

## **Why Peace and Justice is Union Business – No War On China**

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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; 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.

HACSU members work in the Disability and Mental Health sectors. 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 (1). It is unfair to put this strain on our military men and women, and on our already fractured healthcare system.

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

(1) <https://theconversation.com/veterans-have-poorer-mental-health-than-australians-overall-we-could-be-serving-them-better-119525>

on military bases to instead *fund* our healthcare system rather than creating more stress on our system?

We don't need racism. We don't need a strain on our economy. We don't need aggression with our neighbour. We don't need to be pulled into America's wars. We don't need nuclear war. We don't need bloody submarines. 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.

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.

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