

The General Delegation of  
Palestine to Australia,  
New Zealand and the  
Pacific



Intern Policy Research  
Report

**Lobbying Strategies of Australian Jewish  
Organisations in regards to the Israel-Palestine  
Conflict**

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## **Executive Summary**

This report aims to identify lobbying strategies employed by Australian Jewish organisations in regards to the Israel-Palestine conflict and investigate a connection between the actions of the Jewish lobby and Australia's pro-Israeli position. The report is structured to analyse the strategies employed by mainstream Jewish organisations towards the government in Chapter I. In Chapter II, the lobbying tactics used by mainstream Jewish organisations will be discussed. Chapter III will examine the challenges that mainstream Jewish organisations confront. Chapter VI focuses on the strategies employed and obstacles faced by pro-Palestinian Jewish organisations. Lastly, this report provides recommendations for the General Delegation of Palestine (GDOP), the diplomatic representation of the State of Palestine, on strategies they can use to promote the Palestinian cause. The report examines mainstream Jewish organisations and pro-Palestinian Jewish organisations to ensure there is an accurate representation of the Jewish community. Furthermore, the mainstream Jewish organisations that are examined are elected representative organisations and roof-body organisations this further ensures that an accurate illustration of a majority of the Jewish community's views are analysed. Due to the nature of lobbying strategies, it is impossible to isolate the effects of lobbying from other rationales behind policy decisions. Therefore, the report uses the interest group theory to investigate an observable connection between the Jewish lobbying strategies and the government's pro-Israel stance. The results of the research establish this observable connection and identify the various strategies employed by Jewish organisations. Important findings show that mainstream Jewish organisations use their extensive resources to create a structure that employs specialised lobbying strategies on the government creating a stakeholder relationship between the Jewish community and the Australian government. This report is valuable to the GDOP as it could spur on joint initiatives with pro-Palestinian Jewish organisations and the research could assist the development of effective strategies for Palestinian organisations.

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## **Lists of Abbreviations**

AIJAC	Australian Israel and Jewish Affairs Council
AJN	Australian Jewish News
AJDS	Australian Jewish Democratic Society
BDS	Boycott Divest and Sanction
ECAJ	Executive Council of Australian Jewry
GDOP	General Delegation of Palestine
IAJV	Independent Australian Jewish Voices
JBD	Jewish Board of Deputies
JSU	Jewish Student Union
RDA	Racial Discrimination Act
SMH	The Sydney Morning Herald
ZFA	Zionist Federation of Australia

## Introduction

In theory, federal elections in a democracy are an opportunity for major parties to debate on policies and present positions that reflect the views of the majority. Yet, in Australia the central issue of the Israel-Palestine conflict are rarely debated on and Australia's foreign policy has always adopted an unwavering pro-Israeli stance.<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this report, a pro-Israeli position is where a body endorses Israeli actions, by not undermining Israeli policy in regards to Palestine. In the UN, Australia has consistently abstained or rejected UN resolutions that are aimed at building Palestinian's claim for statehood.<sup>2</sup> This is contrary to the views of the majority of Australians that believes Australia should support Palestine's statehood.<sup>3</sup> The misalignment of policy and the majority's opinion in Australia is partly due to the influence of lobby groups.<sup>4</sup> These lobby groups are predominantly independent Jewish organisations that implement strategies to pressure Australian decision-makers to maintain a pro-Israeli position. Lobbying is defined as strategies employed by organisations to influence decision-makers,<sup>5</sup> and the media who play an active role in constructing the public discourse.<sup>6</sup>

This report will examine the Jewish organisations that strive to shape Australian foreign policy in regards to the Israel-Palestine conflict. The research divides the assessment of Jewish organisations into mainstream Jewish organisations that lobby a pro-Israeli stance, and pro-Palestinian Jewish groups that advocate a balanced approach that recognises the rights of Palestinians, including the right to self-determine. Unlike other studies, this report examines pro-Palestinian groups to ensure an accurate representation of all the views within

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<sup>1</sup> See, Ben Saul, 'It's about time Australia put pressure on Israel', *ABC The Drum*, 25 July 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> 'Morgan Poll: Australians Support Palestine, Not Israel', *apan.org.au* <http://apan.org.au/morgan-poll-2014/> accessed 12 May 2015; Peter Manning, 'Political stance on Palestine is out of step with public opinion', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 February 2012.

<sup>4</sup> See, John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007) 3-5.

<sup>5</sup> Lorraine Messinger Harkavy, 'Lobbying Everyone's Responsibility', *American Journal of Infection Control* 17:3 (1989), 154.

<sup>6</sup> John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, 'Is It Love or The Lobby? Explaining America's Special Relationship with Israel', *Security Studies* 18:1 (2009), 76.

the Jewish community. In Chapter I, the strategies employed by mainstream organisations towards the government and Parliament are isolated and discussed. Chapter II will examine the lobbying tactics used by mainstream organisations towards the media. Chapter III focuses on the challenges that mainstream organisations face. Chapter IV analyses the strategies employed by pro-Palestinian Jewish groups and the obstacles they confront. Lastly, the report provides recommendations for the GDOP on potential strategies they can utilise to circumvent pro-Israeli agendas in Australia.

