CHARTING OUR OWN COURSE

Questioning Australia's Involvement in US-led Wars and the Australia–United States alliance

A People's Inquiry

Findings of the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) People's Inquiry: Exploring the case for an independent and peaceful Australia.

What are the costs and consequences of Australia's involvement in US-led wars and the Australia-US alliance? What are the alternatives?

IPAN
Independent and Peaceful Australia Network

This report was produced by the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) on the lands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of this vast continent now called Australia.

We acknowledge that the sovereignty of thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Clans, has never been ceded and we pay our respects to their Elders. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have been immeasurably and adversely impacted by brutal military occupation, 'so-called 'settlement' and ongoing illegal activities. There has never been any agreement/ treaty. Australia is the only former British colony in the world to not have a treaty/ies with her First Peoples.

The lengthy frontier -guerrilla wars (all but ignored in our Nation's psyche) eventually succumbed to British weaponry dominance. Genocidal practices, policies, ongoing militarisation and activities, including nuclear testing, then later American alliances, corporatisation have all been founded on the concept of Terra Nullius and, the dispossession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. They were then, and continue to be excluded from decisions, including military exercises and activities across their lands.

Contributing authors:

Executive Summary – Kellie Tranter,
Lawyer & Investigative Journalist

Chapter 1 – Terry Mason

Chapter 2 – Dr Vince Scappatura

Chapter 3 – Dr Alison Broinowski AM

Chapter 4 – Greg Barns SC

Chapter 5 – Associate Professor Jeannie Rea

Chapter 6 – Ian Lowe AO

Chapter 7 – The Very Reverend Peter Catt

Chapter 8 – Dr Chad Satterlee

Design: Tessa Sellar

This report was produced with generous financial support from Quakers Australia (Peace and Social Justice Fund), Union of Australian Women (Qld)), Maritime Union of Australia (Qld Division), Just Peace Queensland, the Independent Republic Foundation as well as numerous donations made by IPAN members and other organisations and individual supporters

ISBN: 978-0-646-85420-5

November 2022.

Table of Contents

Foreword	4
Aims and Terms of Reference for the People's Inquiry	7
Panel Members	8
Executive Summary	9
Recommendations	12
Chapter 1 Impact on First Peoples: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives	17
Chapter 2 Military and Defence	26
Chapter 3 Foreign Policy	41
Chapter 4 Political Including Democratic Rights	53
Chapter 5 Unions and Workers' Rights	59
Chapter 6 Environment and Climate Change	71
Chapter 7 Social and Community	77
Chapter 8 Economic	88
Appendix A People's Inquiry Questionnaire	98
Appendix B Names of organisations and individuals who made submissions	100

Photo: Edan Baxter

Foreword:

Background to the IPAN People's Inquiry into 'Exploring the Case for an Independent and Peaceful Australia'

Annette Brownlie

The IPAN People's Inquiry 'Exploring the Case for an Independent and Peaceful Australia' was a national public inquiry. It examined the costs and consequences for the Australian people of Australia's involvement in US-led wars and the Australia–US alliance. It also examined alternatives to Australia's current defence and foreign policy frameworks and initiatives.

The Inquiry was initiated by the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN), a network of organisations – community, peace, faith and environmental groups and trade unions – and of concerned individuals around Australia. Submissions from members of the public were received between November 2020 and September 2021. In all, 283 groups or individuals made submissions. Appendix A provides details of a Questionnaire that was distributed as an engagement tool for the Inquiry to IPAN members, their broader supporter base and other community members, as well as being promoted through social media.

The Inquiry was a response to growing concerns amongst IPAN member organisations and individual members, civil society and others in the broader community relating to the lack of transparency in political decision-making in Australia. This opacity leads to decisions about Australia's involvement in international agreements, military operations, and even decisions about going to war with a foreign power being made out of sight of the public. There was also widespread concern about the lack of focus on, and resources for, diplomatic rather than military solutions.

The primary aim of the Inquiry was to build public dialogue and pressure for change to develop a truly independent foreign policy for Australia. This policy would be one in which the Federal government of Australia plays a positive role in contributing to the peaceful resolution of international conflicts. There was also a strong desire to advocate for a more just allocation of Australian government resources.

The secondary aim of the IPAN Inquiry has been to produce and promote a public report that outlines the views of those Australians who hold concerns about the US alliance as Australia's foremost security partner. It can be reasonably assumed that Australians desire a future that will provide peace and hope for their children, grandchildren and future generations. This Inquiry provided an opportunity for Australians from all walks of life to have a say about how our country positions itself in the world.

The IPAN Inquiry focussed on eight broad areas, each with an expert panel leader who compiled a chapter for the report profiling the key themes related to the area for which they had carriage. In doing so, most drew extensively on submissions received from members of the public. The report that follows, based on those submissions, further seeks to detail the steps to be taken to ensure a genuinely independent and peaceful foreign policy for Australia.

As referenced by the leader of the Economic panel, Dr Chad Satterlee, in May 2006 the House of Representatives Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade tabled a report relating to Australia's Defence Relations with the United States. As Dr Satterlee explains, that Committee received a mere 27 submissions including one from the US government and seven from Australian governments or their departments. The remaining submissions included eight by academics and four by defence or strategic policy think tanks. Only two came from organisations promoting peace, while the Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL), the Australia Defence Association (ADA) and the United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA) also made single submissions. The report of this 2006 Committee stated: 'Evidence

Photo by Jim Shields, Brisbane

to the inquiry was overwhelming in its support for the value and relevance of the alliance'. This may well have been the case. The nature of the organisations who submitted to that inquiry, however, could hardly be said to be representative of the Australian community.

The vast number of groups and individuals that made submissions to the IPAN Inquiry, on the other hand, did so either on behalf of their own selves or of community groups. While several academics and prominent commentators on defence and other matters did voice their view, these were greatly outnumbered by the voices of average Australians.

IPAN acknowledges that determining any consensus point of view among members of the Australian community may be problematic. To quote Dr Satterlee again, results of different surveys on the positions held by Australians on matters such as security and defence can be 'difficult to reconcile.' He noted, for example, that, 'A 2021 Lowy Institute poll … found that 57% of respondents would prefer Australia to stay neutral in the event of military conflict between the US and China.[1] Yet an Essential poll two months later found that 57% of respondents support the AUKUS defence pact.'[2]

With the change of Federal government in May earlier this year (2022), and with rising tensions around the globe, the publication of the IPAN Inquiry Report has arguably come at a very timely geopolitical moment. As noted, the perspectives provided are those of a range of civil society organisations and citizens that are much more representative of the Australian public than the perspectives of the 2006 Government Inquiry Report. The current IPAN process was notable in its attempts to be open to the ideas of ordinary citizens and to give voice to these ideas. In a representative rather than participatory democracy, opportunities for citizens to speak out and be heard are regrettably diminishing. There have, furthermore, been clear attempts to mute citizen voices through lack of transparency and secrecy in government.

In addition to summarising the major themes and issues that the public submissions raised, the report importantly provides a series of recommendations proposing how Australia can chart a different international path in the future to that which we have travelled over the preceding seventy years. This, we argue, is a path that is more independent and that better serves the interests of the Australian nation and its people.

Acknowledgements

The IPAN Coordinating Committee and IPAN Inquiry Working Group greatly appreciate the time and commitment of the Chair of the Inquiry, Kellie Tranter, and each of the eight Panel leaders: Terry Mason, Associate Professor Jeannie Rea, Dr Alison Broinowski A.M., Dr Chad Satterlee, Greg Barns SC, Emeritus Professor Ian Lowe AO, Dr Vince Scappatura and the Very Rev Dr Peter Catt. Each made an invaluable contribution to the inquiry and report process.

We also express our deepest appreciation to the many people who took the time and effort to formulate their ideas into written submissions. Without their input, this Report would not have been possible. IPAN commits to further projects that give voice to their ideas.

We further acknowledge the vital support provided by *Independent Australia* who partnered with IPAN on the launch of the People's Inquiry and who have continued to promote the Inquiry through the publication of articles and advertisements in their online publication. Thanks also go to *Pearls and Irritations* for their promotion of the Inquiry through the publication of articles.

A People's Inquiry Working Group has functioned tirelessly behind the scenes for the best part of three years, to establish the structure for and ongoing promotion of the Inquiry, and the finalisation of this final report and associated launch and related activities. Those involved have included members of the IPAN national coordinating committee as well as a number of IPAN volunteers, namely, Annette Brownlie; Barbara Hartley; Bernadette McPhee; Beth Gordon; Bevan Ramsden; Cameron Leckie; Christine James; Derek Burke; Eileen Whitehead; Fayeza Khan; Jonathan Pilbrow; Julie Hart; Kathryn Kelly; Maureen Todhunter; Michael Henry; Nick Deane; Margaret Clarke; Penny Lockwood; Rita Camilleri; Ross Gwyther; Sam Brennan; Shahnaz Martin; Shirley Winton; and Stephen Darley. All activities were greatly enhanced by the work of Sam Brennan, IPAN Media and Communications Worker for 12 months. IPAN also thanks Edan Baxter, Spinifex Valley, for the design of and ongoing support of the Website for the People's Inquiry https://independentpeacefulaustralia.com.au/

In conclusion, we make some brief comment on style. The Report was compiled from contributions made by the nine panel leaders from their compilations of the key findings from the submissions. Each had their own style and approach. While editing as necessary to ensure consistency, we have attempted to retain the style and voice of each writer. As a result, there are slightly different approaches in each section of the report. There is also some small overlap of content. Each writer, however, approaches an issue from a perspective relevant to the Panel for which they have carriage and thus in a manner that is different from that of other writers. We have therefore largely retained the occasional content overlap that occurs.

The IPAN Coordinating Committee commends the Report that follows to the Australian people and also to the Federal Government. It is our fervent wish that the recommendations contained herein are implemented as soon as is reasonably possible.

Annette Brownlie

November 2022

IPAN Chairperson Annette Brownlie is a founding member of the Brisbane based community peace organisation, Just Peace Queensland, and the current (and inaugural) chairperson of the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN). She has served in this position for a decade.

Aims and Terms of Reference for the People's Inquiry

Exploring the case for an independent and peaceful Australia: What are the costs and consequences of Australia's involvement in US-led wars and the US-Alliance? What are the alternatives?

Aims

Primary aim: To facilitate a deep conversation and engagement with the broader Australian community in order to determine a path forward towards a genuinely independent and peaceful foreign policy for Australia; to ensure a more just allocation of Australian government resources.

Secondary aim: To produce and promote a public report which outlines the views of those Australians who hold concerns about the US Alliance and which details the steps to be taken to ensure a genuinely independent and peaceful foreign policy for Australia.

Terms of Reference

1. The costs and consequences of the Australia-US Alliance relating to: Social, political, military/defence, economic and environmental impacts – including:
   a) The impact on First Peoples of Australia
   b) The impact on all Australian people
   c) The impact on other countries and their people as a result of the US/Australian wars in the name of the Alliance
2. Recommendations about the future of the Australia-US Alliance, including in relation to:
   a) The priorities and future objectives of Australian foreign policy
   b) Proposed changes in relationships with other countries, including the United States
   c) The budgetary implications and opportunities of any proposed changes to the Alliance
   d) Sustainable and humane alternatives to current defence industries' dependency on endless wars of aggression

Panel Leaders:

IPAN People's Inquiry

Inquiry Chair

Kellie Tranter is a lawyer and human rights activist who stood as an independent candidate for the NSW Parliament. Kellie regularly contributes political and social commentary to public affairs websites like ABC's The Drum, *Independent Australia, National Times* and *On Line Opinion* and has written for *New Matilda* and the Australia Institute.

Impact on First Peoples

Terry Mason is from the land of the Awabakal language group and has worked advising on and delivering curriculum at Deakin University and lecturing/coordinating in the Badanami Centre, Western Sydney University.

Military & Defence

Dr Vince Scappatura teaches Politics and International Relations at Macquarie University. His latest book is *The US Lobby and Australian Defence Policy*.

Foreign Policy

Dr Alison Broinowski AM is the author or editor of 14 books about Australia's dealings with the world, Asian countries in particular. Alison is a visiting Fellow, Coral Bell School, ANU; President, Australians for War Powers Reform.

Political Inc Democratic Rights

Greg Barns SC is a democratic and human rights barrister. He is an advisor to the Julian Assange Campaign. He is a past president of both the Australian Republican Movement and Australian Lawyers Alliance.

Workers & Unions

Associate Professor Jeannie Rea chairs courses in International Community Development and in Planetary Health at Victoria University, Melbourne, and has been a peace and labour activist all her life. She was formerly president of the National Tertiary Education Union and a member of the ACTU Executive.

Environmental & Climate

Emeritus Professor Ian Lowe AO is emeritus professor of science, technology and society at Griffith University and an adjunct professor at two other universities. He has published extensively and filled a wide range of advisory roles for all levels of government, including chairing the advisory council that produced the first independent national report on the state of the environment in 1996.

Social & Community

Very Reverend Dr Peter Catt is currently Dean of St John's Anglican Cathedral, Brisbane. He is President of A Progressive Christian Voice (Australia), Chair of the Social Responsibilities Committee for The Anglican Church Southern Queensland.

Economics

Dr Chad Satterlee is an independent political economist. His main research interests concern the design of collective ownership. He has previously consulted for government and not-for-profit organisations on energy and labour relations issues.

Executive Summary

Inquiry Chair, Kellie Tranter, Lawyer & Investigative Journalist

The Independent and Peaceful Australia Inquiry report dares to imagine citizens placed alongside Parliament at the centre of Australia's defence and foreign policy decisions. It calls for our nation to create space for debate when matters ought to be contested, and to be confident and mature enough to strive for a genuinely independent and peaceful foreign policy for Australia.

Many Australians have contributed to this historic Inquiry, the first of its kind giving people a chance to have their say on issues related to Australia's defence and foreign policy, particularly the Australia-US alliance. The number of submissions received by the Inquiry indicates that findings are truly representative of the views held by many Australians.

This report gives the Government – and Parliament – elected in May 2022 a roadmap or reference point for assessing the efficacy of decisions and actions, and for using reason, diplomacy and common sense in making decisions about alliances and warfare in what really are Australia's best interests.

Australia's involvement in world affairs at the behest and under the diktats of the US is not consistent with popular Australian views on the role of a peaceful participant cooperating in the consensual solution of world problems. For too long this country has facilitated US hegemony – absolute power over the rest of the world – and engaged in an alliance 'deeply rooted in US self-interest.' We have thus forsaken our independence. Australia is fighting in and invariably losing wars in which we have no direct interest, and for which there is little popular support and even less moral justification. This has been at huge personal and financial costs that are detrimental to the interests of the Australian people.

By any measure, Australia's international standing has been substantially diminished through these involvements in US-led wars. We have lost international respect for our moral clarity, integrity and values, for our domestic governance systems and for our abandonment of constructive global activism and human rights advocacy. We are seen to be a dependent middle power, waiting for signals from the United States before we speak and always careful to avoid any actions that would have strategic implications for the Australia-US alliance even if such actions would advance international humanitarian law, international law and human rights.

Australia must decide what it wants in the world, work out how to get there, and take steps to achieve these goals. We must move away from the militarist mindset that permeates policy making. How do we do this? The Inquiry focussed on identifying viable practical solutions to these problems. The panellists and the many individuals who contributed their valuable time and effort into addressing these problems have offered a number of solutions that are comprehensively outlined in this report.

The common themes that were emphasised by contributors to the report were that: Australians want to be involved in defence and foreign policy decision-making, that Australia's national sovereignty is paramount, that war is a choice rather than an inevitability, that diplomacy must be bolstered and prioritised over militarism, and that decision-making must be transparent, accountable and independent. The ideas distilled in this report deserve careful and serious consideration and are reflected in each of the Inquiry's eight broad areas as briefly summarised below.

Impact on First Peoples: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices representing lived experiences and concerns are hard to find in the space occupied by Australia–US military involvement. Lack of access to unceded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's lands is usually overcome by deft political and economic manipulation, with little concern for health and social impacts, environmental harm, community disunity or sovereignty. We need to hear and give weight to the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Military and Defence

Australia faces a broad array of security risks that require non-military solutions. These security risks are actually increased by Australia's alliance with the US. They come with

the costs and risks associated with bloated defence budgets, climate change, nuclear war, supporting US imperialism, and constraints on Australia's sovereignty, independence and values.

Foreign Policy

The AUKUS trilateral security pact will make Australia even more dependent on the US and less extricable from its wars. That appears to be its purpose. Australian foreign policy lacks independence, and we face increasing dangers and significant costs if this doesn't change. False confidence exists that the US is obliged to defend Australia, and that fighting in America's wars guarantees Australia's security. There is increased militarisation of our society, increased defence expenditure and arms exports, secretive policy-making and little government accountability.

Political Including Democratic Rights

Political and democratic traditions and rights in Australia require rethinking and renewal, with the current system entrenching and enhancing inequality, precarity, marginalisation and dispossession. Legislative inroads into the rule of law, loss of liberties and the lack of independent scrutiny of politicians and powerful and unaccountable security agencies are all reason enough for establishing constitutionally enshrined human rights, an independent Federal anti-corruption commission, real protection for whistle-blowers and ultimately a republic of Australia.

Union and Workers' Rights

The burdens of preparing for, waging, and recovering from, armed conflict fall disproportionately upon workers and their communities. Their taxes are used to fund the war machine and they provide the cannon fodder. Australia needs to extricate its manufacturing sector from war-making industries and invest in economically sound and socially and environmentally just and sustainable jobs and production.

Environment

There are measurable direct costs of military action including fuel use by the military in the context of climate change, nuclear issues, the destruction of the environment, the pollution of air, land and water and biosecurity risks. On the other side of the ledger, environmentally constructive activities in areas such as foreign aid and climate change mitigation are limited by our prioritisation of military spending.

Social and Community

The general public, NGOs and other parts of civil society are deeply concerned about the effects that the Australia-US alliance is having on the social fabric of Australia and our self-understanding as a nation, as well as the financial cost of military spending to the detriment of spending to meet urgent challenges at home. We must see our national interest as it is: something that is independent of US strategic interest.

Economic

Published cost–benefit analyses are not an institutional feature of Australian Government practice or that of the Department of Defence. Many Australians look critically at, and are less willing to pay for, national defence expenditures – both current and projected for the future. Concern is also expressed that our trade relationship with China, beneficial in terms of job generation and national income, has been harmed by our direct provocations on behalf of the United States.

What would an Independent Australia Look Like?

An independent Australian foreign policy would increase the likelihood of resolving trade conflicts through diplomacy and mutual goodwill. As to defence, Australia should look to developing a self-reliant, self-funded, self-defence model with associated manufacturing capabilities, even if this costs more than our current close expensive integration with the US military.

Adopting solutions suggested by the participants in this Inquiry will put Australia on track towards government by politicians who acknowledge, understand, address and try to implement the values and concerns of their constituency, the Australian people. This in turn will mark Australia as a peaceful nation whose people aim to cooperate with all countries in a multipolar world. A unified international spirit of cooperation is our only hope if humanity is to have any chance of successfully addressing such profound fundamental issues as climate change and war.

What's the alternative? It is a future where we will see greater US influence on the Australian political process; where we remain a strategic military target; where our enemies are determined by the US and we are committed to US wars not in our own self-interest; where we have no ability to operate key defence systems independently of the US; where we thwart the opportunity for a coalition of interests in South East Asia and real cooperation on critical issues such as arms control and climate change; where we kill off diplomacy in favour of military options; where at the behest of the US we pick and choose the human rights abuses and international laws we ignore and we continue to play an obstructionist role at the United Nations; where we are

unable to rein in exorbitant payments to weapons manufacturers and other war opportunists; where we are plagued by government secrecy and war propaganda; and where we face network-centric warfare using weapons without full human control, with little or no time to respond, in remote conflicts without geographical borders where everyone is a potential military target.

The work done by this People's Inquiry committee together, and by each individual member, and the work done by participants in and contributors to the Inquiry, provide the seeds for a positive vision of Australia's place in the world in the 21st century. The IPAN vision for an independent and peaceful Australia is not hampered by historical or political prejudices or constraints, not swayed by considerations of egoism or economic self-interest, apart from the interest of every person in a cooperative and peaceful world, and not blinkered by misrepresentations or misunderstandings of history or current events or international politics.

This report can and should be seen as a roadmap for the citizens of Australia. We can regain the power of proper representation so that our country's words and deeds faithfully represent the common wishes of the Australian people, including our need for Australia to live as a peaceful nation working for peace and cooperation in the modern world.

I commend the report and thank each of the many people who contributed to the Inquiry and who made its production possible.

Kellie Tranter

November 2022

Recommendations

In the spirit of a peaceful nation, with a culture of care for all its people, this Report recommends as follows:

Impact on First Peoples: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives

Recommendation 1:

Assaults by overseas military force members on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
The Australian Government should:

a) Collect data and report publicly on rates of assault perpetrated by members of overseas military forces on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

b) Protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples from sexual and physical assault by members of overseas military forces.

c) Deal with alleged offenders from overseas military forces under Australian law.

Recommendation 2:

Health and environmental protection

The Australian Government should:

a) Ensure no exemption from health protocols for members of overseas military forces in order to protect the public from risk of disease and other health risks.

b) Establish a national register of military pollution and allocate an adequate budget to remediate polluted environments, compensate affected communities and treat health impacts.

Recommendation 3

Consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The Australian Government should:

a) Practise adequate, appropriate and meaningful consultation with 'legitimate' stakeholders and custodians in all consultations and negotiations regarding use of lands and waters in accordance with the UN concept of free, prior and informed consent.

b) Place greater priority on the legitimate interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the use and proper maintenance of their lands and, where there is conflict between stakeholders, the position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples should be dominant, not subservient, as is currently the case under Native Title and military agreements.

c) Amend the Western Australia Aboriginal Heritage Act December 2021 to ensure the provision of continuing appropriate regard for consultation and exercise of custodianship over lands and waters.

d) Engage in meaningful modern treaties with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Military and Defence

Recommendation 4

Redefining 'defence' and 'security'

The Australian Government should redefine what it understands by 'defence' and 'security', to include the wider concepts of 'human security' and 'common security'.

Recommendation 5

Urgent security priorities

The Australian Government should prioritise as a matter of urgency:

a) The existential threats of climate change and nuclear war, including joining the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

b) The prevention of a 'new Cold War' between the US and China.

Recommendation 6

The United Nations

The Australian Government should promote the role and purposes of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security.

Recommendation 7

Diplomacy

The Australian Government should shift its focus away from what it recognises as national defence to more comprehensive diplomacy, to better ensure Australia's national security.

Recommendation 8

A new defence policy for Australia

The Australian Government should engage in extensive community consultations to develop new defence policy for Australia that upholds the fundamental objective of protecting territorial Australia and its air and maritime approaches without foreign assistance.

Recommendation 9

War powers

The Australian Government should undertake necessary action to ensure that the authority to commit Australian military forces overseas rests with the Australian Parliament.

Foreign Policy

Recommendation 10

ANZUS Treaty

The Australian Government should review and renegotiate the ANZUS Treaty in line with what is most appropriate for Australia's national security.

Recommendation 11

Overseas military presence in Australia

The Australian Government should eliminate all overseas military presence from military bases in Australia.

Recommendation 12

War powers

The Australian Parliament should legislate to ensure the decision to go to war lies with Federal Parliament.

Recommendation 13

Diplomacy

The Australian Government should:

a) strive to achieve diplomatic, not military, resolution of conflict and differences at the international level.

b) invest additional resources to improve relations with Australia's neighbours.

Recommendation 14

Nuclear weapons

The Australian Government should explicitly reject all use of nuclear weapons in pursuing Australia's national security and sign and ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Recommendation 15

Bipartisanship

The Australian Labor Party should abandon bipartisanship and pursue a new pathway forward on foreign and defence policy and lead public consultation towards an independent national security strategy.

Political Including Democratic Rights

Recommendation 16

Republic referendum

As Australia must become a republic to exercise an independent foreign policy, the Australian Government should give the Australian people the opportunity to vote in a referendum on the Republic.

Recommendation 17

War powers

The Australian Parliament should pass a law that the decision to go to war must be voted on by Parliament.

Recommendation 18

Whistleblowers and integrity

The Australian Government should introduce:

a) Strong protection under law for whistle-blowers and all citizens' civil liberties.

b) Introduce a public and transparent national anti-corruption body.

Unions and Workers' Rights

Recommendation 19

Industry and jobs

The Australian Government should:

a) Redirect national budget priorities from industries that provoke, enable and/or sustain war towards investment in socially and environmentally just and sustainable jobs and production.

b) Embrace alternative ways of creating jobs and increasing national economic independence, including through member-owned cooperatives and using money held in superannuation funds.

c) Disengage from foreign policy alliances that incline Australia into conflicts that justify military production.

Photo: Fernando M. Goncalves

Environment and Climate Change

Recommendation 20

Nuclear energy

The Australian Government should legislate the use of only warships that use an energy source other than nuclear.

Recommendation 21

Joint military exercises

The Australian Government should discontinue joint military exercises with US forces, such as Talisman Sabre, as the biosecurity risks of military vessels that refuse to be scrutinised are unacceptable.

Recommendation 22

Nuclear weapons

The Australian government should join the nations that have already adopted the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and work actively for wider adoption of the Treaty.

Recommendation 23

Environment

The Australian Government should:

a) Work to ensure that the broader societal goal of net zero greenhouse gas emissions necessarily includes a commitment by the military to operate without release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

b) Formally acknowledge the appalling environmental damage caused by US-led wars in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq, and strengthen its determination that our nation will never again be involved in such ill-considered and deeply destructive military operations.

Recommendation 24

Military expenditure

The Australian Government should reassess and reduce the current commitment to spend 2 per cent of GNP on Defence military expenditure levels in order to:

a) Increase the expenditure on climate change responses, and

b) Increase the budget allocation on foreign aid to meet the UN target of 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI).

Social and Community

Recommendation 25

Media

The Australian Government should conduct an Inquiry into the role the media plays in promoting the Australia–US alliance and Australia's strategic relationship with the US.

Recommendation 26

Living wage

The Australian Government should investigate the introduction of a Living Wage as a means for building social cohesion across Australia.

Recommendation 27

War powers

The Australian Government should introduce a plan to work towards establishing a democratic framework for the exercise of War Powers.

Recommendation 28

Defence expenditure

The Australian Government should recast the defence budget to limit expenditure to only that which is required to effectively defend Australia.

Recommendation 29

Veteran support services

The Australian Government should increase funding for veterans' support services.

Recommendation 30

Apology to veterans and families

The Australian Government should issue a formal apology to the military personnel sent to fight on Australia's behalf in Iraq and Afghanistan and to their families for putting their lives, physical and mental health at risk for wars joined to support Australia's alliance with the US.

Recommendation 31

Child protection

The Australian Government should:

a) Introduce robust policies and procedures and safeguards to assess all requests from military representatives for visits to school and educational institutions with young people under the age of 18.

b) Overhaul the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and its implementation to ensure

i) child protection is undertaken responsibly, and

ii) that all alleged sexual offenders are dealt with under Australian law.

c) Prohibit military sponsorship of activities relating to, and participated in, by people under the age of 18 years.

Recommendation 32

Defence industry impact

The Australian Government should establish a Parliamentary Inquiry into the societal impacts of the Australian defence industry.

Economic

Recommendation 33

Industry

The Australian Government should:

a) Identify and nationalise all strategic sectors of the economy.

b) Build up industries specialising in the manufacture of self-defence technologies focused on and best suited to our specific geography.

Recommendation 34

Democracy and integrity

The Australian Government should:

a) Establish a process through which Australian citizens can have a direct voice on the level of defence spending in the country.

b) Establish legislation to ban political donations from defence manufacturers.

c) Legislate for the extensive public transparency of all defence manufacturing contracts.

Photo: Fernando M. Goncalves

Impact on First Peoples:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives

Terry Mason

1. Introduction

There were 32 written submissions that specifically concerned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. This relatively low proportion of submissions is not surprising during a period of extensive COVID-19 restrictions. Oral comment was also gathered through conversations, interviews with the panel leader on community radio, and several meetings with interested people. At these meetings, there was the usual circumspection regarding not talking on behalf of others or for land that one is not custodian for.

Pan-Aboriginality has always been an issue when national matters arise. This concept is often accompanied by wording that intimates an Aboriginal problem and a single solution. The 'pan-Aboriginality' approach has a record of 'searching' for the answer that suits the most powerful stakeholder. A healthy scepticism and reticence on the part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples generally to engage initially with 'outsiders' reinforces this exploitation. Who speaks for whom and what is suitable consultation are perennial and important matters.

Overall, the written submissions show the concern felt by the general public, NGOs, political, union and church groups. Each expressed not only their concern about the Australia–US (and other) alliances but also concern for the impact of a mixture of issues on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The diversity of these issues is broad, covering political, social, environmental, economic and sovereignty matters.

It must be stated that the language used in a significant number of submissions reflects both a colonial history and the political discourse of the last 30 years. Although a submission writer might have strongly supported independence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, ideas were often expressed in the possessive as 'our' Aborigines/Indigenous/Australians/First Nations People or similar. This demonstrates a continuing need to address and challenge the subtle ways in which, even today, colonisation permeates all elements of Australian society.

2. Frontier Wars and Dispossession

Three submissions mentioned frontier wars and dispossession. Dispossession expressed in varying forms was, in fact, a regular topic. One contributor (Lesley Jeffreys, Sub no. 329, p. 1) made specific reference to Australia needing to learn from Aboriginal 'ways' rather than decimating the land. Another (Sheila Newman, Sub no. 127, p. 5) expressed feelings of dispossession in a military context, given that, 'The installation of populations of US military personnel on this land is yet another example of […] perpetual invasion'. A third submission by Marcus Reubenstein, Independent journalist from the independent news site APAC News, pointed out that 'both [Australia and the US] are guilty of treating their non-Anglo ethnic minorities poorly and have shameful histories when it comes to the treatment of their indigenous peoples'. (Sub no. 356, p. 1).

3. Involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Military

Two writers mentioned the lack of recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander military service both past and present. Several oral submissions made to the writer also referenced former or current military service. There was a recognition of the right of communities and individuals to be involved in military service, which was seen to add economic, community and individual skills to those involved. Oral submissions also referred to the responsibility of the authorities to deliver social and health support with respect and dignity to those involved, or previously involved, in military service.

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While military service was seen by some contributors as important, it was ultimately emphasised that education, development and personal advancement are the rights of every citizen of Australia, and that military service should not be the major, or possibly only, pathway to benefits that others gain in their own location.

4. Relationships and Relationship to Land

Relationship is the basis of Aboriginal life. Aboriginal societies were and are diverse. These societies are not currently as they were prior to invasion and, like all societies, are characterised by change while shaped by cultural continuity. The relationships to land and to each other, as diverse as they are, reflect much from pre-invasion spiritual and social structures.

There has been significant and extensive disruption of these past patterns. Yet, although this intimate knowledge has in some instances been interrupted, cultural inheritance and living practices are continuing. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples were entrusted with the custodianship of the land to which they belonged. Ritual and ceremony are not only an act of 'commemoration' but also an act of continuation, creation, renewal and increase. The history flowing from the laws concerning responsibility for the custodianship of country and, from that, every other relationship, still has a profound impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

5. Lack of Adequate Consultation and Respect

It is notable that a consistent theme in all forums was the lack of adequate consultation and respect in relation to decisions about military exercises or defence developments on the lands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. In this context, the work of researcher Amy Thomas and Indigenous researcher Yin Paradies is important. Although this pair recently noted the increased 'inclusion' of Indigenous perspectives across mainstream newspaper and television networks, they found this often does not go beyond 'surface level inclusion'.

According to Thomas and Paradies, surface level inclusion is:

> *absence of negative stereotypes, but excluding Indigenous authors, perspectives, historical and cultural contexts, and voices.*[3]

Aboriginal voices representing lived experiences and concerns are hard to find in the space occupied by Australia–US military involvement. In addition, discussions relating to matters of this Inquiry highlighted strong concern especially about land-clearing and associated damage to sites, land and fauna. Another concern was failure in consultations to seek and obtain guidance from custodians, in contrast to 'decimation [of Country] for greed'.

6. Health and Social Impacts

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been concerns about the risks posed by military exercises and the lack of transparency and consultation about troop movements, such as those outlined below, that are not of a particularly secret nature and are therefore known to be taking place.

US paratroopers from Alaska dropped in on the northern Queensland region, near Charters Towers, during 2021 manoeuvres. Submission writers raised concerns about paratroopers arriving with short notice and also that US troops were on board a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) plane. Submission writers highlighted that there was no evidence that those troops had undergone Australian COVID-19 quarantine requirements.

A submission by Jasmine Pilbrow (Sub no. 215, p. 1) also raised the COVID-19 matter:

> *The fact that 2,200 US Marine troops were able to travel into the Northern Territory earlier this year (2021), despite the high health risk to the First Nations people in the NT, is a clear example of the prioritisation of the US–Australia alliance over the health of Australians, in particular First Nations people.*

COVID-19 positive cases were detected among military personnel in these exercises, and the general populations have been less protected. Only good luck meant an outbreak was avoided.

Concerning the scale of the US military presence in this country involved in exercises on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands, information provided in the Friends of the Earth Australia submission (Sub no. 341, p. 7) regarding the Central Queensland Talisman Sabre exercise makes the scale of this presence very clear:

> *Every two years, Australia hosts some of the world's largest military operations, Exercise Talisman Sabre, joint US–Aus[tralia] combined force training which sees thousands of personnel engaging in land, sea and air manoeuvres… [These] exercises are overwhelmingly American – normally approximately 2/3 of the personnel are from the US.*
>
> *With support locations in cities around the country, the majority of the action takes place in Queensland, on and around the Great Barrier Reef. Talisman Sabre 2019 involved 34,000 personnel. In 2021, Talisman Sabre was significantly downsized due to the Covid pandemic, … [with the numbers] halved to 17,000 US, Australian and allied troops.*

Even the downsized 2021 Talisman Sabre brought huge numbers of US troops into the country.

7.Social and Assault Concerns

In 2018, referencing incidents investigated by Defence over several years, ABC Darwin reported that sexual harassment and sex crimes were often not reported because of fear of victimisation, and that 'pockets of poor leadership' allowed a culture that tolerated sexual harassment and sex crimes to exist'.[4]

Since then, despite the reticence to report, many cases have been exposed in the Australian Defence Forces (ADF). It would be hard to accept that cases of sex crimes and violence are contained to within the ADF itself (that is, among ADF personnel only) and not perpetrated by military personnel in the wider community. In that context, reporting is a fearful prospect not only in terms of having to deal with the military, but also having to deal with civilian police.

Despite the anecdotal reports provided, a 2012 report commissioned by the Department of Defence found that there was merely a 'moderate' risk of sexual assault of civilians as a result of the US military presence in their community. As noted in the Friends of the Earth Australia submission (Sub no. 341, p. 35), Defence devoted just two paragraphs of the 2012 report to the issue.[5] The matters discussed here affect all, but the treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by authorities is generally more fraught.

Substantially more effort should be made to protect women and to rein in the behaviour of troops. Anecdotal reports indicate that there is a significant increase in sexual assaults, drink spiking, crime and public drunkenness in the areas where troops participate in the Talisman Sabre exercises. We should not be exposing women to this kind of threat.

In 2011 the ADF claimed there was no evidence that sexual assault is a problem due to the presence of US and Australian troops participating in military exercises, in either the Shoalwater Bay or Robertson barracks regions (Rockhampton and Yeppoon, and Darwin respectively) (Friends of the Earth Australia, Sub no. 341, p. 35). However, the statistics on sexual assaults within the ADF and the US military suggest otherwise. (Friends of the Earth

Australia, Sub no. 341, p. 35). The ADF does not acknowledge this risk, and there is no mechanism to have this risk publicly acknowledged or acted upon. (Friends of the Earth Australia, Sub no. 341, p. 35).

BaseWatch, a community group opposing US forces in Darwin (cited by Friends of the Earth Australia, Sub no. 341, p. 35), in their response to the PER (Public Environment Report) for Talisman Sabre 2013 joint exercise, noted that:

> *Foremost among our concerns is any social impact on our city. Recently, a report labelled as a 'social impact assessment' of the first tranche of 250 Marines identified sexual assault as one of only two associated hazards with a significant risk rating. BaseWatch are aware of a small but significant number of incidents of sexual assault, and other crimes, committed by US service people on R&R [rest and recreation] here in Darwin. We're aware of similar experiences elsewhere around the country, and at US bases around the world, particularly the litany of sexual assaults in Okinawa, including a very recent case of rape… including one incident where it has been suggested that deficiencies of the SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement) contributed to a total failure of perpetrators of gang rape facing any legal consequence.*

As the February 2018 report by the ABC news service (cited also above) stated:

> *A series of investigations into alleged sexual crimes committed by US marines in and around Darwin have been quietly dropped by Australian and American authorities, ABC News can reveal.*
>
> *That decision raises questions about whether Australia and the US are doing enough to investigate claims of sex crimes, and echoes decades of international concern about the cover-up of those crimes by US military personnel serving abroad.*[6]

As previously noted, these matters affect all, but the treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by authorities is generally more problematic. Ongoing colonisation and dispossession of this nature, and a subsequent denial of the ability to continue custodial obligations, also have a health impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

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8. Environmental

Even in peace time, the military poses a significant risk to civilians living near them. As the submission by Friends of the Earth Australia points out (Sub no. 341 p. 35), local residents at Shoalwater Bay are concerned about potential groundwater pollution from explosives in the catchment. The drinking water of Yeppoon may be endangered by the use of weapons in the Dismal Sector of the Shoalwater Bay Training area, which is part of the water catchment for the town that runs into Waterpark Creek. There are other grounds for concern too. For example, perchlorate, which is commonly used in rocket fuel, has been detected in many groundwater sites in the US and other parts of the world where US forces conduct practice bombing.[7]

Friends of the Earth Australia (Sub no. 341, p. 47) note how:

> *The increasing human population in the Capricorn region will lead inevitably to increased conflict with the military over land and sea use. Many local inhabitants want to see the Shoalwater region better protected and do not want increased military activities in their region: their opinions should be of great importance in decision-making.*

Throughout the Friends of the Earth Australia submission (Sub no. 341), actual and potential environmental effects of military activities are well detailed and are supplemented/ supported by the authors of other submissions.

Some of the environmental risks noted include:

- Marine damage and pollution. This may be to reefs, marine plants and beings.

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- Sound navigation and ranging (SONAR)
- Ballast water pollution and potential introduction of foreign species
- Disruption of bird migration and breeding areas
- Noise
- Radar and radiation from communication and surveillance establishments
- Physical damage to flora, and erosion
- Loss of native species – plant, insect, animal
- Groundwater pollution from pollutants such as perchlorate, lead, mercury, depleted uranium, aircraft fuel and PFAS (per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances) from firefighting
- Pollution and damage to above-ground life from the same
- Future possible uranium storage from nuclear-powered machinery.

It may be argued that the matters listed above are the concern of all Australians. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, however, these are not environmental matters alone. When land and that within it are kin, the cultural stress caused by land destruction, lack of access and the inability to practice custodianship is an attack on the fabric of who a person is.

For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, moreover, the points listed above are not just matters of cultural custodianship and responsibility. They also affect the ability to participate in the economy and take a self-determined and sustainable role in modern society. Both rural and urban people are affected. The loss of income and/or food-gathering practice furthermore extends well beyond recognised sites such as Shoalwater Bay in Queensland or Jervis Bay in NSW. Poisonous pollution such as PFAS travels well outside defined military areas.

9. Lack of Access to Unceded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lands

Friends of the Earth Australia once again provide important information regarding lack of access to unceded land. They point out (Sub no. 341, p. 2), for example, that:

> *US military activity in Australian territory is simply a re-occupation of unceded First Peoples' lands and waters perpetuating their ongoing violent colonisation.*

The Friends of the Earth Australia submission continue (Sub no. 341, p. 2). s:

> *Despite Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs), and the Native Title agreements that sit alongside them, Australia's First People have limited access to their militarily occupied lands/waters; access is controlled by the military. While some have argued that the military are better stewards of space than previous colonial occupiers, such as graziers, military oversight of land/waters in no way guarantees their protection or prioritisation – and does not acknowledge the sovereignty of the original occupants*

Land and waterways contain sites that are important to the culture, heritage and health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. While Native Title is denied to many, this notion is not robust even when 'granted'. It merely recognises the continuing relationship with land and the right to negotiate in certain situations. If there is a conflict between stakeholders, however, the Native Title position is subservient.

This legal subservience has pernicious ramifications for the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people generally. It is particularly galling, however, when land is designated a 'military exclusion area' limiting or negating consultation and allowing limited, if any, access to it.

Loss of access prevents the lodging of Native Title claims and puts pressure on Custodians to accept military use of their land and water without respectful and equitable negotiation. For example, the long-term exclusion of custodians from the site of the Pine Gap installations has been so stressful in many ways for

these custodians that it constitutes a denial of their responsibilities.

In commenting on the building of Pine Gap, Felicity Hayes, a Traditional Owner of the land area on which the facility is located, raised the following concerns:

> *It's like you're stealing, it's all big secrets… must be because of… people getting killed in other countries. They [sic] having war over there in that place and we don't know it, might be coming from here.*[8]

The presence of the Pine Gap installation for satellite surveillance also raises concerns regarding the threat of attack.

The lack of priority placed on consultation is a reflection of an ongoing colonial attitude in the business sector. Friends of the Earth Australia (Sub no. 341, p. 49) point out that, during the 2007 inquiry into expansion at Shoalwater Bay, the ADF claimed Traditional Owners of the Shoalwater region were not consulted because they were not 'contactable'. The organisation notes, however, that: 'With several easily approachable and relevant organisations to facilitate contact, the ADF's failure to make contact at that time can only serve to highlight a lack of effort or a lack of appropriate protocol' (Friends of the Earth Australia, Sub no. 341, p. 49).

A similar claim was made during the secretive construction of the $130 million Port Melville infrastructure primarily to service the small Tiwi Islands wood-chipping industry. This venture, which was funded largely by a Singaporean company, was surrounded by complex claims and counterclaims of who was consulted, who wasn't consulted, and whether it was for the further expansion of the US military presence for up to 80,000 marines.[9]

The future possibility of Australia engaging with nuclear arms raises further questions around mining and storage in Australia. Despite greater opposition, there are some Aboriginal communities amenable to mining.[10] Several IPAN Inquiry submissions highlighted that storage remains a contentious issue, as does the ability to refuse projects or even be consulted adequately.

A 7 December 2021 report by the ABC news service stated:

> *Traditional Owners on South Australia's Eyre Peninsula are preparing to challenge the decision to build a nuclear waste dump on their land […] [The] primary argument against the Napandee decision is that Traditional Owners were not included in discussions with local landholders and townspeople, who were asked to vote on whether they supported the choice of site […]. The group said that without the support of the Barngarla people there could not be broad community support for the facility, and that their exclusion from a process open to ratepayers and short-term residents amounted to systemic racism'.*[11]

Debate is also developing around the possibility of installing space ports and rocket launching facilities within communities, especially around who

Photo: Fernando M. Goncalves

is consulted and who is responsible for the land and decisions at the site.[12]

The Western Australia Aboriginal Heritage Act December 2021 continues the scant regard for consultation and exercise of custodianship.[13] Prior to the introduction of the Act, then Premier Mark McGowan and his government demonstrated contempt for the claim by Aboriginal Land Councils that the Act was not acceptable.[14] This Aboriginal Heritage Act continues the overriding of Aboriginal rights by business interests.

An Open Letter of Concern, which also included the call for a co-designed process to protect sites, was ignored.[15] This letter pointed out that the Bill was weighted in favour of mining and economic interests over Aboriginal heritage and also that it breached United Nations treaty law.[16]

This new Aboriginal Heritage Act adopts (and misuses) the language of international human rights law. It does this by referencing how Indigenous people must be given the opportunity to provide 'free, prior and informed consent' to the damage of sites .[17] However, the *United Nations* says the test of free, prior and informed consent from Indigenous peoples includes the ability to exercise self-determination, including over matters that affect their lands.[18] Given that Indigenous peoples are not legally free to say 'no' to harm, damage or destruction of their sites, the WA Act does not meet this principle.[19]

There is a cross-over between what has become acceptable in the business sector and the approach adopted by the military. This latter is encapsulated by David M. Gray (Sub no. 396, p. 2).

> *The legitimate interests of First Nations people to the use and proper maintenance of their traditional areas have been given low priority when it has been deemed useful to the [Australia–US] Alliance to use these lands for military purposes and manoeuvres under the Alliance. The Alliance partners have regarded their interests as dispensable and unimportant.*

The Newcastle Peace Group (Sub no. 227, p. 1) further articulates this point:

> *[W]hen I say US military bases are stationed 'on our soil' … [w]hose soil is it? This question raises a major contradiction which has to be resolved between the First Australians and the recent settlers from Europe and other parts of the world; this contradiction must be resolved by treaty, reconciliation, mutual respect and equality, and is preventing our country presenting itself as a unified nation to the world.*

Post-COVID-19 emergency reports about the impact of military activity will benefit from a greater number of face-to-face sessions in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sphere. Such sessions are necessary to reflect the basis of relationship and authentic contributions from those with custodianship in the relevant areas.

Land and water and all else are kin to-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Although much of the information in this chapter is of shared concern and responsibility with all Australians, there are vital differences. The ongoing relationship to land for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples is fundamentally different to any association with land that others might have, no matter how long or close that association.

The racism in Australia that continues to dispossess, disadvantage, disrespect and disregard Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and that causes actual cultural, social and health harm to country and people, cannot be erased by any idea that military alliances override the unceded sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Neither holding polite conversations nor importuning political parties has succeeded, or is succeeding, in eliminating the problems noted above. Australia needs to engage in meaningful modern treaties with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Impact on First Peoples:
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Perspective

Recommendations

Specifically, the following recommendations have been called for through the submissions:

Recommendation 1:

Assaults by overseas military force members on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The Australian Government should:

a) Collect data and report publicly on rates of assault perpetrated by members of overseas military forces on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

b) Protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples from sexual and physical assault by members of overseas military forces.

c) Deal with alleged offenders from overseas military forces under Australian law.

Recommendation 2:

Health and environmental protection

The Australian Government should:

a) Ensure no exemption from health protocols for members of overseas military forces in order to protect the public from risk of disease and other health risks.

b) Establish a national register of military pollution and allocate an adequate budget to remediate polluted environments, compensate affected communities and treat health impacts.

Recommendation 3

Consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The Australian Government should:

a) Practise adequate, appropriate and meaningful consultation with 'legitimate' stakeholders and custodians in all consultations and negotiations regarding use of lands and waters in accordance with the UN concept of free, prior and informed consent.

b) Place greater priority on the legitimate interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the use and proper maintenance of their lands and, where there is conflict between stakeholders, the position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples should be dominant, not subservient, as is currently the case under Native Title and military agreements.

c) Amend the Western Australia Aboriginal Heritage Act December 2021 to ensure the provision of continuing appropriate regard for consultation and exercise of custodianship over lands and waters.

d) Engage in meaningful modern treaties with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

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Military and Defence

Dr Vince Scappatura

Introduction

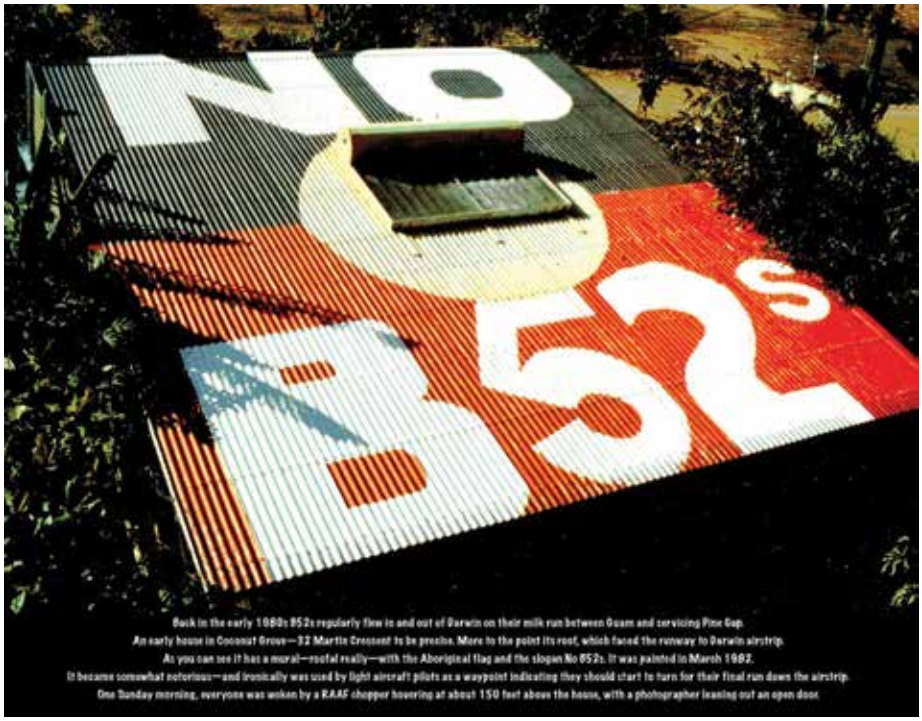
The Australia–US alliance is considered by Australia's political leadership to be the indispensable 'cornerstone' of the country's defence policy. More than just a bilateral security relationship, the alliance is seen to transcend interests and reflect shared values. In this sense, its influence is felt across the full spectrum of Australian political, economic, social and cultural life.

Writing in 2005, historian Peter Edwards described the alliance as 'a political institution in its own right, comparable with a political party or the monarchy'.[20] Consequently, a full reckoning of the costs and consequences of the alliance is a complex and multidimensional task. The IPAN People's Inquiry has rightly identified eight focus areas to receive public submissions and assess the depth and breadth of its impact. This section deals with submissions exclusive to military and defence.

Defence policy pertains to 'the actual or potential use of organised lethal violence' for the purpose of defending Australia, its people and their interests against a narrow category of national security threats (Professor Richard Tanter, Sub no. 401, p. 3). The purported benefits of the alliance in bolstering Australia's defence policy are well known and frequently proclaimed by political leaders and national security elites. These include access to advanced military technology, intelligence cooperation, defence science and military training, along with the expectation of aid in the remote circumstance of direct attack.

However, as many of the submissions to the Inquiry point out, Australia faces a broader array of security risks that require non-military solutions. The most grave and urgent among these include climate change, nuclear holocaust, pandemics and global political and economic instability. Diplomacy, soft power, foreign aid, education, economic development and engagement with international institutions are far more relevant tools in addressing these risks than 'organised lethal violence'. A narrow focus on 'national security' threats thus overstates the security gains from direct military benefits afforded by the alliance, while saying nothing of the risks and costs that the alliance brings.

Indeed, the most popular concern expressed by those who made submissions to the IPAN People's Inquiry was that the alliance makes Australia an unnecessary target of America's foes. This has led the nation into several needless and costly wars and is likely to do so again in the future, with especially grave consequences in the context of great power rivalry between the US and China. Although the cost in lives and treasure can be quantified without too much difficulty, there is no neat way of calculating the increased security risks associated with the



Back in the early 1980s B52s regularly flew in and out of Darwin on their milk run between Guam and servicing Pine Gap.
An early house in Coconut Grove—32 Martin Crescent to be precise. More to the point its roof, which faced the runway to Darwin airstrip.
As you can see it has a mural—roofal really—with the Aboriginal flag and the slogan No B52s. It was painted in March 1982.
It became somewhat notorious—and ironically was used by light aircraft pilots as a waypoint indicating they should start to turn for their final run down the airstrip.
One Sunday morning, everyone was woken by a RAAF chopper hovering at about 150 feet above the house, with a photographer leaning out an open door.

alliance (although they are easy to identify). Such risks include direct and opportunity costs of bloated defence budgets and a growing 'military-industrial complex', the costs of supporting US imperialism (to us, to our victims and to general global stability) and the constraints on Australian sovereignty and independence. Submissions to the IPAN Inquiry rightly bring attention to each of these costs and more.

Enunciating realisable alternatives to Australia's current defence policy is an even more complex and imprecise task than quantifying the risks and costs of the status quo. There is no easy way of disentangling defence objectives from, for example, economic and environmental interests. Although they are distinct areas of policy making, defence policy and foreign policy are inextricably linked and this report on defence and military matters necessarily ventures into the latter. The task is further complicated by the difficulties in defining the elusive and contestable 'national interest'. Proponents of an independent defence policy, which all contributors to the Inquiry advocate in one form or another, must also recognise the limits of Australia's power and influence, and its interdependency within the global political economy. As political economist, Dr William Briggs, asks in his Inquiry submission (Sub no. 58, p. 12), what does 'independence' look like for a small to medium capitalist economy that has no option but to co-exist within the confines of a US-led global capitalist order?

With these complexities in mind, and in a policy space that is otherwise dominated by a clique of national security elites and orthodox perspectives, the submissions summarised below do a remarkable job of identifying the principles, formulating the ideas, and articulating the concrete steps necessary for charting a path forward to a more peaceful, secure and independent Australia. If, as one submission by Professor Tanter argues (Sub no. 401, p. 5), it is possible to fight for more meaningful interpretations of the national interest, these contributions from ordinary individuals and civil-society organisations reflect a powerful volley of blows in the battle to reshape defence policy in the real interests of all Australians.

Starboard bow view of the US Navy (USN) LOS ANGELES CLASS: Attack Submarine, USS LOS ANGELES (SSN 688) underway off the coast of Oahu, Hawaii (HI).

NARA & DVIDS Public Domain Archive

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1. Alliance Threats to Australian Security

Australian leaders frequently present the alliance as guaranteeing Australia's security. For example, in October 2019, Prime Minister Scott Morrison declared, 'Our alliance with the United States is our past, our present and our future. It is the bedrock of our security'.[21] In contrast, contributors to the Inquiry point to the absence of specific defence guarantees in the text of the ANZUS Treaty. As Murray Noonan explains (Sub no. 314, p. 1):

> *The US in signing the treaty with Australia and New Zealand did not commit to automatically supporting those countries with military forces in the event of armed attack. Rather, there is a less stringent commitment to 'consult'. Close reading of the actual text of the treaty reveals that it is not the security guarantee that it has consistently been made out to be.*

The point is reiterated by Spirit of Eureka (Sub no. 281, p. 1), who make the additional remark that the US will only ever act according to its own perceived interests:

> *This [ANZUS] agreement only provides for 'consultation' in the event of attack, rather than automatic military assistance.[22] Indeed, the US has repeatedly stated that they reserve the right to take military action only when 'the interests of the USA…' are threatened.*

Accordingly, in March 2021, President Biden released his Interim National Security Strategic Guidance document setting out his vision for US foreign policies, where it stated:

> *The United States will never hesitate to use force when required to defend our vital national interests. We will ensure our armed forces are equipped to deter our adversaries, defend our people, interests, and allies, and defeat threats that emerge.[23]*

The expectation of US military aid to Australia is even less assured in the case of a nuclear attack. Despite Australian government attempts to project the view to the contrary, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) unequivocally states in their submission to the Inquiry (Sub no. 263, p. 2) that, 'ANZUS is not a nuclear alliance'. The ANZUS Treaty 'provides no unqualified security assurances to Australia, and certainly not any promise of extended nuclear deterrence' (ICAN, Sub no. 263, p. 2).

Contributors argue that not only is the ANZUS Treaty 'weak' and 'vague', but that the alliance undermines Australian security in numerous and profound ways. Major Cameron Leckie (Retired) writes (Sub no. 216, p. 1) as follows:

> *A strong argument, based on empirical evidence, can be made that Australia's alliance with the United States has been detrimental to our national security (as evidenced by domestic terrorism incidents and the ongoing threat of terrorism) as well as our democracy and freedom (as evidenced by the seemingly ever-increasing terrorism and national security legislation and secret trials of national security whistle-blowers).*

Major Leckie's remarks bring attention to the ways in which successive Australian governments have utilised exaggerated threat perceptions adopted to suit US hegemonic interests ('international' communism, 'global' terrorism, Chinese 'world domination') to justify an ever-increasing security apparatus and increasingly draconian national security legislation. Veteran journalist Brian Toohey concluded in an article written for *The Saturday Paper,* that, under the guise of countering terrorism and the threat from China, 'Australia is increasingly behaving like an authoritarian state in its national security legislation, instead of like a liberal democracy'[25]

The most common complaint from those making submissions is that the alliance has undermined Australian security by leading the country into unnecessary and costly wars and is likely to do so again in the future. Noel Turnbull (Sub no. 72, p. 1), a veteran of the Vietnam War, recalls his 'firsthand experience of when politicians get us into wars at the behest of the US and for no national benefit'. Mr Turnbull witnessed the 'unnecessary' and 'criminal' suffering and devastation inflicted on Vietnam, only to see the same mistakes repeated in the 2003 Iraq War (Sub no. 72, p. 1). James O'Neill (Sub no. 139, p. 2) continues along the same vein, noting Australia's 'unfailing support for United States aggression [which] has seen Australian troops involved in at least three major wars since Vietnam, the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 2001, Iraq in 2003 and Syria 2015'.

Writing of the failure of Australia's major wars since WWII to advance or enhance the national interest, Professor Tanter (Sub no. 401, pp. 20-21) reflects on the fact that they were all, 'one way or another, wars for empire. None of the deployments of Australian forces listed over the past seven decades were a response to primary or even second order Australian strategic interests'. Professor Tanter adds that most 'ended in defeat, stalemate, or disgrace' (Sub no. 401, p. 20).

Australian Defence Force (ADF) deployments in US wars

Korean War	1950–1953
Vietnam War	1962–1973
Gulf War	1990–1991
Afghanistan War	2001–2021
Iraq War I	2003–2009
Iraq War II	2014–present
Syria	2015–2018
Yemen (naval)	2014–present

Source: Richard Tanter, Sub no. 401, p. 20.

The SEARCH (Social Education, Action and Research Concerning Humanity) Foundation (Sub no. 183, p. 6) brings attention to another dimension to the costs of war – the 'devastating' human toll to Australian defence personnel and their families from deployments in US-initiated wars. SEARCH draws on data relating to military service since 2001, which shows that 'the suicide rates for ex-service personnel are significantly higher than for the same age cohorts in the Australian population as a whole'.[25] Judy Hemming and Michael McKinley, a former Army reservist, (Sub no. 209, p. 73) draw similar conclusions in their submission, adding that transitioned ADF personnel experience mental health conditions estimated to be higher than rates

in the general population. These conditions include depression, anxiety disorders, agoraphobia and social phobia.[26]

Perhaps the most profound security risk emanating from the alliance is the prospect of a nuclear attack on Australia. Although America's policy of 'extended nuclear deterrence' purportedly reaches Australia, the Medical Association for Prevention of War (MAPW) Australia (Sub no. 326, p. 6) poses the pertinent question:

> *Even if a nuclear 'deterrent' did 'protect' Australia from nuclear attack by others, would we need such protection were it not for our strong alliance and complicity with US policies? If so, from whom? The Pine Gap base in the NT would almost certainly be a high priority nuclear target in the event of a war with Russia, and probably in a war with China.*

2. US Military Build-up and Conflict with China

The danger of Australia being dragged into a devastating US-led war with China was the focus of many contributors to the Inquiry, particularly in the context of a significant US military build-up in Australia and the wider Indo-Pacific and the slide towards a 'new Cold War'. Submissions point to worrying developments that tie Australia to US plans for war with China, especially since the Obama administration announced its 'Pivot to Asia', viewed by contributors as a strategy to 'contain' China and maintain US hegemony in Asia.

