

Embassy of the State of Palestine

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



INTERN POLICY REPORT

**The ALP and Palestine: An Assessment of Differing Australian Labor Party Views
on the Issue of Recognition of the State of Palestine and the Likelihood of a
Resolution Calling for Immediate Recognition passing at the National Conference
in July 2018**

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Executive Summary

The question of recognition for a Palestinian state has become a central element of the historic Israel-Palestine conflict. As a peaceful two-state solution looks increasingly distant and as the international community becomes concerned over the Israeli settlements and growing humanitarian crisis, a push for self-determination amongst Palestinians has emerged that demands their own internationally recognised state.

This report seeks to address an upcoming resolution at the 2018 Australian Labor Party National Conference that would see a future Labor government unilaterally recognise Palestine. It delivers an analysis of the potential dialogue at the conference, utilising the range of views within the party, as well as notable influential factors. Research methods employed were primarily interviews with Labor members, complemented by secondary literature and government sources.

This report finds that a change in thinking has emerged within the party. Some members are increasingly concerned by the human rights record of the occupied territories, the Israeli settlements and the failure of the peace process. Findings suggest the resolution is somewhat likely to pass given these concerns, hinging on how the resolution is framed and how effectively domestic obstacles are tackled, such as factional-based voting and powerful lobby groups.

Four recommendations are provided to the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific:

1. Tell the stories of Palestinians. Many members interviewed spoke of how affected they were by hearing about the reality of life on the ground.
2. Stress the urgency and frame the resolution as being at a critical moment for the conflict and for the Palestinian people.
3. Employ greater coordination amongst lobby groups. Provide one fact sheet amongst all groups that contains relevant information to be distributed to ALP members. Use social media to enhance the lobbying process.
4. Ask Ambassadors from states that have recognised Palestine to help participate. This will foster the sense of being among 'like-minded states'.

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Figure 1: Map of States that Recognise the State of Palestine

Abbreviations

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
APAN	Australian Palestine Advocacy Network
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ECAJ	Executive Council of Australian Jewry
EU	European Union
MP	Member of Parliament
NSW	New South Wales
QLD	Queensland
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States of America
PNC	Palestinian National Council
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation

Introduction

The Israel-Palestine conflict remains one of the most durable of the last 70 years. The conflict has emerged as one between two nations seeking to define themselves in a contested zone. The Palestinian cause has increasingly become about self-determination, and one of its central goals is international recognition. Whilst Israel maintains recognition of a Palestinian state will come as a product of bilateral negotiations, states are turning to unilateral recognition as a method of empowering Palestinian negotiators, re-energising negotiations and challenging the rise of Israeli settlements.

This report focuses on an upcoming resolution at the 2018 ALP National Conference that proposes recognition of Palestine by a future Labor government. This report will firstly analyse the range of ALP views on this resolution, including arguments given for particular views. It will then consider the central influences on ALP stances on recognition in the lead up to the conference and assess which are likely to impede the passing of the resolution. Finally, this report will conclude the likelihood of the resolution passing and provide recommendations to the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand the Pacific on influencing the outcome.

Methodology

In order to consider the full range of ALP views on recognition, this report primarily uses interviews conducted with a spread of ALP members. The qualitative data from these interviews allows analysis of the dialogue on both the issue of recognition and the upcoming resolution. In support of these interviews, secondary literature on the question of recognition, the two-state solution and Australia's historic role in the region is utilised to further inform the analysis. Secondary literature is also employed regarding developments in Europe and the US on the question of recognition.

Chapter One: Background

1.1 Context of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Conflict between Israel and Palestine erupted at the birth of Israel in May 1948, causing war with the Arab world. At the end of this war, Israel occupied 78% of the original Palestinian mandate¹. During a subsequent war in 1967, Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, meaning many Palestinians were now under Israeli occupation. This situation has remained largely unchanged since 1967. Negotiations have been attempted, notably during the 1993/1995 Oslo Accords. The peace process envisages a two-state solution, which would see the eventual creation of a Palestinian state. Yet, time and time again, negotiations have broken down and the conflict has become increasingly violent.

The domestic situation in the OPT does little to facilitate peace. This is due to an increasingly hard-line Israeli administration whose settlers in the OPT have swelled to 600,000². These settlements have been declared illegal under UNSC Resolution 2334³. There is also increasing concern for the treatment of Palestinians living in the OPT, whose economic freedom is curbed by the occupation⁴. Negotiations are further hindered by fractures in Palestinian governance, mostly due to the separation of the Palestinian territories. A 2006 election saw the election of Islamist party *Hamas*, causing a split with the largest faction of the PLO, *Fatah*⁵. The *Hamas-Fatah* split has caused an inability to negotiate effectively to Israel, as well as internal Palestinian grievances⁶.

