

A People's Call for Healthcare not Warfare

We the undersigned, call on the Australian Government to stop funnelling billions of dollars into offensive weapons for unjust U.S. led wars, and invest instead in the health and safety of people and the environment.

On 23 March 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic ravaging the world, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called for a global ceasefire. The UN call highlights the disparity between the huge financial and technological resources invested in wars, and the under-funded and under-resourced public health systems desperately trying to control this deadly virus.

We call on the Australian Government to support the UN Secretary General's call.

COVID-19 has sharply exposed the dangerous and unsustainable priorities of our society. On the other hand, the vast majority of Australians are co-operating to control the virus. World-wide, there are desperate shortages in the supply of most basic safety and life saving equipment – ICU beds, ventilators, virus testing kits and personal protective equipment for front line health workers.

At the same time there are vast stockpiles of technologically advanced military weaponry worth trillions of dollars, waiting to be used in endless profit-making wars.

Redirect military spending

The UN call for a worldwide ceasefire means little unless foreign military forces are sent back to their home countries. To that end we call on the Australian government to bring home our military forces from battle zones in the Middle East, Afghanistan and the Philippines, and to close the Pine Gap function that supports U.S. drone warfare. Hundreds of billions of our tax dollars are used to buy military equipment largely to support the U.S. military agenda around the world. Instead, huge expenditure is urgently needed here in Australia, for health and medical services and to address the climate crisis.

Australia's immediate priorities should be providing support for millions of people facing unemployment, homelessness and poverty during the national disasters of coronavirus, the climate crisis, drought and bushfires – rather than supporting unjust U.S. led wars.

Prioritise people and environment

In spite of this difficult period of physical distancing, people are organising and helping each other and building social unity. We need to make sure we come out of these crises with a more humane, just and democratic society.

We need a society that prioritises the health, education and safety of people and the environment over war.

We need a society that builds Australia's self-reliant and diverse industries to manufacture and produce for the needs of the people, and an economy that's not based on multinational profit making.

We need a society that invests in our research scientists, the CSIRO and other public research institutions, not globalised corporations in search of profit.

We need a society that prioritises peace, justice and the health of people and the environment - an independent and peaceful Australia.

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To endorse this statement go to https://ipan.org.au/healthcare_not_warfare/

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