These developments include new US Force Posture Initiatives that increase rotations of US air, sea and land elements to Australia, including the prepositioning of war supplies and accompanying upgrades to Australian bases for use by US forces; the acquisition of US defence technology and growth of bilateral military exercises, or 'war games', designed to achieve greater 'interoperability' in preparation for a 'high-end' conflict with China; the expansion of major US bases or 'joint facilities' in Australia that are almost certain to play a crucial role in any US–China conflict, including nuclear warfare; and the recently announced trilateral security agreement between Australia, the UK and the US (AUKUS).

The Union of Australian Women (QLD) (Sub no. 324, p. 2) explains the direct consequences of the 'Pivot to Asia' for Australian integration into US strategic objectives:

> *The so-called US Pivot to Asia has led to a permanent stationing of US marines in Darwin and deeper interoperability with and enmeshing of Australia into US military policies and agenda, such as Australian forces being integrated with those of the US; the purchase of costly weaponry; and the upgrading of military facilities on our own territory that are wanted for the use by US forces (e.g., Tindal airbase).*

Bevan Ramsden speaks to developments associated with the US Force Posture Initiatives (Sub no. 142, p. 2):

> *In 2014 the Force Posture Agreement was concluded between Australia and the United States, allowing up to 2,500 U.S. marines to be stationed in Darwin under the US Indo-Pacific Command and to take part with the ADF in annual war games. This agreement also gives the U.S military and its contractors unimpeded access to our airports, seaports, RAN and RAAF bases.*

Talisman Sabre is the largest of the bilateral military exercises between the US and Australia. In recent years, these exercises have employed weapons platforms and tested new operational concepts specifically designed for war with China and with the strategic objective of maintaining US military dominance in Asia.[27]

Friends of the Earth Australia point out in their submission (Sub no. 341, p. 9) to several 'firsts' for Talisman Sabre 2021. These include the firing of US Patriot missiles and the use

of non-US aircraft to transport the US Army's High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) that was rapidly airlifted by a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) C-17A Globemaster III. The intention was to demonstrate the ability of the US, in cooperation with its allies and partners, to quickly move defensive and offensive missiles around the Indo-Pacific in preparation for conflict with China.[28]

A prime objective of the Talisman Sabre exercises is to increase 'interoperability' between US and Australian forces. Wage Peace (Sub no. 291, p. 10) cite David Vine's *Base Nation* (2015) to provide the context for this term and explain the implications for Australia:

> *Military officials talk of 'interoperability', but the hierarchical nature of these relationships is clear enough. Foreign militaries eventually become, if not proxy armies, at least functional adjuncts or extensions of the U.S. military.*

Of all the ways Australia is tied to the US war machine, none is more complete than via the operation of the major 'joint facilities' known as Pine Gap near Alice Springs in the Northern Territory, and North West Cape at Exmouth Gulf in Western Australia. The most important of these is Pine Gap, understood to be the most significant US intelligence gathering facility outside the US.

Contributors to the Inquiry point to the notorious role of Pine Gap in America's global drone assassination program across the Middle East and North Africa. For example, the Justice and Peace Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney (Sub no. 257, p. 6) writes that Pine Gap raises 'a serious human rights concern', namely, 'that intelligence gathered there has played a role in US military drone strikes against al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders but which have also included the killing of hundreds of civilians'.

Pine Gap's signals collection and interception functions play an important role in US global military operations beyond drone warfare, including providing the location and characteristics of key enemy defence systems. The Newcastle Peace Group (Sub no. 227, p. 4), citing Professor Tanter's presentation at the 2016 IPAN national conference, submits that Pine Gap 'hard-wires' Australia into US military operations, providing real-time data on battlefield conditions and enemy communications.

Contributors such as the Alice Springs Peace Action Think Tank (Sub no. 330, pp. 3-4) raise the additional issue of Pine Gap's contribution to America's missile defence and nuclear war fighting capabilities, particularly the critical role in US Nuclear Command, Control and Communications (NC3) via the Relay Ground Station.[29] Consequently, David Noonan (Sub no. 353, p. 6), citing a classified [Defence] Force Posture review prepared for the Australian Department of Defence in 2009, informs the Inquiry that 'defence thinking is that in the event of a conflict with the United States, China would attempt to destroy Pine Gap'.[30]

Pine Gap and North West Cape aside, Professor Tanter (Sub no. 401, p. 23) enlightens the Inquiry about the phenomenal extent of the US presence in Australia. He points to a recent survey that shows US access to Australian military and intelligence facilities goes beyond these well-known examples to include 'more than fifty Australian defence facilities. In some cases, this access was relatively minor, but in most cases it was considerable'.

Altogether, contributors paint a picture of the US military build-up in Australia, and especially Pine Gap, as undermining Australian sovereignty and independence, particularly as this presence effectively amounts to a guarantee of automatic Australian military involvement in any major US war, including most worrisomely war with China. This perspective is encapsulated in a submission to the Inquiry by retired diplomat, Bruce Haigh (Sub no. 150, p. 3):

> *[Former Prime Minister] Morrison talks about defending our sovereignty against China but that has already been ceded for no good reason to America. I wonder if Morrison and [former Defence Minister] Dutton realise how much of our sovereignty we have passed to the US with their base, known as Pine Gap, in the Northern Territory? We only have partial access and there are other US bases and facilities in Australia to which we have limited access. There are American B52 bombers at Tindal RAAF Base ready to bomb Chinese submarine pens on Hainan Island. What are we doing? What have we been conned into?*

Although it was announced only hastily towards the end of the Inquiry, several contributors expressed similar views with respect to the newly formed AUKUS agreement and the Australian government's declared intention to purchase nuclear-powered submarine technology from the US and/or the UK. Professor Peter Stanley (Sub no. 406, p. 1) reflects the sentiments of such contributors when he writes, 'the AUKUS agreement seems to me to be a dangerous, open-ended commitment to join a UK–US alliance regardless of the merits of its actions. This to me seems to abrogate responsibility for national security'.

3. Costs of Empire

Many contributors focussed on the costs of the alliance to Australia directly in terms of security risks, lives and treasure. An equal number were concerned about the consequences of supporting US empire and imperial policies that are contrary to the values of Australians, involve frequent and egregious violations of international law and human rights, subvert democracy, undermine stability, and make Australia complicit in wars of aggression and other war crimes. Noting the fact that America has been at war in 225 of its 243 years of existence since 1776, Nick Deane (Sub no. 131, p. 4) asks, 'Why does Australia choose to align itself with such a consistently violent, militaristic nation as the USA?'.

In calling attention to US imperial policies, the Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church (Sub no. 179, p. 2) quotes former Australian Labor Party MP, and Church member, Joan Coxsedge:

> *US foreign policy has nothing to do with morality, but everything to do with making the world safe for US corporations, to prevent the rise of any society that might offer an alternative to their capitalist model, and to extend US political and economic hegemony over as wide an area as possible.*

Be that as it may, other contributors sought to remind the Inquiry that while US imperialism remains the dominant tradition in US political culture, it is not the sole tradition. Melissa Harrison and Robert Barwick for the Australians Citizens Party (Sub no. 348, p. 8) point out that there also exists within US history and culture a vision and commitment to cooperative nation-building, human welfare and human progress. However, while US imperialism dominates, Australian strategic dependence means the alliance will continue to drag Australia, as it has since WWII, 'into a series of military disasters and immoral regime-change wars', just as it is 'now drawing us into potentially the most disastrous war of all – against China' (Australians Citizens Party, Sub no. 348, p. 9).

In summarising the costs and consequences of the alliance for Australia, Emeritus Professor Joseph Camilleri's reflection (Sub no. 168, p. 3) in 2021 on the seventieth anniversary of the ANZUS Treaty neatly encapsulates the perspective shared by many contributors to this Inquiry:

> *Seventy years later, the balance sheet of the alliance is most striking for the negligible benefits it has brought Australia and the heavy costs it has imposed on our diplomacy, security, budgets, and importantly on the values we supposedly cherish, notably our commitment to civil liberties at home and human rights abroad. Perhaps the most damaging effect has been to strengthen the addiction to empire and the consequent failure to reconcile our history and geography.*

Photo: Justin Tutty -

USA navy landing all the Marines hardware on Lee Pt beach in Darwin

4. Distorting Risks and Threats

Australian and US political leaders frequently cite the fact that both countries have fought alongside one another in every major conflict since World War I as evidence of a deep, enduring and unbreakable bond of 'mateship'.[31] In contrast, contributors to the Inquiry view Australia's enthusiasm for participating in so many of America's disastrous and ill-conceived 'wars of choice' as evidence of deep-seated pathologies.

Emeritus Professor Camilleri OAM (Sub no. 168, p. 2) points to five foundational myths that, to one degree or another, continue to drive Australian mindsets, institutions and policies. These myths are (1) the centrality of 'whiteness' to Australian identity; (2) dependence on an imperial power for protection; (3) loyalty to a great and powerful friend; (4) fear of Asia; and (5) a predilection to fight 'sooner rather than later' and 'there rather than here'. According to Camilleri (Sub no. 168, p. 3):

> *Only by shedding their attachment to the five myths will Australians be able to break free from the shackles of military alignment with the United States, move towards reconciliation with the First Nations of this land, and constructively engage with Asian and Pacific cultures and societies.*

Contributors to the Inquiry view this alliance dependency, and the 'militarist mindset' it breeds, as responsible for distorting Australian defence and foreign policy to focus on a narrow set of traditional security concerns that do not constitute the most urgent or serious risks to Australia. Professor Tanter's submission (Sub no. 401) provides a schema for thinking about this more pertinent but generally underappreciated set of risks.

Professor Tanter identifies *global system risks* as those deriving from the workings of the system of global social relations. These risks include pandemics, forced migration, regressive and predatory forms of globalisation, global apartheid-like structures of inequality, and the absence of modes of global democracy and legitimate global systems of regulation. *Planetary risks* derive from developments of the planet-wide biophysical system, most notably climate change but also other unsustainable practices of exploitation of the global commons. These are contrasted with traditional *international risks* and military threats that Australian defence and foreign policy – and the alliance – are generally preoccupied with (Tanter, Sub no. 404, pp. 8-10).

The most pressing of these non-traditional risks identified by contributors is climate change. Dr Marty Branagan on behalf of Peace Studies, University of New England (Sub no. 229, p. 1) calls attention to the incompatibility of military approaches to dealing with the preeminent threat of climate change:

> *New human security threats have emerged in recent years, with that of global warming far outweighing any threats of war. As such, a global and cooperative approach to reducing emissions must take priority to any nationalist or regional defence approaches, however useful these may have been in the past.*

The submission from the People for Nuclear Disarmament (Sub no. 151, pp. 2, 4) brings attention to another urgent and grave risk facing Australia and humanity – thermonuclear war. This submission points to the many recent studies on the risks of 'nuclear winter'[32] and informs the Inquiry that this threat is greater now than at any time in the past. Reference is also made in the submission to the 'Doomsday Clock' which currently reads '100 seconds to midnight'.[33]

Drawing together these two existential threats, Angela Burrows (Sub no. 334, p. 1) tells the Inquiry that the preeminent question facing humanity today is, 'how can the human race continue to share this planet, which now faces two major threats, the climate emergency and threat of modern weaponry, [that

Photo: Nick Deane

risk] completely annihilating all life on earth?'. Similarly, the Medical Association for Prevention of War (MAPW) Australia (Sub no. 326, p. 6) agrees that 'nuclear weapons and climate change are the two greatest threats to civilisation as we know it'.

Along with the risks of climate change and nuclear war, the Earthworker Cooperative (Sub no. 277, p. 1) calls attention to a third danger – global militarism. Referring to these interrelated risks as the 'three-way crisis facing humankind', the Earthworker Cooperative points out that this crisis will 'never be resolved militarily' (Sub no. 277, p. 2). Rather, it is only through 'global cooperation' that 'the conditions for such a resolution' will be realised (Earthworker Cooperative, Sub no. 277, p. 2). Adding yet another dimension, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Sub no. 354, p. 4) calls attention to the 'gross inequalities that exist causing poverty throughout large sections of the world's population', which, along with authoritarianism and weapons of mass destruction, present significant 'threats to peace'.

Photo: Making Peas/ce

5. Investing in Peace

In identifying that the most relevant, pressing and grave security risks to Australia require non-military solutions, contributors to the IPAN Inquiry call for a shift in resources and investment into diplomacy, foreign aid, education, economic development and engagement with international institutions. The necessity of this shift takes on greater salience in the context of the current and unprecedented divergence in defence and aid spending.[34]

War Resisters International (Sub no. 97, p. 1) calls for a redistribution of funds from the Australian defence budget into strengthening the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), with a particular focus on the Asia-Pacific region. Wage Peace (Sub no. 253, p. 4) agree that DFAT should be properly resourced in order that its capacity outstrips that of Australia's military.

Contributors highlight that a central element of Australia's diplomatic agenda should be to promote a global order based on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including economic and social rights, sympathising with what the UN Human Rights Council and the 'global south' refer to as a 'democratic and equitable international order'.[35] For example, Angela Burrows (Sub no. 334, p. 2) calls for a 'peace agenda' in both defence and foreign policy to address the inequities wrought by imperialism:

> *For too long, power and violence have brought so-called peace and prosperity only to a small proportion of the world, whilst plundering the land, resources and wealth of the rest of humanity resulting in a world of 'haves and the have-nots'.*

> *With much dismay, I view the futility of Australian Government representatives hurtl[ing] into a rushed agreement and alliance with USA, centred on a defence alliance and commitment to purchase submarines, with no consultation within the Australian Parliament and the broader Australian public. Commitments of this gravity should go through extended and rigorous public consultation and gain bipartisan consensus, politically. Australia enjoys prestigious potential and skill to lead diplomacy efforts in the world. It is ludicrous to think that our contribution militarily will have a similar impact.*
>
> Matt Skoss, Submission Number 424

The Graham F. Smith Peace Foundation (Sub no. 238, p. 1) also calls attention to the right of people everywhere to 'equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities', and the need to alleviate global poverty. Consequently, several contributors called for Australia to be more generous in the provision of economic aid and to support agencies of the United Nations, such as the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), that are desperately short of funds. More fundamentally, the Australian Citizens Party (Sub no. 348, p.1)

called for 'peace through economic development'.

In order to promote a 'peace agenda', contributors such as the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Sub no. 354, p. 5) and War Resisters International (Sub no. 97, p. 1) call for significant investment into peace education and conflict studies. Sheila Newman (Sub no. 127, p. 5) specifically calls for the establishment of a research institute in Australia 'in the style of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute' (SIPRI), to promote human rights and regional security. Gareth Smith (Sub no. 344, p. 1) elaborates:

> *Australia is uniquely placed to establish a southern hemisphere equivalent to SIPRI, which would be a regional resource centre for non-violent conflict resolution, peace research, human rights and humanitarian law. Having such a centre would broadcast Australia's commitment to non-militaristic problem solving and would be a resource to which regional nations could make recourse. It would offer mediators' services to nations in dispute and inform governments on ways to build confidence and trust and how to achieve negotiated settlements.*

In furthering Australia's diplomatic agenda, Emeritus Professor Camilleri (Sub no. 168, p. 16) points to the need for a 'comprehensive renewal of multilateral institutions, notably the UN Security Council, the G20 and the Asia-Pacific security architecture'. Camilleri (Sub no. 168, pp. 16-17) links a secure and peaceful Australian environment to the 'common security' of all:

> *Australia cannot secure for itself a peaceful environment by focusing just on its own security, especially if this means acting in ways other nations perceive to be at the expense of their security. With almost every actual or potential conflict of concern to Australia, the key to its resolution lies in reconciling the competing security interests of different actors … an underlying objective of Australian policy must be to achieve the 'common security' of all stakeholders.*

Continuing along this vein, Emeritus Professor Camilleri (Sub no. 168, p. 20) argues that a 'common security' approach to the Indo-Pacific requires a 'phased program of demilitarisation', and that this is the only way to produce a durable solution to address tensions such as those in the South China Sea. 'To seek to construct a new ring of alliances designed to contain China and prolong US predominance in the Western Pacific and beyond would be foolish in the extreme' (Camilleri, Sub no. 168, p. 19).

Other contributors agree that Australia should not 'pick a side' in the great power competition between the US and China. The Medical Association for Prevention of War (MAPW) Australia (Sub no. 326, p. 12) calls for Australia to declare that 'it will not take part in any war over Taiwan, and refrain from taking part in any provocative military operations in the South China Sea'. Furthermore, Australia should 'initiate and encourage peacebuilding and confidence-building measures in our region. As one possibility, Australia could host arms control dialogues' (Medical Association for Prevention of War (MAPW) Australia Sub no. 326, p. 12).

Julie Marlow (Sub no. 336, pp. 3, 5) elaborates on the latter proposal, drawing attention to Australia's own contribution to regional missile proliferation as part of a wider military build-up first announced as part of the Department of Defence's 2020 Defence Strategic Update. It has since been estimated that Australia will spend $100 billion in the next 20 years on missile and guided weapons purchases.[36] Citing Dr Tanya Ogilvie-White, Marlow (Sub no. 335, p. 9) argues that instead of stoking an uncontrolled fire that is engulfing the region by joining this accelerating regional arms race, the more appropriate response would be to:

> *throw everything at firefighting – at garnering international support for a formal arms-control dialogue, a missile moratorium and the creation of a new arms-control architecture to replace the now-*

> *defunct INF [Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces] treaty, the lapsing of which has allowed this fire to spread.*[37]

Marlow (Sub no. 336, p. 9) further contends that if Australia were to commit to serious efforts at regional arms control, it would have to cease significant arms exports and military assistance to governments with records of serious human rights abuses, including the Philippines under the previous Duterte administration, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

People for Nuclear Disarmament (Sub no. 151, p. 7) argue that, in addition to conventional arms control, any serious effort to reduce the threat of nuclear war necessitates Australia 'vigorously promot[ing] nuclear risk reduction' measures, notably No First Use policies. In terms of Asian nuclear disarmament specifically, Emeritus Professor Camilleri (Sub no. 168, p. 20) writes:

> *Australia should, together with others, make it clear that it is time for China and other nuclear armed states to support, and preferably initiate, concrete nuclear disarmament proposals.*

This includes engaging with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which many contributors demand Australia sign and ratify. According to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) (Sub no. 263, p. 4) and studies referenced by the Alice Springs Peace Action Think Tank (Sub no. 330, p. 4), while this would require renouncing extended nuclear deterrence and the closure of the Relay Ground Station at Pine Gap, it would not imperil the ANZUS Treaty or Australia's alliance commitments.

6. Alternative Defence Policy Options

While arguing that investing in peace through diplomacy, economic development and 'soft power' would go a long way towards addressing the most urgent and grave threats to Australia, contributors also recognise the necessity of addressing traditional military threats. Although shedding Australia's 'alliance dependency' would mitigate, and in some cases eliminate, many of the threats emanating from Australia's alignment with US foreign policy objectives, an alternative defence policy to secure the nation against potential adversaries remains vitally important.

Contributors to the Inquiry posit two scenarios for the future of the alliance

in an alternative defence policy for Australia. The first involves demoting ANZUS from its present status as the centrepiece of Australia's security policies. Emeritus Professor Camilleri (Sub no. 168, p. 16) summarises what this might look like:

- reducing current military and intelligence links with the United States, which inhibit the peaceful settlement of disputes, not least in relation to the South China Sea;
- scaling back the US military presence on Australian soil;
- ending all overseas military deployments that are not explicitly authorised by the UN Security Council; and
- shifting the authority to commit Australian military forces overseas from the executive to the Australian parliament.

Other suggestions made by contributors to reform effectively the alliance without necessarily jeopardising its existence include signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, reviewing and terminating any aspect of Pine Gap's role in the US drone program that violates international law, and withdrawing ADF personnel embedded in, or attached to, US military units.

While the specifics vary, contributors to this approach all agree that Australia should not rely on the US so heavily but should learn to 'stand on its own two feet', with some citing New Zealand as a model. Emeritus Professor Camilleri (Sub no. 168, p. 18) points out that this would undoubtedly require a substantial restructuring and reallocation of Australia's military resources, including a scaling back of 'huge and dubious investment in state-of-the-art military platforms and advanced weapons systems'. The desire to 'go down the Kiwi road' has been described by Mark Beeson (2015) as Australia effectively giving up on the pretence of being a 'serious' military power and concentrating its limited capabilities on peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, and also on economic development.[38]

Although demoting the alliance is viewed as a necessary and positive step forward, some contributors point to a second scenario – abrogating the alliance and replacing it with a non-aligned alternative. This is seen as a long-term objective that would go further in securing the full range of Australia's defence and foreign policy interests, concerns and values. Unlike merely demoting the alliance, abrogating it completely would necessarily require a radical

Photo: Kristian Laemmle-Ruff

transformation of Australia's defence forces. Contributors point to two broad options in this scenario – nonviolent defence and 'armed neutrality'.

Dr Branagan on behalf of Peace Studies, University of New England (Sub no. 229, pp. 6-7) summarises the research on the former, citing numerous examples in theory and practice that demonstrate nonviolence as a feasible means for both national defence requirements and the use of international forces to uphold Responsibility to Protect (R2P) obligations. In the specific context of defending Australia from internal usurpations and foreign invasions, civilian-based defence would involve preparation of the population and society's institutions for nonviolent non-cooperation and defiance. Referring to several pioneering studies, including Professor Desmond Ball's *Strategy and Defence* (1982), Dr Branagan (Sub no. 229, p. 7) cites specific strategies and tactics designed 'to deny attackers their objectives, to become politically unrulable by would-be tyrants, and to subvert the attackers' troops and functionaries to unreliability and even mutiny'.

While there would still be costs for maintaining such nonviolent forces, these would be far less than upholding current military forces, and the money saved by cutting defence spending could be invested to improve the 'human security' of all Australians. As Dr Branagan (Sub no. 229, p. 7) writes:

> *The money saved from cutting 'defence' spending could also be used instead for education, health, the arts, poverty reduction, homelessness – thereby reducing inequality and crime, with further savings from fewer prisons needed, [and] healthier and better educated societies. More spent on diplomacy, aid, trade and cultural exchange would reduce regional tensions, build links and reduce regional arms buildups.*

The second option for a non-aligned defence policy for Australia is 'armed neutrality'. Several contributors cite David Martin's pioneering study

Armed Neutrality for Australia (1984) as the basis on which to formulate a modern-day alternative. Professor Tanter (Sub no. 401, pp. 53-54) summarises the essentials of Martin's vision:

- Australia should not participate in military alliances in times of peace, with the aim of neutrality in the event of war.
- As a declared neutral, Australia should have a strong and self-reliant defence capability and be prepared to exercise it in the defence of its interests.
- Australia should develop a comprehensive defence capability with both military and non-military elements amounting to what was sometimes called total defence.
- Australia should not acquire nuclear weapons of its own, or rely on the nuclear weapons of another country for its security.

Bevan Ramsden (Sub no. 142, p. 4) highlights that one of the pioneering contributions of Martin's study was to demonstrate the feasibility of armed neutrality to Australia's unique strategic geography – an island-continent with large empty spaces that count as immense strategic blessings. Ramsden (Sub no. 142, p. 3). cites the five successful examples of neutrals in the 1980s discussed by Martin – Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, Finland and Ireland – as models that Australia could follow, although Professor Tanter (Sub no. 401, pp. 55-59) revisits Martin's analysis of these neutrals and points to some of the complications and novel dimensions that have since emerged. These include the end of the clarity of the Cold War, the decline of the Non-Aligned Movement, some backsliding in the commitment to neutrality, and the compromising of the United Nations.

Several contributors who favour armed neutrality cite the Director of War Studies at the Australian Army Research Centre, Dr Albert Palazzo, who argues that armed neutrality has emerged as the most suitable security policy to manage Australia's most important future challenges, which are the rise of China and ineffective action on climate change.[39] In 2021, Dr Palazzo advocated Australia replace its current strategic offensive posture with a defensive one, adopting a new philosophy of war centred on 'planning not to lose', or negating the ability of a would-be aggressor to impose its will.[40]

Advances in long-range precision strike and sensor capabilities now make it feasible for Australia to adopt anti-access/area denial (A2AD) systems that are the ideal tools for strategic defence. Indeed, it is noted that the ADF is already acquiring long-range strike capabilities, although this is occurring in the context of offensive operations to support the US in a larger coalition.

Following along these lines, IPAN Inquiry contributors in favour of armed neutrality advocate a transformation of the ADF from an expeditionary force integrated into the US military into one which is structured for continental defence based on A2AD systems. Bevan Ramsden (Sub no. 142, p. 5) suggests in his submission that this is likely to require significant outlays in defence spending, at least initially. However, in line with the experience of other neutrals, defence costs should progressively decline as the new defence policy matures (Bevan Ramsden Sub no. 142, p. 6).

Although the options of nonviolent defence and armed neutrality may be strategically sound and operationally feasible, contributors point to significant political obstacles to change, both foreign and domestic. Even demoting the alliance and imposing strict limitations on the use of force by the ADF may prove to be unacceptable to the US. As Dr Briggs (Sub no. 58, p. 5) points out:

> *Australia, in the dangerous times in which we live, will find it increasingly difficult to have anything but a whole-hearted (if one-sided) relationship with the USA. It will always be an all or nothing relationship. Australia will not have the luxury of saying no to this or that war, of saying that the next Middle East adventure is not in our interest, that the relationship is over, and can't we remain friends?*

Hostility by the US in response to demoting or abrogating the alliance may not be the biggest obstacle, given

that the entire Australian state apparatus, large sections of the economic elite and large sections of the media are strongly in favour of maintaining the status quo. Dr Briggs (Sub no. 58, p. 8) once again makes the salient point:

The simple fact of the matter is that Australian political parties and large sections of the economic community endorse a belligerent US foreign policy. We can't get out of the relationship but also don't really want to.

Dr Briggs (Sub no. 58, pp. 8-9) concludes that 'change must come from below'. In agreement, Emeritus Professor Camilleri (Sub no. 168, p. 24) sketches a way forward for concerned citizenry to engage systematically with key sectors of society to effect change. He further suggests (Sub 168, p. 26) that the Inquiry 'be used as an effective launching pad for a series of nationwide consultations on the findings and recommendations of the report'.

Military and Defence

Recommendations

Specifically, the following recommendations have been called for through the submissions:

Recommendation 4

Redefining 'defence' and 'security'

The Australian Government should redefine what it understands by 'defence' and 'security', to include the wider concepts of 'human security' and 'common security'.

Recommendation 5

Urgent security priorities

The Australian Government should prioritise as a matter of urgency:

a) The existential threats of climate change and nuclear war, including joining the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

b) The prevention of a 'new Cold War' between the US and China.

Recommendation 6

The United Nations

The Australian Government should promote the role and purposes of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security.

Recommendation 7

Diplomacy

The Australian Government should shift its focus away from what it recognises as national defence to more comprehensive diplomacy, to better ensure Australia's national security.

Recommendation 8

A new defence policy for Australia

The Australian Government should engage in extensive community consultations to develop new defence policy for Australia that reflects the principles and priorities outlined above.

Recommendation 9

War powers

The Australian Government should undertake necessary action to ensure that the authority to commit Australian military forces overseas rests with the Australian Parliament.

Photo: Kathryn Kelly

Foreign Policy

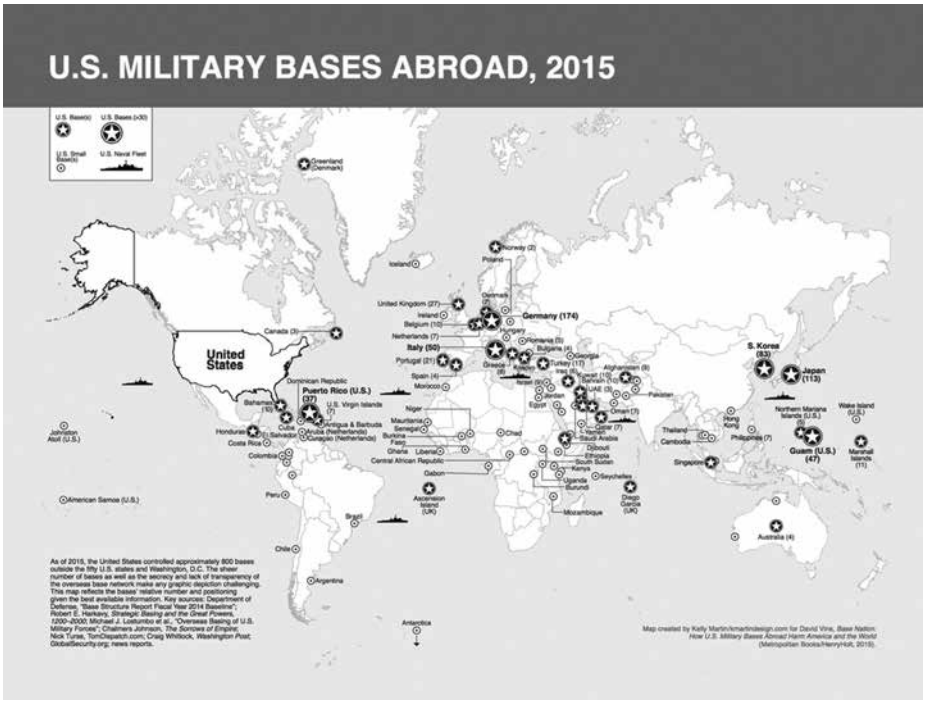
Dr Alison Broinowski AM

Introduction

In the last weeks of the IPAN People's Inquiry, in the second half of 2021, Australia was confronted with the collapse of the US imperium in Afghanistan and our own hasty retreat from Afghanistan. The need to review ANZUS after 70 years became urgent – with some submissions advocating an end to the US alliance. Overall, those making submissions are in agreement that Australian foreign policy lacks independence, and that Australia faces increasing dangers if this does not change.