1.2 The Growing Dialogue on Recognition

The most potent question to come out of the conflict in recent years has been over recognition of Palestine. Palestinians increasingly strive for self-determination. This manifested in the creation of the PLO in 1964, the political representative of Palestine⁷. In November 1988 the PNC

¹ Oren Yiftachel, "Territory as a Kernel of the Nation: Space, Time, and Nationalism in Israel/ Palestine". In *Peace Processes and Peace Accords*, edited by Samir Kumar Das, New Delhi, California and London: Sage Publications, 2005: 71

² Hady Amr et al., "New Approaches to Israel-Palestine Peace: Can Regional Powers Make a Difference?" *Middle East Policy* 24, no.2, (July 2017): 7.

³ United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution 2334*, December 23, 2016, <http://www.un.org/webcast/pdfs/SRES2334-2016.pdf>

⁴ Tanya Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere: Israel/Palestine since 2003*, London and New York: Verso, 2006, 55.

⁵ Ibid 144.

⁶ Riad Kahwaji in Amr et al., "New Approaches to Israel-Palestine Peace", 17-18

⁷ Yiftachel, "Territory as a Kernel of the Nation", 74.

declared the establishment of a Palestinian State⁸. The Oslo Accords were perhaps the first time the peace process had dealt specifically with recognition; Palestine afforded Israel recognition, relinquishing their claim to the original mandate, whereas Israel recognised the PLO as the *representative* of Palestinians⁹.

Much Palestinian discontent stems from the inequality of the negotiations and the politicisation of recognition, which has led to an internationalisation of the issue. The belief is that international recognition will aid territorial compromise¹⁰. As of 2018, 70.5% of UN member states recognise Palestine¹¹. Since 2012, Palestine has the status of ‘non-member observer state’ in the UNGA¹².



Figure 1: Map of states that recognise The State of Palestine¹³

⁸ Ogen S. Goldman. 'Between Self-Interest and International Norms: Legitimising the PLO', *Israel Affairs* 19, no. 2, (2013): 372.

⁹ Yiftachel, "Territory as a Kernel of the Nation", 85

¹⁰ Nadav G. Shelef and Yael Zeira "Recognition Matters: UN States Status and Attitudes Toward Territorial Compromise", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61, no.3 (2017): 537.

¹¹ Ali Al-Arian and Mohsin Ali, "Palestine: Growing Recognition", *Al-Jazeera*, January 15, 2017, <<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2017/01/palestine-growing-recognition-170115201330185.html>>

¹² Shelef and Yael, "Recognition Matters", 86.

¹³ Ishaan Tharoor, "Map: The Countries that Recognise Palestine as a State", *The Washington Post*, November 7, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/11/07/map-the-countries-that-recognize-palestine-as-a-state/?utm_term=.df4b9ae2c67f

1.3 Australian Involvement and Perspective

Australian involvement in the conflict has reflected its support for international organisations. Among the first to extend recognition, it has enjoyed a long friendship with Israel¹⁴. Australia has historically advocated for the two-state solution and Israeli security remains ‘an abiding concern for Australia’¹⁵. Australia’s supports the OPT through humanitarian aid- \$43.8 billion in development assistance between 2017 and 2018¹⁶.

A recent ‘partisan wedge’ in Australian politics has emerged around voting in the UN regarding Palestine¹⁷. In 2014, Australia under the Coalition was one of two states to vote against a resolution calling for an end of Israeli occupation within three years¹⁸. Although the ALP has always had a warm relationship with Israel, having an ‘admiration’ for Israel’s initial socialism, it has subtly shifted Australia’s policy when in power¹⁹. In 2012; after much pressure from the ALP caucus, Prime Minister Julia Gillard abstained on a vote over Palestine’s international status²⁰.

¹⁴ “Bilateral Relations”, Israel Country Brief, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, accessed May 19, 2018, <http://dfat.gov.au/geo/israel/Pages/israel-country-brief.aspx>

¹⁵ “2017 Foreign Policy White Paper”, Foreign Policy White Paper, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, accessed May 19, 2018, < <https://www.fpwhitepaper.gov.au/foreign-policy-white-paper>>

¹⁶ “Overview of Australia’s Aid Program to the Palestinian Territories”, Palestinian Territories, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, accessed May 18, 2018, <<http://dfat.gov.au/geo/palestinian-territories/development-assistance/Pages/development-assistance-in-palestinian-territories.aspx>>

¹⁷ Marty Harris, “ ‘Diplomatic Terrorism’: Palestinian Statehood, the United Nations, and Australia’s Voting Record, About Parliament, *Parliament of Australia*, last modified December 5, 2014, https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/FlagPost/2014/December/Palestine_at_the_UN

