



HUNTER PEACE GROUP

Peace Justice Friendship

(Winner of Newcastle City Council's Community Group of the Year Award 2022)

20th October 2022

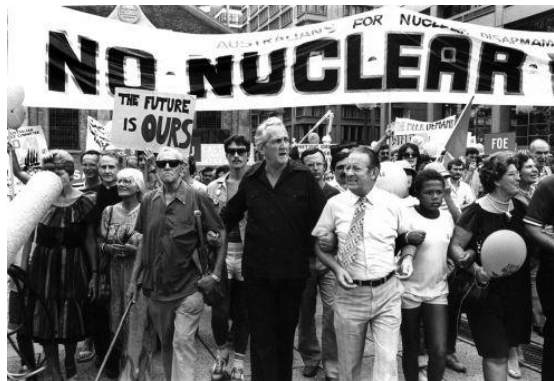
Dear ALP Federal Members of Parliament,

Hunter Peace Group members have been opposed to the AUKUS PACT and all it brings with it since it was first announced back in September 2021 by former Prime Minister, Scott Morrison.

The Anti-AUKUS Coalition has been doing excellent work to bring the need to cancel the acquisition of costly and dangerous nuclear-powered submarines to the fore. Their recent advertisement placed in 2 major newspapers, signed by 90 groups and 1,000 individuals plus responses received shows that opposition to the AUKUS PACT is growing across the country.

Australia rejected going down the nuclear path in the past, and, until the recent Coalition Governments came into power, remained so; let's keep it that way.

Visions come to mind of the wonderful Tom Uren 40 years ago in Sydney leading a march of 40,000 people to protest against **"the threat of "mutual assured destruction"** which sparked protests around the world calling for nuclear disarmament – saying **"NO TO NUCLEAR WAR"**.



Tom Uren 1980s leading the Sydney "Australians for Nuclear Disarmament" march

Tom Uren was witness to the bombing of Nagasaki as he along with others had been sent back to Japan towards the end of WWII to work as "slave labourers" just outside Nagasaki. They saw the sky change colour over city after the atom bomb was dropped, however it was not until sometime later that he realised the horrors of this – at the time he, along with the other survivors were just happy the war was over. Tom Uren, like so many other returned servicemen and women did not speak much about the war or his sufferings, but he did believe that the reason for their survival was that Australians lived by a certain code:

**"The healthy looked after the sick, the strong looked after the weak,
the young looked after the old."**

At the Tom Uren AC Memorial Lecture held on 20th June 2021 (which was hosted by The Hon Anthony Albanese MP and delivered by The Hon Linda Burney MP); Mr. Albanese said about his friend: *“He lived an incredible life. He witnessed the depravity and cruelty of war, but he never lost his humanity. Tom went on to be a minister in the Hawke Labor Government. He was an anti-war advocate. He was a strong anti-nuclear advocate. He fought to preserve Sydney Harbour. To me, Tom Uren was a father figure. He was my mentor. He was my friend. Tom Uren was a man driven by values derived from his own experiences. As a veteran, he abhorred violence. As a campaigner, he believed in a better Australia; and he believed Labor was the party to make that happen. His beliefs inspired me to strive to make this country fairer, better, more ambitious. Those values still drive me today.”*



Uren in 1963.

He campaigned against the Vietnam War, conscription and nuclear testing and opposed Australia's participation the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan



We include this bit of history about Tom Uren's amazing life, in the hope that when Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese and his ALP parliamentary colleagues read it all will remember how important it is to maintain a NO NUCLEAR STANCE, which has been ALP Policy since Mr Uren's day, and realise that if Australia continues supporting the AUKUS PACT – then Australia is moving away from a very long held ALP Policy. If Australia does not give up its support for the AUKUS PACT, then

we are travelling down a road that is not ours; but one that belongs to the United States of America and the United Kingdom's Defence and Foreign policies.

When one reads the anti-nuclear story of a strongly, believing activist like Tom Uren (and there have been and still are, many more just as committed as he in Australia's "NO NUCLEAR" history), it is somewhat inconceivable that today, here in Australia, our government is considering going down this road through the AUKUS PACT; a PACT that does not just bring us nuclear-armed submarines in 20 years' time, but brings UK and USA nuclear-powered submarines to our shores in a much shorter time scale along with the expansion or re-development of at least one Port on the east coast of Australia to accommodate such vessels at a cost that possibly could right all the social justice wrongs that exist in Australia today.

