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WHITE CITY DEVELOPMENT GETS FINAL APPROVAL

GAME ON FOR HAKOAH

GARETH NARUNSKY

CONSTRUCTION of the new Hakoah Club will begin "likely by the end of this year", paving the way for a possible 2023 opening, president Steven Lowy told *The AJN* this week.

The Land and Environment Court gave its final blessing to the project on Tuesday, confirming development consent conditions agreed to between Hakoah and Wollahra Council for the \$60 million plus redevelopment of the White City site the club purchased in 2010.

It allows for the construction of a new club building that will serve as a cultural and community venue, two heated pools, nine tennis courts and a pro-shop developed and operated by Maccabi Tennis, a synthetic playing field, a fitness and wellness centre, and enclosed multi-use courts.

The new facility will provide a range of venues for social and community events, cultural activities, meetings and function spaces, and include temporary food and beverage venues.

"We're hugely excited by this," said Lowy.

"This is possibly the most significant milestone on our journey to date, and gives the impetus to launch a final community fund-



An artist's rendering of the new Hakoah White City complex.

Illustrations: Cotie Parker Architects Pty Ltd

raising effort and membership drive in coming months, before getting construction underway."

With \$47 million having been raised by March this year – including a \$7.5 million federal government grant – Lowy said the next step is to complete major donor fundraising and then have a broad communal appeal and membership program, "which we are working on now".

"From there, we'll then go to a meeting of members which will probably take place near the end of the year," he said.

"That will be the final hurdle to overcome, which we would be entirely confident of achieving. Because we'll have the funding in place, we obviously have the development approval in place, we're well on our way with finalising all the pre-construction activities. And then we should be ready to start demolition."

But for all that to happen, Lowy said it is essential the community gets behind the project.

"The way that will occur is by

the community both donating and being members of the club," he said.

"I haven't been whipping up excitement and enthusiasm in the community until we knew we could deliver. We obviously now have a very high level of confidence that we can.

"So the coming months is the time to market what Hakoah will be – who it will be for, what facilities will be there, what community activities will take place – all of that will be presented to the community.

"And following that, I have no doubt that we'll be overwhelmed with membership excitement."

While it will look like a sporting centre from the outside, Lowy said "what will really make the club tick is its Jewish values, its Jewish culture, its food, its music and its broader social and cultural activities".

"We expect it will be a strong cultural centre for music, arts, food, cooking, a whole range of activities that our community

wants to engage in together," he said.

Noting that around 25 per cent of Hakoah's membership in the past was non-Jewish, he said the club will be promoting membership to both the Jewish and broader communities.

"It will have a strong Jewish ethos. But at the same time, our community here is hugely engaged with the broader Australian community," he said.

Lowy made special acknowledgement of the "cnoemous, dedicated work" of the Hakoah Board and the development subcommittee comprising Philip Wolanski, Alan Lenz, George Farkas and Rob Woolf, in getting to this point.

"There's no way this approval would have been achieved without the dedication of those four individuals," he said.

Lowy also expressed his appreciation for the professionalism and dedication of the planning team at Wollahra Council who handled the application over the past six years.

MALKI ROTH

Twenty years since Sbarro

PETER KOHN

ON the 20th of Av this year (July 29), Arnold and Frimet Roth visited the Israeli grave of Malki Roth and recited Kaddish. It was their daughter's yahrzeit – 20 years after the Australian-born teenager was murdered in a Palestinian terrorist attack at a Jerusalem pizzeria, along with 15 others, including seven children.

"Life was heavy," Malki's father told *The AJN* this week, reflecting on the yahrzeit. "You're missing somebody desperately and feel awful about the fact that she's not part of your life."

But this Monday, August 9, the secular anniversary of Malki's killing, Roth was back on Zoom and on the phone continuing his relentless campaign to see Ahilan Tamimi, the mastermind of the attack, extradited from Jordan to the US. "The ninth of August ... that's all about justice," he stated.

Tamimi had picked out the Sbarro pizzeria targeted by her and another bomber on August 9, 2001, her accomplice dying in the attack. Tamimi left the scene disguised as a tourist, later professing her glee as the ever-rising death toll was reported.

Although sentenced in Israel to 15 consecutive life terms, she was exchanged in a 2011 prisoner swap to free Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit from Hamas captivity. She continues to be feted as a media celebrity in Jordan, and, according to Roth, she recently added a regular newspaper column to her stint as a Jordanian TV show host.

In the US, she faces charges relating to the death of two American citizens – Malki, who held dual citizenship, being one of them – and an extradition request was issued in 2017.

But four years on, Roth is still battling three governments to get Tamimi extradited.

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An artist's rendering of the dining area at the Hakoah White City complex.

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