¹⁸ Oliver Milman and Shalailah Medhora, “Australia ‘Damaged’ Relations with Arab World by Voting Down UN Palestinian Resolution”, *The Guardian*, December 31, 2014, < <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/dec/31/australia-damaged-relations-arab-world-voting-down-un-palestinian-resolution>>

¹⁹ Jacob Abadi. ‘Australia-Israel Relations: The Political and Economic Imperatives’, *The Round Table* 90, no. 361 (2001): 563

²⁰ Daniel Fitton, “Gillard Rolled on Palestine”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November, 28, 2012, <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/gillard-rolled-on-palestine-20121127-2a60x.html>

Chapter Two: Views and Arguments on Recognition within the ALP

In July 2018, Adelaide will host the 48th ALP National Conference. The party will vote on a resolution that commits a future Labor government to unilateral recognition of Palestine. A previous 2015 resolution affirmed support for Israel's right to exist, but noted that in the event of no progress in the next round of the peace process

A future Labor government will discuss joining like-minded nations who have already recognised Palestine.²¹

This chapter will consider the differing views among the ALP in regard to this upcoming resolution. It will firstly give an overview of the changing views since 2015 and then consider arguments for and against the resolution.

2.1 Changes since the 2015 National Conference

Changes in ALP stances since the 2015 conference have occurred at state level. In 2017, the ALP-majority South Australian parliament passed unilateral recognition of Palestine²². That year, the NSW state conference voted in favour of unilateral recognition²³. Similar resolutions have passed at the QLD, ACT, Western Australian and Tasmanian conferences²⁴. These state-based resolutions are coupled with greater factional consensus. The ALP is divided into two, commonly known as the Labor Left and Right²⁵. Historically, the Palestinian cause has been one of the Left, yet a 'sea change' in thinking around recognition has emerged amongst the Labor Right, especially in Sydney²⁶. Notably, Labor Right power-broker Tony Burke was behind the more strongly-worded 2015 National Conference resolution and favours

²¹ Australian Labor Party, *A Smart, Modern, Fair Australia: Labor's National Platform*, 2015, <https://cdn.australianlabor.com.au/documents/ALP_National_Platform.pdf>, 199.

²² Michael Owen, "SA Labor Goes it Alone with Call to Recognise Palestine", *The Australian*, June 27, 2017, <<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/sa-labor-goes-it-alone-with-call-to-recognise-palestine/news-story/639ce53e41fed0a22a02e43b27d50490>>

²³ Stephen Dziedzic, 'Palestine-Israel: Why Does the New South Wales ALP Care about this Dispute?', *ABC*, August 1, 2017, <<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-07-31/why-is-new-south-wales-alp-pushing-for-palestine-recognition/8758540>>

²⁴ Katharine Murphy, "NSW Labor Conference Backs Recognition of Palestine and a Two-State Solution", *The Guardian*, July 30, 2017, <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/jul/30/nsw-labor-conference-backs-recognition-of-palestine-and-two-state-solution>>

²⁵ Richard Willingham, "Sunday Explainer: The Factions Running the ALP", *The Age*, June 19, 2015, <<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/sunday-explainer-the-factions-running-the-alp-20150619-ghryk0.html>>

²⁶ Katharine Murphy, "Labor party NSW Right Faction Push for Stronger Resolution on Palestine", *The Guardian*, 24th April 2015, <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/apr/24/labor-party-nsw-right-faction-in-push-for-stronger-resolution-on-palestine>>

recognition²⁷. Both state-based resolutions and greater factional consensus suggest the call for recognition at the national level will be more pronounced and at the forefront of the agenda for many members.

2.2 Discussion around Recognition

The dialogue around unilateral recognition for Palestine is not a simple case of yes or no. What became increasingly clear in interviewing ALP members was that specific elements of the conflict are cited as reasons for or against recognition. This section will then be divided thematically to consider the arguments within the party. It will also conclude which are most significant in the debate around the upcoming resolution.

2.2.1 The Failure of the Peace Process

One of the central arguments cited in support of recognition was the stalling of negotiations. As the 2015 resolution specifically clarifies recognition ‘in the event of no progress’, this is a potent argument²⁸. ALP members in support of the resolution spoke of a ‘circuit breaker’ to challenge the *status quo*²⁹. Both Anne Aly and Lisa Singh noted that a credible two-state solution cannot be made between one state and one ambiguous entity³⁰³¹. These members want to emulate Sweden, which ‘explicitly justified’ its recognition of Palestine as making the parties more equal³².

Mark Dreyfus, however, argued that ALP unilateral recognition at this point was likely to push Israel further away from the negotiating table³³. Peter Khalil similarly questioned whether recognition would change anything and said that, if anything, it might solidify the Israeli political extremes³⁴. Mr Khalil also expressed concern that this resolution would take away a Labor government’s power to consider the circumstance of the peace process at the time of recognition³⁵.

