of flagship grants multi-year

**6%**
of grants to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-controlled organisations



2509120743-01-GANDEL-2024-25-AR-20p.indd 6 27/3/2026 07:06

# Chairman's Report

The past year has seen Gandel Foundation do what it does best, responding to immediate issues whilst continuing to invest in the long-term, supporting organisations that are making a difference. In the often-challenging times we live in, our work has responded to new and emerging priorities whilst continuing our deep and meaningful partnerships with those helping the most vulnerable in society.

## Combatting antisemitism

Sadly, much of our focus has been helping address the scourge of antisemitism in Australia which has surged since October 7, 2023. We have witnessed a more than threefold increase in incidents, and a growing severity. This has driven us to increase our support for organisations at the forefront of combatting this hate. The terrorist attack on the Jewish community Chanukah event at Bondi on December 14, 2025, resulting in the tragic loss of 15 lives, only deepens our resolve to ensure that the Jewish community in Australia does not live in fear and continues to have the opportunity to thrive.

## Promoting a cohesive and safe society

We remain steadfast in our dedication to building a strong, resilient, inclusive and safe society, and we will do that with people of goodwill and with organisations that are prepared to work with us to overcome societal challenges and build a better future for all. It has been heartening throughout the past year to meet with the significant number of organisations and leaders from across society demonstrating this goodwill.

## Our Contribution

Gandel Foundation continues to see the ongoing impact of our grant partners in all the areas we support. The Gandel Rehabilitation Centre at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem plays a critical role in Israeli society by addressing a significant gap in the country's rehabilitation services, providing advanced care to a wide and diverse demographic, and supporting national resilience. During the last two years, the Centre has played a critical national role (see page 10). Looking forward, the state-of-the art facility will provide comprehensive and innovative care for decades to come treating 10,000 patients a year from across Israeli society. I am pleased that our flagship support has been integral to making this possible.

Across our broad portfolio of work in Australia we are seeing significant progress. We continue to help tackle issues that are of core concern, particularly for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. This includes addressing cost of living worries, especially food and housing insecurity, a wide range of mental health initiatives focused on early intervention, and creating education and employment opportunities. I was also pleased to confirm our commitment to the National Gallery of Victoria for their new contemporary art building development.

## My thanks

Through our family foundation, my dear wife Pauline and I continue to be committed to giving back. Pauline remains passionately involved with our giving and like me, is immensely proud of how three generations of our family are engaged with the Foundation. Our daughter Lisa Thurin continues to demonstrate her passion, leadership and skill to our philanthropy and we are increasingly benefiting from the involvement and commitment of our grandson, Steven Gandel.

I wish to thank Graham Goldsmith AO, our Deputy Chair who is the impetus for much of what we are achieving and has ensured the smooth transition between the Foundation's CEOs.

Finally, thank you to Barry Fradkin OAM for his continuing involvement.

I would like to welcome Adam Ognall who joined us as CEO in late April and is already contributing to our charitable activities.

I also appreciate the efforts and commitment of our small team, Nicole Brittain, Drossos Haramantas and Rhylla Mitchell, especially in the period between CEOs.

**John Gandel AC**
Chairman and Co-Founder

> "The past year has seen Gandel Foundation do what it does best, responding to immediate issues whilst continuing to invest in the long-term."



2509120743-01-GANDEL-2024-25-AR-20p.indd 7 27/3/2026 07:06

# Wellbeing and Mental Health

Over the past year, Gandel Foundation has continued its longstanding commitment to supporting mental health and wellbeing across Australia, with an emphasis on prevention, early intervention, and innovative approaches that respond to emerging community needs.

Gandel Foundation has partnered with frontline organisations and research leaders to fund projects that strengthen personal and community resilience, reduce stigma and expand access to evidence-based support. This work often prioritises individuals and communities experiencing particular challenges.

Below we share the impact and achievements of some of our key partners in this past year. Their efforts reflect both the scale of need and Gandel Foundation's belief that philanthropy can play a catalytic role through supporting pioneering models of care.

