

QUAKER SUBMISSION TO ENQUIRY ON FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL

As Quakers we seek a world without war. We seek a sustainable and just community. We have a vision of an Australia that upholds human rights and builds peace internationally, with particular focus on our region. In our approach to government, we will promote the importance of dialogue, of listening and of seeking that of God in every person. We aim to work for justice and to take away the occasion for war.

Quakers have been present in Israel/Palestine since 1800 and the Ramallah Quaker group has been operating since 1910 as a place of worship, along with a school and child care centre. With support from Quakers in many parts of the world, it is a centre for building cross-cultural relationships and strengthening peace. Quakers have been part of ecumenical accompaniment programs and have been actively using their good offices at the United Nations to urge dialogue towards peaceful resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

Australian Quakers have frequently made approaches to the federal government and opposition to encourage policies that work for the end of the military occupation by Israel, consistent with international law. We support self-determination for Palestinians, and the achievement of basic economic, social and political rights.

We believe that an increase in trade with Israel (and the possibility of a free trade agreement) gives priority to trade over justice by normalising the flow of goods produced in the settlements. Trade in military goods should certainly be ruled out.

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Convenor
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