²⁷ James Massola, “Bill Shorten Clears the Way for Labor Shift on Recognition of Palestine”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, April 29, 2015, < <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/bill-shorten-clears-the-way-for-labor-shift-on-recognition-of-palestine-20150428-1mv5vn.html> >

²⁸ Australian Labor Party, *A Smart, Modern, Fair Australia*, 199.

²⁹ Maria Vamvakinou, Federal Member for Calwell, interview by Miriam Sadler, March 1, 2018.

³⁰ Anne Aly, Federal Member for Cowan, phone interview by Miriam Sadler, April 13, 2018.

³¹ Lisa Singh, Senator for Tasmania, interview by Miriam Sadler, March 28, 2018.

³² Shelef and Yael, "Recognition Matters", 551.

³³ Mark Dreyfus, Federal Member for Isaacs, interview by Miriam Sadler, May 8 2018.

³⁴ Peter Khalil, Federal Member for Wills, phone interview by Miriam Sadler, May 17, 2018.

³⁵ Khalil, phone interview by Miriam Sadler.

Whether ALP recognition can aid the ailing peace process will be a central issue of discussion at the conference. Whilst on the one hand, it is a small gesture in support of the peace process of which the ALP has always been a stronger supporter, the argument that recognition can only harden the Israelis may play into fear that any strong action it takes will have little positive effect on peace.

2.2.2 Israeli Settlements and the Future of the Two-State Solution

Regarding recognition, Tony Burke noted that were it not for the Israeli settlements, the ALP policy would be unlikely to change³⁶. The settlements were the most cited reason in support of recognition. Some argued this issue was ultimately a human rights one^{37,38}. They cited the increasingly hard-line approach of Netanyahu as reasons for their stance, Lisa Singh making it clear this is not an attack on Israel but a criticism of the current administration's policies³⁹. Members in support of a resolution also expressed concern for the future of the two-state solution in light of these settlements. Some were particularly affected by their visits to Israel and Palestine. Both Ms Vamvakinou and Lisa Singh noted their visits to Palestine had made them question what a two-state solution would look like under the reality of the settlements^{40,41}

Fear of a one-state solution was also a critical issue. A one-state solution seems untenable on two levels. Firstly, after years of conflict it appears unlikely the two nations could share power⁴². Secondly, this situation would be unthinkable to Israel whose population would not be the majority⁴³. There is then concern that the situation in the OPT tends toward apartheid. A UN report noted that 'elements of the occupation' constitute apartheid⁴⁴. Whilst it is not for this report to assess the validity of this, there is alarm amongst the ALP about the growing claims of apartheid.

³⁶ Tony Burke, Federal Member for Watson, interview by Miriam Sadler, April 6, 2018.

³⁷ Singh, interview by Miriam Sadler.

³⁸ Vamvakinou, interview by Miriam Sadler.

³⁹ Singh, interview by Miriam Sadler.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Vamvakinou, interview by Miriam Sadler.

⁴² Benjamin Miller. "One State or Two: Why a Two-State Solution is Desirable, Necessary and Feasible", *Ethnopolitics* 15, no.4, (2016): 438.

⁴³ Izzat Salah Abdulhadi, Head of the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, interview by Miriam Sadler, March 29, 2018.

⁴⁴ Dugard 2007, quoted in John Dugard and John Reynolds, "Apartheid, International Law, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory", *The European Journal of International Law* 24, no.3 (2013):891.

The settlements and future of the two-state solution are likely to be the strongest argument in support of recognition at the upcoming conference. Concern for human rights is central to the ALP National Platform and this argument will prove persuasive⁴⁵. Anne Aly believed that ultimately the resolution will come down to the way the issue is framed; human rights elements will provoke stronger reaction⁴⁶. The ALP will not support an apartheid regime and so the resolution may too be framed as helping save Israel from this.

2.2.3 Australia's Regional Friendships and International Role

A divisive issue amongst ALP members was how recognition fits within Australia's regional and international role. With regard to regional friendships, the policy of successive Australian governments has been support for Israel, as the only democratic country in the region⁴⁷. Mark Dreyfus questioned why the ALP would backtrack on such a long-held policy⁴⁸. Most members in support of recognition did not believe it would improve Arab-Australian relations, noting the relationship is primarily economic focused⁴⁹.