## First Step

First Step is a not-for-profit health, mental health and legal services hub in St Kilda, supporting more than 1,600 people each year.

In January, First Step opened a new Specialist Centre for Integrated Care at 18 Mitford Street – a purpose-built space that brings their multidisciplinary team together under one roof. The move has transformed how they deliver care, enabling stronger collaboration, increased accessibility, and a more dignified, trauma-informed environment for clients.

## Live4Life

Live4Life brings together rural and regional communities to improve youth mental health and reduce suicide. Communities are empowered to implement Live4Life, the only youth mental health education and suicide prevention model designed specifically for rural and regional communities.

Over the last 10 years, Live4Life Crews have contributed to thousands of young people improving their mental health literacy and ability to offer and seek help, while reducing the stigma often encountered with mental health in rural communities.



2509120743-01-GANDEL-2024-25-AR-20p.indd 8 27/3/2026 07:06

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1.
Participants in Reverb 2.0 whose multicultural lived experience is embedded in to address stigma and increase young people's confidence to seek support.

2.
Live4Life program participants.

3.
Josh Burns MP, Federal Member for Macnamara and First Step client Allara officially opening First Step's new home.

## Centre for Multicultural Youth / headspace – Reverb 2.0 program

Reverb 2.0 is a program designed to support the mental health of young people from multicultural backgrounds, delivered in partnership by headspace and the Centre for Multicultural Youth.

The initiative equips headspace centre staff and secondary school students with the tools to better understand and respond to mental health challenges in multicultural contexts. Through lived experience, storytelling, youth advocacy, and culturally responsive workshops, the program aims to break down stigma, build confidence, and connect young people with the support they need.

## The Lisa Thurin Women's Mental Health Centre

Australia's first dedicated women-only mental health service, The Lisa Thurin Women's Health Centre was created to meet an unmet need: more than ever, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health services in Victoria have reported a significant increase in women presenting with serious mental health issues.

The Centre forges partnerships across the women's mental health sector to address quality and continuity of care through its contemporary in-patient 30 bed unit, as well as the identified need for gender specific data collection and collaborative research to contribute to the broader mental health policy and reform agenda in Victoria and Australia.

## Canteen

Canteen is the only organisation in Australia dedicated to providing free, tailored support for young people impacted by cancer.

Canteen's Good Grief Program provides young people who have lost a parent or sibling to cancer with the space and tools to process their grief, connect with peers who understand, and begin to rebuild confidence and hope for the future. The program combines evidence-based therapeutic activities with peer connection, helping participants develop practical coping strategies and reduce feelings of isolation.



2509120743-01-GANDEL-2024-25-AR-20p.indd 9 27/3/2026 07:06

# Flagship Grants

Leadership-type grants that support ambitious efforts to deliver transformative impact. Gandel Foundation makes a limited number of Flagship Grants through proactively identifying projects and partners who can help make lasting change in priority areas.

Photo: Nitzan Zohar

CASE STUDY

## Hadassah Hospital

# Gandel Rehabilitation Center

The Gandel Rehabilitation Center at Hadassah Hospital Mount Scopus in Jerusalem is a state-of-the art facility spanning eight floors and delivering much-needed rehabilitation services to residents of Jerusalem and beyond.

The Center was rushed into operation in January 2024 – more than a year ahead of schedule with the building only half completed – in response to urgent needs following the tragic events of October 7, 2023. Since then, the Gandel Rehabilitation Center has expanded its inpatient and outpatient services, offering physical therapy, occupational and respiratory rehabilitation, neurologic care, hydrotherapy, and advanced therapeutic technologies such as computerised gait analysis systems and state-of-the-art pools. It is designed to ultimately serve an estimated 10,000 patients annually both inpatient and outpatient.

When in June 2025, the Israel-Iran attacks began, Hadassah Hospital transformed the Center's underground car park to establish an Underground Emergency Hospital capable of operating during rocket attacks. 130 patients from across different hospital departments – from paediatrics, surgery, orthopaedics – requiring critical care, and from the rehabilitation floors above were moved underground. A few days later the Emergency Hospital received patients transferred from another hospital that was struck by Iranian missiles.

