**Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN)**

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***Background document for public use (‘Work in Progress’)***

**‘Make Peace a Priority’ Campaign**

***Strengthening local and international relationships***

The ‘Make Peace a Priority’ campaign proposal aims to enhance Australia's role in international agencies working to achieve peace. The success of such a progressive agenda would work to render alliances such as AUKUS and other defence initiatives unnecessary.

We believe that working for long term systemic change, within the existing social and geopolitical frameworks, provides a pathway to long term peace.

IPAN supports the building of a peaceful future that benefits all Australians and ultimately has a beneficial global impact.  As we free up resources and money that currently fund offensive military action, we will have the finances available to combat the social and environmental crisis that are already evident. By seeking to achieve meaningful change in Australia we increase our opportunities to collaborate and cooperate with our regional leaders.

Australia has its own internal issues to work on, which also present a security issue. Addressing historical conflicts and value differences, within and between cultural groups, to promote social cohesion within Australia, will be essential if we are to partner with other countries for positive change in our region.

By working with our diverse population we can promote harmony at the national level which will be essential if we are to partner with others to strengthen global systems for peace in the pursuit of international harmony.

As we work towards independent Australian defence, rather than US led offense, this will also serve to de-escalate geopolitical tensions regionally and internationally.

1. Most Australians see peace as an objective worth striving for – they just need to know how they fit in and that peace is achievable and how they can contribute to make peace a high priority for government.

2. Having peace as an objective could help unite Australia and our region – providing a platform for our leaders to promote and create social change - and a *vision* that all Australians could aspire to.

3 The ability to understand the views and concerns of others whilst not necessarily agreeing with themis necessaryto ensure we are not diverted by current conflicts.  IPAN recognises the need to listen to understand, and that whilst not necessarily agreeing with others – listening promotes a level playing field that allows for discussion and conflict resolution that is fair to all. It is our hope that such an approach allows for peoples and communities to grow and thrive.

Peace is many things to many different people, harnessing the inherent desire for peace in all its forms into a cohesive middle ground will be the aim. Highlighting the things that unite rather than divide.

4. This proposal has the potential to bring parliamentarians from different ideological backgrounds to a common understanding of the need for peace.

**A platform does exist - Australia has been appointed to the UN Peacebuilding Commission for 2025 and 2026.**

* Without peace we roll the dice each day – the world forgets that nuclear weapons exist, the number of nuclear powers is increasing, and in increasingly unstable regions such as Pakistan, Israel, India etc.  North Korea is opaque, and the USA seems increasingly unstable.
* Currently major wars are being conducted in countries with nuclear power stations ([Ukraine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chernobyl_disaster)) and with countries that possess nuclear weapons, namely Russia and Israel.  If the Ukraine war widens to *overtly* include NATO, then this would involve most nuclear powers, and escalation would be almost inevitable.  *A nuclear war would be the end of societies everywhere and if not the end of all life, it would mean the end of the majority of species on earth.*  See [Doomsday Clock -  Atomic Scientists](https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/2025-statement/) and [SIPRI](https://www.sipri.org/)

Australia has been appointed to the UN Peacebuilding Commission for 2025 and 2026 and is campaigning for a seat on the UN Security Council in 2029.  Both initiatives provide additional opportunities to pursue a peace agenda.

A peace initiative can progress *concurrently* with the existing defence initiatives and without policy contradictions.  This would be attractive to politicians - although agreements such as AUKUS may be regarded as essential - a focus on systemic peace will make these strategies less critical.

Rather than tackling short-term issues that may wedge politicians, a vision for peace can be embraced by all.

The existing state of foreign affairs recognises the reality of great power politics, that the natural state of the world is conflict.  This model is self-fulfilling and can only end in conflict – and conflict is not a zero-sum game, everyone loses.  As has been proposed many times we need to look beyond this model, recognising that the only way to progress is through co-operation and negotiation.

Whilst we continue to view the world as competing nation-states that jockey for power and influence, if we cannot proceed humanely, it is likely that we will end up in war, death and misery. The alternative, however, is working towards a system that acknowledges that we are living on the same precious planet with shared needs with all species on earth.

[**War Is Our Most Urgent Problem - By John Horgan, Scientific American.**](https://www.scientificamerican.com/blog/cross-check/war-is-our-most-urgent-problem-let-8217-s-solve-it/)

*Is there a more urgent problem in the world today than war? And when I say "war" in this post, I mean also militarism, the culture of war, the armies, arms, industries, policies, plans, propaganda, prejudices, rationalizations that make lethal group conflict not only possible but also likely.*

*My answer to the above question: No, there is no more urgent problem than war. Not climate change, pollution, overpopulation, oppression, poverty, inequality, hunger, disease.*

*If you seek solutions to any of these problems, you should also devote at least some effort to ending war, for several reasons. First, war exacerbates or perpetuates our other problems, either directly or by draining precious resources away from their solution. War subverts democracy and promotes tyranny and fanaticism; kills and sickens and impoverishes people; ravages nature. War is a keystone problem, the eradication of which would make our other social problems much more tractable.*

*Second, war is more readily solvable than many other human afflictions. War is not like a hurricane, earthquake or Ebola plague, a natural disaster foisted on us by forces beyond our control. War is entirely our creation, the product of human choices. War could end tomorrow if a relatively small group of people around the world chose to end it.*

*Third, more than any of our other problems, war represents a horrific moral crime. Particularly when carried out by the U.S. and other nations, or by groups that aspire to or claim the legitimacy of states, war makes hypocrites of us and makes a mockery of human progress. We cannot claim to be civilized as long as war or even the threat of war persists.*

[**From the declaration of St James’s Palace 1941:**](https://histdoc.net/pdf/United_Nations_docs_pp.9-11.pdf)

*The only true basis of enduring peace is the willing cooperation of free peoples in a world in which, relieved of the menace of aggression, all may enjoy economic and social security … It is our intention to work together, and with other free peoples, both in war and peace, to this end.*

[**From The Australian Dictionary of Biography**](https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/founding-of-the-un)**:**

*“Evatt argued that, in the U.N., Australia should not align itself automatically with any major power bloc, but should judge questions on their merits. By enabling the U.N. to develop in its early years as a forum whose outcomes were not always predictable, Evatt’s Australia may have helped to secure legitimacy for the new organization, and perhaps allowed the U.N. to act as a force for restraint in the Cold War.”*

[**Extracts from Senator the Hon Penny Wong United Nations General Assembly speech**](https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/penny-wong/speech/national-statement-united-nations-general-assembly)**:**

*We look forward to 2025 when Australia will have a seat on the UN Peacebuilding Commission, coinciding with the review point for those resolutions.*

*Since the creation of the UN Peacebuilding Fund, we have been a consistent partner, and we are a top ten donor.*

*We support a strong role for regional leadership on peacekeeping. Our commitment to international peace and security is why Australia seeks a seat on the Security Council for 2029-2030.*

*And it is why we pursue Security Council reform.*

*And given that it is nuclear weapons that most risk catastrophe, we must work harder to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.*

*We will continue to work with others to strengthen the NPT – the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime – despite those who seek to damage it for their own gains.*