



Defence spending 'absurd and counter-productive'

The Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) has described the expansion of military spending revealed in the Defence White Paper as 'absurd'.

Mr Nick Deane, a spokesperson for IPAN, said:

"There is no justification for further diversion of finite government funds into military acquisitions."

"We are quite adequately armed for our own defence. Increasing expenditure so significantly is absurd when, as the White Paper says, '*...there is no more than a remote prospect of a military attack by another country on Australian territory in the foreseeable future...*'"

"The mooted increase in military spending comes at the expense of essential social investment, including fixing our hospital systems, building the NBN, implementing the Gonski education reforms and addressing the climate crisis," said Mr Deane

"The reality is that the acquisitions proposed in the White Paper will be used for purposes other than the defence of Australia. "

The White Paper brings focus to China's growing influence in our region. From China's immediate response it is clear that the White Paper conveys a message of distrust and ill-will towards that nation. This is highly regrettable, and especially concerning for Australia's business community.

"The White paper boasts about Australia joining the United States of America in its intention to 'contain' China's expansion and maintain its domination in SE Asia," said Mr Deane.

"Australia has now effectively joined an arms race in our region. Far from promoting stability, the White Paper has already heightened the very tensions it identifies as threatening. Its effects run counter to its stated 'highest priority' – that of keeping the Australian community safe."

IPAN is a network of Australian community-based peace groups. It has a presence in every State, Territory and capital city in Australia.

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