Hadassah medical staff working in the fully-functioning Underground Emergency Hospital in June 2025.

**"Once again, the Gandel Rehabilitation Centre that you made a reality is pivotal to our worst-case preparations. The patients now underground are the sickest we have. They're the ones who can't walk or be easily moved to safe spaces in our regular hospital departments. They're now getting the crucial life-saving care they need."**

– Jorge Diener, Hadassah International CEO



2509120743-01-GANDEL-2024-25-AR-20p.indd 10 27/3/2026 07:06

# Major Grants

Grants that reflect Gandel Foundation's wish to provide substantial and meaningful support to our not-for-profit partners. Major Grants are made proactively and our decisions are evidence-based to ensure we support initiatives that deliver defined outcomes and lasting benefits.

CASE STUDY

## Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI)

# Generation Victoria (GenV)

Above: Baby Eliana, born on Christmas Day 2020, and her parents, was the first participant recruited to GenV.
Right: Professor Sharon Goldfeld AM, Director of Population Health at MCRI.

This year, Gandel Foundation provided a Major Grant to MCRI which supported high-impact projects and researchers under the leadership of Professor Sharon Goldfeld AM, Director of Population Health.

Sharon's research focuses on the complex mix of social, environmental and biological factors that shape child and adolescent health. Her work is particularly focused on translating this knowledge into effective prevention, early intervention, and treatment strategies, particularly for families experiencing social and economic disadvantage.

A cornerstone of this work is Generation Victoria (GenV), one of the world's largest birth and parent cohort studies which is designed to advance health and wellbeing in smarter and faster ways. With over 140,000 participants across the state. GenV creates a powerful resource for understanding and improving outcomes in areas such as mental health, obesity, learning difficulties, allergies, and more, ultimately helping shape better policies, services, and futures for children and families.



2509120743-01-GANDEL-2024-25-AR-20p.indd 11 27/3/2026 07:06

# Community Grants

Grants that enable Gandel Foundation to support a range of partners across our issue areas and are aimed at providing support for a defined program or smaller community organisation.

CASE STUDY

## Arts Centre Melbourne

# Wonderbox

Wonderbox is a multi-sensory immersive theatre work created with and for children with disability, and their family and friends. Created by Sensorium Theatre (WA) this highly tailored production is suitable for children with a broad range of access needs aged 5-8 years, including those with multiple and complex needs and those on the Autism Spectrum.

Gandel Foundation supported Arts Centre Melbourne to present this work as part of its combined Families and Children and Schools Engagement program for the enjoyment of children, their teachers, carers and families, helping to address the lack of arts experiences designed specifically for children with complex disabilities.

At the beginning of the performance a slow introduction takes place on entry to the space. Children are encouraged to take off their shoes and explore the environment as they meet the performers before the show begins. In this way every child's curiosity is celebrated and rewarded with wondrous surprises as the performance evolves. As boxes reveal boxes within boxes, each child is given the opportunity to find a magical version of themselves.

Children participate in inclusive theatre experiences through Wonderbox.



2509120743-01-GANDEL-2024-25-AR-20p.indd 12 27/3/2026 07:06

# Combatting Antisemitism

The Australian Jewish community is experiencing unprecedented high levels of antisemitism with the number of reported incidents in the past two years being three times the total of any year prior. During the period this Review covers, the Jewish community was subject to verbal abuse, harassment, intimidation and gestures such as Nazi salutes. There was also the firebombing of Melbourne's Adass Israel Synagogue in December 2024, which was later ruled to be a terrorist act, as well as a spate of arson and graffiti attacks targeting Sydney's Jewish community.

Gandel Foundation's response to rising antisemitism in Australia has primarily focused on education, awareness and community resilience. We have provided significant additional support to a range of partners both at the forefront of the immediate response and whose work builds understanding and educates on the root causes of hate. We outline below some of the initiatives and organisations we have supported:

## Leadership

Gandel Foundation is partnering with community organisations at the forefront of the fight against antisemitism. This includes Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), the peak body of the Australian Jewish community which represents and advocates for the community to government and in wider society and whose work spans political advocacy, legal work to combat racial discrimination and monitoring anti-Jewish incidents. Similarly, Gandel Foundation has continued its long-standing support of the Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV).