## Methodology

### A. Organisations

This report will focus on a number of Jewish organisations including the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), NSW Jewish Board of Deputies (JBD), Australian Israel and Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC), Australian Jewish News (AJN), Zionist Federation of Australia (ZFA), Australian Jewish Democratic Society (AJDS), and Independent Australian Jewish Voices (IAJV). ECAJ is the officially elected representative organisation of the Jewish community, and deals with federal matters.<sup>7</sup> JBD is the elected representative body of the NSW Jewish community, and represents 61 local organisations.<sup>8</sup> AIJAC is the public affairs organisation for the Jewish community and actively advocates the interests of the community to government, parliamentarians and the media.<sup>9</sup> AJN is the media outlets for the Jewish community and publishes weekly in Melbourne and Sydney.<sup>10</sup> ZFA is the federal roof organisation for Zionist organisations in Australia, central to ZFA's mandate is the promotion of Jewish identity and Israeli legitimacy.<sup>11</sup> AJDS and IAJV are pro-Palestinian Jewish groups that promote a viewpoint of the conflict that focuses on Palestinians rights and a more open debate on the conflict.<sup>12</sup>

### B. Evaluation

There is an unsolvable analytical challenge of isolating the effects of lobbying strategies from other rationales behind the policy decisions.<sup>13</sup> For example, Australia's pro-Israeli stance can be attributed to other factors than lobbying such as cultural affinities with Israel, strategic asset of the US and Israel, and common threats.<sup>14</sup> The research cannot quantify the impact of Jewish organisations lobbying strategies. Instead, the research aims to

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<sup>7</sup> 'About' *ecaj.org.au* <<http://www.ecaj.org.au/about/>> accessed 25 March 2015.

<sup>8</sup> 'About the Board' *nswjbd.org* <<http://www.nswjbd.org/AboutTheBoard/default.aspx>> accessed 25 March 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Personal Communication, Jeremy Jones, Director of International and Community Affairs of AIJAC, April 13 2015.

<sup>10</sup> 'About: History of the Australian Jewish News in print and online', *jewishnews.net.au* <<http://www.jewishnews.net.au/about-2>> accessed 25 March 2015.

<sup>11</sup> 'Who we are', *zfa.com.au* <<http://www.zfa.com.au/about/who-we-are/>> accessed 25 March 2015.

<sup>12</sup> 'About' *ajds.org.au* <<http://www.ajds.org.au/about/>> accessed 25 March 2015; 'About' *iajv.com* <<https://iajv99.wordpress.com/about/>> accessed 25 March 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Ben Fisherman, 'The 'Israel Lobby': A Realistic Assessment', *Foreign Policy Research Institute: Orbis* (2008), 162.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



characterise the lobbying strategies of Jewish organisations and investigate an observable connection between the Jewish lobby and the government's pro-Israel stance. The evaluation of the effectiveness of lobbying strategies uses the interest group theory as the basis of assessment. The interest group theory states that the nature of a democratic political system enables a focused cohort of voters to have a large impact on the political process not dependent on the size of the group.<sup>15</sup> Under this theory, lobby groups that have coherent narrow goals and resources to employ strategies can effectively impose their position on the government.<sup>16</sup> This study focuses on the strategies Jewish organisations employ and uses secondary resources to illustrate lobbying effects. Mixed interviews were conducted with various organisations that facilitate the understanding of how these organisations run and want to be perceived.

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<sup>15</sup> Frank R. Baumgartner and Beth L. Leech, *Basic Interests: The Importance of Groups in Politics and Political Science*, (Princeton University Press, 1998), 14; Maloney, 'The Theory of Government', *Clemson Economics* (2001).

<sup>16</sup> Elisabeth R. Garbor, *Populist Paradox: Interest Group Influence and the Promise of Direct Legislation*, (Princeton University Press, 1999); Daniel A. Farber and Philip Frickey, *Law and Public Choice: A Critical Introduction*, (University of Chicago Press, 1991).

## Chapter I: Lobbying the Government

Mainstream Jewish organisations employ various lobbying strategies targeted at influencing the federal government and parliament. Australia's foreign policy has continually maintained a relatively pro-Israeli position.<sup>17</sup> Lobbying strategies employed have positioned mainstream Jewish organisations as an important stakeholder of the government ensuring their agenda is maintained and appeased by the government. In 2014, Attorney General Brandis called the use of the internationally recognised term 'occupied' to describe settlements as 'unhelpful,' in an attempt to weaken the illegality of the occupied territory.<sup>18</sup> Reports have speculated that Brandis's statement was an attempt to appease grievances within the Jewish community over the government's plans to amend the Racial Discrimination Act (RDA).<sup>19</sup> This demonstrates the overwhelming success mainstream Jewish organisations lobbying strategies have had in influencing the government. This section will isolate specific strategies the mainstream groups employ and discuss how they were successful.

### *A. Coherent Unified Voice*

Due to the nature of the Holocaust and acts of anti-Semitism throughout history there is a strong sense of Jewish identity within the Jewish community.<sup>20</sup> This strong sense of identity positions the Jewish community to care deeply about Israel, as a symbolic homeland for all Jews from persecution.<sup>21</sup> Under the interest group theory, the Jewish community a relatively small group with a population of just over 100,000 in Australia form a focused group of voters on the issue of foreign policy towards Israel.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, decision-makers face a high risk of losing Jewish votes and support if they adopt a pro-Palestinian stance.

