



Labor MP blasts Israel

■ **Nick Butterly**

WA Labor MP Melissa Parke has savaged Israel for its “disproportionally aggressive” response to Hamas rocket attacks and likened Gaza to a prisoner of war camp.

Underlining growing concerns within Labor’s Left towards the Jewish state’s military aggression, Ms Parke said the plight of the Palestinians was too often forgotten.

She said that while she condemned the indiscriminate attacks on civilians by both sides, “rather than seeing Israel being disproportionately aggressive in response, I would rather see them being disproportionately compassionate”.

“They are the stronger by far of the two peoples and it’s in their power to

move towards peace. What is missing from the commentary in Australia — which tends to only refer to the rocket attacks from Gaza — is the context,” she said. “Decades of occupation of the Palestinian people, repression, imprisonment, extrajudicial assassinations, and a harsh blockade that has strangled the Gazan economy, denied people essential health care, left young people without the prospect of a dignified life, and increased radicalism.”

She said that as long as Gaza was “closer to a prisoner of war camp than a nation state”, hopes for peace were dim.

This week, Foreign Affairs Minister Bob Carr warned Israel that a disproportionate response to Hamas would feed extremism. Prime Minister Julia Gillard said Hamas’ rocket attacks were “utterly unacceptable”.