



Julian Hill MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR BRUCE



Commissioner Rob Heferen
Australian Taxation Office
GPO Box 9990
Melbourne VIC 3001

Dear Commissioner

RE: TAX CONCESSIONS FOR AUSTRALIANS FUNDING ILLEGAL ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

I write regarding media reports and concerns raised by advocacy groups that Australian individuals and organisations are able to receive tax concessions for donations made in support of illegal Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and seek your response in relation to a number of questions regarding this important issue.

Australia has never recognised Israel's sovereignty beyond its pre-June 1967 borders, and regards Israeli villages, neighbourhoods, and other developments located in the Palestinian territory it has occupied since 1967 as illegal settlements.

The illegality of Israel's settlement enterprise has been recognised by multiple UN Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), which *"reaffirms that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law."*

The settlements pose a structural impediment to the existence of a viable Palestinian state, and therefore undermine the longstanding commitment of successive Australian governments towards a two-state solution in which Israel and a future Palestinian state coexist, in peace and security, within internationally recognised borders.

The ongoing conflict in Gaza, as well as escalating settler violence and Palestinian dispossession in the West Bank, reinforces the urgent need to take proactive steps towards a negotiated two-state solution.

In this context, profound concerns have been raised by many Australians and civil society organisations with relation to Australia's involvement in Israel's illegal settlement enterprise, including that:

- i. Australian citizens are able to fund the perpetuation of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories;
- ii. registered Australian charities and not-for-profit organisations are being utilised as a vehicle to this end; and
- iii. donations made in support of illegal settlement activities are being rewarded with tax-deductible status.

These issues have been raised over many years, including by the Australian Jewish Democratic Society, the New Israel Fund, as well as human rights organisations in Australia, Israel, and internationally.

Recently, media outlets have reported that registered Australian charities and not-for-profit organisations – including the Australian Jewish National Fund (for the Midreshet Kidmat Yerushalayim-Seminary for the Advancement of Jerusalem), the Christians for Israel Foundation, and the Ariel