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<sup>17</sup> See, Ben Saul, 'It's about time Australia put pressure on Israel', *ABC The Drum*, 25 July 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Alexandra Kirk, 'Backlash to Brandis ruling out use of 'occupied' to describe Israeli settlements', *ABC News* (5 June 2014).

<sup>19</sup> Anthony Loewenstein, 'Australia not seeing East Jerusalem as occupied', *SBS TV News* (12 June 2014).

<sup>20</sup> Simon N. Herman, *Jewish Identity: A Social Psychological Perspective*, (Transaction Publishers, 1989), 105-7,

<sup>21</sup> Richard Falk, 'Israel and Jewish Identity', *Dialectical Anthropology* 8:1 (1983), 87-89.

<sup>22</sup> Dr. David Graham, 'The Jewish Population of Australia: The Key findings of 2011 Census', *Monash University Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation* (2014).

### B. Extensive Resources

Mainstream Jewish organisations support the Australian political system by providing large capital contributions to parties. Carr reported that Rudd had stated that around one fifth of the capital raised for the 2007 election campaign was derived from the Jewish community.<sup>23</sup> Mainstream Jewish organisations are heavily funded by wealthy Jewish businessman, such as Frank Lowy the founder of Westfield holdings.<sup>24</sup> Under the interest group theory, supplying large campaign contributions creates a relationship where the Jewish donors become an important stakeholder to parties.<sup>25</sup> To ensure future contributions that help garner votes in the next election major parties are pressured to maintain their pro-Israeli stance.<sup>26</sup>

These contributions are made to both major parties ensuring the federal government maintains a pro-Israeli position. In April 2014, Opposition Leader Bill Shorten spoke to the ZFA and stated that ‘some’ settlement activity in the West Bank is illegal.<sup>27</sup> The use of the word ‘some’ indicates that some settlement may not be illegal which contradicts Labor’s position that all settlements are illegal in accordance with international law.<sup>28</sup> Shorten’s statement reflects a desire to appease the conservative mainstream Jewish organisations and garner support for the next election. Overall, mainstream Jewish organisations have utilised their extensive resources to exert pressure and build strong networks within the Australian political system.<sup>29</sup> Bob Carr reports that the pro-Israeli lobbyists have a direct line to the

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<sup>23</sup> Michelle Grattan, ‘Carr sparks brawl over political influence of Melbourne Jewish Lobby’, *The Conversation*, 10 April 2014; Bob Carr, *Diary of a Foreign Minister*, (Sydney : NewSouth, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Kerry R Bolton, ‘The Zionist Lobby: Myth, Reality, or Mythic Reality?’ *Foreign Policy Journal* (January 12, 2015).

<sup>25</sup> Elisabeth R. Garbor, *Populist Paradox: Interest Group Influence and the Promise of Direct Legislation*, (Princeton University Press, 1999); Frank R. Baumgartner and Beth L. Leech, *Basic Interests: The Importance of Groups in Politics and Political Science*, (Princeton University Press, 1998), 14-16.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Raphael Aren, ‘Australia’s opposition chief: ‘Some’ settlement activity illegal’, *Times of Israel*, 7 April 2014.

<sup>28</sup> Gabrielle Chan, ‘Bill Shorten’s statement on Israeli settlements stirs Palestinian group’, *The Guardian*, 1 April 2014.

<sup>29</sup> See, Anthony Loewenstein, *My Israel Question*, (Melbourne University Press, 2006).

office of the Prime Minister.<sup>30</sup> This reinforces the notion that no matter the party in government the federal government will always uphold the pro-Israeli stance.

### C. Structured and Specialised

Mainstream Jewish organisations function within a structure, where groups have jurisdiction on different issues depending on the context of the incident.<sup>31</sup> This enables specialisation and groups to engineer strategies based on their specific target audiences, increasing the persuasiveness of the lobbying.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the organisations work together to exert pressure in different avenues and on different bodies, increasing the overall success of the lobbying.

For example, in 2015, Professor Jake Lynch from the University of Sydney engaged in a protest for the recognition of Palestine at a public lecture.<sup>33</sup> The incident occurred on university grounds therefore the Jewish Student Union (JSU) took on the responsibility to directly pressure the university by making a submission and petition to the University of Sydney calling for Lynch to be fired.<sup>34</sup> The JBD, as the state representative body, gave the JSU recommendations on writing a persuasive submission.<sup>35</sup> AIJAC, AJN and JBD continued to report on the issue to ensure adequate pressure was placed on the University of Sydney Vice-Chancellor, who is currently investigating the incident.<sup>36</sup> ECAJ, the federal roof body organisation continually highlighted the incident as an issue.<sup>37</sup> This case-study demonstrates

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<sup>30</sup> Jonathan Swan, 'Bob Carr's texts to Gillard reveal 'extraordinary' influence pro-Israel lobby had on former PM' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 April 2014; Bob Carr, *Diary of a Foreign Minister*, (Sydney : NewSouth, 2014).

<sup>31</sup> Personal Communication, Vic Alhadeff, NSW Jewish Board of Deputies Chief Executive Officer, April 13 2015.

<sup>32</sup> Frank R. Baumgartner and Beth L. Leech, *Basic Interests: The Importance of Groups in Politics and Political Science*, (Princeton University Press, 1998), 14.

<sup>33</sup> Glen Falkenstein, 'Antisemitism on Campus: Has Sydney University's Jake Lynch finally gone too far?', *ABC Religion and Ethics* (17 March 2015).

