

Margid Bryn-Burns

I want to say Thank-You for this opportunity. I have attempted to cover the eight points but have done so in a rather haphazard manner.

A close friend, American, happily married to an Australian who trained at Duntroon, who cared for their first child whilst her husband served in Vietnam. Not an easy time. Yet, as we have discussed, easier than the lot of my very young mother, separated from her husband and experiencing first-hand night time bombing raids during WW2.

Our 'war' conversation started recently following news about the death of a Duntroon officer by suicide. I shared of comforting my neighbour whose precious young son took his own life after serving in East Timor.

I find war abhorrent. The wonton waste of war, abhorrent. Yet most of all I find the truth in the quote of the Indian writer Arundhati Roy: "Once weapons were made to manufactured to fight wars. Now wars are manufactured to sell weapons." Absolutely, absolutely abhorrent.

I no longer can vote for the party of both my heritage and earlier conviction. A state or nation creating jobs through the research/production/selling of weapons of war akin to an Undertaker Murdering her/his Children in order to stay in business. Every child is precious every life sacred in my reckoning. The fact that my state and country is doing just this causes me heartache and, a real crisis of faith in democracy. This is what I've lived with this last decade. If you want a job join the army; if you want to learn a trade, join the army; if you want to study for a degree – without the burden of a hex debt, join the military. Both major parties had a hand in closing down TAFE's. Blocking path ways to trade training. We take hope from the pathways of the young and wonder why the increase in mental health problems.

Australia can go to war without the real input of its people. It wasn't a democratic decision in 2003 and, under exiting legislation, unlike our 'coalition of the willing' partners it remains a decision which could be made even without any cabinet involvement. Shame, shame.

It is hard to comprehend that voted into our parliament are men, (yes, it is men) who still believe war is the answer. We're on the brink of annihilation from nuclear weapons and yet these war fanatics persist. Making sense of the old saying: Those who profit keep making war! From 'Shirt fronting, Putin" to pouring oil on troubled waters with China by interacting without tact and diplomacy. Cutting back on diplomacy and overseas aid. Madness in my book. It is truly at times most depressing.

Although my last rave is about the environment it really is one of my prime concerns. Our First Nation people, with such utter generosity, are willing to show us how to care for this land. It is theirs and yet they are willing to share. What lessons for life we could be learning from these wise people whose ancient wisdom is a key to our survival. We ought desperately to be learning and instead continue to decimate for greed this beautiful country.

The pandemic is teaching us how we can adapt and at speed. Far more than we ever imagined. Let us do just that. Let us learn to live simply, so others may simply live.