



Community Recognition Statement
Wednesday, 23 March 2022

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I would like to recognise the work of the Australia Western Sahara Association whose aim is to raise awareness and promote the Saharawi cause in Australia. The independence struggle in Western Sahara closely mirrors that of the East Timorese.

In 1975 when the colonial power Spain withdrew, the neighbouring country, Morocco, invaded. Many Saharawi fled to desert refugee camps. A war ensued until a UN-sponsored ceasefire was declared in 1991 when a referendum was promised. Despite UN efforts and wide international support, Morocco still refuses to agree to a referendum.

The association campaigns for a UN referendum of self-determination; protection of the economic and political rights of the indigenous Saharawi in occupied zones; safeguarding the country's natural resources for the Saharawi people; and UN monitoring of human rights, on both sides. It also contributes humanitarian aid to the camps. Recently the association commemorated Western Sahara's National Day with a flag-raising at Leichhardt Town Hall.

On behalf of everyone in our community I would like to thank the Australia Western Sahara Association for their efforts and campaigning to bring about a fair and equitable outcome for the people of Western Sahara.



Jamie Parker MP
Member for Balmain