<sup>34</sup> Personal Communication, Vic Alhadeff, NSW Jewish Board of Deputies Chief Executive Officer, April 13 2015.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Personal Communication, Jeremy Jones, Director of International and Community Affairs AIJAC, April 13 2015; 'University of Sydney Issue', [nswjbd.org.au](http://nswjbd.org.au) <<http://atb.nswjbd.org/news/richard-kemp-incident/>> accessed 25 April 2015; 'Jake Lynch', *Jewishnews.net* <<http://www.jewishnews.net.au/tag/jake-lynch>> accessed 25 April 2015; Michael Spence, 'Message from Vice Chancellor: Concerns about Anti-Semitism on Campus', *Sydney.edu.au* <<http://sydney.edu.au/news/staff/2576.html?newsstoryid=14714>> (19 March 2015) accessed 15 April 2015.

<sup>37</sup> 'Colonel Richard Kemp CBE', [ecaj.org.au](http://www.ecaj.org.au) <<http://www.ecaj.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/kemp1.pdf>> accessed 25 April 2015.

how the mainstream Jewish organisations exerted pressure on different targeted decision-makers, increasing the success of the lobbying.

#### *D. Easily Mobilised*

Mainstream Jewish organisations mobilise resources efficiently to employ reactionary lobbying strategies that prevent the government from implementing policies adverse to their agenda. This is evident in the responses of mainstream Jewish organisations to the government's plan to amend the RDA. The proposed amendment to s18C made charging individuals for anti-Semitic conduct more difficult, thus the amendment was not in the Jewish community's interest.<sup>38</sup> ECAJ made a submission to the Attorney General's office stressing the deep flaws in the proposed amendments, in terms of human rights, Australia's international commitment and endangerment of Australia's multiculturalism.<sup>39</sup> Jewish organisations mobilised efficiently to incorporate other groups that opposed the amendment. The Jewish Community Council of Western Australia made a submission on behalf of 19 other minority and ethnic organisations including the Islamic Council of Western Australia.<sup>40</sup> Overall, mainstream Jewish organisations played a pivotal role in organising an effective opposition to the amendments to RDA.<sup>41</sup> Due to the strong opposition the Abbott government scrapped plans to amend the RDA even though this damaged the government's credibility for keeping election promises.<sup>42</sup> This example exposes the ability of Jewish organisations to mobilise efficiently and effectively in amassing resources and pressuring the government to change policies.

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<sup>38</sup> 'Repeal of Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act', *ecaj.org.au* < <http://www.ecaj.org.au/2014/repeal-of-section-18c-of-the-racial-discrimination-act/>> (25 March 2014) accessed 3 April 2015; Julie Nathan, '2014 Report on Anti-Semitism in Australia', (2014) *Executive Council of Australian Jewry*.

<sup>39</sup> 'Exposure Draft of Freedom of Speech (Repeal of s.18C) Bill 2014 (the Exposure Draft)', *ecaj.org.au* < [http://www.ecaj.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/freedom\\_of\\_speech\\_submission1.pdf](http://www.ecaj.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/freedom_of_speech_submission1.pdf)> (29 April 2014), accessed 3 April 2015.

<sup>40</sup> Steve Lieblich, 'Submission to the Attorney General on proposed reforms to the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 on behalf of 212,480 Australians', *Jewish Community Council of WA* (28 April 2014).

<sup>41</sup> Brenton Sanderson, 'Australian PM Caves into Jewish Lobby for Free Speech Laws', *Occidental Observer*, August 8 2014.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

### *E. Educating Influential Leaders*

Trips and programs to Israel are run to educate advisors, parliamentary members, human rights commissioners and student leaders of the Israeli government's perspective.<sup>43</sup> AIJAC runs the Rambam Israel Fellowship Program, which in 2014 the program took three Liberal members to Israel.<sup>44</sup> The JBD and the Parliamentary Friends of Israel in 2013 hosted a delegation of parliamentarians from NSW for a five-day trip to Israel.<sup>45</sup> The trips are engineered to build sympathies for Israeli's security dilemma.<sup>46</sup> One parliamentarian stated that "visiting Israel is the best education for any parliamentarian. I got an immediate appreciation of the urgency that Israel's geography created regarding threats from bordering nations."<sup>47</sup> This demonstrates the success of the trips to Israel in exposing leaders to Israel's plight and garner sympathies for Israel. One politician stated that after meeting with an Israel Defence Force spokesperson about the security fence, they returned with the opinion that others were wrong and the fence was not a land grab.<sup>48</sup> This comment demonstrates the success of the trips in altering opinions that contradict their perspective. Overall, the trips to Israel provide leaders with a profound experience that positions leaders to view the issue through an Israeli lens.

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<sup>43</sup> Anthony Loewenstein, 'Bob Carr was right to start a debate on the influence of the Zionist lobby', *The Guardian*, 15 April 2014.

<sup>44</sup> 'About' *aijac.org.au* < <http://www.aijac.org.au/about-aijac/> > accessed 1 April 2015; Phoebe Roth, 'Pollies Praise Israel', *Australian Jewish News*, June 24 2014.

<sup>45</sup> 'Parliamentary Friends of Israel Study Tour', <[http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Prod/parlment/hansart.nsf/V3Key/LC20130228011?open&refNavID=HA8\\_1](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Prod/parlment/hansart.nsf/V3Key/LC20130228011?open&refNavID=HA8_1)> (28 February 2013) accessed 24 April 2015.

