



2025 Year in Review

Summary

The Israel for Youth Foundation Inc. (I4Y) was delighted to support its second group of high school students taking part in UJEB's Year 10/11 Israel Experience. 2025 marked the first departure of UJEB's Israel program, titled "Ketsev".

The initial cohort that I4Y supported was the 2022 UJEB Israel trip. It was the first post-Covid program when 40 UJEB students from VIC, SA and WA participated in the Year 10 Israel Program that had historically been provided by NSW's Board of Jewish Education (BJE).

In 2023, UJEB created their first Year 10 Israel program called Ketsev. With 85% of the 40 students in 2022 receiving financial support, there was a substantially increased interest for the 2023 intake. As at 6 October 2023, UJEB had 58 students committed to Ketsev. With Hamas commencing war against Israel on 7 October 2023, UJEB (along with every other school that offered a Year 10 Israel program that year) cancelled its program and it was not until 2025 that the next trip could depart.

Despite the continued uncertainty of further conflict in the Middle East, UJEB (along with several of the Jewish schools, including Mt Scopus Memorial College) proceeded to take their first Ketsev group to Israel at the end of 2025. It was offered to both Year 10 and Year 11 students however the numbers dropped dramatically from the initial March 2025 registrations given the Iran missile strikes on Israel and 12-day war in June. Eventually, 16 students, including one from New Zealand, departed for UJEB's Ketsev Israel program in December 2025, returning January 2026.

Key observations from the 2025 UJEB Year 10/11 Israel trip:

- Student numbers were substantially down, largely because of uncertainty and anxiety related to the conflict
- A higher percentage of students were able to pay the full cost of the program, reflecting the concern around non-refundable amounts from families less able to afford the program.

	2022	(2023*)	2025
By financial need			
Registration of interest	80+	130+	87
Number of students participating	40	58	16
Program cost	\$ 12,900	\$ 13,900	\$ 16,144
Families receiving I4Y any financial support	34	44	11
% of participants needing financial support	85%	76%	69%
Value of discretionary grants	\$ 169,000	\$ 197,500	\$ 25,500
Families receiving extra financial assistance	14	13	5
Value of extra financial assistance	\$ 77,300	\$ 44,700	\$ 56,398
Total I4Y financial support provided	\$ 246,300	\$ 242,200	\$ 81,898
Families paying the full cost	6	14	5
% who could pay the full cost	15%	24%	31%
Average cost per child requiring any financial support	\$ 7,244	\$ 5,505	\$ 7,445

By Location			
VIC	36	49	15
SA	1	1	0
WA	3	8	0
NZ	0	0	1
By School			
Independent	11	17	4
Government	29	41	12
Number of schools	14	31	11

* Given the 2023 trip didn't take place, it's still relevant to understand the growing demand by Year 10 Jewish students in non-Jewish schools for UJEB's Ketsev Israel program

Soon after places are offered in June, UJEB commits to a 12-month program for the students. The experience is much more than just a trip to Israel.

“Preparing for the Journey” over the 6 months prior to departure to Israel includes a Shabbat Seminar, sessions on Israeli challenges, culture and behavioural expectations.

While the students enjoy the post program bonds forged through social events and Shabbat dinners, they are also committed to the remainder of the Ketsev program, “Strengthening the Connections”. This includes a Shabbat dinner, attending the 2026 Info Session, attending the BBYO (B'nai Brith Youth Organisation) camp as leaders and getting involved in the Jewish community alongside other Jewish community organisations as representatives of UJEB.



Attitudinal shifts

UJEB's Ketsev program is supported by I4Y because it is more than just an Israel trip – it is a year-long program that develops the students' Jewish identities and builds strong connections amongst themselves and with the wider Jewish community.

Participants are required to complete a survey prior to departing for Israel and after they have returned.

The 2025 cohort was the first to undertake the surveys, and UJEB will endeavour to respond to feedback and consider how the program could be further enhanced. I4Y plans to monitor results over time, with highlights from the pre-and post-trip surveys conducted for the 2025 Ketsev cohort including:

Post trip, attitudes to these issues and sentiments increased in overall terms:

- Supporting social justice causes: +56%
- Supporting Jewish causes by either volunteering or donating money: +45%
- Post 7 October, I have the knowledge and skills to answer questions appropriately: +25%
- If asked about Israel's right to exist, I feel well equipped to give a good explanation: +67%
- Knowledge of Israeli politics: +167%
- Knowledge of Israeli economy: +120%
- Knowledge of Israeli geopolitical situation: +86%
- Knowledge of Diversity within Israeli society: +63%
- I feel at home in Israel: +63%
- I feel a responsibility to Israelis and Israel: +63%

Post trip, attitudes to these issues and sentiments sharply increased:

- Knowing Israel's main cities and bordering countries: +100%
- I feel a connection to Israel: +300%
- Knowledge of Israeli culture: +100%
- Israel is a guarantee for the Jews against assimilation: +200%
- What happens in Israel directly affects my life as a Jew in Australia: +67%
- I can articulate to others what Israel means to me: +80%
- I feel proud of Israel: +67%
- I am interested in learning more about Judaism and my Jewish heritage: +100%
- I feel a sense of belonging to the Jewish community in my state/territory: +100%

At our recent Impact Event on 22 February 2026, we welcomed 4 recently returned Ketsev students to reflect on their experiences. You can watch their presentations here:

Ofri & Shani: <https://youtu.be/aN6cG9mW-NY>

Gabriel: <https://youtu.be/dIsDcctpk8E>

Peppa: <https://youtu.be/0ssVRdP5V74>



2025 Testimonials

“The Ketsev program, especially the five weeks in Israel, was incredibly meaningful for our child. Attending a public school where Jewish students are a minority, this experience deepened their Jewish identity, strengthened their connection to Israel, and fostered a strong sense of belonging.

As their first overseas trip without us, Itzik and Sharni’s professionalism, organisation and care gave us complete confidence. The program balanced safety, emotional wellbeing, education and personal growth, while encouraging independence and resilience.

Our child returned more confident, mature and connected to their heritage, with lasting friendships and a broader perspective on the world. We are deeply grateful for the experience and highly recommend the Ketsev program.”

Parent #1, 2025 intake

“We want to say a huge THANK YOU to the whole UJEB and Israel for Youth teams for giving our child and our family the most incredible Israel Ketsev experience.

Seeing the pictures, reading the daily blog and feeling the connection that our child and the others were having was absolutely amazing. We had serious FOMO throughout the whole trip.

Our child has come back with an even bigger love for Israel, our homeland, and is now wanting to spend a year there after school and even wanting to join the army, we could not be prouder.

We are so blessed to have organisations like UJEB, Israel for Youth, and passionate leaders guiding our children.

Thank you so much for this amazing gift.”

Parent #2, 2025 intake

“The UJEB Israel (Ketsev) program was truly an unforgettable, life changing experience for our child. It provided a unique opportunity to connect with their Jewish identity and develop a lasting, personal bond with the land of Israel. We are incredibly grateful for the support that made this journey possible; it is an experience that will stay with our child forever.”

Parent #3, 2025 intake