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Farrell Urges Peace Amid Gaza Protest Tensions

August 4, 2025

– Categories: Human Rights



Trade Minister Don Farrell calls for calm after pro-Palestine protests on Sydney's Harbour Bridge, stressing Australia's desire for a peaceful resolution to the Gaza conflict.

On August 4, 2025, Trade Minister Don Farrell, speaking on behalf of the Australian government, urged protesters to avoid escalating tensions by importing the Gaza conflict into Australia, following a pro-Palestine march across Sydney's Harbour Bridge, as reported by Sky News Australia. The demonstration, part of a series of protests addressing the ongoing war in Gaza, saw thousands demand a ceasefire, with organizers claiming public pressure influenced the government's December 2023 vote for a United Nations (UN) humanitarian ceasefire resolution, according to The Guardian. Farrell emphasized the government's condemnation of Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack, which

killed 1,200 Israelis, while expressing concern over civilian deaths in Gaza, now nearing 19,000 as reported by Gaza's health authorities.

Farrell, addressing the march on Sky News' Sunday Agenda, described Australia's support for a humanitarian ceasefire as a balanced response to a complex conflict, stating that the government supports Israel's right to self-defense but seeks to minimize civilian casualties. The Albanese government's shift from abstaining on a similar UN vote in October 2023 to supporting a ceasefire reflects growing international concern, with 153 nations backing the December resolution, per The Guardian. However, critics argue the government's stance lacks clarity, with Liberal Senator Hollie Hughes expressing embarrassment over the ceasefire vote, citing Hamas's use of sexual violence, as reported at a separate Sydney rally organized by United with Israel.

The Harbour Bridge protest, while peaceful, disrupted traffic and raised concerns about public safety, prompting Farrell's call for restraint. New South Wales Police reported no arrests, but the event underscored tensions over Australia's foreign policy. The government's decision to resume funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in March 2024, following Canada and the European Union, drew criticism from the opposition, with Shadow Foreign Minister Simon Birmingham questioning alignment with the United States, which maintained its funding freeze pending UNRWA investigations, per ABC News.

Farrell's remarks highlight the government's attempt to navigate a divisive issue while maintaining domestic stability. As protests continue, the challenge remains balancing diplomatic positions with public order, amid scrutiny of the Albanese government's inconsistent messaging on the Gaza conflict.