Instead, on 16 September 2021, with the announcement of the AUKUS partnership, the government imposed over the alliance an 'enhanced trilateral security partnership' whose detailed terms are unknown. If this agreement becomes a Treaty, AUKUS will make Australia more than ever dependent on the US and less extricable from its wars. That appears to be its purpose.

Bruce Haigh, a former diplomat, asserted in his submission (Sub no. 150, p. 3) that other independent countries in the region (such as New Zealand and Singapore) are waiting for Australia to 'find the guts' to join them. Australia, others recall, showed independence briefly in 1972–75, and intermittently before and since. However, following 2001 and the war on terror, through groupings such as the Five Eyes



Graphic by David Vine, from "Base Nation"

Anglosphere intelligence alliance and military collaboration, the revival of old friendships has come to dominate our foreign, defence and trade policies. Submissions made after the September 2021 AUKUS announcement view this partnership as effectively locking Australia into US preparations for war against China (Cameron Leckie, Sub no. 404, p. 2; Professor Peter Stanley, Sub no. 406, p. 1; Mike Callanan, Sub no. 408, p. 1; Colin Apelt, Sub no. 398, p. 1).

The 2020 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) was held in October–November 2021, after the IPAN inquiry closed to submissions. Governments at COP 26 failed to reverse the militarisation of the world's resources, which are needed for global survival. In this context, Australia's foreign policy has also failed, which raises the question as to whether Australia has committed itself to the wrong side of history. These recent developments make the work of the People's Inquiry even more challenging, but ever more significant.

I appreciate IPAN's initiative and thank contributors for their many thoughtful submissions including on Australia's foreign relations. The summary that follows divides submissions into six groups: Costs of War, Warlike Australia, Australia's Options, Agenda for Action, Threats, and Alternatives. A Postscript has been added.

Photo: Kristian Laemmle-Ruff

1. Costs of War

One consistent theme was the disproportionate costs of wars: the suffering, injury and death of our own forces and of those fought against. The cost to Australia of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), disabilities, cancers and other illnesses and suicide among veterans are enormous. The personal experience of some contributors, such as Margid Bryn-Burns (Sub no. 180, p. 1) and Belinda Curtis (Sub no. 207, p. 1), demonstrates how these costs are shared by veteran's families.

The 41 Australian lives lost in Afghanistan and 240 serious injuries are vastly increased by veterans' suicides (around 500 to date) and the deaths of 47,000 Afghan civilians (Jo Whitehead, Sub no. 363, p. 1). This was a failed campaign. Yet as our troops left Afghanistan, then Prime Minister Scott Morrison enigmatically stated that 'Freedom is always worth it', as cited in the submission by the Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church (Sub no. 179, p. 4). Contributors nevertheless ask whether spending $1.9 trillion globally on failed wars is, in fact, 'worth it,' especially when Australia's gross debt in the 2020/2021 financial year reached $936 billion, a figure that has grown since then.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) (Australian Section) (Sub no. 158, pp. 1-2) cites the huge human costs of all sides of every war. Australian deaths alone were numbered at more than 600 in the Boer War, 60,000 in World War I, 27,000 in World War II, 340 in Korea, 521 in Vietnam, 41 in Afghanistan, and 4 in Iraq. Australia has also been involved in other US-led wars in the Gulf, Syria and Yemen.

Deepa Kumar discusses how, after the 9 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre, 'Islamophobia …. was becoming the handmaiden of empire.'[41] While Kumar's discussion related to the US, this development arguably emerged in Australia also, leading to some Australian troops joining others in committing war crimes. As contributor Margaret Anne Brown (Sub no. 191, p. 1) observes, when it's not clear why they are at war or who the enemy is, some 'lose their way'. Yet, as Sheila Newman (Sub no. 196, p. 8) points out, those who reveal such crimes, like Witness K, David McBride and Julian Assange, are treated as enemies by the Australian government. The latter two cases drag on, as does the Government's response to multiple investigations of war crimes in Afghanistan.

Certainly, there are enormous costs of many kinds, over and above the figure of 2.09 per cent of GDP that Australia spends on the military (2020 figure[42]), highlighted in submissions, but which has since risen to 2.10 per cent (2021 figure[43]). Citing the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), the SEARCH Foundation states that Australia's defence budget for the 2020/21 financial year was $42.7 billion, which equates to an average daily expenditure on 'defence and related activities' of $117,112,446 (Sub no. 183, p. 3). As highlighted by August Mikucki (Sub no. 262, p. 1), Australians each pay $33.56 per week for defence. The SEARCH Foundation (Sub no. 183, pp. 8-9) cites figures showing that Australia spent $7.8 billion on the war in Afghanistan to June 2011, $540 million a year for five years on the war in Iraq, and $1.3 billion on fighting Islamic State (IS) in Iraq and Syria in 2014–2020.

An anonymous submission (Sub no. 254, p. 1) argues that, as a result of the alliance, 'countries which are enemies of the US are likely to regard us with hostility.' Vintage Reds (Sub no. 417, p. 3) point out the detriment to Australia of echoing US antagonism towards China. Such provocation has arguably cost Australia billions of dollars in lost trade, education services and tourism. Savings from reduced military spending could be put to the many uses that have been recommended by contributors, as outlined throughout this report.

A detailed contribution (Mia Donovan Sub no. 190, p. 18) drawing on opinion surveys, suggests that young Australians (aged 18–25) are less likely than others to accept that the costs to Australia of the alliance with the US, a notoriously unreliable ally, outweigh its benefits. Many older Australians who recall the Vietnam and Iraq wars are likely to have reached the same conclusion. Some submissions moreover argued that an independent inquiry into how Australia joined the invasions of Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, and the costs and consequences of those conflicts, is long overdue (Australians for War Powers Reform, Sub no. 385, p. 2; Justice and Peace Office, Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, Sub no. 257, p. 4).

2. Warlike Australia

Many submissions expressed concern that war appears to be the fallback position for Australian governments, with this sentiment clearly articulated by former Western Australia Premier, Geoff Gallop (Sub no. 425, p. 1):

> *One of the issues we need to address in view of the US defeat in Afghanistan is what I would call 'the impulse to a military response' when faced with a challenging situation. It provokes both a practical (will it achieve the ends being sought?) and an ethical (will it bring unacceptable levels of harm?) question.*
>
> *At the core of this impulse is the seemingly unlimited military means to activate it; the power to cause great harm to enemies wherever they live. The temptation to use it is all too often the first instinct rather than the last resort.*

Although Australians have a long history of opposition to both war and conscription, the work of historians such as Henry Reynolds confirms the emergence of a strand of national belligerence from the time of the arrival of British invaders and the British Army and Navy. These invading settlers and their descendants waged a war of aggression on 'the Aborigines' which, as Justices William Deane and Mary Gaudron in their joint Mabo ruling noted, was a 'conflagration of oppression and conflict' that had the effect of '"dispossess[ing], degrade[ing] and devastate[ing]' them', leaving behind 'a national legacy of unutterable shame'. [44] In addition, further lasting harm was inflicted on Aboriginal people in Australia, and also on the environment, by British nuclear tests in the 1950s and 1960s.

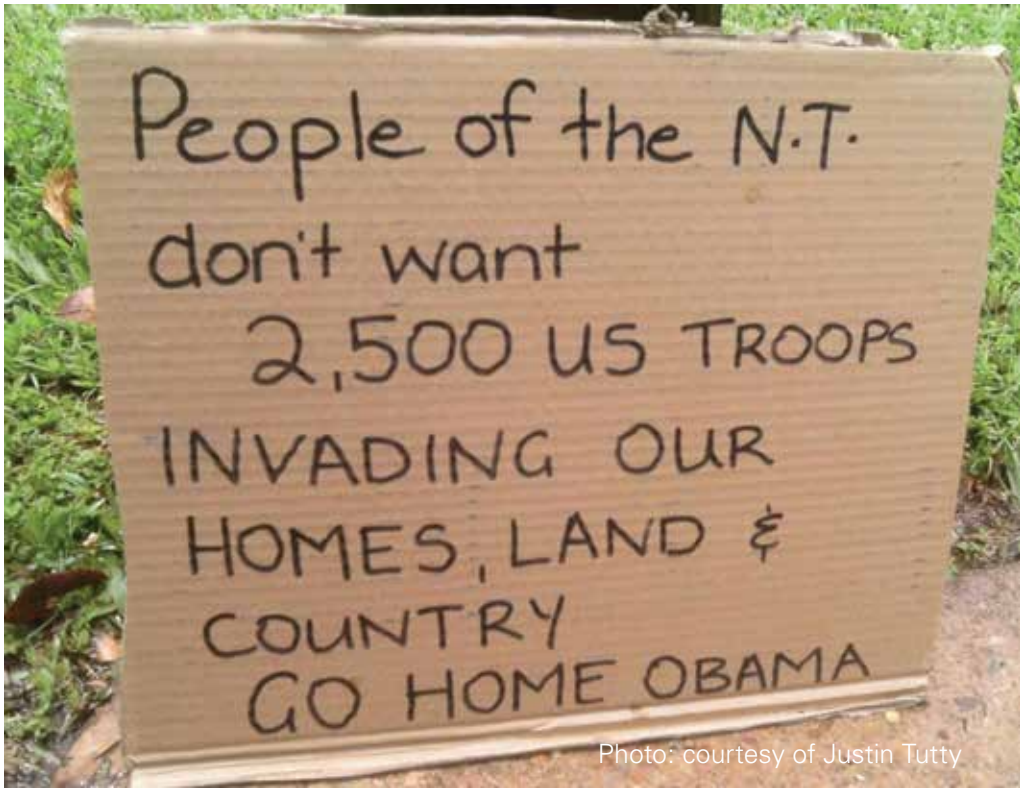


Photo: courtesy of Justin Tutty

When we consider comments by (predominantly male) Australian politicians of both persuasions, we might conclude that each side believes that war is the answer. In 2007, then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd claimed the Australian Defence Force (ADF) was in Afghanistan to meet our obligations under ANZUS,[45] while former Defence Minister Peter Dutton in 2021, falsely stated that this helped to save Australian lives from terrorist attacks in Australia.[46]

Fear and Invasion Myths

Some contributors, e.g., Nick Deane (Sub no. 67, p. 3), pointed out that fear of invasion by Britain's enemies or by a country on the Asian continent – particularly China – was a myth inculcated across succeeding generations. Another myth was that Japan intended to invade Australia in 1942 and Australia was saved by the US. American forces were in fact deployed to Australasia to defend US interests. Furthermore, Japan had by then decided against invading Australia (Ross Gwyther, Sub no. 290, pp. 1-5; Nick Deane, Sub no. 67, p. 3).[47]

Since that time, however, Australian governments have fed the public a 'diet of fear' (Anonymous, Sub no. 254, p. 1), 'reassuring' the Australian people that they can always rely on the US for Australia's national security. Some contributors argue that the government should, in fact, warn us to fear the US with its creeping militarisation of Australia (Olivetta Harris, Sub no. 339, p.

1; Kieran Finnane, Sub no. 307, p. 1). To Nick Deane, the ambition of the US is nothing less than global military and economic 'full spectrum dominance' (Nick Deane, Sub no. 131, p. 4).

The invasion myth was the basis of the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security (ANZUS) Treaty, which produced both the false confidence that the US was obliged to defend Australia, and the false hope that fighting in America's wars guaranteed Australia's security. Yet no commitment to defend Australia has ever been made by the US, with Nick Deane (Sub no. 67, p. 2) referring to such a claim as a 'protection racket'. This claim moreover has arguably made Australia into the reverse of the multicultural, Asia-engaged that we were in the 1980s and early 1990s.

A number of submissions argued that far from observing the international rules of armed conflict that Australia recommends to others, we break these rules selectively and are just as selective about which nations we urge to obey these rules. There is little doubt, moreover, that this increasing militarisation of our society contributes to secretive policy-making and reduced government accountability.

Ignorance about Australia's Enemies

Several submissions point out that wars fought by Australia have consistently lacked any government statement of clear strategic objectives against which losing or winning could be judged. Furthermore, ignorance about the enemy prevailed. Judy Hemming and Michael McKinley (Sub no. 209, p. 1) refer to the author of *The Art of War,* Sun Tzu (Chinese general, military strategist, writer and philosopher from the Eastern Zhou period of ancient China) who, although advising fighters to know their enemy well, ultimately concluded that: 'The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting'.[48]

Specific examples of Australia's foreign policy subservience to the US and the UK are provided by several contributors. This subservience leads to Australia's blind compliance with its allies' choice of enemies. Examples include events such as the incorporation of West Papua into Indonesia, the anti-communist purge and massacre of Indonesian civilians in 1965–66, the UK handover of Diego Garcia to the US in 1965, and the 1975 Indonesian invasion of East Timor. Many contributors to the IPAN's People's Inquiry deplored Australia's invasion of Iraq, our participation in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, support of Israel against the Palestinians, and US antagonism towards Iran and North Korea.

Various concerns were raised that Australia's friends and enemies are identified for us by the US. There is no doubt that Australian governments have had close relations with international leaders, including Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel, Narendra Modi in India, and Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines. This includes relations with successive Indonesian Governments with shocking human rights in their treatment of Aceh, East Timor, Papua and West Papua (joint submission by Australia West Papua Association SA INC [AWPA SA] and Australia East Timor Friendship Association SA INC [AETFA SA), Sub no. 333, pp. 1-3). Yet Australia attacks China for human rights abuses in Hong Kong and Xinjiang (Cameron Leckie, Sub no. pp. 13, 14, 16).

1974 Campaign against US Bases in Australia

A number of contributors expressed deep concern about the current allied provocation of China (see, for example, James O'Neill, Sub no. 139, pp. 2-3). As Marcus Reubenstein (Sub no. 356, p. 20) interestingly points out, a significant percentage of exports lost by Australia during the 2020/2021 trade spat with China were replaced by US suppliers. We might accordingly ask whether or not US foreign policy is largely intended to make the world safe for US corporations.

Contributors deplore that Australia was silent while the US replaced 22 governments since World War II, and supported torture, mass murder, and intimidation by repressive client dictators. In particular, as highlighted by the Australia West Papua Association (Sub no. 333, p. 2), Australia did not object to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) backing Indonesia's takeover of West Papua and Timor, or the coup that replaced Sukarno with Suharto. Australia has not criticised Israel's ongoing actions against the Palestinians, nor the aggressive and discriminatory policies of Saudi Arabia. From a slightly different but related perspective, Penny Lockwood (Sub no. 357, p. 2) sees in the defunding of university history courses a propaganda move designed to make Australians more ignorant and fearful of Russia and China, and more likely to endorse future US wars.

There are numerous clear examples of how, once the US chose its successive enemies – e.g., communism, Iran, Russia, China – that these automatically became Australia's 'enemies' without proper public discussion about any threat that might be posed to this country. One contributor thus lamented that 'Another country has control over whether we fight our neighbours', even though 'Our neighbours are not our enemies' (Rebecca Buttenshaw, Sub no. 194, p. 1). Concerns were expressed in submissions about whether Australia will repeat this pattern and follow the US into its next war.

Operating at the bidding of the US or independently

Australia imitates the US in denigrating and undermining the United Nations (UN), instead of working to address its limitations and advancing multilateralism. As several submissions show, Australia's years of building goodwill in our region have been dismissed in favour of a revived US imperium. Australia arguably cannot progress until we put our own house in order.

There have been several occasions, however, when Australia has differed from the US when voting in the UN General Assembly (UNGA), e.g., since 1996, Australia has voted in favour of Cuba's annual resolution calling for an end to the US trade embargo on that country. Australia is party to several international conventions and treaties that the US is not. These include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Collingridge (Sub no. 309, p. 3) cites some Scandinavian countries as an example for Australia in being less subservient to US foreign and defence policies.

The Philippines Australia Solidarity Association submission argues there has been a 'worsening human rights situation in the Philippines' and that this 'is connected to the Australian geopolitical and economic interest in the region' (Sub no. 312, pp. 1-2). This group suggests that 'Australia's military aid provides an impetus for the protection and security of its [i.e., Australia's] business interests in the region' (Philippines Australia Solidarity Association, Sub no. 312, p. 2). We might interpret this as suggesting that, rather than supporting human rights or combatting terrorism and other threats to national security, Australia goes to war to protect its own interests and to gain control over selected global resources. Similar concerns were expressed in the submission by the Australian Solidarity with Latin America (Sub no. 273, p. 1) and the Australia–Cuba Friendship Society (Brisbane Branch) (Sub no. 267, p. 1).

Overall, the submissions make very clear a message that is central to the findings of the IPAN People's Inquiry: that Australia acts best when it operates independently of the US, as seen in the ADF response in Cambodia, East Timor and the Solomon Islands.

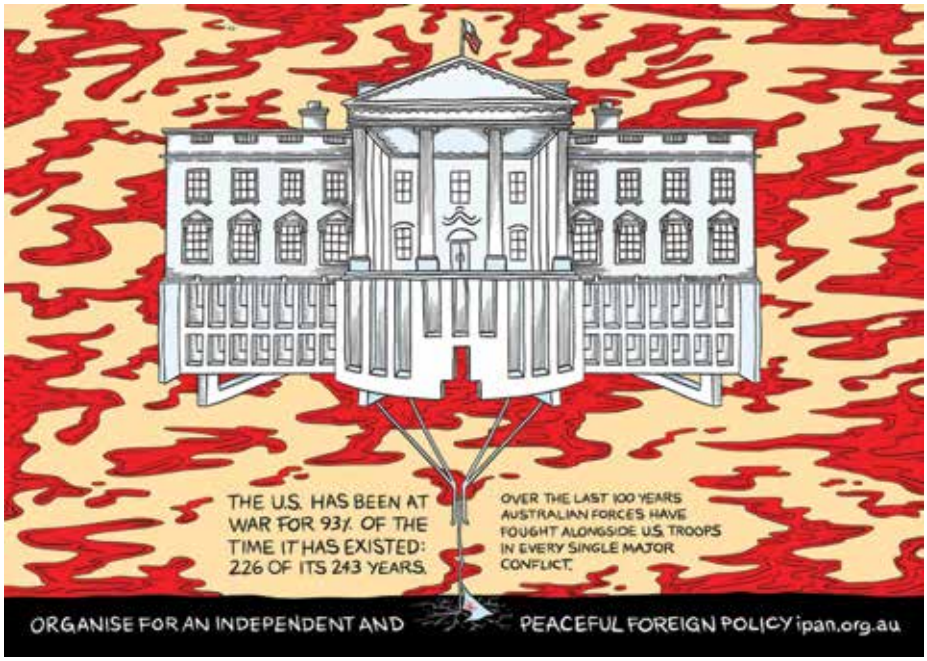
3. Australia's Options

Many contributors point out that Australia's concerns, values and interests are distinct from those of the US, and even if they were as identical as some politicians claim, this would anyway not guarantee that the US would fight to defend them in Australia. In this context we might ask whether it is our values or our territory that need defending.

Contributors offer a range of alternative foreign policy choices for Australia. Some agree that Australia should observe its treaty commitments by not manufacturing and exporting weapons. The Campaign for International Co-operation and Disarmament (CICD), for example, argues that 'war-promoting organisations' like the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) serve the interests of the governments and arms manufacturers that fund them and promote China as a strategic threat (Sub no. 338, p. 1). Some submissions urge a different path forward, with Julie Hart, for example, recommending that we manufacture fire-fighting equipment and water-bombing planes and involve our military in taking meaningful action against global warming (Sub no. 375, p. 2).

Support for Sovereign Self-Defence and Armed Neutrality

It can be argued that many funds allocated for defence by the Australian government are expended on destructive outcomes. In this context, both the SEARCH Foundation (Sub no. 183, p. 6) and Angela Burrows (Sub. No. 334, p. 4) suggest investment in a sovereign defence industry with Burrows going on to say that: 'Joint facilities, military equipment and personnel should be rapidly scaled down and removed.'



Artwork by Sam Wallman

Some writers called for Australia to cancel all military agreements with the US. Several contributors accordingly suggested that Australia consider armed neutrality and/or non-alignment, positions that have historically suited countries as varied as Switzerland, Finland, Ireland, Lichtenstein, Malta, Sweden and Turkmenistan. David Martin was the first writer to make a case in 1984 for armed neutrality[49], a position updated in detail by Professor Richard Tanter (Sub no. 401, p. 53-54). SafeGround (Sub no. 349, p. 1) took a slightly different position by advocating universal disarmament.

What Australians Think About China

The Lowy Institute's June 2021 opinion poll found that 57 per cent of respondents considered Australia should remain neutral in the event of a US war with China, while 41 per cent thought Australia should support the US.[50] In addition, there has been a 22 per cent rise (since the previous poll in 2020) in the number of those who saw China as a security threat (63 per cent up from 41 per cent) more than an economic partner, though over a quarter of Australians "believe that the media's reporting about China is too negative" [51]

While the number of Australians who see China as a security threat has risen, this is not necessarily reflected in the views of those who made submissions to this Inquiry. A common thread among contributors was that the world must become accustomed to more than one great global power. Other submission writers argue that, unless provoked, China poses no threat to Australia or to any other armed nation in Asia.

Decline of the US Empire

While some consider that the superior power of the US will continue, others argue that it is already ending. Contributors see the rout of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and Australian forces from Afghanistan in May–August 2021 as a sign of the slow collapse of the US Empire. Some ask how even with the massive military purchases supported by ASPI – and by Peter Dutton during his time as Defence Minister – Australia can hope to defeat China when we and our allies were unable to defeat the Taliban.

4. Agenda for Action

International Law

Most contributors seek Australia's disengagement from the US and from US wars and recommend that our leaders urge their US counterparts to subscribe to the principles, conventions and international bodies that they currently ignore. Australia might do the same, since it too often appears to reject international agreements. From this perspective we might argue that Australian delegations have played a spoiler role in, for example, supporting starvation sanctions imposed by the US on countries such as Libya and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In the context of Cuba, the May 2021 Oxfam report, *Right to Live Without a Blockade*, makes clear that sanctions impinge most destructively on the women of the site being so targeted,[52] and as a result on their children as well. Rather than Australia behaving like a US sycophant, many submissions call for us to rebuild the respect we once had in Asian countries, and to revive genuine multiculturalism in Australia.

War Powers Reform

Several contributors, such as Australians for War Powers Reform (AWPR) (Sub no. 385, p. 2) and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) (Australian Section) (Sub no. 158, p. 4), advocate reform of Australia's war powers in order that, rather than being sent to war through prime ministerial or executive order, Australia commit to war only after comprehensive parliamentary debate and, critically, a vote supporting that end. Endorsing this position, some groups recommend a War Powers Act. There was support variously for direct plebiscites at regular intervals on defence spending and also for a referendum to be held before the country committed to war.

A Roy Morgan poll undertaken for AWPR in late 2020 reported that 83 per cent of respondents favoured a change in the way Australia goes decides to war,[53] and another survey in 2021 found 87 per cent in favour.[54]

The decision to go to war in Australia was once based on a democratic process. The Australia-US alliance has seen a reluctance on the part of Australian authorities to consult with the electorate before committing the country to war. Furthermore, the alliance's most recent iteration, the AUKUS agreement, offers no scope for democratic processes to precede Australia joining the US in its next war. Prior to the May 2022 Federal election, unionists argued that AUKUS was a wedge designed to ensure that outcome. While some submissions predicted May 2022 as a khaki election based on Australia accepting US nuclear weapons, nuclear ships, and military bases as permanent establishments on our territory, the outcome would suggest that, in their most overt forms at least, these possibilities have been questioned. Yet US President Biden's promised coalition of democracies could further lock Australia and other nations into Cold War II.

Many recommended a revival of diplomacy and soft power, including the offer of aid to the rural poor in China and in other countries, consistent with the UN's sustainable development goals. Australia's priorities, these writers argued, should be less military and more diplomatic. There was also advocacy for nonviolent conflict resolution, middle-power and 'hybrid' diplomacy and peace-building initiatives, as well as re-engagement with multilateral institutions. Chris Hawke (Sub no. 347, p. 1) proposes 'kitchen table'[55] citizen diplomacy as an alternative to the control of mainstream media.

Encouraging Change to a Peace and Justice Framework

Professor Winnifred Louis, a social psychologist (Sub no. 204, p. 3) observes that Australians who see themselves threatened by other nations turn to the Alliance for reassurance. She argues that to persuade such people otherwise, advocates must present a compelling theory of change – from injustice and war to justice and peace, and from alliance to independence. They must also reach out to new leaders from demographics that distrust the peace narrative, seeking to build a 'chain of trust' to enable change.

Ultimately, Australia's best defence is rejection of the so-called US Alliance and vigorous support for all disarmament initiatives and an independent foreign policy which respects and assists countries in our region.

Spirit of Eureka,
Submission Number 154

5. Threats

No submission writer considers China to be a threat to Australia. Any threats facing Australia are regarded as of its own making within the parameters of the US alliance. In fact, Norma Forrest (Sub no. 193, p. 1) regards the US as 'the most dangerous country ever', given its propensity over many years to be 'too keen to go to war unnecessarily'. As several submissions recalled, Malcolm Fraser pointed out in 2014 that the US alliance posed the greatest threat to Australia by making it a target for that country's enemies.[56] At that time, Fraser recommended closing Australia's US bases. This had interestingly been the intention of former Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, almost four decades earlier in December 1975.

Josephine Vallentine (Sub no. 169, p. 1) recalls visiting US bases in the 1980s, and being denied the opportunity even as a Senator in 1987 to visit Pine Gap which was and remains 'off limits to any Australian personnel'. Vallentine was part of a large citizen presence at the facility's gates that breached the perimeter fence. This group was subsequently jailed for trespassing. Vallentine's submission also raised profound concerns about Australia's extravagantly expensive and useless arms purchases and environmentally damaging military exercises.

US bases in Australia are growing both in size and number. Tindal, an RAAF military air base and civil aviation airfield in the Northern Territory, is being prepared to house Triton surveillance aircraft and ballistic missiles and nuclear-capable US B1 bombers (with the capacity to reach southern China) (Richard Stone, Sub no. 163, p. 1; Bevan Ramsden, Sub no. 140, p. 1). Citing David Vine's *Base Nation* (2015), Wage Peace (Sub no. 253, pp. 2-3) argues that the bases have for generations advanced US business interests, illegally targeted civilians and enabled extra-judicial killings.

Justin Tutty from Darwin (Sub no. 265, pp. 1, 3) argues that the lack of scrutiny of US military in the Northern Territory is damaging Australian democracy. He presents a list of examples: alleged sexual assaults by US personnel, failure to impose and supervise quarantine, inadequate assessment of the environmental impact of wargames, and a 'free pass to anything with an American flag', including Marines visiting Northern Territory schools. The numbers of US military personnel in Darwin will continue to increase.

Other contributors express concerns that the permanent presence of US troops in Australia undermines Australian sovereignty and compromises our remaining independent decision-making capacity (Spirit of Eureka, Sub no. 281, p. 2). Australia is described (from the perspective of US military intellectuals) as a 'supportive sanctuary' for them to "launch military activity in SE Asia" (Nick Deane, Sub no. 67, p. 4). Thus, as Professor Tanter argues (Sub no. 401, pp. 42-43), Australian military forces are so interoperable with those of the US that it is almost inconceivable that this country would not be involved in a future US war. This accords with statements made by former Defence Minister Peter Dutton in November 2021 about conflict with Taiwan.[57] In other words, in terms of Australian national security policy – and this is a bipartisan position held by the Coalition and the ALP – Australia's 'national interests' equate to those of 'the US'. The alliance, Tanter observes, distorts Australian understanding of its own interests.

Australia's alliance with the United States has taken us as Australian citizens into at least four wars since WW11 that have been pointless. And, now there are mumblings and propaganda that is conditioning Australians to believe we have an enemy in China. A war against China would be sheer madness and in the event China might need to use its military might against us as part of the alliance with the USA, the first place it would attack is Pine Gap, the US spy facility. Pine Gap, and indeed most of northern Australia that would face extreme military attack, sits on some of the most ancient historic sites in the world. Sites that the oldest living culture on Earth have cared for and have been of great significance to. I dread to think of how many of the Earth's and First Nation's people's archaeologic sites could be damaged should there ever be a war with a superpower that is China.

Beth Gordon, Submission Number 155

Risk of Nuclear Escalation, Need for Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

Some submissions pointed out that the Australian bases hosting US military under the AUKUS military alliance could make Australia a surrogate target for China as a warning to the US. Various observers have expressed concern that a conventional conflict with China could readily escalate into a nuclear event, with disastrous consequences for Australia. Such a development would take the country closer to accepting nuclear installations, nuclear war-fighting and a nuclear industry, and further away from banning nuclear weapons.

Several groups and individuals recommend signing and ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) that has significantly advanced a global norm against nuclear weapons possession and reliance. These groups also deplore trade fairs where nuclear devices and other weapons of mass destruction are promoted. A 2018 IPSOS public opinion poll found that 78.9 percent of Australian respondents supported Australia joining the TPNW while only 7.2 per cent opposed.[58]

As People for Nuclear Disarmament (Sub no. 151, p. 7) observe, although DFAT might express concern about nuclear war, Australia has shown no inclination to sign the TPNW. Now, however, it seems that the Labor Government is considering signing the TPNW. Several contributions, however, point out that the ALP's commitment to signing the TPNW (initially made at the December 2018 Labor National Conference, and reaffirmed in 2021 in a pre-election pledge to sign and ratify the treaty) raises questions about the nuclear-related functions of the bases at North West Cape and Pine Gap, to say nothing of Australia's status under the protective umbrella of US 'extended deterrence'. Concerns were also expressed about the expanding role of Robertson Marine Barracks and upgrades to the Tindal RAAF base that will enable that site to service US nuclear bombers.

