



James Altman OAM

Chair (interim)

My parents escaped to Australia from Vienna in 1938, just after the Anschluss (when Nazi Germany annexed Austria). They had to leave their apartment and everything they owned, except their personal effects, in Austria.

The story of my parents also relates to courage to care, as it was my mother's non-Jewish butcher in Vienna who, through his relative in Australia managed to help them get a visa to Australia; another example of how a small act of kindness possibly saved lives.

I was born in Sydney a few years later, was educated there, and graduated from Sydney University with a BA in mathematics and psychology. I then qualified in Actuarial science and made my career in this field.

From a young age, I have been passionately interested in human rights, and this has led me along a pathway of volunteer work, both in the Jewish community and the general community. I was President of B'nai B'rith Australia / New Zealand from 2002 to 2006 and again from 2010 to 2013, was the first Vice-President for Courage to Care, and subsequently the Treasurer for several years. Through my involvement with BBANZ, I played a part in securing a Resolution on the Rights of the Child in the UN Commission on Human Rights. I have also worked for the Refugee Council of Australia and the Australian Refugee Foundation on a voluntary basis. In January 2008, I was honoured with the award of Medal in the Order of Australia for service to the Jewish community and for fostering intercultural understanding.

My other passionate interests are music and of course my family. My wife, Elaine and I have two married daughters, Yael and Erica, and three grandsons, Manny, Josh and Oscar.

After having stepped down from Courage to Care at the end of 2013, I'm now delighted to renew my association with this wonderful organisation.