Members in support of recognition did not believe there is no role for Australia in the peace process, as it has minimal influence⁵⁰. Anne Aly argued Australia does not engage with Palestine or Israel on that basis, nor does it have the infrastructure to take on that role⁵¹. Australia's minimal international role was also a central argument of Mark Dreyfus. He noted Israel-Palestine is well beyond Australia's sphere of influence⁵². Australia's role in international affairs should not be understated but neither should it be overstated especially in this vein⁵³. Mr Dreyfus linked this to successive Australian governments that have approached the peace process as they approach most international affairs, through a broad interest and supporting international law. Support for recognition would not be reflective of Australia's policy nor international role⁵⁴.

⁴⁵ Australian Labor Party, *A Smart, Modern, Fair Australia*, 120.

⁴⁶ Aly, interview by Miriam Sadler.

⁴⁷ Ali Kazak. "Australia's Diplomatic Approach to the Arab World and Israel", In *Australia and the Arab World*, Abu Dhabi: The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, 2009: 141.

⁴⁸ Dreyfus, interview by Miriam Sadler.

⁴⁹ Aly, interview by Miriam Sadler.

⁵⁰ Carr, Bob, Former Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, phone interview by Miriam Sadler, April 24, 2018.

⁵¹ Aly, interview by Miriam Sadler.

⁵² Dreyfus, interview by Miriam Sadler.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Australia's regional role is a divisive issue. Improved Australian-Arab relations or a greater role in the peace process are not considered important in comparison to concern over negotiations and the settlements with regard to arguments for recognition. For those opposing recognition, Australia's limited regional influence and friendship with Israel is crucial. For the conference, this will be a somewhat persuasive argument hindering the resolution. The leadership will be loath to harm its friendship with Israel if it is persuaded the conflict is outside of its sphere of interest.

2.2.4 Palestinian Governance

A central concern of those against the resolution is the state of Palestinian governance. The conditions for recognition of a state are defined as; fixed territory; fixed population; functioning government; the capacity to enter in foreign relations.⁵⁵ Those against ALP recognition contend that Palestine has neither determinable territory nor government. Mark Dreyfus noted that the conflict between *Hamas* and *Fatah* has left it unclear who represents Palestinian people⁵⁶. He also argued recognition of *Hamas*, as a group designated a terrorist organisation would be counter to Australia's support for democracy. Peter Khalil similarly noted that, although he would like to see recognition, he would support recognition of a secular and democratic state, conditions not on *Hamas*' agenda⁵⁷.

The ambiguous nature of what the ALP would recognise will no doubt be a central concern for the leadership. It has the potential to define the debate at the conference to which those in favour of recognition must be aware. The leadership and undecided voters will no doubt be concerned as to what the ALP is actually recognising, and will be cautious to be seen as legitimising an extremist organisation that threatens Israel's security. Those in support of the resolution must be then careful to specify explicit frameworks for the entity the ALP would recognise and how it will handle *Hamas*.

⁵⁵ Francis A. Boyle, *Palestine, Palestinians and International Law*, Atlanta: Clarity Press, 2003; 31

⁵⁶ Dreyfus, interview by Miriam Sadler.

⁵⁷ Khalil, phone interview by Miriam Sadler.

2.3 Conclusion

There is change emerging in ALP views towards unilateral recognition. ALP members expressed frustrated with the breakdown of negotiations, the settlements and concerning trend towards apartheid. They believe recognition can support the two-state solution. Greater Arab-Australian diplomacy nor a role in the peace process did not register as strong arguments. Opposing arguments mostly centred on the long Australian friendship with Israel, the lack of infrastructure to have any role in the peace process and the issue of *Hamas*. This argument contended the ALP should uphold Australia's policy of maintaining a broad support for the peace process through international organisations.

The spread of views within the party suggests that the conference will come down to how the resolution is *framed*. The strongest arguments for recognition are the ones that frame the conflict as a human rights issue. An emphasis on the illegality of the settlements and uncertain future peace would see greater chance of the resolution passing, these being core Labor's values. Central obstacles to the resolution passing will be the emphasis on Australia's long-held policies, including its friendship with Israel. In order for the resolution to pass, the resolution must also be framed as an evolution of Australian policy in response to reality on the ground and be careful not to be seen as an attack on Israel.

Chapter Three: Influential Factors on Stances on Recognition

As in all significant policy debate and especially with an issue this divisive, the lead up to the National Conference will be marked by increased exposure around recognition. This will then have influence on how ALP members, especially those still undecided, will vote at the conference. This chapter will consider influential factors on ALP views on recognition and how these may affect the likelihood of the resolution passing. These factors are divided into internal and external, or international, factors.

3.1 Internal Factors

3.1.1 Factions and Unions

Central to the ALP are its factions and unions, whose members will be amongst the 400 delegates at the conference⁵⁸. The first factional influence is state-based. In light of the NSW 2017 state conference, Penny Wong declared it was ‘not determinative’ of the federal position; none of the resolutions bind the national one⁵⁹. Yet, the numbers are there⁶⁰. Resolutions in favour of recognition have come from the majority of state branches.