Lorel Thomas argues that: 'This position of reliance upon US nuclear protection is hypocritical and against the spirit of the Non-Proliferation Treaty' (Sub no. 303, p. 1). As a result, it has been suggested by some that this could require an ALP government to choose between the ANZUS Treaty/AUKUS and the TPNW. Hood and Cormier, however, conclude that 'while concerns about conflicts between the TPNW and ANZUS are not illusory, there are ways that such conflicts can be navigated and resolved by Australia and the US revisiting the security arrangements and practices that they have built up under ANZUS'.[59] While these undoubtedly 'have pre-existing obligations embedded in them that cannot be sidestepped', they can be 're-worked and discussed'.[60] Very pragmatically, these writers also note 'a need for those pushing for a nuclear-free world to begin to think about how to navigate the legal complexities of existing security treaties such as ANZUS'.[61]

The International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) (Sub no. 255, p.3) points out that, since 1994, Australian governments have 'imported' into the ANZUS Treaty a 'nuclear promise' that the US will provide Australia nuclear protection. Such a promise, however, does not actually appear in the Treaty. This misreading has promoted Australia's dependence on US nuclear protection and, in so doing, exposed Australia to nuclear attack

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by US opponents. ICAN observes that under the TPNW, nuclear weapons are already illegal. Lawyers for Peace (Sub no. 371, p. 1) similarly argue that in terms of the TPNW, the nuclear dimension of ANZUS may be unlawful and unjustifiable. It appears that Australia could sign the TPNW as other US allies have done, eliminate nuclear-related activities at relevant bases in Australia, and still have an alliance with the US based on conventional weapons. Such views are endorsed by other submission writers including Dale Hess and Adrian Glamorgan, two members of the Religious Society of Friends in Australia (Quakers) (Sub no. 285, pp. 8-9). ICAN (Sub no. 263, p. 5) and People for Nuclear Disarmament (Sub no. 151, p. 7) who argue, moreover, that nuclear risk reduction concerns not just Australia and Australians but the whole world.

Positive Perspectives on the Alliance

The National Quaker Peace and Legislation Committee Religious Society of Friends in Australia (Sub no. 189, p. 4) is optimistic about 'reimagining' the US Alliance as an instrument of 'peace-building multilateralism'. In this context, Marcus Reubenstein (Sub no. 356, p. 1) argues that the alliance 'makes sense for Australia', claiming that the US will remain our only reliable and viable option as an ally. Citing conservative opinion in the US and Australia that supports US hegemony, he warns that if Australia fails to join the US in its growing rivalry with China, we will ourselves become America's enemy (Reubenstein, Sub no. 356, p. 3). Reubenstein nevertheless concludes that Australia should consider its own interests and not be 'picking fights on America's part' (Sub no. 356, p. 22).

Real Threats to Australia?

If Australia was to be a target of an attack, the threat would likely come in one of three forms: a conventional missile attack on Australia as a substitute for China's real enemy, the US; a cyber-attack on critical infrastructure and institutions; or a nuclear attack. All would be catastrophic for Australia, and, even though urgent preparations are said to be under way, it is likely that defence against these threats would be ineffectual.

Brian Boyd (Sub no. 214, pp. 2, 4) quotes leaders of the world's largest economies saying it is a matter of not if, but when, there will be war, with various people predicting this to occur in three to six years. He cites a 2021 quote by US Indo-Pacific command head Philip Davidson who says conflict with China 'could happen within six years' (Brian Boyd, Sub no. 214, p. 2). There is also, however, a warning against 'phony war' scenarios: Australians need to be aware that we are unnecessarily treating China as our enemy and accept what two contributors describe as the 'unrelenting pornography of the threat ostensibly posed by China' (Judy Hemming and Michael McKinley, Sub no. 209, p. 7).

The Impact of AUKUS

AUKUS is viewed by a number of submission writers as undemocratically imposed on Australians without detail or debate. It is viewed as a 'dangerous, open-ended commitment' (Professor Stanley, Sub no. 406, p.1) and one that will have the effect of entrenching America's view of the world even more deeply among Australians, at a time when former allies of the US are backing away from a failing great power. AUKUS is likely to give US nuclear-armed warships and military aircraft unlimited access to Australian military locations. This would make Australia a US war platform so that any US enemy would become Australia's enemy. It is also possible that such as development would open the way to establishing a nuclear weapons industry in Australia.

6. Alternatives

For reasons discussed above, several contributors agree that the only course left for Australia is diplomatic, rather than military, and all our resources should be directed to avoiding war with China, as our neighbours are doing.

Australia is no longer seen as a good international citizen. Instead, our foreign service has been depleted, the power of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in the government hierarchy is diminished, and bipartisanship prevails in foreign and defence policy. Calling in 2019 for Australia's budget allocation for diplomatic matters to be raised to 1.5 percent of GDP, Melissa Conley Tyler observed that the Netherlands invested 4.3 percent of its budget in diplomacy and aid. She also noted that comparable expenditure in Australia had fallen from a high of 9 percent in the immediate postwar period to 3.2 percent by 1969 and then to a parlous 1.3 percent in 2019.[62] Contributors generally advocate mutually respectful behaviour and upgraded diplomacy by Australian representatives on the global stage.

Since 1945, neither major party has made the US Alliance an election issue. As the National Quaker Peace & Legislation Committee Religious Society of Friends in Australia (Sub no. 189, p. 3) point out, rather than 'frank and fearless conversation' with the US about ANZUS, it appears that popular opinion is being channelled towards war preparation in both the short and long term. Contributors recommend a complete change of mindset for Australia.

Postscript

When this report was in pre-publication, the Albanese Government made good its promise to call for a Parliamentary inquiry into how Australia sends armed forces into overseas conflict. This is only a first step on the way to war powers reform, but it will be welcomed by most groups and individuals who have contributed to the IPAN People's Inquiry.

Foreign Policy

Recommendations

Specifically, the following recommendations have been called for through the submissions:

Recommendation 10

ANZUS Treaty

The Australian Government should review and renegotiate the ANZUS Treaty in line with what is most appropriate for Australia's national security.

Recommendation 11

Overseas military presence in Australia

The Australian Government should eliminate all overseas military presence from military bases in Australia.

Recommendation 12

War powers

The Australian Parliament should legislate to ensure the decision to go to war lies with Federal Parliament.

Recommendation 13

Diplomacy

The Australian Government should:

a) Strive to achieve diplomatic, not military, resolution of conflict and differences at the international level.

b) Invest additional resources to improve relations with Australia's neighbours.

Recommendation 14

Nuclear weapons

The Australian Government should explicitly reject all use of nuclear weapons in pursuing Australia's national security and sign and ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Recommendation 15

Bipartisanship

The Australian Labor Party should abandon bipartisanship and pursue a new pathway forward on foreign and defence policy and lead public consultation towards an independent national security strategy.

Photo: Kathryn Kelly

Political Including Democratic Rights

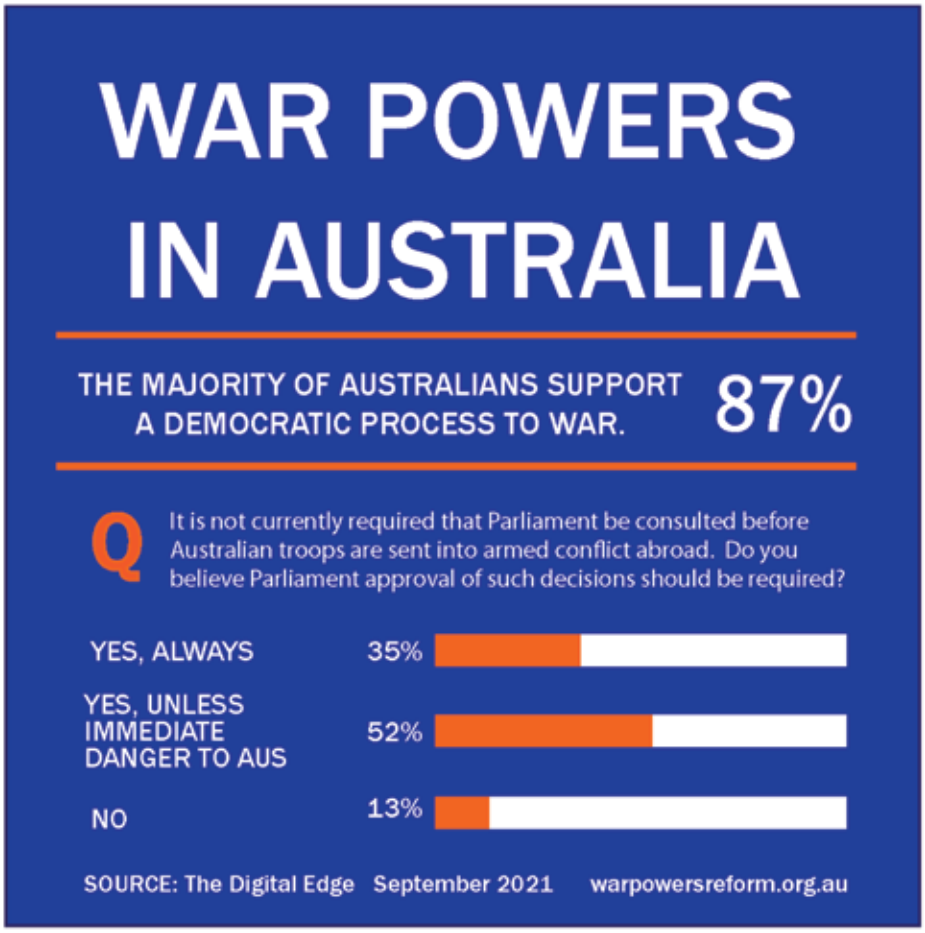
Greg Barns SC

Introduction

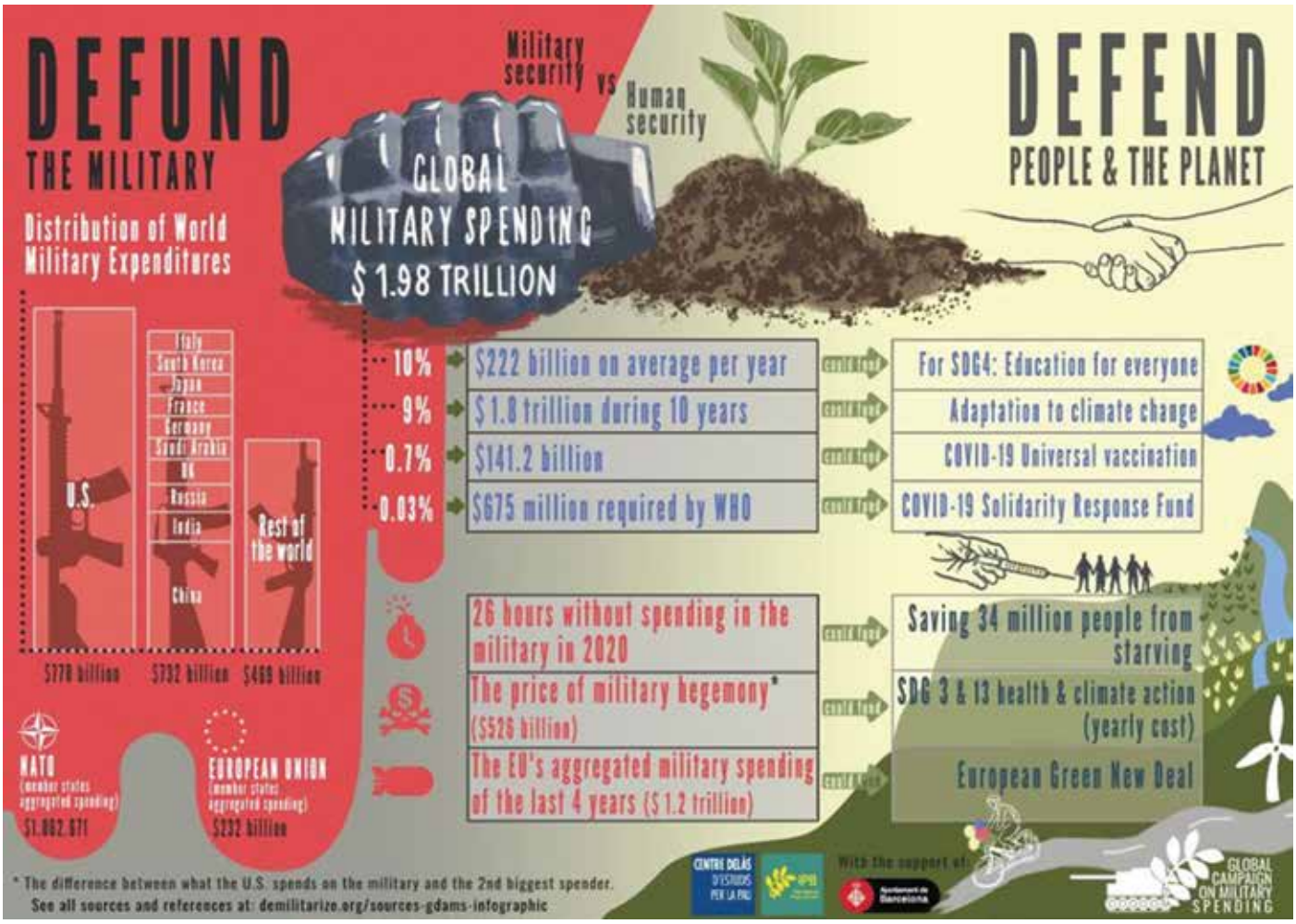
No Australian should take democracy for granted. In a sense, Australia today is sliding into a form of authoritarianism. This is a dangerous phenomenon that, as I argue in *Rise of the Right: The War on Australia's Liberal Values*,[63] began when former Prime Minister John Howard decided in 2001 to suspend the rule of law and rip up international treaty and convention obligations in order to keep the Tampa, a ship carrying desperate asylum seekers, from our shores.

In July 2022, the newly appointed ALP Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus KC put an end to the disgraceful political prosecution of Canberra lawyer and former ACT Attorney-General Bernard Collaery. Mr Collaery, paying the price for revealing the truth about the Howard government's criminal actions against East Timor, was prosecuted in 2018 and faced charges, including allegedly conspiring with his client, "Witness K", to disclose confidential information about the Howard government's spying operation in Timor-Leste in 2004.

The submissions received in this IPAN People's Inquiry make clear that political and democratic traditions and rights in Australia require renewal and revolution. Discontent with the status quo is palpable, particularly because the current 'system' entrenches and enhances inequality, marginalisation and dispossession. Power is concentrated increasingly in the hands of a few to the exclusion of the many.



Courtesy of AWPR (Australians for War Powers Reform)



Graphic: International Peace Bureau

2. Real Independence

One of the major voices to emerge from the submissions received was the desire for an Australian republic. It is now 22 years since the failed 1999 Referendum (when I was Campaign Director for the Yes case). That loss ended the quest by former Labor Prime Minister, Paul Keating, to ensure Australia has its own head of state. The death of Elizabeth II may however mark the beginning of a renewed push for an Australian head of state.

The submissions received argue that Australia cannot be independent in a constitutional and political sense unless the British monarchy is removed from its role as Head of State. But a republic alone is not enough. Many submissions pointed to the need to engage civil society in greater depth than is the case today. Increasing control of political and bureaucratic machines by vested interests means the notion of democratic decision-making is too often simply given lip service. Domination of the parliament by the executive arm of government, the Australian people's lack of capacity to influence key policy debates, and the need for reform of parliament are key issues that emerged in this Inquiry. Also important here is the view that deliberative democracy should play a role in decision-making, through the selection or election of individuals to consider issues such as electoral reform, environmental control regimes, and other policy issues.[64]

Another country has control over whether we fight our neighbours [even though]…Our neighbours are not our enemies.

Rebecca Buttenshaw,
Submission Number 194

3. War Powers

One dominant theme emerging from submissions was the urgent need for the reform of war powers. Various submission writers recognise that having the decision to commit a nation to a war resting in the hands of one person, the Prime Minister, is 'appalling' and an indication of the fragile nature of democratic rights in Australia. That Australian military resources must only be committed following a full parliamentary debate involving both houses was very strongly supported. Some submissions suggested that a two-thirds vote of both the House of Representatives and the Senate be required in relation to a decision to go to war. None of the submissions argues for the status quo.

4. Human Rights

The decline of the rule of law and the loss of liberties in the wake of the War on Terror were major concerns of many participants in the Inquiry. There was also concern that there is no independent scrutiny of powerful security agencies such as the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) and the Australian Federal Police (AFP).

Submissions focused on the extraordinary erosion of rights that Australians have experienced over the past two decades. Suppression orders, secret courts and closed hearings, detention without access to a lawyer, control orders and preventive detention are now established features of the legal landscape in Australia. Along with the sidelining of the courts and constant undermining of them by politicians like former Defence Minister Peter Dutton and his media allies, these shifts have seen Australia slipping down the rankings of democratic countries.

Many submissions remarked on the deeply disturbing fact that Australia lacks effective human rights protections at the Federal level. The urgent need for a law providing these protections is evident given that individual rights are now routinely sidelined or even legislated away by governments of all persuasions. Many submissions advocated that such a law protecting human rights should be constitutionally entrenched. The majority of contributors expressed concern about the unequal structure of Australian society and increasingly neoliberal economic sphere where through privatisation and austerity, market-oriented policies eliminate price controls, deregulate markets, lower trade barriers and so forth to reduce state control in the economy. Contributors see these as the leading factors creating the very fragile human rights framework that is routinely abused by governments and corporations.

photo: Kathryn Kelly

5. The Bernard Collaery Case and the Rule of Law

As noted above, the political prosecution of Canberra lawyer and former ACT Attorney-General Bernard Collaery was brought to an end in July 2022. It was therefore in place when the Inquiry was conducted. The anger felt in some submissions about the prosecution of Bernard Collaery was palpable. He and Witness K were charged with offences under Commonwealth law because in the course of advocating for the East Timorese against the bullying of Australia over gas fields in the Timor Sea, they revealed that the Howard government authorised Australian security agencies to spy on the East Timorese cabinet to gather intelligence. Witness K pleaded guilty well before Collaery's case in the ACT Supreme Court was discontinued. Australian government lawyers had previously suffered a defeat in their December 2021 attempt to throw an even larger veil of secrecy over the trial.

While now discontinued, the Collaery case is indicative of the misuse of law by the Australian state against those who blow the whistle on its illegal and unethical activities. Security agencies such as ASIO are given whatever they want from their supine political masters, and the destruction they do to democracy and the rule of law seems to be ignored or even encouraged by some in the bureaucratic and political machine. This, of course, does not take account of the millions of taxpayers' dollars expended by the Commonwealth on the legal pursuit of brave democrats, like Bernard Collaery, who rightly value transparency over secrecy. The need for strong protection for whistle-blowers and civil liberties emerged as a recurring sentiment in submissions.

Bernard Collaery speaking Canberra 24/10/19 Photo: AAPP

6. Transparency and the Security State

The Collaery case led some submissions to make the point that there needs to be greater independent scrutiny of intelligence and security agencies. Those submissions identified that there is no effective check on the security and defence establishment in Australia. While the Inspector General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS) is the independent office with a remit to police ASIO, ASIS and other agencies, there was little confidence among those making submissions that IGIS in fact acts independently of government agencies.

There is a need to create a transparent organisation which, in terms of personnel and culture, has no links to existing security agencies. Such an agency should have extensive powers to investigate, and refer for prosecution, abuses of power by security agencies. Reporting by this agency must be public. Some submissions suggest parliamentary scrutiny of security organisations be enhanced and more transparent. The current Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS) is viewed as being toothless and too often operating behind a veil of secrecy.

Some submissions refer to the interference and disruption of democracy via the means of US and other foreign powers' influence on political parties, MPs and parliamentary committees. In addition, some submissions called for bans on, or strict regulation of, political lobbying.

7. Anti-Corruption Measures, Election Funding and Foreign Interference

Alongside this call for an organisation to investigate security agencies is the call for an independent anti-corruption commission, along the lines of those commissions that exist in some states such as NSW.

Many submissions reflect a loss of faith in parliamentary democracy. Political donations, and the ability of foreign powers such as the United States to interfere in Australian political life directly and indirectly, are seen as serious impediments to real democracy in Australia.

Most submissions that dealt with this issue called for a ban on political donations, with such monies to be replaced by government funding. This would enable the full and fair participation of minor parties in elections. Some submissions also recommended strong and enforceable laws that prohibit foreign donations and government interference.

Many submission writers expressed a belief that corruption flourishes in the national political arena because of the lack of an anti-corruption body. The need for a public and transparent anti-corruption agency is seen as an antidote to such a culture.

The Albanese government's national anti-corruption commission bill, introduced in late September 2022, is a welcome development.

8. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The depressing lack of progress on the recognition of, and respect for, Australia's First Peoples is another theme to emerge from the submissions. Some argue for reserved seats in Federal Parliament for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Others argue that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples should have a right of veto over proposed land use. The rewriting of the Australian Constitution to reflect the contested history of Australia, particularly the invasion by Europeans, is also seen as important. The Albanese government's proposed Voice referendum provides, at least, a chance to push for greater sovereignty for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

One interesting submission argues that Australia-US military installations and exercises should be subject to assessment of their impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as well as on the environment. These installations and exercises cover large areas of land and water, but are exempt from any environmental scrutiny by Traditional Owners, who have no say in the use of their land and no capacity to say no to such projects.

Photo: Shahnaz Martin

9. Conclusion

If there is an overall theme to be drawn from submissions it is that Australian democracy is broken and heading down an authoritarian path. There is pessimism about parliamentary democracy because of the powers amassed by executive government and the use and misuse of this power by government security agencies that include the AFP and ASIO. The need to renew democracy through symbolism such as a republic, human rights legislation and effective policing of the executive are key to a 21st century Australia that reflects truly the will of the people to see an independent and peaceful Australia.

Political Including Democratic Rights

Recommendations

Specifically, the submissions have called for the following recommendations:

Recommendation 16

Republic referendum

As Australia must become a republic to exercise an independent foreign policy, the Australian Government should give the Australian people the opportunity to vote in a referendum on the Republic.

Recommendation 17

War powers

The Australian Parliament should pass a law that the decision to go to war must be voted on by Parliament.

Recommendation 18

Whistleblowers and integrity

The Australian Government should introduce:

a) Strong protection under law for whistle-blowers and all citizens' civil liberties.

b) Introduce a public and transparent national anti-corruption body.

David McBride speaking in Adelaide 28/9/2022 Photo: IPAN

Unions and Workers' Rights

Associate Professor
Jeannie Rea

Introduction

Workers have borne, and will continue to bear, the burden of wars

Electrical Trades Union (ETU) Qld and NT (Sub no. 246, p. 1)

The fact that it is workers who do the actual labour that gets things done is too often overlooked or even ignored in debates about foreign policy, economics and politics. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, opened many eyes to the critical role of workers. This role ranges from the obvious gargantuan efforts of health workers, to the crucial but usually invisible contribution of retail, warehouse and hospitality workers.

In a January 2022 article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* , Jim Stanford from the Centre for Future Work summed up the contribution of working people when commenting upon the breakdown in supply chains that occurred during the Omicron wave:

> *The reality of value-added production and supply is much more human … It is people who are the driving force behind production, distribution and supply. Labour – human beings getting out of bed and going to work, using their brains and brawn to produce actual goods and services – is the only thing that adds value to the 'free gifts' we harvest from nature. It's the only thing that puts food on supermarket shelves, cares for sick people and teaches our children.*[65]

Waterside Workers float 1963
Grahame Garner collection,
Fryer Library

It is most appropriate, therefore, that Unions and Workers' Rights is one of the key themes of this Inquiry. This focus foregrounds the role of labour and of organised labour in unions and also of workers' rights.

The key themes of submissions to the Inquiry addressing unions and workers' rights focussed substantially or in part upon the adverse costs and consequences of specifically the Australia-US Alliance and more generally of war-mongering as foreign policy, particularly the enormous public and private investment involved. Most writers concluded that rather than destroying people and the planet, governments should divert military budgets to spending on improving people's lives and livelihoods.

Photo from National Library of Australia.

1. At Each End of the Gun is a Worker

The Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) submission (Sub no. 280, p. 2) highlights that:

> *Workers and working people are the main casualties of wars. Our Defence Force personnel are workers in uniform, and while they bear the brunt of the trauma on the battlefields, working class communities at home also bear the consequences of this trauma. Trauma breaks-up children's families and homes, while our public health systems pick up the pieces. But still, too often, lives end in tragic circumstances. Trauma is what HACSU members deal with every day in the course of their work. It is something we want to put an end to, not to create through unnecessary war.*

Wars rely upon the bodies and brains of workers, whether on battlefields, in factories, or in research institutes. Foreign policy, furthermore, is founded in some contexts upon being prepared for war.

The writers of a number of submissions emphasised that they were not anti-war and, in fact, wrote in support of what they considered to be 'just wars'. These 'just wars' included World War II against fascism and wars of decolonisation and independence. However, the burden of preparing for, waging and recovering from armed conflict falls disproportionately upon workers and their communities, and even more so upon the socially disadvantaged.

Put sharply, over a century ago, in reference to World War I, Vladimir Lenin is reputed to have said, 'A bayonet is a weapon with a worker at both ends'. In wars, workers are mobilised to fight, often against their preference and/or will.

Over a century ago, Australian workers joined the call to fight for the British Empire, as did tens of thousands of workers on both sides in that terrible war. Although soldiers, professional or conscripted, are prohibited from organising unions, soldiers in the Great War did organise and their increasing resistance arguably contributed to governments, monarchies and captains of industry needing to finish the war before revolution spread beyond Russia. While most soldiers at the time were conscripts, this was not the case in Australia. In fact, it was through the trade union movement that Australian workers played a critical role in the campaign that defeated two conscription plebiscites. Significantly, as employers and governments sought to reduce hard won wages and conditions, workers also continued to fight industrial battles throughout the war.

Most of the submissions addressing unions and workers' rights began by pointing to the World War I conscription campaign referenced above. They continued by referring more broadly to the long and proud history, that continued through to the invasion of Iraq, of Australian workers organising in opposition to imperialist and unjust wars. The submissions also pointed to organised labour supporting global peace and nuclear disarmament. This support included at times taking industrial action.

2. Worker Solidarity for Peace and Disarmament

Contributors pointed to instances of Australian unions acting in solidarity with working people of other countries in support of anti-colonial and liberation struggles, and also of positive campaigns for peace. Often cited was the refusal (in 1938) of Australian waterside workers to load pig-iron for Japan following that country's 1937 invasion of China. This was a time when Japan was ramping up both its munitions industry and its military ambitions in the Pacific.

In 1949 the Waterside Workers Federation also boycotted Dutch shipping in support of the new Seaman's Union of Indonesia. After Indonesia invaded and occupied Timor Leste in 1975, maritime and other unions campaigned for boycotts of Indonesia. In 1999, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) initiated the union led 'Campaign for Peace' that pushed for a peace-keeping force in Timor Leste and that also protested against the operation of Indonesian-state owned companies such as Garuda at Australian airports.[66] These are a few examples that point to nuanced positions from unions within a broad commitment to world peace and to nuclear disarmament.

Today the ACTU supports the international campaign to abolish nuclear weapons and calls upon the Australian government to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) adopted in 2017 by the United Nations.[67] Over the decades, with membership support, a number of unions have been active participants in wider anti-nuclear movement campaigns, including against both the export of uranium and a nuclear industry in Australia.

Importantly, unions including at times the ACTU, have often been ahead of not just conservative parties, but also of the Labor Party, in adopting positions that often have wide popular support and that over time come to be endorsed by mainstream politics and governments.

Relevant also to this IPAN People's Inquiry into the case for an independent and peaceful Australia, however, is the fact that the trade union movement has often been split along ideological lines. This division became more intense following World War II and Australia's move away from the British empire to formalising its alliance with the US in 1952.

The Cold War era was intensely divisive to Australian unions, in spite of huge increases in union coverage and membership density, and successful improvement of workers' rights across the workforce during that time. Splits amongst and within unions arising from Cold War ideological divisions nevertheless hampered effectiveness by pitching unions against one another politically and within workplaces. This ultimately distracted focus from the protection and advancement of workers' rights.

Even in the first half of 2022, support for the Australia-US Alliance, along with ongoing subservience to the United Kingdom, played out in the reticence of many ACTU affiliates to voice opposition to AUKUS, the awkwardly named deal for Australia to acquire nuclear-propelled submarines. The fact that only the most progressive left-wing unions have expressed opposition to AUKUS is a function of divisions that continue to fragment Australian unions on such matters. Many ALP-affiliated unions are cautious, while unions covering workers involved in military manufacturing remain mostly focused on jobs at any costs.

Caution in such matters has a long history in Australia's union movement. The SEARCH Foundation (Sub no. 183, pp. 9-10) pointed out, for example, that 'The Australian trade union movement, including the left, maintained support for a local arms industry, naval ship construction and repair, and for aircraft maintenance, continuing from the huge effort required in World War 2'. It is evident that Australia's alliances with both the US and the UK, along with old Cold War affiliations, have had a heavy impact on Australian union discourse in terms of international solidarity. Such a tendency in some quarters has not, however, prevented other workers or their unions standing up in local and international arenas for independence and peace.

3. Australia-US alliance Undermining Australian Unions

In spite of the issues outlined above, what has ultimately been effective intervention in matters of international solidarity, positive support for peace, and opposition to militarisation and nuclear proliferation, have brought Australian unions to the attention of the US and UK. This has resulted in pressure brought to bear upon Australian governments to curb Australian unions.

An independent foreign policy could ultimately extract Australian governments and peoples from the thrall of following US labour and business ideologies, models and practices.

Additionally, the relative long-term industrial strength and success of Australian trade unions in protecting and improving workers' rights and livelihoods, compared to their US counterparts, has been a thorn in the side of US capital operating in Australia.

The Vintage Reds of the Canberra Region (Sub no. 351, p. 2) observed:

> *American corporations dominate Australia's economy. The American military dominates our 'defence' thinking. American elites dominate our politics…*

Currently the union movement and its capacity to defend and extend the rights of workers is much reduced. This development, wholly unwelcome, has much to do with the domination of our economic and political life by the United States.