<sup>46</sup> Anthony Loewenstein, 'Bob Carr was right to start a debate on the influence of the Zionist lobby', *The Guardian*, 15 April 2014.

<sup>47</sup> Walter Secord, 'Australia/Israel Jewish Affairs Council', *parliament.nsw.gov.au* < <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/hansart.nsf/V3Key/LC20120904048> > (4 September 2012) accessed 4 April 2015.

<sup>48</sup> Alan Tudge, 'Briefing from Rambam Fellows', *ICJS-online.org* < <http://www.icjs-online.org/indarch.php?article=194> > (April 18 2005) accessed 1 April 2015.

## Chapter II: Influencing the Media

This chapter will examine the strategies that mainstream Jewish organisations employ to ensure their agenda dominates Australian media. The media is an important target audience for lobby groups since it shapes the public discourse about Israel and Palestine, which is the foundation of policy choices by decision-makers.<sup>49</sup> Firstly, this section will examine the mechanisms employed by the mainstream Jewish organisations to pressure Australian media outlets to ensure the Israeli perspective leads the agenda of reporting. Secondly, Jewish organisations use the anti-semitic charge to discredit and marginalise pro-Palestinian views.

### *A. Pressuring the media*

To a large extent the media echoes a pro-Israeli perspective that emphasises the importance of Israel as a strategic asset and garners sympathy for Israel's moral case. This can be partly attributed to lobbying strategies employed by mainstream Jewish organisations that target influential media outlets. Organisations such as AJN and AIJAC have positioned themselves as the first point of contact for mainstream media outlets. AIJAC representative Jeremy Jones, states that he is frequently in contact with media outlets for comments or to clarify facts on various matters.<sup>50</sup> This demonstrates that AIJAC has built a network connections that consistently seek and report on AIJAC's perspective on matters.

The lobby's strong ties with the mainstream media are demonstrated by their ability to pressure media outlets to penalise those who go against their agenda. This is evident in 2014 when journalist Mike Carlton of the Sydney Morning Herald (SMH) resigned after being suspended for posting a comment in response to a reader calling them a 'Jewish bigot.'<sup>51</sup> At first, the matter was being dealt with by the Editor-in-Chief who was preparing an apology with Carlton.<sup>52</sup> However, due to external pressure the issue went up to the higher authorities and Fairfax's Director of News and Business ordered Carlton's suspension. Carlton resigned in response to the suspension.<sup>53</sup> The way the matter was dealt with indicates that the Jewish lobby's influence had the ability to affect the internal workings of SMH. Carlton reported that

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<sup>49</sup> John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007) 168-169.

<sup>50</sup> Personal Communication, Jeremy Jones, Director of International and Community Affairs AIJAC, April 13 2015.

<sup>51</sup> Joshua Levi, 'Carlton quits SMH', *The Australian Jewish News*, 6 August 2014.

<sup>52</sup> 'Sydney Morning Herald columnist Mike Carlton resigns following furore over Gaza column', *ABC*, 7 August 2014.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

he believed that SMH “buckled” to the pressure of the pro-Israel lobby.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, in response to Carlton’s comment and a Jewish cartoon in SMH, Avstev Group, a company who bought advertisements in SMH, expressed its withdrawal of advertisement.<sup>55</sup> This places pressure on Fairfax to prevent these incidents that undermine the mainstream Jewish community’s agenda, as there could be consequences to their profit margin. Therefore, this demonstrates that there is substantial pressure on the media from the Jewish organisation and the community to not contradict their agenda.

Furthermore, the coverage of the Gaza conflict in 2014 demonstrates how the lobby has created a relatively pro-Israeli bias in mainstream media outlets. This bias in the media has been created by the strong networks the Jewish community has built. Firstly, the conflict was relatively under-reported.<sup>56</sup> Secondly, upon close examination of the content of the Gaza coverage there was a bias to an extent to show Israeli’s rationale and justifications for the bombardment.<sup>57</sup> This report will note that not all mainstream media outlets shown this extent of bias such as SBS and ABC. However, papers such as the SMH and The Age demonstrated a strong pro-Israeli bias of coverage of the conflict.<sup>58</sup> In The Age, opinion pieces were dominated by articles that claimed the conflict was brought on by both sides and continued by both sides.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, The Age had a sizeable representative sample of articles garnering sympathy for Israel’s unique security dilemma.<sup>60</sup> SMH reports included those that suggest that the Gaza solution “can only come from within”,<sup>61</sup> attributing blame to Hamas,

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<sup>54</sup> ‘Sydney Morning Herald columnist Mike Carlton resigns following furore over Gaza column’, *ABC*, 7 August 2014.

<sup>55</sup> Joshua Levi, ‘Carlton quits SMH’, *The Australian Jewish News*, 6 August 2014.

<sup>56</sup> Jeremy Beecham, ‘Setting the agenda in coverage of Gaza and MH17’, *The Guardian*, 24 July 2014.

<sup>57</sup> Evan Jones, ‘The Fairfax press and the Gaza massacre Part II(a)’, *independentaustralia.net* < <https://independentaustralia.net/article-display/the-fairfax-press-and-the-gaza-massacre-part-ii-a,6888>> (12 September 2014) accessed 14 April 2015; Evan Jones, ‘The Gaza massacre, MH17 and the faux Fairfax foreign affairs narrative’, *independentaustralia.net* < <https://independentaustralia.net/article-display/the-gaza-massacre-mh17-and-the-faux-fairfax-foreign-affairs-narrative,6696>> (22 July 2014) accessed 14 April 2015.

