

I believe a majority of Australians feel that Australia should be doing much more to resolve international tensions in a peaceful, co-operative way. In the International Year of Peace (1986) I helped with the national tour of the double decker Peace Bus when it was in SA visiting a wide range of schools, community events, workplaces etc. I was particularly impressed by the concern shown by school age children. Since then the horrors of war have become obvious to a huge number of people who have been affected by war - directly or indirectly - refugees and their descendants, ex-service people and their families and Australians in contact with families overseas in war zones.

1. Australia should join the significant number of other countries which do not have a military alliance with the USA, China or Russia. If the major military powers have less allies, there is less of a chance they will start a war, big or small.
2. Australia should reduce its military spending and encourage other countries to do the same.
3. We must recognise there can be no lasting peace without justice. Inequalities between nations and within nations are increasing. We need to consult communities at home and abroad about the best ways to reduce inequalities. Developing fair trade agreements should be a priority. Challenging the concentration of wealth and power in Australia and overseas is obviously a huge task. Strong alliances between movements and organisations struggling for a better world is essential. Money saved by reducing military spending can be redirected to reducing inequalities and tackling the huge environmental problems we face. A transition plan needs to be developed to provide alternative employment for workers affected by reduced military spending.
4. All of us need to develop better conflict resolution skills - in government, homes, workplaces, playgrounds and organisations - locally, nationally and globally. Peace Studies should be a significant part of all levels of education. Developing caring, cooperative and collectively in many ways.
5. The UN struggles to make any headway when big countries do not co-operate. However, UN resolutions and ongoing work (often in the background) are important and Australia should be involved in a more positive way e.g. sign the Treaty to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.
6. The white invasion of Australia continues to have a big impact on the lives of indigenous Australians. The Uluru Statement from the Heart should be acted upon immediately.

Also, our federal government must show more compassion and welcome many more into Australia. Australia can not make much progress on reducing international tensions and inequalities without "putting our own house in order" .

7. Competition for natural resources, ecologically sound economies should take place as soon as possible, learning from indigenous cultures should be part of the process.