We are working with the Office of Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, Jillian Segal AO as it addresses the acute challenges on Australian university campuses and in schools.

Gandel Foundation has also been a significant early funder of The Dor Foundation which was established in 2025 to support initiatives to build tolerance, understanding and social cohesion. Dor has been developing a research-driven national strategy to counter antisemitism in Australia with particular focus on social media platforms and education.

## Responding to Community

Following the firebombing of the Adass Israel synagogue, Gandel Foundation joined with other philanthropic organisations and the wider community to support the Adass community and the rebuilding of the synagogue.

We also continue to deepen our partnership and support of Community Security Group (CSG) Victoria which protects Jewish life and the Jewish way of life by offering security guidance and training to Jewish communal institutions, schools, and synagogues, as well as providing year-round protection for Jewish communal events and buildings. CSG has also strengthened its crisis and emergency management capabilities this year.

## Education and Awareness

The newly formed Monash Initiative for Rapid Research into Antisemitism (MIRAA) investigates the causes, nature, and potential remedies for antisemitism in Australian society. Led by Monash University's Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation (ACJC), it takes a sector-by-sector approach into understanding how antisemitism impacts Australian society. Gandel Foundation has committed multi-year support for this crucial effort.

Gandel Foundation has for many years driven work that educates on the lessons of the Holocaust, and builds social cohesion in Australia. Recent events have strengthened our dedication to this mission.

The 2025 Gandel Holocaust Studies Program for Australian Educators was held in Melbourne. This long-term professional development program for teachers is building a cadre of expert Holocaust educators who are active throughout Australia.

We continue our long-term partnership with Courage to Care who deliver Upstander Programs to schools, workplaces and organisations across Victoria. Their team of dedicated volunteers have delivered the Upstander Programs to around 150,000 students, at no cost to schools, transforming bystander behaviour and inspiring participants to become Upstanders in their own communities. In parallel, we are working with Together for Humanity and UJEB on their Student Ambassador Program.

In a significant innovation, we partnered with the Victorian Department of Education and Museums Victoria to support a pilot Museums Visits Program for public schools. Pupils from 30 schools in low SES areas attended two of the participating museums: Immigration Museum, Islamic Museum of Australia, Melbourne Holocaust Museum and Jewish Museum of Australia to strengthen their anti-racism education.



2509120743-01-GANDEL-2024-25-AR-20p.indd 13 27/3/2026 07:06

# CEO's Report

It is my privilege to write my first report as Gandel Foundation CEO.

## Building on legacy

Stepping into the role in late April, I was already aware of the Gandel family's commitment to giving and their contribution to society through a range of causes and issues. What I have experienced since starting has been the values, wisdom, passion and commitment that underpins this work. The opportunity to help build upon this legacy of giving and community impact is a real privilege.

## Priorities

An early priority has been engaging with our partners and grantees across all program areas, as well as with community leaders and trusted experts. I have been struck by the strength and depth of the Foundation's relationships – accompanied by genuine affection – across the not-for-profit sector. What I have come to recognise is that it derives from the Foundation's contributions extending beyond its grants into leadership, its knowledge and in valuing partnership.

As we respond to the changing and increasingly complicated context, Gandel Foundation's approach and instincts serve it well. We understand that it is our not-for-profit partners who are the ones out there making an actual difference and in supporting them, we need to balance responding to funding immediate needs and gaps in society with investing for the long-term. As you will have read in this Annual Review, the Foundation works hard to achieve this balance to support partners that drive progress that might not happen otherwise.

## Appreciation

I would like to thank John and Pauline Gandel, Graham Goldsmith, Lisa Thurin and the other trustees for their warm welcome to the Foundation. The care and encouragement they have given, and their trust has been inspiring. I would also like to thank my team – Nicole, Drossos and Rhylla – for their support and incredible work and we are delighted that Bridgette joined the team recently.