<sup>58</sup> Evan Jones, ‘The Fairfax press and the Gaza massacre Part II(a)’, *independentaustralia.net* < <https://independentaustralia.net/article-display/the-fairfax-press-and-the-gaza-massacre-part-ii-a,6888>> (12 September 2014) accessed 14 April 2015.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, ‘In the new world disorder, a Gaza solution can only come from within’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 July 2014.



and some articles were critical of the lack of coverage of rockets hitting Israeli cities even though there were no casualties from these rockets.<sup>62</sup>

*“One has to credit a military juggernaut and a covertly nuclear state for its success in framing itself as a victim even as it bombs a largely defenseless population. Even as Israel plays warden over Gaza, which has been described as the world’s largest open-air prison, it perpetuates the myth that it is a state perpetually fighting for its survival.”*<sup>63</sup>

This quote expresses the overwhelming success of manipulating the coverage of the Gaza bombardment. Mainstream Jewish organisations have successfully lobbied to ensure their narrative dominates the coverage of the Gaza conflict or at the very least provides a diversion from the facts.

### *B. The charge of Anti-Semitism*

The lobby’s rhetorical defense of equating anti-Zionism or criticism of Israel as anti-Semitic has created an effective political weapon to stifle an open free discussion of the conflict.<sup>64</sup> Modern anti-Semitism does persist in Australia evident with graffiti, vandalism with anti-Semitic slurs, and continual threats to synagogues, Jewish schools and other community structures.<sup>65</sup> Anti-Semitism is defined as hatred of Jews, for what they are and not for what they have done or do.<sup>66</sup> Due to the experiences and strong community sense of Jewish people there has been an automatic alignment of Jewish and upholding Israel’s legitimacy.<sup>67</sup> This has led to a blurred distinction between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism.<sup>68</sup> Jewish organisations have manipulated the anti-Semitic label to establish a rhetorical shield of defense for Israel’s actions and impose a political charge on those who question these actions.

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<sup>62</sup> Evan Jones, ‘The Gaza massacre, MH17 and the faux Fairfax foreign affairs narrative’, *independentaustralia.net* < <https://independentaustralia.net/article-display/the-gaza-massacre-mh17-and-the-faux-fairfax-foreign-affairs-narrative.6696>> (22 July 2014) accessed 14 April 2015; ‘Reports from Gaza need a more balance perspective’, *The Australian*, 26 July 2014.

<sup>63</sup> Randa Abdel-Fattah, ‘How language changes views of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over Gaza’ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 July 2014.

<sup>64</sup> Edward C. Corrigan, ‘Is Anti-Zionism Anti-Semitic? Jewish Critics Speak’, *Middle East Policy* 16:4 (2009), 146.

<sup>65</sup> Anthony Loewenstein, *My Israel Question*, (Melbourne University Press, 2006) 117.

<sup>66</sup> Edward C. Corrigan, ‘Is Anti-Zionism Anti-Semitic? Jewish Critics Speak’, *Middle East Policy* 16:4 (2009), 146.

<sup>67</sup> Anthony Loewenstein, *My Israel Question*, (Melbourne University Press, 2006) 69-78.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 113.

The misuse of anti-Semitism is clearly evident in the way The Australian has characterised the Boycott Divest and Sanction (BDS) Movement. The BDS movement is a peaceful non-violent method to coerce Israel into following the international law by opposing institutions and bodies that uphold Israeli actions.<sup>69</sup> In 2013, Shurat HaDin Israel Law Center took Jake Lynch to Australian Federal Court over a breach of the RDA.<sup>70</sup> SILC claimed that Lynch's refusal to sponsor a fellowship application of an Israeli academic from the Hebrew University due to the university having links with the establishment of illegal settlements was anti-Semitic.<sup>71</sup> This was a form of the BDS movement. Overall the story was relatively ignored, ABC did a brief segment on the issue and Fairfax Media did not run the story.<sup>72</sup> The Australian published countless stories that associated anti-Semitism and the support for the BDS movement.<sup>73</sup> For example, after a bashing in Sydney of a Jewish man, The Australian published a Holocaust survivor on the front cover and embedded within the article was a discussion on BDS.<sup>74</sup> There is no correlation between the physical assault of a man and the BDS movement which is a peaceful non-violent form of protest. However, this is just one attempt of many where the media has tried to form a correlation in people's mind that anti-Semitic views are reflected in anti-Zionist attitudes.<sup>75</sup> By establishing this link, Jewish organisations can use the label of anti-Semitism as a political charge. This strategy successfully positions anti-Zionism reports as controversial and most likely to incur backlash of being labeled anti-Semitic. Therefore the strategy successfully prohibits an open discussion of all viewpoints.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> 'Introducing the BDS Movement', *bdsmovement.net* <<http://www.bdsmovement.net/bdsintro>> accessed 10 May 2015.

<sup>70</sup> Nick Rowbotham, 'Lynch lives to BDS another day', *honisoit.com* <<http://honisoit.com/2014/07/lynch-lives-to-bds-another-day/>> (29 July 2014) accessed 28 April 2015.