At the Conference, however, members do not necessarily vote on their state lines which is where factional politics comes into play. There is some disagreement as to who will have the majority; some believe the Left, whilst others think ‘major organisational efforts’ have shored up a Right majority^{61,62}. Labor Right also has significant dominance in Victoria, which will then give it significant influence on the proceedings of dialogue around the resolution⁶³. The second influence over voting is around affiliated unions. Powerful unions such as the Australia Workers Union and Transport Workers Union are affiliated with Shorten and Victorian Right⁶⁴. Their votes could then be crucial in deciding the fate of the resolution.

⁵⁸ Australian Labor Party, *ALP National Constitution*, July 26, 2015, <https://cdn.australianlabor.com.au/documents/ALP_National_Constitution.pdf>

⁵⁹ Joshua Levi, “Labor ‘Urged’ to Recognise Palestine”, *The Australian Jewish News*, July 6, 2017, <https://www.jewishnews.net.au/nsw-alp-motion-recognise-palestine/65932>.

⁶⁰ Vamvakinou, interviewed by Miriam Sadler.

⁶¹ Tony Bramston, “Factions Firm Up Policies and Numbers for ALP National Conference”, *The Australian*, April 10, 2018, <<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/factions-firm-up-policies-and-numbers-for-alp-national-conference/news-story/19b1d1dac280d44ba9aaa45a933490fb9>>

⁶² Murphy, “Labor party NSW Right Faction Push for Stronger Resolution on Palestine”.

⁶³ Willingham, “Sunday Explainer: The Factions Running the ALP”.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

A central influence on ALP views on recognition is thus the structure of the party itself. Voting on the resolution will be ultimately based somewhat in factional based politics. For the likelihood of the resolution passing, the dominance of the Victorian Right presents a significant obstacle as it is here that notable members against recognition are based and it is here that the powerful union votes lie.

3.1.2 Lobby and Interest Groups

Lobby and interest groups within Australia are also significant influences on the ALP. These groups will be influential in the weeks preceding the conference as each side seeks to distribute information to voters. Pro-Israeli groups are overseen by the Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council, whose mission is to ‘convey the interests of the Australian Jewish community’ to the community, government and media⁶⁵. The lobby is a powerful group in Australian politics that successfully attempts to influence Australian policy on the Middle East⁶⁶. The lobby has also funded many trips to Israel for parliamentarians⁶⁷. This has become an issue of contention, with Labor Friends of Palestine urging a ban on MPs accepting these trips⁶⁸.

Pro-Palestinian lobby groups also operate within the Australian political sphere but have much less influence. Most lobbying stems from APAN, a coalition of organisations ‘seeking to influence’ Australia’s policy on Palestine⁶⁹. These groups also seek to distribute information and fund some trips for Parliamentarians. The central weakness of Palestinian lobbying noted by members was a lack of co-ordination and funding⁷⁰. There was a feeling too that the lobby is impeded by a view that Palestine is a special interest area that cannot garner wider attention⁷¹.

Lobbying will become a central influence in lead up to the conference, as these groups will spread information on the resolution based on their views and will thus influence what information ALP members have access to. In terms of the resolution, the likelihood of its passing is somewhat hindered by the pro-Israeli lobby, especially given its involvement within

⁶⁵ Kazak, “Australia’s Diplomatic Approach”, 142.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Carr, phone interview by Miriam Sadler.

⁶⁸ Sean Nicholls, "Push to Ban Labor Officials from Lobby Trips to Israel: Politics Conference to Consider Plan", *The Age*, January 20, 2016, <<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/push-to-ban-israel-lobby-trips-for-nsw-labor-officials-20160119-gm8zsx.html>>.

⁶⁹ “APAN People”, About, Australia Palestine Advocacy Network, accessed May 18, 2018, <https://apan.org.au>

⁷⁰ Aly, interview by Miriam Sadler.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Labor Right. The Palestinian lobby would then do well to present a cohesive and firm policy that illuminates ALP members of the relative merits of recognition

3.1.3 The Australian Public

Australian public opinion appears to have very little influence on ALP views. A McNair Ingenuity Research poll in 2006 found that 90% of those polled answered ‘very important’ or ‘important’ when asked ‘How important is a just resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict?’⁷². A 2018 YouGov poll suggests this support does not transfer into support for recognition. The poll found the ALP is at odds with public opinion, with only 13% of those polled favouring recognition without a peace deal⁷³. The poll was commissioned by ECAJ and its limitations must be accounted for, but Maria Vamvakinou confirmed that the conflict does not incite the ‘kind of vigorous public debate’ that could influence policy⁷⁴.

