

# Executive Council of Australian Jewry Inc.

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## **ECAJ Welcomes President Bush's Remarks on Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the peak body of the Australian Jewish community, has welcomed the Bush Administration's efforts to advance Arab-Israeli reconciliation and to make progress toward resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. ECAJ acting president Anton Block made the following observations:

“Like most Australians, Australian Jews have long been committed to an independent Palestinian state, existing in peace and security side by side with the Jewish state of Israel. President Bush's program – which calls for renunciation of terror by Palestinian factions, fulfillment of security pledges by the Palestinian Authority, Israeli adherence to commitments on the removal of illegal outposts and the release of Palestinian tax revenues, a new U.S. aid package to help bolster Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and an international meeting under U.S. auspices – will help stabilise the region and normalise political relations.

President's Bush's urging of Arab states to establish political relations with Israel and to end anti-Israel incitement in regional media is a significant initiative. The Arab states have done too little for too long. Israel and the international community have been almost entirely responsible for pushing the Palestinians toward peace, while the Arab states have at best sat back and at worst encouraged radicalism and antisemitism.

Following horrific violence between Palestinian factions, and in the face of larger security threats from a re-armed Hezbollah and an Iran intent on acquiring nuclear weapons capability, President Bush's proposal seeks to advance Israel's security and well-being and resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through the peaceful establishment of a Palestinian state

The ECAJ, which supports a two-state solution and has actively encouraged dialogue between Jews and Muslims through its interfaith work, support this undertaking by President Bush, while fully recognising the immense challenges that lie ahead.”

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