



Stop the Israeli Occupation of Palestinian Territory

The CFMEU has adopted a position to boycott products and services (BDS) made or offered by Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This stand was taken to highlight Israel's continuing land grab through settlement construction and expansion, strongly condemned by the U.N. and governments of the world including the U.S. administration.



It was also adopted as part of peaceful resistance measures to Israel's intransigence and ongoing breaches of international law, humanitarian law and UN resolutions. These breaches threaten the peace process and the internationally recognised two-state solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and leave the region, indeed the world, teetering at the edge of disaster.

In Australia, as well as internationally, a similar stand was taken by a huge multitude of organisations and individuals including political groupings, churches, unions, associations and NGOs. Some organisations and individuals took a stand in support of a total BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) against all Israeli products and services. All this has become an international movement of conscience against the Israeli government's endless breaches of international and humanitarian law that are very well documented on a daily basis. In the UK, products of Israeli settlements carry a label stating that fact to give consumers an educated choice.



Recently, Marrickville Council in Sydney had taken a similar position of principle by resolving to adopt BDS. As a result, it has been, and continues to be, subjected to a systematic campaign by the Israel lobby in Australia. This has taken the form of a flood of protest letters to the councillors of Marrickville from local and interstate sources, protest letters to NSW federal and state ministers and MPs, media appearances by Israel's lobby spokespersons including the ABC

News, mobilising opposition within the Council's boundaries and targeting the local and NSW press.

The issue of boycott is by no means a matter for only the federal government or foreign affairs. It is an act of conscience by individuals, communities, civil society and other organisations. Peaceful popular boycott of the apartheid regime in South Africa had long preceded official government action. Boycott is a tool that all humanity and all organisations can use in working peacefully to bring justice to the people of Palestine.

It is important that we support democratic process and, among other things, defend the rights of councils and other bodies to take principled stands on issues of international and humanitarian law, particularly when our major political parties in government and opposition are lagging way behind the rest of the world on this issue.

Marrickville Council must not be allowed to get isolated and defeated on this issue. Somewhere, somehow, a line has to be drawn in defence of those who are for justice and peace and dare to speak out.

