



Dr Marjorie O'Neill MP

MEMBER FOR COOGEE

I would like to start by thanking the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies for providing me with the opportunity to speak here in solidarity with the Jewish community and the people of Israel.

Let me please begin by telling you that I am very much personally upset by the events in Israel and Gaza in the past few weeks. I, like all members of my community, am distressed by the loss of innocent lives during this recent flare-up of violence. The escalation of hostilities, the deliberate firing of weapons into civilian areas, and widespread fear and destruction has sent shockwaves through the global community. The announcement of a ceasefire is a welcome reprieve for all of us. I pray that it will continue.

I visited Israel only two years ago. I enjoyed the vibrancy of life there and I have seen first-hand the incredible nation that has been built in the desert. I have delighted in the cafes, restaurants and the many freedoms that Israeli citizens enjoy. I explored the industries Israelis have built, the economy they have grown, and the safe place that has been offered to Jews escaping persecution from around the globe. I have seen many instances of Jews and Arabs working in harmony and for the betterment of all humanity. A story that seldom told in the media. For me, Israel is so much more than a tiny, thriving democracy in a troubled region.

All of us are deeply concerned about the events of the past few weeks. There are many people in my electorate who feared for the lives of their loved ones as an endless stream of rockets was fired', many from civilian hubs within Gaza. My heart goes out to those immediately affected by this crisis and to the many people living in Australia who are deeply concerned about the millions of Israelis who live in daily fear of terror.

At times like this, I believe it is useful to return to first principles. To consider what are the guiding values against which we can judge events. In this current crisis, there are a few fundamental truths which should be the basis for further discussion and, hopefully, for the resolution of the awful events we see unfolding:

I and the Australian Labor Party support a two state solution. And for Israelis and Palestinians to live within secure and recognised borders. I am sure that we all want to see the people of that region living in safety and at peace with respect for one another's fundamental human rights. We all mourn the loss of innocent lives, no matter where the tragedy takes place.

Israel has a right to exist within secure borders; Israeli citizens have a right to go about their daily lives free from rockets, missiles and acts of terror; Israel has a right to defend itself against the targeting of their civilian population by Hamas, unquestionably a terrorist organisation.

Coogee Electorate Office:

A: 15/53-55B Frenchmans Rd, Randwick NSW 2031, Australia

P: (02) 9398 1822 **F:** (02) 9398 1044 **E:** coogee@parliament.nsw.gov.au

w marjorieoneill.com.au **f** [MarjorieONeillCoogeeMP](https://www.facebook.com/MarjorieONeillCoogeeMP) **t** [@MarjorieSONeill](https://twitter.com/MarjorieSONeill) **ig** [marjorieoneillcoogee](https://www.instagram.com/marjorieoneillcoogee)





Dr Marjorie O'Neill MP

MEMBER FOR COOGEE

Democracy and freedom are principles which have guided modern societies. Israel is the only democracy in the region and it must be protected.

I acknowledge with sadness and disappointment that some expressions of concern for the people of Gaza mask a latent antisemitism and an agenda to delegitimize Israel.

Political leaders in Western democracies must always call out those forms of anti-Semitism, which includes boycotts, divestments and sanctions against the state of Israel. I will stand firmly against BDS and call it out when I see it. Making lives more difficult for innocent people already struggling with the trauma of violent conflict is not a legitimate means for pursuing peace!

I am proud to be a member of the party which was instrumental in the establishment of the State of Israel and to stand on the shoulders of giants such as Former Labor Foreign Minister Doc Evatt.

In 1960, he addressed the Jewish community in the very place we stand today and said:

“I can assure you I never spared any effort to induce the United Nations to make a decision, and having made it, to see that it was observed strictly throughout the world so that the new State of Israel, whose people who had in the past done so much for humanity, would be welcomed, not merely formally but with good heart and good conscience.

AM ISRAEL CHAI.

Coogee Electorate Office:

A: 15/53-55B Frenchmans Rd, Randwick NSW 2031, Australia

P: (02) 9398 1822 **F:** (02) 9398 1044 **E:** coogee@parliament.nsw.gov.au

w marjorieoneill.com.au **f** [MarjorieONeillCoogeeMP](https://www.facebook.com/MarjorieONeillCoogeeMP) **t** [@MarjorieSONeill](https://twitter.com/MarjorieSONeill) **ig** [marjorieoneillcoogee](https://www.instagram.com/marjorieoneillcoogee)

