

1100-1597  
1100-1612



**THE HON JULIE BISHOP MP**

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Dr Dennis Jensen MP  
Chair  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Petitions  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear *Dennis* Jensen

Thank you for your letter of 9 November 2015 regarding the Petition to Formally Recognise a State of Palestine, as submitted to the Standing Committee on Petitions for consideration (reference number 1100/1597).

Australia firmly supports a two-state solution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. The Government considers a negotiated two-state solution the only way to establish a future Palestinian state that exists side by side with Israel in peace and security, within internationally recognised borders. Australia has repeatedly encouraged Israel and the Palestinians to return to direct negotiations towards this goal.

Australia remains a committed supporter of the Palestinian people and their aspirations to statehood. We continue to support the institutions of a future Palestinian state through our aid program. In 2015-16 Australia is providing \$42.8 million in development assistance to the Palestinian Territories, which includes direct budget support to the Palestinian Authority. This assistance reflects Australia's longstanding commitment to making a practical contribution to the peace process.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Julie Bishop

21 DEC 2015