In the words of former Prime Minister Morrison(Sept., 2021) when announcing his plan for a second submarine base on Australia's east coast: *“Fleet Base West in Western Australia will remain home to the current Collins class and future nuclear-powered submarines, given its strategic importance on the Indian Ocean. But establishing a second submarine base on our east coast will enhance our strategic deterrent capability, with significant advantages in operations, training, personnel, and industrial terms. An optimal east coast base would provide home-ported submarines with specialised wharfs, maintenance facilities, administrative and logistics support, personnel amenities, and suitable*

*accommodation for submarine crews and support staff. **It would also enable the regular visiting of US and UK nuclear-powered submarines.***

Members of Parliament, as well as the above, please do not forget that this PACT also includes: *“co-operation on advanced cyber, artificial intelligence and autonomy, quantum technologies, undersea capabilities, hypersonic and counter-hypersonic, electronic warfare, innovation, and information sharing. The PACT will also focus on military capability, separating it from the FIVE EYES intelligence-sharing alliance that also includes New Zealand and Canada.”*

As recently as 14th October 2022, former Prime Minister Keating said in part: *“Australia can do its own foreign policy, its own security arrangements and pacts, and develop its own defence capability without being owned by anyone else. But our strategic sovereignty is being outsourced to another country, the US’.*

“AUKUS should be an exchange of ideas and no more than that. It is not too late for the Australian Government to back out of the agreement. Keeping Australia in the AUKUS alliance would be a tragedy for Australia. I mean going to Cornwall (in the UK) to find our security in Asia; (James Cook and Arthur Phillip left 230 years ago.) Do we really need to go back there? The challenge of governments is to make their own stories. That is what the present-day government should be brave enough to do. Tone needs to become substance.”

October 10, 2022 — 10.30pm Sydney Morning Herald report:

The purchase of eight nuclear submarines under the AUKUS pact is expected to add at least another \$100 billion to the nation’s already ballooning Defence Bill, as the Albanese government seeks to rein in cost blowouts and delays of major military projects”

According to the Australian Defence Magazine In 2021 the current Defence budget in Australia sat at 2.1 % of GDP: reported by Katherine Ziesing | Canberra | 11 May 2021 *“which equated to \$44.62 billion in funding for Defence and the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD), a 15 per cent jump from last year’s \$38.7 billion. This puts Defence spending at 2.1 per cent of GDP. The October Budget saw an estimated spend of \$16.806 billion in 2021/2022 but the portfolio budget statement from this year has \$15.766 billion on the cards, meaning Defence has not been able to get that last billion out the door.*

But the estimated total acquisition program saw \$70.45 billion to be spent over the coming four years; this budget sees that number jump to \$85.91 billion over the same period. Some big programs are going to be hitting some significant milestones to get that amount of money moving.”

This year (we will know next week) these figures most probably will have increased; and don’t forget the AUKUS PACT has not yet been costed - properly costed – but possibly \$100 billion for the subs alone? What about all the other aspects of this PACT listed above – have they been costed? and don’t let’s forget all the upgrades in the Northern Territory to the 5 bases and the other work announced by the Morrison Government in 2021 and earlier.

Hunter Peace Group members urge our Australian ALP Federal Government to:

- Change tack,
- Stop going down the Morrison Government Defence road,
- DITCH THE AUKUS PACT
- START FROM SCRATCH
- Channel Thomas Uren AC – a devoted peace activist opposed to nuclear weapons and the nuclear industry whose quest for social justice led him to be a strong advocate for socialism and therefore was a supporter of left and progressive politics which meant following the politics of social justice, human rights, equality for all, fairness between nations and caring for the environment.

If our Albanese Government did this so much suffering in Australia would be alleviated and hopefully end.

It's Time for Change, Mr. Albanese. Take Australia down the road of “**politics of social justice**” we will be a richer nation in many ways if you do.

In Peace and Friendship

Lynda Forbes
Secretary Hunter Peace Group

Information on Tom Uren AC was taken from “The Conversation” and 2021 opening address by The Hon Anthony Albanese introducing the Tom Uren AC Memorial Lecture, WikiLeaks



Hunter Peace Group 33 Dean Parade, Rankin Park NSW 2287
Email: hunterpeacegroup.2016@gmail.com.au Phone: 0249529346