<sup>71</sup> Anthony Loewenstein, 'To support the boycott, divestment and sanction movement is not anti-Semitic', *The Guardian*, 7 November 2013.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid; Nick Rowbotham, 'Lynch lives to BDS another day', *honisoit.com* <<http://honisoit.com/2014/07/lynch-lives-to-bds-another-day/>> (29 July 2014) accessed 28 April 2015.

<sup>73</sup> Anthony Loewenstein, 'To support the boycott, divestment and sanction movement is not anti-Semitic', *The Guardian*, 7 November 2013.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> See, Anthony Loewenstein, *My Israel Question*, (Melbourne University Press, 2006) 119.

### Chapter III: Challenges to Mainstream Jewish Organisations

This chapter will discuss current challenges the mainstream Jewish organisation faces and how these challenges reflect flaws in their lobbying strategies.

#### A. *Growing pro-Palestine stance in factions of the Labor Party*

There is a growing faction in Australian politics that support a more balanced approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict and are willing to recognise Palestine's statehood.<sup>77</sup> In 2012, Australia abstained from a vote for upgrading the status of Palestine in the UN.<sup>78</sup> Reports show that Gillard desired to vote against the upgrade, however due to strong pressure from her party especially within the cabinet, Australia abstained from the vote.<sup>79</sup> This received heavy backlash from Jewish groups who demanded a meeting with the Premier to express their grievances with the decision.<sup>80</sup> However, this strategy failed to target the group that caused Australia to abstain. In 2015, there are speculations that the Labor Party will conduct a vote to determine whether the party recognises Palestine's statehood in the Federal Conference in July.<sup>81</sup> This demonstrates the lobby's failure to target and persuade the growing factions of their agenda.

#### B. *Publicity of the disproportionate influence of Jewish organisations*

Recently, the disproportionate influence that Jewish groups hold within the Australian political system has been highly publicised, consequently depicting a negative image of the Jewish community that could undermine the lobbying of their agenda. Bob Carr's autobiography depicts the Jewish lobby especially the right-winged organisations as tyrants' subcontracting Australian foreign policy.<sup>82</sup> This characterisation fuels a perception that the Jewish community through capital is inducing the government to adopt their agenda. This publicity exposes that Palestinians case stands on an uneven playing field which could garner

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<sup>77</sup> Katharine Murphy, 'Labor party NSW right faction in push for stronger resolution on Palestine', *The Guardian*, 24 April 2015.

<sup>78</sup> Alexandra Kirk, 'Australia to abstain from Palestinian vote', *ABC*, 27 November 2012.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Jim W. Dean, 'Jewish Lobby Bullying Exposed in Australia', *Veterans Today*, 29 November 2012.

<sup>81</sup> James Massola and Deborah Snow, 'Palestinian Foreign Minister welcomes possible Labor shift over state recognition', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 May 2015.

<sup>82</sup> Lenore Taylor, 'Bob Carr diaries: foreign policy was subcontracted to Jewish donors', *The Guardian*, 9 April 2014.

more sympathy from the public and parliamentarians for the Palestinian cause. Jewish organisations have responded to publicity to their disproportionate influence by denying the validity of statements and discrediting sources such as Carr.<sup>83</sup> However, the Jewish organisations' responses fail to mitigate the perception that the Jewish lobby exerts overwhelming control over the government and reports citing Carr as a source persist.

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<sup>83</sup> See, Mark Leibler, Bob Carr's 'Israel lobby' claims inaccurate, bizarre', *AIJAC*, 11 April 2014.

## Chapter IV: Pro-Palestinian Jewish Organisations

### A. Human Rights Emphasis

Pro-Palestinian Jewish organisations stress the promotion of human rights for all, which increases the legitimacy of their agenda of promoting Palestinians rights aligned with Israeli. For example, The IJAV's original declaration states a commitment to recognition of "the legitimate national aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians with a solution that protects the human rights of all."<sup>84</sup> This reference to promoting human rights is not isolated to the Israel-Palestine conflict but to wider societal issues. Robin Rothfield a representative from the AJDS stressed that his organisation is committed to a range of human rights issues including asylum seeker treatment and Aboriginal rights.<sup>85</sup> By widening the scope of their engagement, the pro-Palestinian organisations are actively aligning the conflict of Israel-Palestine as a human rights issue. The pro-Palestinian groups attempt to engage the Jewish community by emphasising that human rights are particularly important to Jews as the experience of the Holocaust has posed an obligation on Jews to prevent gross human rights abuses.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, similarly to mainstream lobby groups the pro-Palestinian groups use the experience of the Jews to manipulate a greater commitment to their agenda. Moreover, pro-Palestinian groups emphasize that Israel's disregard for international law and human rights is detrimental to Israel's national interest in the long term.<sup>87</sup> This strategy helps mitigate criticism that the pro-Palestinian viewpoint is anti-Israel and anti-Jew. The pro-Palestinian groups employ these strategies through an educational campaign that organises public presentations that provide a platform for pro-Palestinian views to be explored.<sup>88</sup> The organisations also organise and participate in fundraising, film screenings, demonstrations and Jewish community events.<sup>89</sup>

### B. Challenges

Pro-Palestinian Jewish organisations face many challenges which deter the degree of influence they can exert. Mainstream Jewish communities have marginalised pro-Palestinian organisations by dubbing them as "self-hating Jews." This label discredits the legitimacy of

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<sup>84</sup> 'Original IAJV declaration', < <https://iajv99.wordpress.com/sign-the-declaration/original-iajv-declaration/> > accessed 1 April 2015.