The overall membership and composition of Australian unions has changed dramatically since 1976, when 51% of workers belonged to unions (56% of men and 43% of women).[68] That was a time when in some workplaces a union ticket was still legally required to get the job (closed shop), while there was an assumption in other workplaces that workers would join a union and they did and so density was over 90%.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) statistics indicate that by 2021, however, only 14 per cent of Australian workers (1.4 million) were trade union members, a fall from 40 per cent in 1992, with highest membership density currently in the education and training industry (31 per cent) and the 'professionals' occupation (21 per cent).[69] This is a dramatic change from 1976 when the biggest unions were in the manufacturing sector.[70] Even then, however, work opportunities were contracting as, unable to smash the rights of local workers, rapacious companies moved offshore.

Yet it is insufficient to attribute the decline in union power in Australia to changes to the structure of the economy leading to the decline of previously dominant industries such as manufacturing. Also critical has been an increase in barriers to unionising in old and new industries that include the casualisation of so many jobs. In this sense, Australian Governments have persistently sought to undermine unions politically and legislatively. As the SEARCH Foundation (Sub no. 183, pp. 2, 9-10) pointed out, the Australia-US alliance contributed to this undermining as follows:

> *Australian workers and their union movement have suffered significant loss of rights and livelihood because of Australia's military alliance with the USA.*
>
> *The main reason for this is that US authorities, particularly the State Department, CIA and NSA, included left wing Australian unions in their targeting for Cold War political control or elimination. The left unions and the Communist Party opposed war and nuclear weapons after World War II, and the US authorities saw this as opposition to their new-found global dominance. On the economic front, Australian workers were able to engage in strong industrial action to improve their rights and living standards after World War II, and US investors, particularly General Motors and the Ford Motor Company, wanted tame-cat unions or no unions at all in their factories. …*
>
> *From the time of the Hawke-Keating governments, Australian economic policy swung from Keynesian demand management to neoliberal privatisation, trade liberalisation and labour market*

deregulation. This was inspired by the 'Washington Consensus' for these polices during the Reagan presidency and the Thatcher era in the UK. These policies empowered employers to suppress union membership, and eventually lead to a rapid increase in social inequality, cuts to social services, precarious work and wage stagnation.

In Australia, modern anti-union legislation harks from the 1980s when the Hawke–Keating Labor governments embarked upon a 'modernising' project to introduce the US system of enterprise-level bargaining. This 'modernisation' included legislating against the right to strike outside of bargaining periods, and even mandating the size of unions.

Many eulogies delivered for Bob Hawke, a former ACTU President, who was a great champion of the US alliance, pointed to his government's dismantling. of 'draconian' labour laws.

By 1996 the Howard Coalition Government had brought in the *Workplace Relations Act*, which outlawed closed-shop arrangements and introduced individual contracts to smash collective bargaining. Although the Rudd–Gillard Labor government's *Fair Work Act* to some extent restored the balance, these administrations still refused to make industrial action legal outside of bargaining periods. Starkly exposing the whole charade was the 2014 Trade Union Royal Commission, which, while ostensibly inquiring into narrow (albeit reprehensible) cases of union leadership corruption, also became a forum to attack the legitimacy of trade unions for merely doing their job of representing the interests of workers.

The resulting legislation demanded of unions, which are democratic membership-based organisations, financial and organisational accountability far exceeding that expected of companies.

The SEARCH Foundation (Sub no. 183, p. 10) concluded:

The Australian labour movement is struggling to break from [the current] neoliberal framework, and part of this effort has been to reject the US economic and social model, which continues to be promoted in Australia by well-organised corporate think tanks and industry associations, with prominent links to similar bodies in the US and the US Republican Party.

Despite these on-going concerted efforts to undermine the legitimacy of unions in Australia, polling regularly confirms that a majority of Australians think Australia would be better off if unions were stronger.[71] Unionised jobs are safer, with better conditions, and with pay around 25 per cent more than similar work done by those with no or low union membership.

Photo: CC National Archives

SONY DSC CC Photo: Matt Hrkac

4. Defence Trades Controls Act

In addition to the influence of the hazy world of think tanks and other covert operations, there are examples of the Australia-US alliance interfering directly with workers' rights. For example, the *Defence Trade Controls Act 2012* was established to control the export of defence and strategic goods and technologies as listed on the then Defence and Strategic Goods List. The Act's purpose was to implement obligations of the 2007 Australia–United States Defence Trade Cooperation Treaty to facilitate the movement of certain defence articles and services between the United States and Australia without the need for export licenses or approvals. The US Congress imposed conditions for ratification, requiring Australian legislation related to the intangible transfer and the brokering of controlled goods, technology and services. This legislation ultimately also applied to various aspects of research in Australian universities.

Pointing out that universities already had rigorous ethics and research approval processes, the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) at that time identified that this imposition had implications for the academic freedom of academic researchers and the autonomy of universities. The new plan seemed to be that research would be approved by someone in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). On reviewing the proposed legislation, the NTEU soon realised that scientists could unknowingly break the laws imposed and face prosecution for charges that could carry heavy criminal sanctions. Then Senator Scott Ludlum noted that the Australian Greens had consistently expressed serious concerns about the Bill, referring to it as 'complex and flawed legislation.'[72] He also noted that 'the Bill was rushed through the parliament with insufficient time given to examine many amendments at very short notice.'[73] It was suggested that the rush to legislate resulted from a desire to have the Bill in place for a planned visit from the US Secretary of State.

In 2015, following NTEU alliance building, lobbying and organising, the government conceded that the original legislation disadvantaged Australian scientists in comparison to their US counterparts, and the Act was amended. While these amendments introduced some improvements, they nonetheless extended the authority of the Minister of Defence to include a 'tap-on-the-shoulder' prohibition power for publication and brokering activities. To ensure comprehensive member support, the NTEU ran information campaigns amongst affected members and followed up individual cases.

5. The Costs and Consequences of Armed Conflict on People in their Communities

Photo: Shahnaz Martin

Submissions from unions, allies and individuals emphasised the costs and consequential impacts of armed conflict upon people and their communities in terms of those wounded and killed (military and civilian), those terrorised, the destruction of social and cultural lives, political structures and civil society, and economic and environmental devastation. Contributors pointed to the enormous financial cost of not only wars and their aftermath, but also of ongoing expenditure in 'defence' materials and systems. Several also noted the disproportionate impacts upon First Nations Australians, minority group members, those persecuted, and members of economically poor communities.

Pax Christi (Sub no. 166, p. 1) reminds us:

> *Australia, as we know it, was founded on war and violence. The British Empire invaded and seized the land and fought wars with the First Nations peoples. They were driven from the land; their way of life was undermined and their spirituality was destroyed. They were marginalised and neglected as being less than fully human. The foundations of the Commonwealth of Australia are both physical and spiritual violence. Australians live in fear that what they stole violently could be taken from them violently.*

While the White Australia Policy (WAP) pre-dates the Cold War and the Australia-US Alliance, and while this policy has been formally abandoned for decades, its influence still persists in white supremacist attitudes towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and also towards those who have recently arrived in Australia. Too many trade unions have fallen into WAP tropes evoking a xenophobic nationalism by calling to protect '"Australian" jobs' and constructing 'others' as enemies.

This shameful tendency emerges too readily in discourses concerning foreign policy and threats to Australian security, trade and jobs. Describing workers overseas or newly arrived as threats is a disgrace. Although the organised trade union movement is consciously moving away from such language, influence is diminished across the general workforce when trade union membership is so low.

Anti-racist activism in the form of workers backing up each other can nevertheless be found in many, many workplaces. Discourses around protecting '"Australian" jobs' is often just rhetoric at a union policy level. While the test is clearly on the workplace ground, it is also evident in union movement support for workers who take a stand against military-related research and manufacturing.

6. Swords into Ploughshares

For centuries, workers have resisted making weapons of war. They have done so by striking and occupying factories to demand that their skills be used for peaceful purposes. As long ago as the 700s BC, the Prophet Isaiah urged people to 'beat their swords into ploughshares' and 'neither shall they learn war anymore'.[74]

There are recent examples from the US of workers in prominent companies speaking out. In 2019, dozens of Microsoft employees signed a letter protesting the company's $480 million contract to supply the US army with augmented-reality headsets intended for use on the battlefield. The letter said, 'We are a global coalition of Microsoft workers, and we refuse to create technology for warfare and oppression ... we did not sign up to develop weapons, and we demand a say in how our work is used'.[75]

Thousands of Google employees, including dozens of senior engineers, signed a letter in 2018 protesting the company's involvement in a Pentagon program that uses artificial intelligence to interpret video imagery and that could be used to improve the targeting of drone strikes. The letter read: 'We believe that Google should not be in the business of war'.[76] Reportedly, at the risk of solitary confinement, some courageous workers in prisons and detention centres have also protested being forced into military production work.

Magrid Bryn Burns' submission (Sub no. 180, p. 1) quoted Arundhati Roy: 'Once weapons were manufactured to fight wars. Now wars are manufactured to sell weapons'.[77] Bryn-Burns (Sub no. 180, p. 1) also pointed to the relentless advertising enticing young people to join the armed forces to get a free education. We might note that Australian Defence Force higher education students are paid while studying and do not accrue a Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) debt.

Wage Peace (Sub no. 253, pp. 2, 4) warned both of military corporations as influencers and of the growing dependency upon military industries to fund civilian research and infrastructure. This submission went on to note that: 'The size of the weapons corporations, which are now ensconced in Australian political life, means that they are able to influence political decision making in ways that are not democratic'.

The Electrical Trades Union (ETU), Queensland & Northern Territory, (Sub no. 246, p. 1) pointed out that:

> *The Australian weapons manufacturing industry is largely controlled by multinational weaponry firms, which exercise a great amount of control over workers' rights and working conditions… Additionally, profits from such corporations would be reaped overseas, injecting little or nothing into the Australian economy.*

Ipswich to Brisbane march 1964
Grahame Garner collection, Fryer Library

7. Victims of War

A number of submissions highlighted the wide range of people who become victims of war. For example, Harold W. Johnson (Sub no. 259, p. 3) noted as follows:

> *Over the past 70 years. young people from Australia have been involved in fighting in the wars of other countries … These foreign wars have resulted in a massive cost to the Australian military personnel involved as well as to their families due to their death or personal injuries as the result of wars.*

The SEARCH Foundation (Sub no. 183, p. 6) profiled suicide rates amongst military workers. The group noted that data relating to military service since 2001 shows that the suicide rates for ex-service personnel are significantly higher than for the same age cohorts in the Australian population as a whole.[78]

A submission by the HACSU (Sub no. 280, p. 1), whose members work in the Disability and Mental Health sector, observed as follows:

> *Our members have a large part to play in the emotional and physical recovery from war due to this injury and trauma. War Veterans are 3 times more likely to have psychological distress, and are around 10 times more likely to have suicidal thoughts. It is unfair to put this strain on our military men and women, and on our already fractured healthcare system.*

The Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church (Sub no. 179, p. 4) focused upon the contrast between military and humanitarian spending in Afghanistan:

> *In her book, The Three Trillion Dollar War,[79] [co-authored with Joseph E. Stiglitz], Linda [Bilmes] explains how having a US soldier in Afghanistan costs the US taxpayer around $800,000 per year. We might expect Australian troops costing similar amounts. $36 billion was spent by the US annually on military action in Afghanistan. In contrast the US spends $1.5 billion average on reconstruction and humanitarian aid. How many schools, hospitals and other meaningful jobs could be created both here and in the US with that sort of money? Afghanistan desperately needs support in education and health (USA Aid). The unemployment rate in Afghanistan in 2008 was 40% (CIA World Watch).*

8. Preferred Spending

The Vintage Reds of the Canberra region (Sub no. 351, p. 4) lamented:

> *We make the sad observation: every dollar spent on our current 'defence' strategy is a dollar less to spend on health, education and welfare, here domestically, or abroad on foreign aid for humanitarian purposes.*

All contributors commenting on trade union matters who expressed concern about the huge cost of the 'national defence' spending that sustains Australia's strategic relationship with the US argued that monies from the public purse would be better spent on health and education, on addressing climate change and social and economic injustice, and on labour market planning and decent job creation. There were also multiple calls for alternative conflict resolution mechanisms.

The ETU (Sub no. 246, p. 1) wrote that an issue highly relevant to their members is a just transition for workers impacted by the nation's urgently needed response to climate change:

> *The 2021 Federal Budget's allocation of funds to renewable energy sources and de-carbonising was minimal, allocating only $30 million towards renewable energy sources for one project in the Northern Territory. In stark contrast, $46 billion was budgeting for military spending. We are in immediate danger of a climate crisis, yet are still not allocating satisfactory funds to tackle this emergency. Much needed funds must be allocated to the climate crisis.*

1930 art by Noel Counihan - workers demonstrate against war.

This Union noted (Sub no. 246, p. 1) that the US miliary alone produces more greenhouse gases than the entirety of Sweden, Switzerland and Morocco.

Health and education union advocates argued for allocating Federal Budget funds in a way that supports people who rely upon the work of their union members. The HACSU (Sub no. 280, p. 1) articulated:

> *Working people's taxes should not be diverted from public and community needs such as public health, education, affordable housing, welfare, and building local and sustainable industries and secure jobs in Australia. Particularly when our industries are continually having to fight for funding – be it under the NDIS or for our mental health hospitals. Both the disability and mental health sectors are grossly understaffed, particularly in regional areas. A recommendation from the recent Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health system suggested we add a tax levy to fix our broken mental health system – how about using some of the tens of billions of taxpayer dollars spent on military bases to instead fund our healthcare system rather than creating more stress on our system? ... We do need to prepare for our future in this brave new world of pandemic, global warming, displaced people and refugees, and worsening mental health.*

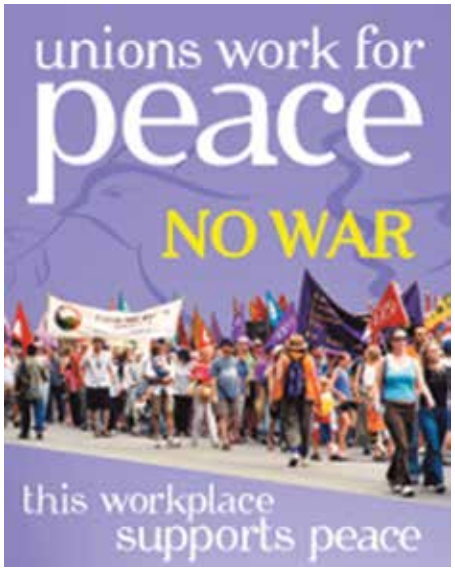
The NTEU Qld Division (Sub no. 416, p. 1) explained how Australia's higher education sector is now in a crisis that stems from three key factors:

1. *chronic underfunding of public higher education, particularly research, over at least the past two decades on the part of federal governments of both political persuasions …; and*
2. *the prioritisation of rankings, reputation and prestige in spending choices by Vice-Chancellors and Executives of Australia's public universities, leading to an overinvestment in research at the expense of teaching …; and*
3. *the conscious decision of university managements to fund the difference between federal government funding and what they want to spend, via mass casualisation of their workforce, a transfer from teaching income to research, and a risky over-reliance on international student fees.*

From the NTEU (Queensland Division) perspective, the downward trajectory of higher education spending, both as a share of total government spending and as a share of total national income (GDP), is an indication of the lack of government commitment to supporting and maintaining a world class higher education system. Australia already has one of the lowest levels of public investment in tertiary education in the developed world.[80]

The NTEU Queensland Division (Sub no. 416, p. 1) further argues:

> *Funding universities properly in and of itself is the first critical step to a comprehensive quality, free tertiary education sector based on secure jobs and healthy workplaces. It is also a critical investment in the recovery of society in the wake of a global pandemic. An increase from 0.7% of GDP to the OECD average of 1.0% of GDP would begin to alleviate the chronic underfunding that has plagued tertiary education for decades. Re-thinking the commitment of billions of dollars to the alliance with the United States, including the recent AUKUS developments which have thrown away further billions of dollars, could allow the government to fully fund the sector.*



A critical consequence of long-term chronic underfunding is that universities are loathe to refuse, or even to add conditions ensuring research integrity to, externally funded war-related projects involving the development, for example, of next-generation weapons. This compromised position of both universities and the researchers they employ undermines the independence of these projects and is also likely to have a follow-on effect that impacts upon other research, as well as on decisions concerning general education and engagement.

Conclusion

Contributors to the Unions and Workers Rights section of the IPAN Inquiry made strong cases for withdrawing from foreign policy alliances that drag Australia into conflicts that justify the production of military hardware and the destruction caused by this hardware. Such alliances also exert dangerous adverse influences on government priorities and expenditure, and on internal democracy. As well as supporting changes in budget spending priorities, contributors argued for ambitious but necessary alternatives as outlined in the recommendations below. To once more quote from the HACSU submission (Sub no. 280, p. 2):

Australian unions have a long history and involvement in the peace and social justice movements. There is power in union. All Australians deserve to be safe in their work and supported to reach their full potential without the fear of war or international aggression. We have a lot of work to do, but only through peace and diplomacy can we work on improving Australia.

Australia's current foreign policy priorities are dangerous to the health and livelihoods of working people. The US Alliance has actively undermined workers' rights to organise collectively as union members in a way that protects and improves condition for workers, and that ensures fair access to the goods and services provided by these workers.

Unions and Workers' Rights

Recommendations

Specifically, the following recommendations have been called for through the submissions:

Recommendation 19

Industry and jobs

The Australian Government should:

a) Redirect national budget priorities from industries that provoke, enable and/or sustain war towards investment in socially and environmentally just and sustainable jobs and production.

b) Embrace alternative ways of creating jobs and increasing national economic independence, including through member-owned cooperatives and using money held in superannuation funds.

c) Disengage from foreign policy alliances that incline Australia into conflicts that justify military production.

Ipswich to Brisbane march 1964
Grahame Garner collection, Fryer Library

Environment and Climate Change

Ian Lowe AO

Introduction

More than sixty submissions commented on the costs of warfare in terms of the Environment and Climate Change. Issues covered included the measurable direct costs of military action, fuel use by the military in the context of climate change, nuclear issues, biosecurity risks and 'opportunity costs'. 'Opportunity costs' refers to desirable activities that are precluded by the prioritisation of military spending.

Submissions detailed the direct costs of Australia's involvement in wars in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq. These include deforestation, pollution of air and water, radiation from the use of depleted uranium, loss of productive land and interference in bird migratory patterns.

Local activity in this country also caused concern. There are, for example, biosecurity risks in the involvement of the Australian military in international joint exercises such as Talisman Sabre (held in the Shoalwater Bay area of Central Queensland) and the refusal of the US military to subject its vessels to the necessary biosecurity scrutiny.

Many submissions pointed out that the prodigious expenditure of funds on the military makes it impossible to address real threats such as climate change. The military uses massive amounts of fossil fuels, with the US military alone emitting greenhouse gases comparable to those from a middle-sized country like Denmark. As Tamara Lorincz, from the International Peace Bureau (IPB), noted in September 2014, 'The US Department of Defense [sic] is the largest industrial consumer of fossil fuels in the world'.[81] The nuclear issue was another aspect that was repeatedly raised. Putting nuclear reactors in warships risks radioactive pollution on a scale comparable with major accidents like Chernobyl or Fukushima, while the existence of some 13,000 nuclear weapons across the globe poses an existential threat to civilisation. As the submission from the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) (Sub no. 427, p. 1) pointed out, the current conflict in Ukraine has seen "the weaponization of nuclear facilities and the threat of an uncontrolled radiation release", even if the Russian army does not use its nuclear weapons.

Photo: Fernando M. Goncalves

1. The General Issue

In 2014, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon observed that, from 'the contamination of land' to the 'plunder of natural resources', the environment 'has long been a silent casualty of war and armed conflict'.[82] James Porter, a professor of ecology, concluded: 'War is more destructive to the environment than any other normal activity that we associate with humankind'.[83] Professor Catherine Lutz, cited by Karl Mathiesen, pointed out that war changes our parameters. In the face of a threat to the nation, real or perceived, 'acts that would normally be abhorrent become acceptable, even routine'.[84]

Tom Marwick (Sub No.322, p.2) pointed out that:

> *All wars cost environmentally, bombs not only kill people but also every living animal within the blast region leaving bomb craters disfiguring the landscape, that is the bombs that exploded. War zones are left with unexploded ordinances, particularly from cluster munitions and landmines making the war zones dangerous environments for decades to come.*

Another submission from Wilfred Flint (Sub No. 366, p.1) made a similar observation:

> *Humans are not the only victims of war. Unwitting casualties are flora and fauna in battle grounds - indeed, entire ecosystems are destroyed by war. Environmental destruction seems to be seldom taken into account by aggressors when the validity of war is questioned, nor when post-war costs are assessed.*

In the words of the ACF (Sub No. 427, p1), 'war brings harm and destruction…damaging national and global ecosystems' with impacts on all species.

Obvious examples of the environmental cost of conflict are evident from US-led wars in which Australia has participated. The Vintage Reds of the Canberra Region highlighted the use of defoliation during the US War in Vietnam (Sub No. 351, p.4). This was a key strategy of US forces, which meant the destruction of forests to prevent their use as supply channels for Vietnamese troops. The effects of Agent Orange will continue for generations. As a specific example, Mihai Andrei discusses how mangrove forests in the Mekong delta have not yet recovered fifty years after the end of the American War.[85]

In the first Gulf War in 1991, the US bombed Iraq with 340 tonnes of missiles containing depleted uranium.[86] Mac Skelton of Johns Hopkins University observed that the resulting radiation poisoned the soil and water of Iraq. The war also destroyed infrastructure, causing sewage to flow into streets and rivers, while refineries and pipelines leaked oil.[87] Over 500 oil wells were set on fire by the retreating Iraqi army.[88] Illegal logging by US-backed warlords and wood harvesting by refugees has been estimated to have destroyed one-third of all forest area in Afghanistan between 1990 and 2007, resulting in drought, desertification and species loss.[89] The war has also had a devastating impact on the number of migratory birds that rest during their journeys in Afghanistan. As an extreme example, the number of migratory birds passing through that country is now about 15 per cent of the typical figure thirty years ago.[90]

Several submissions pointed out that military training also has significant environmental impacts. The Shoalwater Bay training area in central Queensland is adjacent to the Byfield National Park, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the RAMSAR (an international Convention on Wetlands) listed Shoalwater and Corio Bay wetlands. The threatened Shoalwater Bay environment includes over 300 kilometres of coastline, mangrove fish breeding habitats, wetlands, sea grass meadows and subtropical rainforest.

Submissions identified a range of problems associated with the joint military exercises being conducted in this region. Rita Camilleri (Sub no. 177, p. 6) and the ACF (Sub no. 427, p. 1) both point out that the military exercises don't just do environmental damage but also threaten the cultural heritage of the local Indigenous Peoples. These exercises are therefore in breach of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which states explicitly that military activity should not take place on the lands or territories of Indigenous Peoples without their free and informed consent.

These military activities also pose biosecurity risks arising from soil contamination, release of ballast water from visiting vessels and the possible introduction of pest species on military vehicles and equipment. The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) was established in 1908 and exercises the function of border quarantine. In 2018, the Inspector-General of Biosecurity published the report *Military Biosecurity Risk Management in Australia*. This report refers to some of the general threats to biosecurity posed by the presence of foreign armed forces in Australian waters and on Australian soil as follows:

> *[…] military aircraft, vessels, vehicles, equipment and personnel kits provide pathways into Australia for exotic pests and diseases and present special biosecurity risks. Military equipment and conveyances operate in many different international environments and frequently land or arrive in Australia at non-first points of entry. Equipment and conveyances can be specialised and complex, making them difficult to inspect.*[91]

Submissions identified one obvious loophole in the biosecurity arrangements. This is the fact that the US refuses to allow Australian inspection of its vessels, military equipment and personnel. Australia is in the invidious position of having to train US personnel to do the job for us, and to trust that they will do it to the standards of exactness and thoroughness required to protect our biosecurity.

Finally, the Wage Peace submission (Sub no. 253 p 2) pointed out the role of the 'Four Primes' – the four largest weapons-producing US corporations. These four, Boeing Defence, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon and Northrop Grumman, have a growing presence in Australia which arguably results in the diversion of resources in this country to US military industry projects. Wage Peace argues (Sub no. 253, p. 2) that the weapons corporations in question 'use their relational and lobbying power to dampen diplomatic efforts with other States: defunding, undermining diplomatic efforts by militarising relationships and militarising conflicts'.

Globally, the military undoubtedly play a significant role in enabling resource projects that are opposed by local people. The best documented case is Freeport, where the Indonesian military provides support to keep open a mine against the wishes of the Amungme and Kamoro landowners. There are other examples such as Exxon Mobil in Aceh, Shell in Nigeria and Chevron in Myanmar, all supported by the military to continue resource extraction projects with significant social and environmental costs.

2. The Military and Climate Change

The military are very heavy users of fossil fuels and consequently produce huge amounts of greenhouse gases as noted by Kathryn Kelly (Sub No. 327, p.2). In a second submission (Sub No.201 p.2-3), Ms Kelly pointed out that governments do not hold the military to account for their fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions in the same way that industries are regulated and required to report. She further observed (Sub No.201, p.1) that: 'The US Department of Defense [sic] is the largest industrial consumer of fossil fuels in the world'. It uses about 21 billion litres of petroleum fuels a year and produces emissions comparable, as already noted, to those of a middle-sized country like Denmark. These are the figures that apply *before* the US military even goes to war, when fuel use increases. During the Iraq war, US forces were consuming 218 million litres of oil a month,[92] the majority of which was used merely to transport fuel from bases to the vehicles that were actually involved in fighting.

…how can the human race continue to share this planet, which now faces two major threats, the climate emergency and threat of modern weaponry, [that risk] completely annihilating all life on earth?

Angela Burrows,
Submission Number 334

3. Nuclear Weapons

While the environmental impacts of conventional warfare are disastrous, they pale in comparison to the possible consequences of nuclear war. While there has been some success in reducing the world stockpile of nuclear weapons from the 1986 high point, when an estimated 70,000 warheads were in readiness, the latest estimate by the Federation of American Scientists is that there are still around 12,700 nuclear warheads in the world's arsenals. About 2000 of these are on 'high alert', ready to be launched at a moment's notice.[94]

The US and Russia each have about 6000 nuclear warheads, China about 350, France and the UK about 200 each, India and Pakistan each about 160, Israel 80-90, while North Korea is believed to have enough fissile material for about 40 bombs. The nuclear weapons now deployed have typically 100 to 1000 times the destructive capacity of the weapons that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A single one of these weapons could wipe out an entire large city. It has been calculated that even a restrained, localised nuclear war involving the use of only thirty to forty weapons could put so much debris into the atmosphere that the world would be plunged into a 'nuclear winter' with, for example, more than 10 degrees reduction in temperatures and 90 per cent reduction in plant growth. This would probably lead to the end of civilisation.

The UN's Non-Proliferation Treaty has not succeeded. This is largely because, rather than disarming as they undertook to do, the five nations that had nuclear capability in 1970 have continued to develop and deploy new nuclear weapons. While a new treaty to outlaw nuclear weapons (The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, TPNW) had at the time of writing been signed by 68 states parties, none of the nations with nuclear weapons were among these. Australia also hasn't signed, presumably because our governments feel they are protected by the US 'nuclear umbrella'. One submission (ICAN, Sub No 263, p.2) pointed out that the nuclear umbrella represents a threat to use nuclear weapons in Australia's defence policy – a threat which is illegal in International Law.

Around the time that the final report submissions were lodged, the Australian government announced its intention to try to obtain US or UK nuclear submarines. Bob Boughton (Sub no. 388, p1) and the ACF (Sub no. 427 pp 4-5) both pointed out that this is a very dangerous move. Although it should not be necessary to say so, putting nuclear reactors in vessels which will be legitimate targets in any serious conflict invites catastrophic radioactive pollution of the oceans. The very idea is foolhardy. Conventional warfare is very destructive of the natural environment. The potential of nuclear war is very many times worse. The obvious conclusion is that we must develop more civilised ways of resolving disputes.

4. Priorities

Finally, we need to be cognisant of the fact that spending prodigious sums of money on the military means that these funds are not available for more important priorities. Several submissions argued that slowing climate change and protecting our unique biodiversity should be higher priorities than acquiring military hardware. Some cited Arundhati Roy (as highlighted in the Unions and Workers Rights' section) who in her Sydney Peace Prize Lecture in 2004 said: 'Weapons were manufactured in order to fight wars. Now wars are manufactured in order to sell weapons'.[95]

Many writers felt the impending climate catastrophe was the greatest challenge facing future generations. This catastrophe will undoubtedly impinge with even more dire results on countries with limited resources. Yet, there appears to be a vast difference between Australian military spending and the funds allocated for aid to poorer countries.

Australia now spends nearly ten times as much on the military as we do on supporting countries in need through overseas aid.

The Coalition parties and Labor both agreed that defence spending should increase to two per cent of GDP by 2020–21. This has been achieved with funding reaching 2.09 per cent of GDP in 2021[96], and 2.10 per cent in 2022[97]. In the 2020-21 budget, Defence received $44.62 billion, a 4.4 per cent increase on the previous financial year. For the 2021-22 budget Australia's overseas aid was cut by 4.9 per cent bringing it to $4.34 billion.

As a proportion of Gross National Income (GNI) our overseas aid allocation has dropped to 0.22 per cent. The United Nations target, that Australia has agreed to at various international fora, is that countries spend 0.7 per cent of their GNI on Official Development Assistance. A number of European countries, including Sweden, Denmark and Norway allocate this percentage of GNI or more to overseas aid.

