



Lyrebird Dreaming Pty Ltd

31 January 2026

David Smith MP  
Member for Bean  
Tuggeranong ACT

Dear David,

**Re: Australia should withdraw its invitation to President Herzog**

I am writing as a constituent of Bean about Australia's invitation to host Israel's President next week. The announced dates are 8–12 February 2026.

Solidarity with Jewish Australians after the horrific act of antisemitic terror at Bondi is appropriate, and indeed, essential. But inviting a foreign head of state is not the only, nor the best, way to express that solidarity. Especially in this case, it is the wrong vehicle for the right sentiment: it seriously risks inflaming conflict, and it risks signalling disregard for international law at precisely the moment Australia should be demonstrating moral clarity.

Let's be honest about what this invitation communicates. A state visit isn't a condolence message. It is official hospitality: photos, ceremony, honour, and legitimacy. When that legitimacy is extended in the middle of a genocide and war crimes committed by Israel that are the subject of intense international legal scrutiny, Australia can't pretend the optics are neutral.

There's also a basic moral problem: we are being asked to treat a senior representative of a state as an honoured guest while vast civilian suffering in Gaza remains a daily reality and humanitarian access is almost impossible. People of good faith can disagree about causes, blame, and solutions. But it should not be controversial to say this: when civilian life is being shattered at the scale it is in Gaza, our government has a duty to choose symbolism that de-escalates, not symbolism that inflames and legitimises the human rights abuses.

The legal arguments are not abstract, either. The International Court of Justice has issued provisional measures in South Africa's case against Israel under the Genocide Convention, including directions related to preventing prohibited acts and enabling humanitarian assistance. In July 2024 the ICJ's advisory opinion on the Occupied Palestinian Territory set out findings about illegality and described Israel's obligations in relation to the resulting situation, including duties around non-recognition and not rendering aid or assistance in maintaining an unlawful situation.



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Some will argue the Israeli presidency is largely ceremonial, and that engagement is better than isolation. But ceremony cuts both ways: if the role is symbolic, then so is the visit. And if the visit is symbolic, Australia must ask what it symbolises to the region, to our neighbours, to our diaspora communities, and to the many Australians who want our foreign policy to align with the rules-based order we so often invoke. President Herzog has proudly signed Israeli bombs that have been dropped on Gazans!

There is a better path that honours the victims of Bondi and protects social cohesion here at home. Anthony Albanese should withdraw the invitation while simultaneously deepening real solidarity among Australians: fund community security and education against antisemitism and discrimination in all its forms, support trauma recovery, and increase humanitarian support for civilians in Gaza while pressing Israel to comply with international law. The message would be simple: we stand with Australians targeted by hate, and we will not use their grief as a stage for state-to-state symbolism that divides us.

Australia should not host this visit. If we care about unity, morality, and law, we should cancel the invitation and choose solidarity that heals rather than hardens.

Yours sincerely,

*Gregory Andrews*

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