



Little to envy about the envoys

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Body

The Prime Minister's decision last month to appoint Jillian Segal as the nation's first anti-Semitism envoy was met with cautious words of approval from Jewish leaders and the wider community.

Confusion still reigns over what Segal, an eminent lawyer and businesswoman, can hope to achieve during her three-year term. Even some of her supporters don't fully understand the role and, at least politically, regard it as nothing more than a sop for the critics - that is, having now named an envoy, Anthony Albanese can safely deflect any allegation that his government has been a dithering, equivocating, morally limp-wristed mess on the issue.

What's made matters worse, however, are the consequences of the PM's recent reshuffle of cabinet, which saw Andrew Giles not only dumped from immigration but also from his portfolio of multicultural affairs. Both have been gifted to Tony Burke, a bete noire of Jewish leaders who've criticised his tepid support for Israel in the aftermath of October 7, among other unhelpful, highly questionable remarks and positions.

Burke, for example, backed the right of pro-Palestinian protesters to occupy universities. He's on record quoting Hamas casualty figures as fact, and he's pledged full-hearted support for Canterbury-Bankstown Council's decision to fly the Palestinian flag - that was in the days after the southern Israeli massacre, well before Israel's ground invasion even started in Gaza.

Ironically, he's simultaneously facing political annihilation in his own western Sydney seat of Watson, where an activated Muslim population is threatening to oust him over a perception that Labor has been far too pro-Israel since the start of the war.

Somehow, Segal is supposed to report her findings on anti-Semitism to this politically conflicted minister, one who faces electoral suicide if he puts a foot wrong and who's already demonstrated a total lack of insight and empathy on the anti-Semitism itself.

Meanwhile, not a word out of the PM's office about the impending appointment of a Special Envoy for Islamophobia. That's because of the genuine struggle to find a moderate Muslim leader willing to take on the role, one that the government will accept, and one who'll at least be prepared to condemn what happened on October 7.

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A tougher benchmark than everyone in cabinet realised, apparently.

Building relationships The last time NSW Lands Minister Steve Kamper was spotted out on the town it was at a low-key dinner in the company of a corrupt former Hurstville mayor, Con Hindi.

Also in attendance was construction boss Ronnie Wardan, head of Sydney firm Wardan Group, and his employee Amanda Ghalloub, but Kamper saw no need to declare this private meeting in his ministerial diary. He told Margin Call at the time that Wardan and Ghalloub were family friends and that Hindi wasn't invited but crashed the dinner and wouldn't go away. The minister, being a gentleman, just couldn't bring himself to tell Hindi to take a long walk.

The only reason to relive this matter is that Kamper has unfortunately been spotted once again in a deep, offline conversation with a prominent character in the NSW property game, this time developer Fouad Deiri, chairman of Deicorp, who had the pleasure of chewing Kamper's ear at an NRL football game last weekend.

Kamper told us he was invited to the Dragons v Bulldogs match by the St George CEO and spent most of the game in the Captain's Lounge. Not according to one eyewitness, who told Margin Call that Kamper seemed to spend much of the game in the Deicorp box.

A spokesman for Kamper said the interaction with Deiri was hardly for most of the match. "The minister dropped into Fouad's box for about 15 minutes to distract himself from the score," they said. The Dragons, for what it's worth, were snuffed out 28-10 by the Bulldogs, the flak adding: "The minister has known Fouad from when he still worked on the tools." That is, for decades, when a much younger Deiri wasn't the leader of a developer-builder empire and instead an apprentice carpenter starting out in the trade.

These sightings wouldn't be so awkward if Kamper wasn't the Minister for Lands and Property, a portfolio of immense consequence to guys like Deiri and Wardan, and anyone else whose business is real estate. It seems just about everyone in this sphere is very old mates with the minister!

Subtle sledgehammer So little love has been lost between **Fortescue** and three former employees of the company accused of stealing intellectual property - if only to establish their own rival green steel start-up concern.

Fortescue's ham-fisted private investigators followed the trio around for weeks, spied on their families and rifled through their mail.

But court documents in the case suggest the animosity **Fortescue** felt towards former chief scientist Bart Kolodziejczyk might go back well before the company launched legal action this year.

What other conclusion are we to draw when the mining major named a special report in search of misconduct "Project Sledgehammer". Surely a hint of the whacking to come, if nothing else. Kolodziejczyk left the company in November 2021.

Ahead of his departure **Fortescue** allegedly called in Deloitte to run a forensic sweep on his laptop and phone, looking for evidence he was taking proprietary information with him.

As it turns out, Deloitte's Project Sledgehammer (released in December) was something of a swing and a miss, identifying no wrongdoing.

You'd expect such a bold title to get a mention in court when the trio try to have **Fortescue's** case against them thrown out next week. If nothing else, it offers an easy argument that **Fortescue's** legal case is as much about trying to scare off would-be competitors than it is about IP theft.

INSIDE MARGIN CALL Twiggy's subtle as a sledgehammer

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