## Looking Forward

Looking forward, we have refined our strategy and applied that to a strategic focus for 2026-2028 and we expect we will be announcing some exciting new grant partnerships. Our strategy is inspired by John and Pauline Gandel's vision and legacy. It celebrates the impact, successes and deep relationships the family and Foundation have achieved as we look towards the Foundation's 50th anniversary year. The strategy – which is presented on the next page – is an evolution of our current approach. It refreshes the vision and purpose and sets out clear principles that will guide our grant making. We have refined our granting into 5 issue areas and we continue to grant to the Jewish community, the wider Australian community and to some projects in Israel.

With the new strategy, Gandel Foundation will strengthen its legacy whilst looking forward to creating a positive and lasting difference in people's lives.

**Adam Ognall**
Chief Executive

"I have been struck by the strength and depth of [Gandel] Foundation's relationships across the not-for-profit sector."



2509120743-01-GANDEL-2024-25-AR-20p.indd 14 27/3/2026 07:06

GANDEL FOUNDATION

# STRATEGY 2026-29

## Vision & Purpose

### Vision

Stronger, resilient, vibrant, and inclusive communities

### Purpose

To create a positive and lasting difference by powering the delivery of programs and activities that improve quality of life in Australia and Israel

## Gandel Foundation's Approach

Gandel Foundation is a proud family-based organisation with the founders, John Gandel AC and Pauline Gandel AC along with members of the next two generations of their family, actively involved.

### Our approach to philanthropy

We support initiatives that:

1. empower people to improve their wellbeing and future prospects
2. promote community values and foster community spirit
3. have a long-term transformative impact

We prioritise support for the most vulnerable and marginalised groups.

## Five Issue Areas

### Celebrating Arts & Culture

A vibrant and creative arts sector is essential for a thriving society. The Gandel family has a proud history of supporting the arts through championing Melbourne and Australia's world class institutions, nurturing Jewish arts and cultural heritage, and recognising the role of arts in building strong communities.

### Promoting Health

Philanthropic grantmaking in the health and medical field is crucial for advancing knowledge, developing new treatments, and improving public health, both mental and physical. Gandel Foundation partners with leading hospitals, institutions, and health organisations to advance health outcomes.

### Strengthening Jewish Life

Gandel Foundation aspires to elevate Jewish life in Melbourne and beyond through investing in initiatives that promote Jewish identity, nurture leadership, and strengthen the resilience and vibrancy of the community.

### Empowering People

Gandel Foundation is committed to helping individuals and cohorts access opportunities to improve their lives and those of others around them, especially from the most disadvantaged sectors of society.

### Fostering Community

Gandel Foundation invests in initiatives that promote tolerance and understanding, combat the root causes of hate, and foster connections. We are proud of our long-standing dedication to educating on the lessons of the Holocaust, combatting modern antisemitism and hate, and building cohesion in Australia.

## Grant Levels

Gandel Foundation has three levels of grant giving that apply to all our issue areas:

### Flagship Grants

Leadership-type grants that support ambitious efforts to deliver transformative impact. Gandel Foundation makes a limited number of Flagship Grants through proactively identifying the projects and partners who can help make lasting change in priority areas. Flagship Grants are typically funded over extended periods.

### Major Grants

Grants that reflect Gandel Foundation's wish to provide substantial and meaningful support to our not-for-profit partners. These grants can be allocated as a single, one-off contribution or through multi-year support. Major Grants are made proactively and our decisions are evidence-based to ensure we support initiatives that deliver defined outcomes and lasting benefits.

### Community Grants

Grants that enable Gandel Foundation to support a range of partners across our five issue areas. Community Grants are typically allocated up to a maximum amount of $40,000 and envisaged as one-off grants aimed at providing support for a defined program or smaller community organisations. Community Grants are implemented through proactive granting and targeted open grants rounds.

GANDEL FOUNDATION

gandelfoundation.org.au