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Albanese, Ley's Past Palestine Support Resurfaces

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Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Opposition Leader Sussan Ley are facing renewed attention over their earlier involvement in the Parliamentary Friends of Palestine, a bipartisan group in the Australian Parliament established to promote engagement with Palestinian issues. Albanese played a founding role in 1999, serving as the group's first secretary, while Ley was listed as a co-chair by 2003. At the time, both leaders expressed support for Palestinian statehood and greater understanding of the Palestinian cause.

As national leaders, their current positions have shifted. Albanese, now leading the Australian Labor Party, maintains support for a two-state solution but has stopped short of formally recognising Palestinian statehood. In a recent interview, he criticised Israel's

blockade of humanitarian aid to Gaza as a breach of international law. However, he cautioned against recognising Palestine at this stage, citing concerns about the role of Hamas and regional instability. This position has drawn criticism from some Labor supporters and independents who argue the government should take a stronger diplomatic stance in line with the party's 2021 national conference motion that supported Palestinian recognition.

Sussan Ley, now leader of the Liberal Party, has taken a more definitive step away from her earlier support for Palestine. In a 2011 parliamentary speech, Ley voiced support for Palestine's bid for United Nations membership. In recent statements, however, she has focused on condemning Hamas and emphasising support for Israel. Her past remarks have resurfaced during internal Liberal Party debates, particularly around leadership and foreign policy direction, but Ley has clarified that her views have evolved in response to current events.

The contrasting evolution of both leaders' positions highlights the changing political landscape around Middle East policy in Australia. With ongoing conflict and rising global tensions, both the government and opposition face increasing pressure to clarify their foreign policy priorities. Independent Senator David Pocock recently criticised the Albanese government for offering rhetoric without action, calling for tangible measures such as sanctions in response to the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

The shared history between Albanese and Ley within the Parliamentary Friends of Palestine has become a point of political interest, reflecting broader questions about consistency, leadership, and Australia's role in international diplomacy.