

Inaugural chairman steps down, Smorgon steps up

MACCABI Victoria administration stalwart Ian Davis has stepped down as chairman of the organisation's Sports Foundation (MVSF), with director Dale Smorgon stepping up to fill the role.

Davis' contribution to the Maccabi movement has been significant and multifaceted, showing loyalty and commitment to the cause for more than half a century.

Aaron Fetter reports.

IAN DAVIS

THE inaugural chairman of the MVSF, which launched in 2003, Davis has played a key role in creating and developing the foundation into the integral fundraising vehicle it is today, which has ensured Maccabi has remained a thriving dynamic and inclusive organisation for the whole community.



Since its inception and under Davis' watch, the MVSF has raised in excess of \$2.5 million, ultimately raising Maccabi's profile and stature within the Jewish and wider community.

Through Davis' unwavering passion and leadership he's provided strategic direction and stability for the organisation.

And as a result, his actions have inspired and motivated decades of volunteers, donors, administrators, and athletes to contribute to the development of Maccabi and Jewish sports within Victoria.

Major achievements under Davis' leadership:

- MVSF's signature project, the building of the Leon Haskin Tennis

Centre, courtesy of \$1.3 million raised by the foundation.

- Annual Appeal
- All Abilities Program
- Helen Synman Coaching Fund
- Henry Jolson Pathways Program
- Member Protection Program
- Club Development Fund

Despite not coming to fruition, Davis has been a firm voice and advocate for revolutionary projects such as the Elsterwick Park proposal for the AJAX Football Club, which would have incorporated a broad-based community centre.

A Maccabi Victoria life member and hall of famer, Davis held the presidency during some challenging years in the '90s and along with Harry Procel and Sam Parasol fought valiantly to save 97 Alma Road and almost pulled off a miracle.

From 1988-2003 Ian was part of an active committee of Maccabi Victoria tasked with finding a communal home for the organisation.

This group investigated Caulfield Racecourse on two occasions, the Booran Road dam site, Elsterwick Park, the site next to Bialik College, Princes Park and Caulfield Park among others.

After over 15 years in the top job, Davis will still be involved on

the foundation's committee as a director, and he has given his blessing to incoming chairman, Dale Smorgon.

"I am absolutely delighted to be able to hand the baton to Dale at this time," Davis said.

"He has the passion and energy to lead and inspire the next generation in their support of the foundation. With the launching of new programs such as the Maccabi Victoria Women in Sport strategic plan and the Maccabi Life program, the role of the foundation continues to grow and expand.

"I am very confident that Dale with an extremely energetic board will do a great job in this important role."

DALE SMORGON

A surname synonymous with Maccabi at state and national level, Smorgon joined the foundation board as a director in 2015.



The CEO of Innovative Retail Pty Ltd and a director of Generation Investments, Smorgon is a passionate sport lover, and was an active Maccabi club member with AJAX at both junior and senior levels.

Smorgon has continued his family ties with Maccabi with his sons keen members of the basketball and football clubs.

Speaking to *The AJN*, Smorgon said, "Taking a leadership role in an organisation that has been a part of the fabric of the Melbourne Jewish community for almost 100 years is an absolute privilege.

"Maccabi is about both physical health and mental wellbeing, about an active, inclusive and proud community."

The foundation has supported many generations and Smorgon believes the future will take on a different complexion – in response to the changing community sporting landscape – one that he and his committee are proud to lead.

"Maccabi is becoming about so much more than just traditional club sport. 'Maccabi Life' is a health and wellbeing program designed to increase community participation and promote a healthy lifestyle. Over the coming years we hope to see Maccabi Life develop and play an important role, providing an opportunity for a broader spectrum of the community to engage in healthy lifestyle activities through events, seminars and unstructured sport."