Demographically, the Israeli population of Australia is around 15,000⁷⁵. The Jewish population is 0.4% as of the last census⁷⁶. The Muslim-identifying population accounts for 2.6% of the population, concentrated in Melbourne and Sydney⁷⁷. There is some belief that an increasing Arab/Muslim population in Sydney has influenced the ALP. For example, some believe that Gillard changed Australia’s vote to ‘abstain’ in the 2012 UN vote due to a ‘precarious prospect’ in Western Sydney electorates⁷⁹. ALP members interviewed for this report disagreed with the idea that electorates shape this particular policy. Tony Burke said focus on electorates undermines the social justice element of the issue⁸⁰. Maria Vamvakinou agreed, saying it is an attempt from those against the resolution to undermine the issue⁸¹.

⁷² Eulalia Han and Halim Rane, "Australian Public Opinion on the Israel-Palestine Conflict: Implications in the Context of Arab Revolutions", *Australian Journal of Political Science* 46, no. 4 (December 2011): 621.

⁷³ Gareth Narunsky, "ALP at Odds with Voters" *The Australian Jewish News*, March 15, 2018, <<https://www.jewishnews.net.au/alp-at-odds-with-voters/74851>>

⁷⁴ Han and Rane, "Australian Public Opinion on the Israel-Palestine Conflict", 627

⁷⁵ Ran Porat, "The Ausraeli Approach: The Diasporic Identity of Israelis in Australia". In *Australia and Israel*, edited by Shahar Burla and Dashiell Lawrence, Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2015: 90-120.

⁷⁶ "2016 Census Data Reveals "No Religion" is Rising Fast", 2016 Census: Religion, Australian Bureau of Statistics, last modified June 27, 2017, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mediareleasesbyReleaseDate/7E65A144540551D7CA25814800E2B85?OpenDocument>

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Sharam Akbarzadeh, "Islam in Australia". In *Australia and the Arab World*, Abu Dhabi: The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, 2009: 118

⁷⁹ Fitton, "Gillard Rolled on Palestine".

⁸⁰ Burke, interview by Miriam Sadler.

⁸¹ Vamvakinou, interview by Miriam Sadler.

There is some concern that a ALP failure to recognise Palestine would ‘leak’ votes to the Australian Greens Party⁸². The Greens have formally recognised Palestine as a ‘contribution to securing a negotiated two-state solution.’⁸³ Considering the findings that neither public opinion nor electorates have significant impact in influencing the stance of the ALP, it seems unlikely that losing votes to the other parties solely due to this issue is of much concern for the party.

3.2 External Factors

Of all external factors influencing ALP policy toward Palestine, the most historically important is the role of the US. Australia has historically followed the US, but the powerful US Jewish lobby and long-term US-Israel alliance mean the US increasingly lacks ‘a vital enough concern’ to challenge Israeli settlements^{84,85}. As of May 2018, Donald Trump had delivered on an election promise by relocating the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, displaying disregard for UNGA Resolution 181 and causing concern that the US has resigned from its role as peace broker⁸⁶. The embassy move has left Palestinians disillusioned with the US; Abbas called it the ‘slap of the century’⁸⁷. This has led to some calls within the international community for other powers to take over.

Although Chapter Two found ALP members were undecided on Australia’s role in the peace process, there are some such as Peter Khalil who think Australia can join a coalition of powers like Canada, the UK and EU⁸⁸. The policies of the EU then become especially relevant. In 2014, Sweden became the first EU member to recognise Palestine, a move which received significant backlash as ‘counter-productive’ from Israel⁸⁹. On the one hand, the only two states

⁸² Alex Benjamin Burston-Chorowicz, “A Fight Worth Having: Rudd, Gillard, Israel and the Australian Labor Party”. In *Australia and Israel*, edited by Shahar Burla and Dashiell Lawrence, Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2015: 69.

⁸³ “Resolution on Palestine”, The Greens, accessed May 19, 2018, <<https://greens.org.au/national/resolution-palestine>>

⁸⁴ Patrick Seale, "The Palestinian Battle for Statehood". *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* 30, No. 7 (Sept/Oct 2011): 12.

⁸⁵ Barry H. Steiner, ""Going for Broke" on Palestine", *International Negotiation* 23 (2018): 71

⁸⁶ Ziad Abu Zayyad, "President Trump's Decision on Jerusalem Lacks International Legitimacy and Strategic Vision", *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture* 22/23, no.4, (2017/2018): 4

⁸⁷ Abbas 2018, quoted in Anders Persson, “What will Trump’s ‘Ultimate Deal’ Mean for Palestinians?”, *Al-Jazeera*, March 28, 2018, <<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/trump-ultimate-deal-palestinians-180327082942844.html>>

⁸⁸ Khalil, interview by Miriam Sadler.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

deemed to be ‘like-minded’ that have recognised Palestine are Sweden and the Vatican⁹⁰. Those against the ALP resolution cite this as a central concern; with so few ‘like-minded states’ to consult with, Australia’s policy would in fact be an international anomaly⁹¹. On the other hand, moves in Europe for recognition are on the increase and could become relevant to Australia if the European powers were to recognise Palestine and/or propose a peace plan. This would this satisfy the ‘like-minded states’ clause.