<sup>85</sup> Personal Communication Robin Rothfield, *AJDS representative*, April 15 2015.

<sup>86</sup> See generally, *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

the organisation's mandate and ostracizes them from the Jewish community. For example, IAJV launched an online petition demanding for a more open debate on the Israel-Palestine conflict.<sup>90</sup> In response, a counter-petition was created accusing IAJV of 'anti-Israel bashing.'<sup>91</sup> AIJAC and AJN continually reported on IAJV's lack of legitimacy and claimed that IAJV was exploiting their ethnicity to promote anti-Israel sentiment.<sup>92</sup> These reports undermine the legitimacy of the pro-Palestinian organisations views especially within the Jewish community.

Furthermore, the pro-Palestinian organisations face internal structural challenges and a lack of resources. AJDS is heavily reliant on promoting its agenda and events on Facebook.<sup>93</sup> This is an ineffective marketing strategy to reach a wider audience, as it is reliant on individuals liking the AJDS's page. While IAJV does not have formal members or a process of collective decision-making.<sup>94</sup> This internal structure poses challenges in the organisation's capacity to grow and gain legitimacy on a larger platform. For example, when IAJV circulated a second petition there was less support.<sup>95</sup> This could be due to the lack of structure that engages with original signatories. Danny Lamm, President of ZFA stated that the IAJV has lost support from many high ranking members exposing their lack of legitimacy.<sup>96</sup> The lack of structure, resources and labels of being anti-Jew overall undermines the legitimacy of pro-Palestinian Jewish organisations' agenda and the effectiveness of their lobbying strategies.

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<sup>90</sup> Emma Alberici, 'Jewish calls for open debate of Israeli Palestinian conflict', *ABC*, 6 March 2007.

<sup>91</sup> Jonathan Pearlman, 'Aussie Jewish group balks at pro-Israel bias', *The Jerusalem Report*, 2 April 2007, 1.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Personal Communication Robin Rothfield, *AJDS representative*, April 15 2015.

<sup>94</sup> 'About', *iajv.wordpress.com* < <https://iajv99.wordpress.com/about/>> accessed 25 April 2015.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Danny Lamm, 'Israel is taking all the right steps on the pathway to peace', *The Age*, 7 April 2008.

## **Recommendations**

### *1. Cooperation with AJDS and IAJV to address the charge of anti-Semitism*

An initiative should be formed with the Palestinian organisations such as Australia Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN), AJDS and IAJV to educate the public and the media of the true meaning of anti-Semitism and the difference between any Israeli policies and anti-Semitism. This could be done in the form of public presentations and building networks with media sources. It is necessary to work with AJDS and IAJV as this will increase the legitimacy of the initiative. The initiative must re-frame the Australian public discourse to acknowledge the current misalignment of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. This initiative should emphasise that labels of ‘anti-Semitism’ and ‘self-hating Jews’ are often used to stall an open debate and resolution. Furthermore, the initiative should establish that the misuse of these labels exploits the Holocaust experience in a disrespectful and highly inappropriate way. This helps increase the legitimacy of the initiative and could garner more Jewish support. Once the accurate meaning of anti-Semitism dominates public discourse there will be more opportunities for an open candid discussion on facts and not rhetoric. This will lead to more questioning of the validity of Israel’s policies and whether they align with Australia’s national interests and values.

### *2. Exposing the Jewish lobby’s disproportionate influence*

The Palestinian community and advocacy groups lack resources in terms of capital and manpower to implement strategies similar to Jewish organisations. Therefore, this paper recommends that the Palestinian community focus on exposing the disproportionate influence the Jewish lobby have on the political process and decision-making. Using Bob Carr’s book as a catalyst the community should employ strategies that expose the overly powerful nature of the Jewish lobby. This would establish the context of the uneven platform Palestinians stand on. This could garner more sympathy from the public and parliamentarians. Furthermore, this may urge parliamentary members to adopt a more balanced approach, as they do not want to be controlled by lobby groups.

### *3. Overall strengthening of relations with Jewish organisations*

The GDOP should strengthen its relations with pro-Palestinian Jewish organisations by forming joint initiatives, and events together. Strong relations with pro-Palestinian Jewish organisations is one step forward to building a structure that can exert pressure in different avenues similar to mainstream Jewish organisations. On other hand, the GDOP should implement a gradual consultative process with mainstream Jewish organisations to ensure

there is a level of cooperation and understanding between the groups. Due to the nature of the Israel-Palestine conflict the formation of a sustainable resolution is dependent on cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians.



## **Conclusion**

Mainstream Jewish organisations successfully alter the alignment of public opinion and government policy. Through various lobbying strategies that have been isolated in this paper mainstream Jewish organisations induce decision-makers to maintain Australia's staunch pro-Israeli stance. These organisations position themselves to ensure the mainstream media outlets to an extent do not contradict their agenda. Pro-Palestinian Jewish organisations actively promote human rights for all including Palestinians, however due to lack of resources their strategies do not exert considerable influence. The paper has sought to provide new research in isolating strategies, and showing the strategies employed by Jewish organisations from a full spectrum of views. However, more research must be conducted. Due to constraints, this research was unable to examine the ways Jewish organisations interact with groups in Israel and even the US. I recommend that future scholars examine the interactions of Jewish organisations across the world and how organisations differ from country.

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