

Executive Council of Australian Jewry

The Representative
Organisation of
Australian Jewry



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MEDIA RELEASE

ECAJ CONDEMNS UK UNION'S ACADEMIC BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL

Grahame Leonard, President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), the elected representative organisation of the Australian Jewish community, said today:

"The Executive Council of Australian Jewry condemns in the strongest possible terms the resolution passed by Britain's National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE), which calls for a boycott of Israeli academics and Israeli academic institutions not publicly stating their opposition to the Israeli Government's policies in the Palestinian Territories.

"NATFHE has strongly criticised the Iraq War yet has not sought to bully American or Australian academics into voicing their opposition. Neither does it demand that its own members have to "stand up and be counted" on this or other political issues. Has NATFHE proposed to isolate chronic violators of human rights such as China, Syria, Cuba and Saudi Arabia? That NATFHE singles out Israel for such treatment - particularly when it is actively seeking a solution to Palestinian woes, as demonstrated by its disengagement from Gaza - can only be seen as racist.

"If NATFHE really is concerned about helping the Palestinians, it should be encouraging dialogue and cooperation with Israelis. Blacklisting academics and institutions in the only democratic country in the Middle East will surely set back the Palestinian cause, and possibilities for improved relations between Israel and its neighbours."

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