The likelihood of Europe offering a peace plan or unanimously recognising Palestine before July seems unlikely, especially as Trump’s ‘deal of the century’ is still unknown⁹². Given the ALP’s long support for the bilateral alliance with the US, there is a strong possibility it will continue to follow the US in its Israel-Palestine policy, especially if Trump offers a new plan. There is then a possibility the ALP may await this peace plan before making any significant change in its policy, especially any changes in its stance on recognition⁹³.

3.3 Conclusion

The road to the conference is still uncertain. Internal influences have the greatest influence on ALP stances and have the potential to be the biggest obstacles to the resolution. They have two distinct roles. Lobby groups will be important in the weeks leading up to the conference, as these groups bring awareness to certain views around the issue. Factions and unions will become most important during the voting process. The influence of the Victorian Right will be of similar importance to the likelihood of the resolution passing. Groups in favour of the resolution would then do well to shore up support in other state branches and factions, as well as present the leadership a cohesive argument centred around human rights concerns.

On an international level, the US embassy move and recognition in Europe have some influence on ALP views although this will most likely not be fully realised by the conference. Members interviewed agreed the US had forfeited its negotiating role and the embassy move throws into doubt the fundamental basis of the peace process, which could see Labor seek a

⁹⁰ Dreyfus, interview by Miriam Sadler.

⁹¹ Dreyfus, interview by Miriam Sadler.

⁹² Persson, “What will Trump’s ‘Ultimate Deal’ Mean for Palestinians”.

⁹³ Abdulhadi, interview by Miriam Sadler.

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more assertive role. Yet, it appears that role will come gradually and it will take the unveiling of Trump's peace plan for the ALP to fully decide its course in this regard.

Chapter 4: Conclusion and Recommendations

This report concludes that there has been a change in thinking amongst the ALP with regards to unilateral recognition of Palestine since 2015. An increasing number of members see recognition as a tool to not only empower Palestinian negotiators and salvage the two-state solution but also express their concern over the increase in Israeli settlements in the OPT and the human rights record of the current administration. Arguments against recognition mostly centre on Australia limited international role, its long support for Israel and a desire to continue the policy of successive government regarding support for international law.

Influential factors on ALP stances in the lead up to the conference ultimately rest in the domestic workings of lobby groups and the votes of unions and factions. Debate around international factors, especially the views of like-minded states and the current US policy, are influential factors but their power may not yet be realised, especially as recognition in Europe is so limited. Whilst there is potential that Australia will be galvanised into a greater role in the peace process, this is unlikely to be realised until the extent of Trump's peace plan is revealed.

The resolution is quite likely to pass, especially given the success of state-based resolutions. Success will rest on the framing and wording of the resolution. If the resolution is framed as a human rights issue it will be more likely to pass, as this hits at core Labor values. If the wording contains substantial framework for the implementation of recognition, including prescription of diplomatic and political consultation it may then alleviate concerns around the Palestinian entity and governance. Secondly, the resolution will pass provided internal influences are overcome. This includes greater coherency within pro-Palestinian lobby groups in providing information to voters at the conference.

This report provides the following recommendations for the Delegation and for lobby groups seeking to influence the outcome of the resolution:

1. Tell the stories of Palestinians. Many members interviewed spoke of how affected they were by hearing about the reality of life on the ground.
2. Stress the urgency and frame the resolution as being at a critical moment for the conflict and for the Palestinian people.

3. Employ greater coordination amongst lobby groups. Provide one fact sheet amongst all groups that contains relevant information to be distributed to ALP members. Use social media to enhance the lobbying process.
4. Ask Ambassadors from states that have recognised Palestine to help participate. This will foster the sense of being among 'like-minded states'.

Appendix: List of Indicative Questions Posed in Interviews

1. How will immediate recognition of the state of Palestine help or enhance the two state solution?
2. How could ALP recognition of Palestine enhance diplomacy with Arab states?
3. What effect will unions have on voting on the resolution?
4. What are groups like APAN and Australian Parliamentary Friends of Palestine doing?
5. What role do electorates have to play?
6. Is there the balance of debate shifting within the party?
7. What framework within Israel/ Palestine do you believe there then needs to be before Australia can extend recognition?
8. What does Labor's relationship with Israel look like?
9. Does Australia have a role to play in mediation between Israel and Palestine and ultimately achieving the two state solution?

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