The disparity between Australia's budget for the military compared with overseas aid is likely to widen in coming years. The 2016 Defence White Paper sets out alarming military growth through to 2030. Meanwhile there is no indication that the Coalition or Labor plan to increase the aid budget.

In this context, we might conclude with the words of former US Army General and President Dwight D. Eisenhower, when addressing the American Society of Newspaper Editors in April 1953:

> *Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.*[98]

It is imperative that Australians commit to preserving the environment in a way that will ensure food security and a level of prosperity for all. Directing funds away from military spending to projects designed for a peaceful, sustainable society must become a priority.

Photo: Fernando M. Goncalves

Environment and Climate Change

Recommendations

Specifically, the following recommendations have been called for through the submissions:

Recommendation 20

Nuclear energy

The Australian Government should legislate the use of only warships that use an energy source other than nuclear.

Recommendation 21

Joint military exercises

The Australian Government should discontinue joint military exercises with US forces, such as Talisman Sabre, as they are practising for US wars of aggression which are against Australia's best interests and as the biosecurity risks of military vessels that refuse to be scrutinised are unacceptable.

Recommendation 22

Nuclear weapons

The Australian government should join the nations that have already adopted the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and work actively for wider adoption of the Treaty.

Recommendation 23

Environment

The Australian Government should:

a) Work to ensure that the broader societal goal of net zero greenhouse gas emissions necessarily includes a commitment by the military to operate without release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

b) Formally acknowledge the appalling environmental damage caused by US-led wars in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq, and strengthen its determination that our nation will never again be involved in such ill-considered and deeply destructive military operations.

Recommendation 24

Military expenditure

The Australian Government should reassess and reduce the current commitment to spend 2 per cent of GNP on Defence military expenditure levels in order to:

a) Increase the expenditure on climate change responses, and

b) Increase the budget allocation on foreign aid to meet the UN target of 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI).

Taken at School Strike for Climate in Canberra 2019. Photo : IPANPhoto:

Social and Community

Photo: Spirit of Eureka

The Very Reverend Peter Catt

Introduction

The submissions relating to social and community matters reveal that the general public, a significant number of NGOs and other sectors of civil society are deeply concerned about the effects of the Australia-US alliance on the social fabric of Australia. The September 2021 announcement of the AUKUS partnership has exacerbated this concern.

Far from being just a generalised feeling, submissions pointed to specific ways in which the alliance is warping and undermining Australian society, our self-understanding as a nation, and our concept of where we fit in the world.

The submission by Mia Donovan (Sub no. 190, p. 18), which presented a report entitled 'Young People's Attitudes Towards the Australian–United States Alliance', suggests that these concerns are also widely held by 18-25-year-olds in Australia (as mentioned in the Foreign Policy section above). Specifically, Donovan found that 'respondents within the 18–25 age group share a majority belief that Australia having an alliance with the U.S. heightens possibilities for Australia to be involved in conflict and war…despite attitudes towards the overall benefit Australia receives from ANZUS' (Sub no. 190, p. 18). Donovan's data also revealed that most respondents recognise they have 'limited knowledge of the Australia–U.S. alliance' – an issue that has been 'highlighted by academics and policymakers over many years' (Sub no. 190, p. 18). Donovan's study gives extra import to, and underlines the significance of, the specifics covered by submissions to this Inquiry.

1. The Effect of Being Constantly at War on Australia's National Self-understanding and Understanding of the 'Outside' World

Marcus Reubenstein (Sub no. 356, p. 1) noted:

> *For better, or worse, the interests of Australia and the United States are largely aligned. Given the alternatives, a close and workable relationship with the US is clearly in Australia's national interest.*

Reubenstein nevertheless argues (Sub no. 356, pp.1, 4-5, 23), as do many other submissions, that we need to filter our involvement with the US through the lens of our own national self-interest. He suggests that attention to national interest is the missing piece in Australia's involvement in its alliance with the US. Reubenstein goes on to observe that Australia's inability to consider its own national interest independent of US national strategic interest is symptomatic of a lack of maturity in Australia's self-understanding. Rubinstein's submission (Sub no. 356, p. 12) references the ANZAC Day 2021 address made by Michael Pezzullo, Department of Home Affairs Secretary:

> *In what was a message to mark the upcoming 70th Anniversary of the US-Australian military alliance, [Pezzullo] made just two references to military leaders, both of them American – General Douglas Macarthur and Dwight D. Eisenhower … In his communique … there was not a single mention of any Australian military leader. Nor was there any reference to the Australians who've died on foreign soil in US-led wars*

Several submissions suggested that this lack of maturity is a legacy of colonisation, which in turn has led us to see ourselves as isolated in a threatening world.

The submission by Angela Burrows (Sub no. 334, p. 1) reflects the thoughts expressed in many submissions:

> *Australia's colonial past has left this nation feeling dependent and seeking the support of more powerful 'Friends'. Rather than 'growing up' to be an independent nation, the reverse is happening. Our alliance with America has led to [Australia accepting] stationing of US Marines in Darwin and increasing [US] access to other military facilities as well as the key surveillance/communication role played by Pine Gap in all US conflicts and wars. The US alliance has led Australia to fight in offensive, destructive overseas wars in countries and situations which did not threaten Australia. It is time to ask whether war and domination can ever lead to a peaceful world.*

Emeritus Professor Joseph Camilleri (Sub no. 168, p. 3) provides a deep and detailed analysis of the cultural influence of the US on Australia, and the issues that we have failed to address in our own culture because of our alliance with the US. For example, Camilleri agues:

> *One of the most important yet often overlooked drivers of our military alignments has been a generous dose of racism or at least cultural xenophobia – a deep-seated sentiment that our friends are necessarily located in the West and our enemies in the East. Governments have repeatedly justified this option by proclaiming their commitment to the West's democratic values, honoured as much in the breach as in the observance. Scratch a little below the surface, and racial prejudice soon rears its ugly head.*
>
> *The White Australia policy which encapsulated this view of the world has been largely, though not entirely, set aside when it comes to our immigration policies, but it remains alive and well in our foreign and security policies. As we shall see, this glaring failure to reconcile our history and geography is no longer sustainable.*

In a very extensive submission, Judy Hemming and Michael McKinley (Sub no. 209, p. 3) further illustrate the influence of the US on Australia by referencing both the work of one of Australia's most experienced diplomats, Alan Renouf – who labelled Australia 'The Frightened Country'[99] – and a recent publication by a player in Australian defence and geopolitics for over 50 years, Alan Gyngell, entitled *Fear of Abandonment*.[100] Each speaks of Australia's current relationship with the US as suffering from Dependent Personality Disorder.

Judy Hemming and Michael McKinley (Sub no. 209, p. 18) unmask other aspects of our self-understanding by considering in detail how the cult of sacrifice has enabled the development of a militaristic

culture that is enlivened by an alliance with the US. Any criticism of that culture is attacked as besmirching the dead. As a result, many feel that criticism of the Alliance is taboo. As Hemming and McKinley (Sub no. 209, pp. 55-56) observe:

> *The past is therefore captured and becomes malleable raw material that can be bent to the service of political and economic power. In an age in which political and economic power have, through the imposition of neoliberalism upon the Western Education systems at all levels, already determined that the principal carriers of critical political, social, and historical scholarship are increasingly irrelevant, the past is easily changed to whatever narrative suits the prevailing requirements. Left unexamined, inter alia, and to the advantage of all religious belief, is that interrogation of what James Baldwin phrased as the 'habits of thought [that] reinforce and sustain the habits of power'.*

A number of submissions, including one from Vintage Reds of the Canberra Region, (Sub no. 351, p. 7) noted the role the media plays in warping our sense of perception:

Our mainstream media (a substantial portion owned by Murdoch, a US citizen) is often complicit in promoting American obsessions and peddling disinformation. The 'war on terror' and the invasion of Iraq (based on false evidence of weapons of mass destruction) and Afghanistan (where a limited action against al Qaeda would have sufficed) is an example where the media failed to report fairly and honestly.

A submission by Justin Tutty notes (Sub no. 265, p. 3):

> *On the occasion of President Obama coming to [Darwin] to formally announce the initial marine deployment, I was disallowed from placing a small simple classified ad announcing a location to protest the visit. The NT News told me the ad (simple time, place, reason) was 'disrespectful' and so would not run. I realise this is a small complaint, but turns out [rejecting the request for the classified ad] signalled a very 'respectful' (subservient) approach by local media to the growing build up.*

Distorted perceptions created by the media also lay the ground for unquestioned excess military spending. Australia has endured a multitude of lost opportunities resulting from the enormous amounts of money spent on unnecessary militarisation to serve the needs of the US. Many submissions agree with the argument explained so powerfully by Henry Reynolds in his book, *Unnecessary Wars*, regarding Australia's unnecessary involvement in US-led wars.[101]

The submission by Living Incomes For Everyone (LIFE) (Sub no. 364, pp. 1-2) links this misallocation of money to Australia's increasingly frayed social fabric. This group advocates for funding currently devoted to military spending to be reallocated to the provision of a living wage for all so that Australia's social fabric can be repaired, restored and enhanced.

As the IPAN People's Inquiry deadline for submissions drew near, the Australian government announced the AUKUS agreement. Several submission writers addressed this development. Dale Hess and Adrian Glamorgan, for example, noted (Sub no. 420, p. 1):

> *The AUKUS agreement committing Australia to buy nuclear submarines and to align its defence with the nuclear powers, the United States and the United Kingdom, was announced without documentation, and without consultation or debate within civil society or indeed Parliament. This critical decision, taken without consultation, serves to reinforce the need for a democratic framework for the exercise of War Powers.*

Maya Pilbrow (Sub no. 360, p. 1) captured the thoughts of many when she observed: 'I care deeply about Australia's involvement in U.S.-led wars. I think Australia's immigration system is strongly tied to our foreign policy, all of which is overtly hawkish and ultimately detrimental to building a more peaceful society.

Artwork: Evie, 12, Canberra

2. Opportunities Lost

Opportunities lost due to the financial cost of Australia's involvement in unnecessary wars and associated militaristic build-up include the provision of more public housing, better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and better education, and mental and general health care for all.

The most obvious effect of this misallocation of resources is the diminished capacity of the Federal Government to deliver services. Submission writers repeatedly noted that the money spent on unnecessary wars could be used to build social capital. The submission from Fair Go For Pensioners (FGFP) Coalition Victoria Incorporated (Sub no. 318, p. 1) was typical of this position. The group observed as follows:

> *Over the next ten years the Australian government will spend $570 billion ($57 billion annually) of public funds on 'defence', mainly in supporting US global wars and weapons corporations. If the 'defence budget' was pared back to eliminate the costly military equipment and weaponry designed to wage wars of aggression well beyond Australian shores, Australia could still have a formidable defence force, but also be in better position to look after the health and wellbeing of the people and provide a secure and decent standard of living for all.*

These sentiments were echoed in countless individual submissions, in addition to more extensive documents from Derek Burke and Michael Williss, on behalf of the Australian Education Union, South Australia (AEU-SA) and The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF).

A submission by the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) Queensland Division (Sub no. 416, p. 9), drew attention to the fact that the newly announced AUKUS agreement will serve only to exacerbate the pressures outlined above.

3. Ongoing Social Impact

The ongoing social impact of Australia's involvement in war includes the trauma experienced by veterans, their families and communities. A significant number of submissions pointed to the personal cost borne by several service personnel and those close to them. Former ADF members shared stories of living with PTSD and the debilitating effect this had on their lives.

Several submissions from family members of people who served in the military spoke of the personal cost of living with someone with PTSD or of having someone die by suicide as a result of the effects of their military service. Yet others referred to the hidden pandemic of health effects caused by chemicals used in the war effort or encountered during actual battle.

Iraq War veteran, Sarah Watson (Sub no. 175, p. 1), wrote:

> *As a former member of the Australian Army, who now suffers significant injuries from Operational Service in Iraq, I want to see changes made to the decision-making processes for committing young Australian men and women to wars and conflicts that are not only not our battles to fight, but not in Australia's best interests.*
>
> *Within a fortnight of being in Iraq on what would be a seven-month tour of duty from November 2006 to June 2007 in a southern province of Iraq …, I was asking myself the question 'What are we doing here?'.*
>
> *The mission was vague; we were to provide 'overwatch' and a small mentoring role for the Iraqi Army. No weapons of mass destruction had been yet found in Iraq, however, Saddam Hussein was hanged 6 weeks after the arrival of our Battlegroup, causing a spike in insurgent activity (increasing rocket attacks against the base we were on).*
>
> *It became clear we were there for political reasons (alliance with the US) as opposed to any real interest in Australia's national security. It was also clear that the local population did not want troops there.*
>
> *We did more harm than good for the people of Iraq and now their country is still suffering the consequences.*
>
> *I suffer from PTSD and moral injury from my service in Iraq. My marriage has broken down as a result. My children now also suffer due to the trauma sustained in my military service.*
>
> *From the group that I deployed with to Iraq, I know of one Army Officer who took his life, leaving behind a young daughter, and multiple others who now suffer PTSD as a result of the Iraq deployment.*
>
> *There must be greater transparency and debate in the future commitment of Australian men and women to wars and conflicts that Australia has no real reason to be involved in. If we don't, the price will be a continued increase of veteran suicide, broken families and lives ruined and more often than not, a worsening security environment in those countries we deploy to.*

Artwork by Justin Tutty

Several submissions highlighted the ways in which the ignoble end to our involvement in the Afghan war, and the questionable reasons for Australia being there in the first place, will see a repeat of the cycle that has already played out for veterans from Vietnam and Iraq. Many pointed out that the after-effects of serving were exacerbated by the fact that, while finances flow freely into the front end of the military enterprise, support for veterans and their families is less than adequate.

Various writers joined Sarah Watson, cited above, in calling for greater scrutiny and transparency when despatching Australian troops to a war-zone. An anonymous submission (Sub no. 254, p. 1), for example, pointed out the following:

> *In the case of war in Afghanistan, our longest engagement of 20 years, the purpose has never been clearly articulated and the Australian people have been largely kept in the dark as to why we were there and what the exit strategy would look like. It has cost the lives of 21 Australian combat personnel, and on return home over 500 veterans suicides from psychological trauma, exacerbated by bureaucratic delay in getting urgently needed rehabilitation to*

rebuild their lives. Exposure of alleged war crimes committed by our special forces has resulted in the subsequent Brereton Report. The US and NATO allies recently withdrew their military personnel from Afghanistan, and Australia followed shortly after without [then Minister for Foreign Affairs] Marise Payne offering any reasons as to the timing. With no rationale offered for our longest war, it is what [historian] Henry Reynolds would describe as another unnecessary war.

Previous experience ought to have taught this nation that offering an apology for previous deeds develops an awareness of the past that informs the future. The apology to the Stolen Generations is a case in point. There is an urgent need for an apology to also be offered to the surviving personnel sent to the Iraq and Afghan conflicts and their families, and to the families of those both killed in those conflicts and who have died by suicide since for putting their lives, physical and mental health at risk for wars joined to support Australia's alliance with the US.

Photo: Fernando M. Goncalves

4. The Effect of the Alliance on Australia's Future Prosperity

The attitude adopted by the US is damaging Australia's place in regional and world affairs. In recent years, the effect of the Alliance on Australia's future prosperity has been exemplified by our provocative attitude to China. This had an economic impact and has also affected the country's standing as a nation in the global community. The Mike Pezzullo speech mentioned above was named in a number of submissions as being illustrative of the way in which channelling US attitudes is damaging Australia. Former Prime Minister Paul Keating tried to restore some balance to this in his November 2021 speech to the National Press Club.[102]

While other sections of this report explore in more detail how this will affect Australia's standing in the world, many submissions noted that this kind of sabre-rattling is having a negative effect, without any demonstrable benefit, on various sections of our economy.

5. Loss of Cultural Interaction with Our Region

Several submissions highlighted the way in which the US alliance draws Australia away from interacting more meaningfully with our near neighbours, and how our focus on the US and US priorities prevents us from being enriched by the cultures of our own region.

Concern was expressed that Australia tends to deal with our near neighbours in an imperialistic and condescending way. It was noted that this is reflected in an absence of concern in the Australian media for the plight of our climate-change affected neighbours in the Pacific. Lack of Australian engagement and concern was seen as having a detrimental effect, not only on our neighbours, but also on our self-understanding as a nation.

Artwork by Bo, Brisbane.

6. Dislocation of Local Communities by the Military Presence

Concern regarding the dislocation of local communities by the presence of the military was evident in submissions relating to Talisman Sabre in Yeppoon (Central Queensland), the largest bilateral combined training activity between the ADF and the US military, and also in submissions relating to the ever-growing presence of US military personnel in Darwin.

A submission from Friends of the Earth Australia (Sub no. 341, p. 9) notes:

> *Talisman Sabre has spread its reach to both military and non-military sites in Queensland, and impacts on both military and civilian infrastructure and non-military sites throughout Australia, with little, if any, scrutiny, assessment or reporting. We have unanswered questions about what activities have taken place, what equipment was used, what governance was applied and how impacts were or could be assessed.*

A number of submissions drew attention to how the presence of US personnel on Australian soil can on occasions present a danger to children and women. Some submissions provided examples of the inadequate handling of allegations of rape against US personnel and the erosion of child protection protocols.

A submission from Justin Tutty (Sub no. 265, pp. 1, 3) notes:

> *Early deployments [of US marines] were largely diplomatic, including the significant feature of marines in schools (running sporting activities, etc). Strict local regulation on working with children was wilfully bypassed… A member of BaseWatch contacted Ken Davies, the CE of Dept of Education, in 2013. He in turn referred concerns to the Solicitor General. Much later a response came with the dubious assurance that the visits were made legal by a declaration from the Department. I think this illustrates how decisions tangential to the deployments can become infected by an inappropriate tendency away from transparency, accountability and due process.*

Basewatch's own submission (Sub no. 272, p. 2) included details backed up by documentation demonstrating how allegations of sexual assault against US marines cause significant concerns, including about how such allegations are addressed. This submission refers to:

> *… the book Darwin, by Tess Lea, which concludes with a dramatic telling of the gang rape of a couple of local teenagers in the 90s. This horrible crime is particularly significant because it highlights a flaw in the Status of Forces Agreement (Aus/USA SOFA) that allowed the offenders to evade accountability to Australian justice processes.*

The same submission (Basewatch, Sub no. 272, p. 2) also notes that:

> *A clear community-based recommendation, sustained over the past 10 years, offers that the SOFA is outdated and should be formally reviewed in the very new context of new USA bases in Darwin, to close any loopholes and give all stakeholders greater certainty re shared expectations.*

7. The Effects of the Increasing Militarisation of Australia's Industrial Base

A number of submissions pointed to how Australia's Federal Government seems determined to follow the US example and develop something of a military-industrial complex. These submissions made reference to the 2021 Land Forces Expo held in Brisbane and to the Federal Government's desire to see Australia in the top 10 weapon-exporting countries. Writers implored Australia to learn the evident lessons from the over-reliance of the US economy on the military-industrial complex and the way in which this over-reliance has destabilised rather than added to world peace.

The Normalisation of Conflict and Violence as Ways of Negotiating in Society

Several submissions noted the connection between patriarchy, our political leaders' fascination with militarism, and the scourge of domestic abuse. These submissions invite us to scrutinise the interconnections between these phenomena rather than viewing each in isolation. Several writers regarded the revelation that Parliament House is unsafe for female workers as a symptom of the complex of associations at work in this respect.

These submissions contend that true security can be established only through the development of relationships that value and promote gender mutuality. A submission by Annette Brownlie (Sub no. 102, p. 2) noted the following:

The horrific reality of domestic violence (DV) leading to statistics of one woman per week on average [dying in Australia] is unacceptable. This needs to be understood within the militaristic culture that has developed as well as recognising the reality of DV and mental health issues occurring in the families of members of the ADF, many of whom have great difficulty with PTSD following time served in war zones as well as the culture of the ADF while training. This culture has been the subject of the recent Brereton report into war crimes committed by service men in the SAS. I have personal knowledge of the treatment of those who, while protesting at Swan Island training base for SAS troops, experienced degrading violent acts committed by those on the base who responded to them entering the base.

Photo: Green Left Weekly

8. Militarisation and Schools

In an eye-opening and troubling submission, Derek Burke and Michael Williss on behalf of the AEU-SA (Sub no. 323, p. 1) pointed to the way that weapons manufacturers are normalising militarisation through involvement in schools and other activities for children. Examples quoted in the submission include: sponsorship by the British multinational arms, security and aerospace company, BAE, of The Smith Family's STEM education program for disadvantaged children. Commendably, The Smith Family discontinued this relationship when given background to BAE's activities by peace activists such as WagePeace.[103] *Reference was also made to* Lockheed Martin sponsorship of The Gallipoli Scholarship Fund (GSF), Northrop Grumman sponsorship of Australian school students and teachers to attend Space Camp®, and Raytheon's interactive travelling exhibition, Maths Alive!

Derek Burke and Michael Williss on behalf of the AEU-SA, refer to Raytheon's involvement (Sub no. 323, p. 2) noting:

> *David Fawcett, the then Assistant Minister for Defence, gave his imprimatur and stated: 'I welcome the ongoing commitment by Raytheon to engage young Australians by helping them visualise what a career in science or engineering might look like'. No reference of course to the fact that the giant US missile-making Raytheon supplies the Saudi–UAE coalition with missiles that targeted and killed civilians and children.*

Regarding its recent report, *Militarisation in Australia: Normalisation and Mythology*,[105] the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Australian Section) Inc. (WILPF) submission (WILPF, Sub no. 158, p. 3) makes a similar point:

> *The report analyses the increasing trend towards militarisation in Australia from 2010–2020, the processes of normalisation of military involvement within Australian culture, society, the economy, and government policy. For WILPF, that this trend is being accepted as normal by the Australian public is a growing concern. Normalising militarisation is not contributing to a more peaceful and secure Australia, and we need to find more equitable and just ways to strengthen true human security and to build resilience and capabilities in all our diverse communities across Australia.*

Familiarity breeds consent

Derek Burke and Michael Williss on behalf of the AEU-SA (Sub no. 323, p. 4), conclude the section of that document dealing with weapon's manufacturers and sponsorship of School activities as follows:

> *As retired members of a caring profession, we are dismayed that predominately foreign weapons manufacturers have easy access to our students and have inordinate influence to involve them in ventures of technological destruction. We demand that educational authorities cease the involvement of arms profiteers in Australian schools.*

As a society, we must question the incursion of organisations associated with the military into our schools and advocate instead for a strong curriculum based on peaceful problem solving through diplomacy.

Social and Community

Recommendations

Specifically, the following recommendations have been called for through the submissions:

Recommendation 25

Media

The Australian Government should conduct an Inquiry into the role the media plays in promoting the Australia–US alliance and Australia's strategic relationship with the US.

Recommendation 26

Living wage

The Australian Government should investigate the introduction of a Living Wage as a means for building social cohesion across Australia.

Recommendation 27

War powers

The Australian Government should introduce a plan to work towards establishing a democratic framework for the exercise of War Powers.

Recommendation 28

Defence expenditure

The Australian Government should recast the defence budget to limit expenditure to only that which is required to effectively defend Australia.

Recommendation 29

Veteran support services

The Australian Government should increase funding for veterans' support services.

Recommendation 30

Apology to veterans and families

The Australian Government should issue a formal apology to the military personnel sent to fight on Australia's behalf in Iraq and Afghanistan and to their families for putting their lives, physical and mental health at risk for wars joined to support Australia's alliance with the US

Artwork by Maggie

Recommendation 31

Child protection

The Australian Government should:

a) Introduce robust policies and procedures and safeguards to assess all requests from military representatives for visits to school and educational institutions with young people under the age of 18.

b) Overhaul the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and its implementation to ensure

i) child protection is undertaken responsibly, and

ii) that all alleged sexual offenders are dealt with under Australian law.

c) Prohibit military sponsorship of activities relating to, and participated in, by people under the age of 18 years.

Recommendation 32

Defence industry impact

The Australian Government should establish a Parliamentary Inquiry into the societal impacts of the Australian defence industry.

Economic

Dr Chad Satterlee

Introduction

Seventy inquiry submissions raised Economic issues bearing on Australia's national defence and security. These submissions ranged from short statements to thoroughly researched papers.

The profiles of those who submitted individually on economic matters include a concerned citizen, a former army officer, a professor, a high school student, a former state premier, and a former senator. A variety of not-for-profit organisations were also represented. Submissions came from groups or individuals in all states and territories.

Overall, submissions were highly critical of the Australia–US alliance (hereafter 'the alliance') and its asserted contribution to Australia's national defence and security.

Over a decade and a half ago, in May 2006, the House of Representatives Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade tabled a report on its own inquiry into the alliance. Of the 27 submissions accepted by the Committee at that time, one was from the US government, seven were from Australian governments or their departments, eight were from academics, four were from defence or strategic policy think tanks, four were from two peace promotion organisations, with one each from the Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL), the Australia Defence Association (ADA), and the United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA).

The 2006 Joint Standing Committee report states: 'Evidence to the inquiry was overwhelming in its support for the value and relevance of the alliance'. Yet it is questionable whether the findings of any such inquiry could truly claim to be representative of 'most Australians'. In fact, there is currently no comprehensive picture of what most Australians think about defence issues. The snapshots of views we have, furthermore, are sometimes difficult to reconcile. For instance, a 2021 Lowy Institute poll found that 57% of respondents would prefer to stay neutral in the event of military conflict between the US and China.[106] Yet an Essential poll two months later found that 57% of respondents support the AUKUS defence agreement.[107]

On the other hand, the IPAN People's Inquiry snapshots presented here clearly come at a most timely geopolitical and global economic moment, as already underscored in previous sections of this report. In comparison to the 2006 Commonwealth inquiry, furthermore, this project is representative of a more diverse range of civil society organisations and citizens. Indeed, the IPAN People's Inquiry process stands alone in being open to the ideas of ordinary citizens and taking their points of view seriously.

Why, in fact, should we care about what ordinary citizens think about defence issues?

Many economists will argue that decision making in areas such as the choice of military equipment should be rationally guided through a rigorous weighing of projected benefits and costs. Broadly speaking, the government would, in an ideal case, act to promote the welfare of society as a whole by implementing policies whose total net benefits exceed those of relevant alternatives.

No thoroughgoing process of benefit–cost analysis has ever been an institutional feature of Australia's Department of Defence. Nor did the May 2006 Commonwealth inquiry attempt anything approaching this in its assessment of the alliance itself. This is partly because it is extremely difficult to identify and measure benefits and costs over time in a defence context, while also dealing with economic and strategic uncertainty.

Perhaps more important in terms of the absence of any thoroughgoing defence benefits and cost analysis is the fact that numerous submissions to the IPAN'S People's Inquiry provide detailed evidence suggesting that the political process in Australia has been captured by disproportionately influential defence-sector special interests.

We might consider one prominent example, namely, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI). This is a defence think tank founded by, and tasked with giving non-partisan advice to, the government. Marcus Reubenstein (Sub no. 356,

p. 14) observes that ASPI regularly hosts events bringing together government defence officials and defence industry representatives. At one such event, sponsored by Thales, Northrop Grumman and Lockheed Martin, and which featured the then Defence Minister as a keynote speaker, participants were informed that they would be 'given the opportunity to have closed-door discussions with government departments and agencies' (ASPI 2018–19 Annual Report, cited in Reubenstein, Sub no. 356, p. 14).

Marcus Reubenstein cites Department of Finance records showing that, in 2020, ASPI collected nearly $7 million in commercial revenue and sponsorship and its sponsors included 12 weapons manufacturers that, together, have collected more than $51 billion in government contracts since 2001 (Sub no. 356, p. 14). ASPI is also partly funded by US government agencies.

While such relationships do not necessarily exercise undue influence on official public policy deliberations, Wage Peace (Sub no. 291, p. 2) contends that 'the size of the weapons corporations, which are now ensconced in Australian political life, means they are able to influence political decision-making in ways that are not democratic'. If these submission writers are correct, then such relationships may work to limit the policy options presented for consideration. As a result, the economist's preferred approach of benefit and cost analysis would seem to be practically dead on arrival.

The following is a summary of citizens' views on economic matters related to defence and security as expressed in submissions. These views are clearly motivated by the belief that defence issues can and mostly should be a matter of democratic, rather than technocratic, debate.

The findings are presented in four sections: willingness to pay and opportunity cost, trade, war, and economic sovereignty. The final section presents a brief overall summary.

Photo: Kathryn Kelly

Graphics by Wage Peace

1. Willingness to Pay and Opportunity Cost

If, for example, you are hiring a private bodyguard, you will be strongly motivated to pay a price that accurately reflects what you are willing to pay, given your protection needs and budget. This is because you are the sole individual benefiting from the protection provided.

National defence, however, does not work in this way. The defence of an individual citizen by the Australian Defence Force does not reduce the 'amount' of national defence available to other Australian citizens. Defence 'allocation', in other words, is theoretically distributed evenly across all citizens. This is the case whether or not a given citizen agrees with national defence policy.

There would be no disagreement over willingness to pay for national defence if its benefits strictly covered individuals who could shop around for an acceptable price for personal coverage. But there is no such market. So, the federal government provides national defence and must determine how much citizens are willing to pay.

We currently spend 2.1% of our national income annually, now in the order of $50 billion, on defence. Many submissions point out that this budget share has been adopted as a target by both major political parties.

It is possible that the current rate of spending is, in fact, the rate actually preferred by the majority of voters. It is equally possible however, as previously outlined, that there are political-economic forces working to keep this rate from being substantively contested.

Significantly, since the IPAN People's Inquiry is a national public inquiry explicitly urging the people of Australia to express their views on independence for Australia and on the Australia–US Alliance, it has provided all interested Australian citizens the opportunity, if they wish, to declare how much they are willing to pay for defence, including whether the current spending rate is too high or too low.

Some might question this approach on grounds of sample representativeness. IPAN does not possess the resources of a large polling organisation, let alone a government. On the other hand, there is a case to be made that the current bipartisan electoral offering is no less unrepresentative. It must also be stressed that nothing in the IPAN People's Inquiry process ruled out submissions expressing a preference for high rates of defence spending.

