



Executive Council
of Australian Jewry Inc.

MEDIA STATEMENT

14 May 2019

FEDERAL ELECTION 2019: Where do the parties stand on matters affecting the Australian Jewish community?

As has been our practice for a number of years, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry has written to the leaders of the Coalition, the Australian Labor Party and the Australian Greens ahead of the upcoming federal election seeking their positions on policies and issues of particular interest to the Australian Jewish community.

The topics covered by the questions reflect the concerns of our community as observed by the ECAJ from our position as the peak representative body of the Australian Jewish community, which engages with Jewish communities and over 200 Jewish organisations throughout the country. These topics are highly diverse – from combating antisemitism in challenging times, to foreign policy and support for Israel, communal security and religious freedoms.

The full responses provided by each party can be found on our website:

We wish to thank the party leaders and their staffs for responding to our questions in a substantive and timely manner which will help us to ensure that Jewish Australians are informed about crucial policies and positions on matters they care deeply about.

Key findings:

Protecting our community

Both Labor and the Coalition have pledged \$55 million in Round 4 of the Safer Communities Fund Scheme towards protecting religious schools and places of worship where there are security risks to children. Labor has vowed to “work with Jewish schools and community organisations to ensure their security needs are met.”

Antisemitism

All three parties surveyed have affirmed a commitment to combatting antisemitism. The Greens however have stated that they “have not formally endorsed the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.”

Jerusalem

Labor has vowed to reverse the Morrison Government’s recognition of west Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state

The Coalition’s position is that “... aspirations for Palestinian statehood can only be realised through direct negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel.”

Labor reiterated “... the desire of the [last ALP National] Conference to recognise Palestine as a State while acknowledging this will ultimately be a matter for a future Labor Government.”

The Greens “support the recognition of a Palestinian state”.

Anti-Israel Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions

Labor has stated that it “has always opposed BDS” and has condemned it as a “policy of exclusion”.

The Coalition has denounced BDS as “anti-Semitic”.

The Greens have confirmed that BDS “is not Australian Greens policy.”

United Nations

The Coalition has pledged to “stand with Israel in the face of biased and unfair targeting in the UN General Assembly.”

Labor and the Greens will examine every UN resolution “on its merits”. Labor will also be guided by its commitment to “support for a two-state solution and support for the peace process.”

Religious Freedom

All parties surveyed have affirmed the basic principle of religious freedom. The Greens have expressed support for a “charter of rights” to resolve inconsistencies between religious and other freedoms. Labor and the Coalition have expressed broad support for the findings of the Ruddock Review.

No party surveyed has any plans to propose changes to laws on male circumcision (brit milah). The Greens support “stunning of animals before slaughter”, which is incompatible with kosher slaughter.

Electorate of Wentworth

Given that the seat of Wentworth has a sizeable Jewish community and a sitting member who does not belong to one of the parties surveyed, we have also afforded the Member for Wentworth the opportunity to respond to our questionnaire and for the Liberal, Labor and Greens candidates in Wentworth to affirm or augment their party responses, as appropriate. We expect to publish these responses shortly.

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