

Dear Mayor and Councillors

August 18 2025

I write to you on behalf of local community members of Jewish Voices of Inner Sydney to express our concerns regarding the attendance of any members of the Inner West Council including Mayor Darcy Byrne at the forthcoming Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM) event in the Gold Coast on Sept 3-5.

At our meeting with the Mayor on April 1 2025, it was agreed that Jewish Voices of Inner Sydney should be consulted on major local decisions related to antisemitism. We regret that the Mayor has decided not to follow through with this commitment to the local Jewish community before accepting an invitation to headline this conference.

We request that the decision to attend and speak at this event by the Mayor be urgently reviewed given information which has surfaced regarding its organisers and funding sources which are directly linked to Israel and supporters of its government. Israel is currently accused of plausible genocide by the International Court of Justice and of genocide and massive war crimes including starvation by numerous human rights and international legal organisations and individuals.

CAM, the organiser of this event, has strong links to the Israeli government and to the Israeli Defence Force. One of its key aims is to push the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism at every level of government.

This definition has been widely criticised for conflating criticism of Israel with antisemitism and has been used to suppress criticism of Israel. This aim is also a key focus of Antisemitism Envoy, Jillian Segal who is a keynote speaker at this summit. Two of CAM's advisers are recent graduates from the Israeli Ministry of Strategic Affairs, the department which was established in response to the growing BDS Movement which bases its calls on international law and human rights and justice for Palestinians.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) is a key partner in the organisation of the summit. The ECAJ is an organisation that has publicly supported Israel throughout the Gaza genocide and publicly condemned the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice.

A major sponsor of the summit is Southern Steel, whose Executive Chairman has major interests in Bissoloy Steel which supplies steel for Israeli armoured vehicles and is a board member and past president of the Jewish National Fund Australia. The conference co-chair is Stanley Roth whose family trust, Henroth Investments Pty Ltd., has made significant donations to Advance Australia. His brother, John Roth, is co-director of this trust and Jillian Segal's husband.

Other controversial speakers include former Senator Nova Peris, whose litany of Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian social media posts (which include sharing such views as "Islam should be banned in the West", and that Muslims were "Satan worshipping cockroaches that need to be eradicated") have caused deep offence amongst the local Muslim and Arabic-speaking community.

There are numerous other concerns about this summit, but our focus has been to outline the links to organisations and individuals which openly support the Israeli state and seek to silence critics of this state.

It's clear to us that this event has been conceived to lobby for councils to introduce the IHRA definition of antisemitism in their LGAs and to attempt to conflate criticism of Israel with antisemitism. We do not accept the parameters of this definition and do not believe that our elected local representatives should participate in an event which is so clearly exploiting the scourge of antisemitism as cover to push a pro-Israel agenda.

We are local Jews who believe that antisemitism can best be tackled by implementing the Inner West Council's anti-racism strategy which will also combat other forms of racism as well.

We feel strongly that we as Jews do not need any special protections or privileges in relation to other groups and instead support strengthening anti-racism strategies to protect all people within the LGA.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

David Fonteyn

Jewish Voices of Inner Sydney