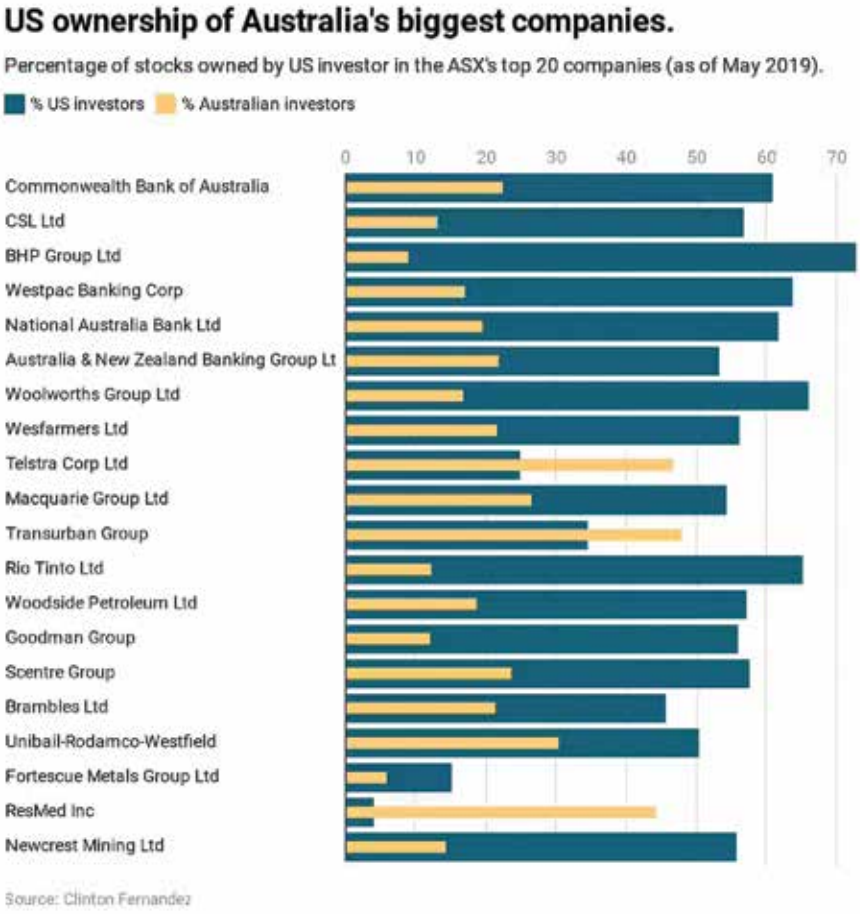
The clear trend from the vast bulk of relevant submissions is that many respondents wish to pay much less for national defence than what is currently allocated in the Federal Budget.

It is important to note here that our national economy does not generally employ its labour and productive resources in a full and efficient manner. That is to say, the Australian economy is currently producing some way below its potential. This, in theory, means that we could probably have both more submarines (as an example of defence spending) and more nurses (as an example of other social spending) without giving up either.

An overwhelming number of submissions make clear, however, that respondents do not want 'more submarines'. Writers express the view that a sizeable share of our defence spending would, on moral and/or economic grounds, be better spent elsewhere. Some specific suggestions from submissions are outlined below.

The Fair Go for Pensioners Coalition (FGPC) Victoria states (Sub No. 318, p.1): 'Rather than pouring billions of dollars into preparations for the next US military mission, the federal government should be protecting Australians at home'. This Coalition goes on to condemn inadequate government action on staffing numbers, training, and pay rates as recommended by the recent Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. Readers are reminded of the crisis in the for-profit residential aged care system during the ravages of COVID-19, and of the 'wide support in the community for a significant increase in resources allocated to aged care, both residential and home care, and associated medical services' (The Fair Go for Pensioners Coalition [FGPC] Victoria, Sub no, 318, p.1).

Numerous submissions condemn the Federal government's ten-year plan to make Australia a top ten defence equipment exporter. Terry Fitzpatrick (Sub no. 188, p. 1) suggests 'the hundreds of millions of dollars currently shoring up the arms industry should be subsidising a green revolution. We need to build new infrastructure and retrain arms and fossil fuel company workers, ensuring a smooth transition away from industries that take lives to ones that protect them'. Speaking on behalf of her seven grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren, 94-year-old Ruth Marcia Watson (Sub no. 94, p. 1) similarly declares: 'Let's stop selling arms to other countries'.



Reproduced with permission from Clinton Fernandez

The submission from War Resisters International Australia (Sub no. 97, p. 1) suggests that some of Australia's defence spending would be better invested on policies to strengthen Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs, on conflict and peace research, on peacekeeping and disaster relief personnel, and on support for under-funded agencies such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Jane Taylor (Sub no. 146, p. 1) is one of several writers who call for a redirection of defence spending towards the country's foreign aid budget.

Clem Campbell OAM (Sub no. 101, p. 1) suggests that spending on 'education, protection and restoration of our landscape and wildlife, and rebuilding our rural and regional communities' would stimulate economic growth and employment more effectively than defence spending. A submission by August Mikucki (Sub no. 262, p. 1) estimated that the 2021 defence budget could have paid for around 611,613 teachers.[108]

2. Trade

For three weeks in November 2021, Australian and US navy personnel conducted Exercise Dugong 2021 around the Port of Fremantle in Western Australia (image provided). This involved specialist teams attempting to identify and neutralise sea mines as part of a simulated hostile scenario.

We must ask: what hostile actor might conceivably have the motivation and means to damage Australian ports or sea lanes? Media rhetoric suggests that the obvious candidate is China, perhaps in the context of a naval war.

As numerous submissions point out, however, China is currently Australia's largest trading partner. Given this economic relationship, it makes little sense for China to intentionally damage the routes through which it trades. The recent AUKUS defence pact likewise begs the question: why do we need submarines to defend our trade *with* China *from* China?

Most trade-related submissions assert that we are better off coexisting with China. In the words of one anonymous Year 12 Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) student (Sub no. 415, p. 2): 'Economically, it is in Australia's interest to maintain a civil relationship with our key partner and eventually wean ourselves off economic reliance on any single state. This implies a balanced security relationship with the US, that limits our active involvement in the flexing of [that country's] military power'.

Many submissions express concern that Australia's beneficial trade relationship with China in terms of income and job generation is being needlessly, if not absurdly, harmed by deliberate provocations made by Australia. One writer (Dr William Briggs, Sub no. 58, p. 6) notes that for every 13 jobs in Australia, one is a by-product of our engagement with the Chinese market. Three representative examples of commentary from submissions of this nature are provided below.

The Vintage Reds of the Canberra Region (Sub no. 417, p. 3) are concerned that our economically valuable export activities 'are under threat from the US-inspired war of words against China, which may very quickly become a real war'. This group asks: 'What vital national interest of ours is threatened by China that warrants us jeopardising our economic stability?'.

Joseph Lenzo (Sub no. 86, p. 1) is concerned that 'integration with the US military would almost certainly draw Australia into any conflict the US has with China'. This, the writer suggests, would result in 'economic disaster for the Australian people'.

Niall McLaren (Sub no. 234, p. 3) warns that in the event of a US war against China, Australia's trade with China would quickly cease. As a result: 'some very large companies such as BHP and Rio Tinto, as well as many thousands, even tens of thousands, of smaller companies would promptly be bankrupted. This does not touch on the many hundreds of thousands of workers and their families and, let us not forget, farmers, whose finances would be devastated'.

Other submissions argue that an independent foreign policy for Australia would increase the likelihood of trade conflicts being resolved through diplomacy and mutual goodwill. Former South Australian state premier Lynn Arnold AO (Sub no. 350, p. 2) gives the example of Australia's leadership of the Cairns Group during the Uruguay Round of agricultural trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Mr Arnold (Sub no. 350, p. 2) argues that this experience provides 'a powerful precedent for how Australia might choose to play an international role … which is not beholden to any strategic obligations'.

A further trade-related theme addressed in multiple submissions is the lack of transparency regarding Australia's weapons export destinations. The SEARCH Foundation (Sub no. 183, p. 3), for example, is concerned that Australian-manufactured weapons are being used in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Sri Lanka and Yemen. In each site, Australian-manufactured hardware is contributing to 'widespread death, destruction and displacement of populations.' The SEARCH Foundation is also disturbed that the Defence Minister alone currently has the power to deny weapons export permits.

The Justice and Peace Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney (Sub no. 257, p. 5) suggests that a 'further move to foster a peaceful Australia' would be 'to ban political donations from weapons manufacturers as a deterrence to governments creating more business for weapons manufacturers who have donated to their party'. The Campaign for International Co-operation and Disarmament (CICD) Victoria (Sub no. 338, p. 2) also insists that there 'must be open and clear reasons for entering into any contracts to buy or sell equipment for warfare'.

Economic

Original Artwork by Eileen Whitehead

3. War

Many submissions raise the matter of imperialism. In the broad sense, this concerns a powerful country exerting military, political and/or economic dominance over another that is less powerful, in a manner that forces the latter into a position of subservience.

The overwhelming consensus across submissions is that the US remains the dominant global imperial power. Various groups interpreted US strategic policy in this light. The Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church (Sub no. 179, p. 5), for example, argues that US imperialists are encircling China because China is the dominant power in Asia and on track to become the largest economy in the world. This submission also observes that by providing economic aid to developing countries through the Belt and Road Initiative, China is encroaching on the traditional global economic dominance of US imperialism.

Many submissions compare US and Chinese global economic and foreign policy throughout modern history. While recognising China's bullying of smaller countries, writers nonetheless view the US as the more aggressive party and the party that is more likely to initiate a shooting war with the capacity to escalate to a nuclear conflict. Reflecting on this historical context, Olivetta Harris (Sub no. 339, p. 4) is one of many writers expressing alarm that our government may not hesitate to go to war 'whenever the US says "jump"'.

Dr Briggs (Sub no. 58, p. 8) argues that the substantial foreign investment made by US capital in Australia 'always hangs as a Damoclean sword over the Australian state'.

This economic dependence makes it difficult for political leaders of any persuasion to say no to participating in US-led wars. Briggs predicts that any attempt by an Australian administration to close the Pine Gap facility, or end the US troop presence in Darwin, would be regarded as acts of hostility by the US.

Numerous submissions highlighted the strategic, military and economic disasters of US-led wars in which Australia was involved. Two representative examples are provided.

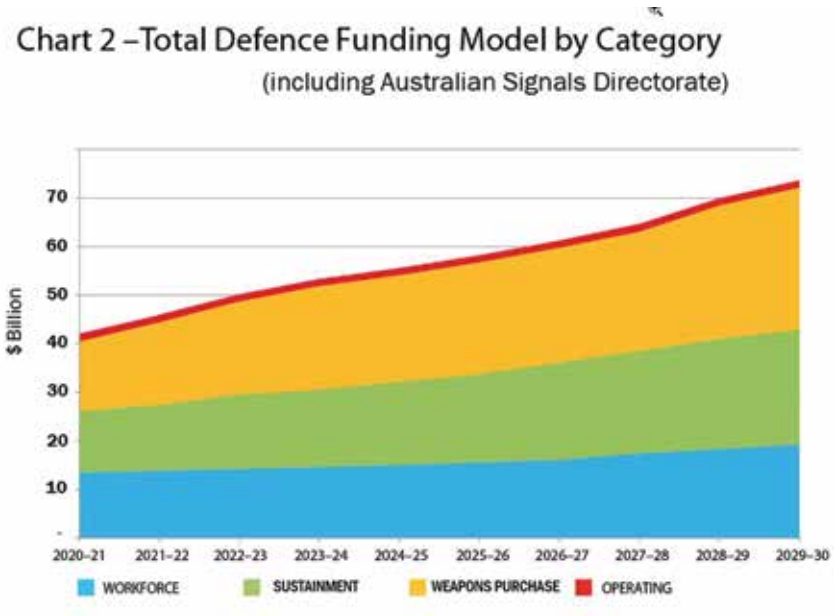
A submission from Australians for War Powers Reform (AWPR) (Sub no. 385, p. 1) points out:

> *From 1945 on, none of the conflicts in which Australia supported the US resulted in victory (except the brief deployment to Kuwait, 1990–91). Australia withdrew its forces from Korea following an armistice, and retreated from failed wars in Vietnam, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Taking into account the thousands of Australian deaths and injuries, the huge financial and social losses, and the damage inflicted on other countries and their people, the costs of these wars clearly outweigh the benefits.*

Emeritus Professor Joseph Camilleri OAM (Sub no. 168, p. 3) states:

> *Seventy years later, the balance sheet of the alliance is most striking for the negligible benefits it has brought Australia and the heavy costs it has imposed on our diplomacy, security, budgets, and importantly on the values we supposedly cherish, notably our commitment to civil liberties at home and human rights abroad. Perhaps the most damaging effect has been to strengthen the addiction to empire and the consequent failure to reconcile our history and geography.*

It is worth adding that many of these costs would be practically incalculable using standard economic methods.



Source: 2020 Defence Strategic Update p 55

4. Economic Sovereignty

The costs of Australia's close integration with the US military, particularly in terms of economic sovereignty, are highlighted and critiqued across many submissions.

Former Senator for Western Australia, Josephine Vallentine (Sub no.169, p. 1), observes that 'allies are expected not only to train in war rehearsals, but also to buy, mostly from the US, the latest military technology and hardware to suit their [US] purposes'. Many submissions express concerns over value for money under this uncompetitive arrangement. Vallentine gives the example of our purchase of more than 70 F-35 jet fighters, which she believes are 'totally unnecessary for the defence of Australia, and which have proved so problematical that tests reveal that they cannot fly through an electrical storm, or their computer technology ceases to function (this may have been corrected in the last couple of years)' (Sub no. 169, p. 2).

Various submissions voice concerns at the increased dependence on foreign defence technology and know-how necessarily associated with the recent AUKUS defence pact. Dale Hess and Adrian Glamorgan (Sub no. 420, p. 4) point out that 'nuclear-powered submarines are very complex, and maintenance and operational activity will require Australia to rely on and become more deeply embedded in US and UK technical support systems. The consequence is loss of sovereignty and the ability to act independently'. Quakers Australia is worried that 'this partnership shifts Australia's military posture from defensive to offensive, increasing the potential for Australia's participation in US-led regional incursions, including through the use and transport of nuclear weapons'.

A number of submissions express a desire for Australia to develop a self-reliant and self-funded self-defence industry, and manufacturing capability in general, even if this costs more than our current close integration with the US military. For example, Michael Kerswell (Sub no. 203, p. 1) believes that 'military armament manufacturing needs to be closely monitored in a nationalised fashion and only for self-defence and not export profitability'. Some submissions note that relying on distant supply chains makes us vulnerable to sustained conflict, as well as to supply shortages a nd pandemics.

Other detailed proposals for achieving economic sovereignty include the argument presented by David M. Gray (Sub no. 396, p. 2), who pointed out that a self-reliant defence industry requires comprehensive access to relevant intellectual property. Mr Gray concluded that 'the best access comes from being the substantive designer of the hardware as well as its manufacturer'. He further suggests that Australia build up those industries that specialise in the manufacture of self-defence technologies focused on our specific geography, which might include 'unmanned aerial and undersea surveillance devices' (David M. Gray, Sub no. 396, p. 2).

Many submission writers argued that achieving genuine economic sovereignty requires the imposition of public ownership and control over the productive assets used by defence and other large firms in order to ensure that democratic principles govern their use. For example, submissions by Bevan Ramsden and Shirley Winton (Sub no. 200, p. 5), and by Derek Burke (Sub no. 152, p. 3) argue that the government should define and nationalise strategic sectors, including defence, electricity utilities, water, telecommunications, public transportation, pharmaceuticals, mining and energy resources, chemical production, manufacturing, financial services, and health and education. They further argue for re-establishing an Australian shipping line under federal government control.

One means to counter the apparent disproportionate influence that defence interests seem to hold over government policy direction was suggested by August Mikucki (Sub no. 262, p. 2). Mikucki asks us to imagine a system of 'direct plebiscites on incremental changes to the defence budget ... held every 2-5 years, with debate to guide voters in their decision making. This would give Australian voters a direct say in how much of their taxpayer money is spent on defence'.

This direct plebiscite proposal raises interesting questions regarding how more direct decision-making over economic trajectories might operate under public and/or private ownership, and the economic sectors to which this kind of process could and should extend. Such design questions are beyond the scope of the present inquiry.

5. Summary of Findings

Willingness to pay and opportunity cost

Most writers oppose increased defence spending and argued that a large fraction of this spending would be better spent on other social programs. An overwhelming number of submissions suggest an unwillingness to fund national defence at the rate currently allocated in the federal budget.

Trade

The general consensus among submissions is that Australia is economically better off coexisting with China. Writers therefore find Australia's recent direct provocations of China to be unreasonable and needless. Some submissions argue that an independent foreign policy for Australia would increase the likelihood of diplomatic resolutions to trade conflicts.

Multiple submissions express concern over the lack of transparency around the destinations of Australia's weapons exports. One suggestion is to ban political donations from defence manufacturers. Another possibility is to mandate extensive public transparency whenever such contracts are entered into.

War

The overwhelming consensus across submissions is that the US remains the world's dominant imperial power, and that in any comparison of US and Chinese belligerence, the former emerges as the more aggressive and the one more likely to initiate a shooting war that could escalate into nuclear conflict. Many submissions express concern that Australia lacks the ability to refuse to participate in another US-led war. Furthermore, many assert that consideration of our track record of participating in US-led wars confirms that the alliance has imposed heavy costs on Australia while yielding negligible benefits.

Economic sovereignty

The costs of Australia's close integration with the US military are highlighted and critiqued across many submissions. Multiple submissions express concern over our dependence on foreign defence technology and know-how, including in relation to the recent AUKUS defence pact. Some submissions express a desire for Australia to develop a self-reliant and self-funded self-defence industry and manufacturing capability in general, even if the costs exceed those of our current close integration with the US military.

Economic

Recommendations

Specifically, the following recommendations have been called for through the submissions:

Recommendation 33

Industry

The Australian Government should:

a) Identify and nationalise all strategic sectors of the economy.

b) Build up industries specialising in the manufacture of self-defence technologies focused on and best suited to our specific geography.

Recommendation 34

Democracy and integrity

The Australian Government should:

a) Establish a process through which Australian citizens can have a direct voice on the rate of defence spending in the country.

b) Establish legislation to ban political donations from defence manufacturers.

c) Legislate for the extensive public transparency of all defence manufacturing contracts.

APPENDIX A:

IPAN People's Inquiry Questionnaire

As an engagement tool for the Inquiry, a nine-item questionnaire was distributed to IPAN members, their broader supporter base, other community members as well as being promoted through social media. The questionnaire asked respondents for their views on the Australia–US alliance, Australia's relationship with the US and involvement in US-led wars, and decisions about Australia going to war. The questionnaire also encouraged respondents to consider making submissions to the Inquiry. Although not based on a random sampling, questionnaire responses indicate significant levels of concern in sections of the Australian population in relation to some of the risks for Australia associated with the US alliance.

The next 5-10 years are critical if we are to avoid ecological collapse and out of control climate change which will in turn likely lead to more wars as countries become less stable. The military industrial complex contributes a significant amount to fossil fuel emissions. Military spending is also rising significantly and reducing the amount we have to spend on conservation and alternative energy programs as well as much needed social and health services. A clear priority is for Australia to work with First Nation communities to address the damage caused by colonisation.

Elizabeth Moore, Submission Number 343

Inquiry Questionnaire – Summary of Results

'Over 1000 IPAN members, supporters, and others have their say'

A Snapshot Report on the People's Inquiry Questionnaire, November 2021

What the survey data found

- Opinion was divided amongst survey respondents in relation to **whether the United States would come to Australia's aid if Australia's security was threatened**, with 34% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the USA would come to Australia's aid, and 35% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that the U.S. would come to Australia's aid.
- 88% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that **Australia's alliance with the US makes it more likely that Australia could be drawn into a war that is not in its interests**. Only 6 per cent of respondents did not believe Australia could be drawn into such a war, due to the alliance.
- Three quarters (75%) of survey respondents believe that **because of the US alliance, Australia could be drawn into a war with China**, while only 14 per cent of respondents do not believe that this would be the case.
- There was overwhelming support (90% agreed or strongly agreed) that **both houses of the Australian Parliament should debate and vote on any decision to commit Australian troops and resources to overseas military operations**. Only 6% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this proposal.
- 81% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that **Australia's national security has been damaged by its support and participation with the US in conflicts such as in Iraq and Afghanistan**, while only 9% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Photo by Jim Shields, Brisbane

- 78% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that **Australia's international reputation has been harmed by its constant support for, and participation in, US foreign policy**, while only 9% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 84% of survey respondents indicated that they think **Australia's active adherence to US foreign policy has had a somewhat or significantly negative impact on Australia's deteriorating trade relationship with China over recent years**, while only 8% responded that they think it has had no impact.
- Only 14% of respondents believe that **Australia is safer as a result of the presence of US military forces/intelligence-gathering installations on Australian territory (such as at the Joint Defence Facility at Pine Gap and at North West Cape**) while 66% of respondents do not believe these make Australia safer.
- Just over half of all respondents (51%) believe that Australia would be better off if **it was to end its alliance with the United States,** while 10% of respondents believe there would be no change, and 20% believe Australia would be worse off.

The questionnaire ran from 24 March 2021 until 6 November 2021, with responses received from every State/Territory in Australia. A total of 1112 responses were received.

Demographics of Questionnaire Respondents

- 43% identified as female; 53% as male, 1% Non-Binary; 2% Prefer not to say
- 61% identified as 61 years of age or older, 14% between 51 and 60 years and 25% between 11 and 50 years,
- 3% identified as Indigenous, 11% as from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, and 81% as non-Indigenous.
- Responses were received from all states and territories, with 69% from three states, NSW (24%), Queensland (24%) and Victoria (21%). The remainder came from the NT (10%), the ACT (6%), SA (6%), WA (5%) and Tasmania (3%).

APPENDIX B:

Names of organisations and individuals who made submissions

Anonymous Submissions (11)
Dr Adam Broinowski
Adela Brent for Australia Solidarity with Latin America
Albert M. White
Alice Springs Peace Action Think Tank
Alison E. Broinowski for Australians for War Powers Reform
Allen L Jasson
Amador Navidi
Annie Butler, Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation
Andrew Fullarton
Angela Burrows
Anne C. Sutherland
Annette Brownlie
Ashly Campbell
August Mikucki
Belinda Curtis
Berlin Guerrero for Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) Australia
Beth Gordon
Bevan Ramsden
Bob Boughton
Brendan McKeague for Pace e Bene Australia
Brian Boyd
Brian Toohey
Bruce Cameron
Bruce Haigh
Burt Blackburne for Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church
Cameron Leckie
Carmelita Baltazar for Migrante Australia
Caroline Norma
Casey Davidson
Charles Knight
Cecilia Webster for Gravener Family
Cheryl Duffin
Chris Grgurovic-Vandenberg
Chris Knight
Christine James
Christopher Crouch
Christopher Hanson
Father Claude Mostowik msc. Pax Christi Australia
Clem Campbell AO
Colin J. Apelt
Colin Mitchell
Dale Hess and Adrian Glamorgan
Darryl Nelson
Dave Arkins, Andy Alcock and Bob Hanney for Australia West Papua Association SA Inc. and Australia East Timor Friendship Assoc SA Inc.
Dave Kerin for Earthworker Cooperative
Dave Sweeney, Australian Conservation Foundation
David Faber
David M. Gray
David Harvey
David Morgan
David J. Noonan
David Perkins
David A. Pretty
David Stephens
Dennis Murphy
Derek Burke
Dr Don Longo
Eileen Darley for Living Incomes For Everyone
Eileen Whitehead
Elizabeth Moore
Erin Kenny
Evan A. Hadkins
Evgenia Zhang
Fiona McCandless for Health and Community Services Union
Frances A. Long
Frank Burton
Frank Simpson
Gareth Smith
Geoffrey I. Gallop
Gill H. Boehringer for International Association of People's Lawyers
Glenn Major
Gray K. Nomad
Greg Rolles
Harold W. Johnson
Harold Wilkinson, Quaker Peace & Legislation Committee Religious Society of Friends in Australia
Ian Curr
IPAN South West Regional Victoria
James O'Neill
Jamie Piotrowski
Jane Taylor
Jane Timbrell for Vintage Reds of the Canberra Region
Janette Morgan
Jasmine Pilbrow
Jessica Western
Jo Whitehead
Joan and Alan McColl
Professor Jocelyn Chey
Joe Collins
Joe Montero
John Collingridge
John Hallam, People for Nuclear Disarmament
John Hermann
John Menadue
John Speight for Fair Go For Pensioners Coalition Victoria Inc.
Jonathan Pilbrow, Rosalie Schultz and Chris Hawke
Emeritus Professor Joseph A. Camilleri
Joseph Lenzo
Josephine Vallentine

Joy Taylor
Judy Hemming and Michael McKinley
Julie Hart
Julie Marlow
Justin Tutty and for Basewatch
Dr Ka-Sing Chua
Kathryn Kelly
Keri James
Kerry Davies
Major General Kevin Walsh RFD (Retired)
Kieran Finnane
Kieran Walsh
Kristin Perissinotto for Electrical Trades Union QLD & NT
Kyriacos Kyriacou
Lachlan Hurse for Australia-Cuba Friendship Society (Brisbane Branch)
Lee Rhiannon
Len Cooper for Melbourne May Day
Léonie M. Ebert
Lesley Jeffreys
Lesley J. Agar
Linda du Boulay
Lorel Thomas
Louise Bennet for Bring Assange Home Campaign
Lucia Mayo
Luke Whitington, SEARCH Foundation
Lyn Lane & Margaret Reynolds for Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Australian Section) Inc
Lynette Amaterstein
Lynn Arnold
Marcus Reubenstein for APAC News
Margaret A. Brown
Assoc Prof Dr Marianne Hanson and Dr Margaret J Beavis for International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons Australia
Margaret Pestorius and Miriam Torzillo, Wage Peace
Margaret Williamson for Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church
Margid Bryn-Burns
Marion J. Oke
Mark Beeson
Mark Lawlor
Mark Taylor
Dr Marty Branagan for Peace Studies, University of New England
Matilda Byrne
Matt Skoss
Maya Cifali
Maya Pilbrow
Melissa Harrison & Robert Barwick for Australian Citizens Party
Mette Eliseussen for SafeGround
Mia Donovan
Michael A. Kerswell
Michael Henry for Just Peace Queensland
Michael McNally for National Tertiary Education Union Queensland Division
Michael Pembroke
Michael Pilbrow
Michael Stilwell Flynn
Michael Williss
Michele Munn
Mike Callanan
Mike Scrafton
Millie Rooney
Murdoch MacKenzie
Murray Noonan
Newcastle Peace Group
Naomi Ebert Smith, The Graham F Smith Peace Foundation
Niall McLaren
Nick Deane
Noel S. Turnbull
Norma Forrest
Olivetta Harris
Pamela Collett
Penny Lockwood
Peter Grullemans
Peter D. P. Jones for War Resisters International (Australia)
Father Peter Smith, Justice and Peace Office, Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney
Professor Peter A. Stanley
Philip Atkinson
Rebecca Buttenshaw
Rebecca Hausler
Rees D. Barrett
Reyvi Marinas for Philippines Australia Solidarity Association
Richard Stone
Professor Richard Tanter
Rita Camilleri
Robert Dunne
Robin A. Sevenoaks
Robin Taubenfeld for Friends of the Earth Australia
Roger Davies
Roger Keyes
Romina Beitseen for Campaign for International Co-operation and Disarmament
Rosemary Morrow for Blue Mountains Permaculture Institute
Ross Gwyther
Russell Goldflam
Ruth M. Watson
Sandra Moxon Beck
Sarah Watson
Shar Molloy & Kirsty Howey for Environment Centre NT
Sheila Newman
Shirley Winton
Spirit of Eureka South Australia
Stephanie Vesel for Lawyers For Peace
Stephen Darley for Independent and Peaceful Australia Network SA
Stephen Horn & David Hessey for International Volunteers for Peace Australia
Dr Sue Wareham, Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia)
Sister Susan Connelly for Josephite-Justice Network
Susan E. Pilbrow
Ted Trainer
Terry Fitzpatrick
The Australian Student Christian Movement (Queensland)
Tom Marwick
Treena Lenthall
Trisha Roberts
Union of Australian Women (Queensland)
Valerie Joy
Wallace McKitrick
Warren Winton for Spirit of Eureka Victoria
Wilfred Flint
Dr William Briggs
Professor Winnifred Louis

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Photo: Leo Bild.

All wars cost environmentally, bombs not only kill people but also every living animal within the blast region leaving bomb craters disfiguring the landscape, that is the bombs that exploded. War zones are left with unexploded ordinances, particularly from cluster munitions and landmines making the war zones dangerous environments for decades to come.

Tom Marwick, Submission Number 322

Current indications are that the continuation of… [the] policy of strategic dependence on the U.S and subservience to its foreign policies will lead us into a U.S. war with China with unimaginable consequences for Australia and the World. For our sakes and those of our children and grandchildren, Australia must grow up, have confidence in the capacity and abilities of our 25 million people, break with military alliances and believe that we can defend, where necessary, a very defendable continent, relying on ourselves and the rich and abundant resources of this continent and make our contribution to peace in this world.

Bevan Ramsden, Submission Number 140

There must be greater transparency and debate in the future commitment of Australian men and women to wars and conflicts that Australia has no real reason to be involved in. If we don't, the price will be a continued increase of veteran suicide, broken families and lives ruined and more often than not, a worsening security environment in those countries we deploy to.

Sarah Watson (former member of the Australian Army, Southern Iraq Province deployed to Al Muthanna Province), Submission Number 175

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Photo: Edan Baxter