

## **Christians, Jews meet over boycott**

Barney Zwartz, *SMH*, 17 August 2010

JEWISH and Christian leaders have met in Sydney to heal the wounds caused by a call last month for Australians to boycott Israeli goods made in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The National Council of Churches in Australia called for Australians to consider the boycott at the request of Middle Eastern churches, but the Jewish community was outraged.

The president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Robert Goot, wrote to the council saying the resolution was a "most unpleasant surprise ... we feel that we have been badly let down by people we have long thought of as our friends".

Last week members of both councils, including heads of the Catholic and Anglican churches, archbishops Philip Wilson of Adelaide and Phillip Aspinall of Brisbane, met to restore relations.

Yesterday the councils, the leading organisations for the respective faiths, said in a joint statement that a "serious exchange of views" had helped Christian leaders better understand Jewish concerns and Jewish leaders better understand why the resolution was adopted.

Mr Goot would not comment further and the general secretary of the churches council, Tara Curlewis, said only that the statement showed the depth of the relationship between the groups. But the boycott resolution remained in place. They will meet again to work on a "more comprehensive" statement.