



16 August 2021

The Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) Inquiry
PO Box 573
Cooparoo, Queensland 4151

Via email: ipan.inquiry@gmail.com

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: People's Inquiry into the Costs and Consequences of Australia's involvement in US led wars and the US Alliance: Social and Community

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) is Australia's largest national union and professional nursing and midwifery organisation. In collaboration with the ANMF's eight state and territory branches, we represent the professional, industrial and political interests of more than 300,000 nurses, midwives and carers across the country.

Our members work in the public and private health, aged care and disability sectors across a wide variety of urban, rural and remote locations. We work with them to improve their ability to deliver safe and best practice care in each and every one of these settings, fulfil their professional goals and achieve a healthy work/life balance.

Our strong and growing membership and integrated role as both a professional and industrial organisation provide us with a complete understanding of all aspects of the nursing and midwifery professions and see us uniquely placed to defend and advance our professions.

Through our work with members we aim to strengthen the contribution of nursing and midwifery to improving Australia's health and aged care systems, and the health of our national and global communities.

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ANMF Journals

Australian Nursing and
Midwifery Journal (ANMJ)
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Australian Journal of
Advanced Nursing (AJAN)
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ABN 41 816 898 298



It is the position of the ANMF that health cannot be achieved without peace. Political unrest results in considerable cost to individuals and threatens freedom of access to health care, basic education, food, water, justice, shelter and a healthy environment. These are minimum humanitarian rights and must be protected.

To promote peace, the Australian Government must take every necessary action to protect Australia from going to war and avoid using force to settle political disagreement.

Historically, Australia has become involved in war in part due to alliances with the United States (US). The cost and consequences, for the health of people living in Australia, has been extensive with the effects traversing decades and generations.

Whilst, the ANMF support strengthened interoperability of US and Australian forces to respond to regional contingencies, such as Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief, the impact of Australia's relationship with the US cannot be ignored. The pursuit of peace should have priority over all political objectives and Australia must strive for military independence to uphold this priority.

Furthermore, each year significant public expenditure is invested in the defence sector. This is at the expense of greater investment in other sectors such as health, education and training, housing, communities and environment, and social security and welfare. The health system in Australia is under immense pressure. The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety is but one example that the health system in Australia is in urgent need of reform. It is imperative spending on defence in Australia aids Australian interests alone and is not to the detriment of expenditure on sectors that bolster the health and wellbeing of people living in Australia.

The ANMF urges the Australian Government to consider investment in military development that promotes peace and in doing so supports the health and wellbeing of people living in Australia. Please find enclosed, the ANMF Position Statement on Peace for your reference. Should you require further information on this matter, please contact Julianne Bryce, ANMF Senior Professional Officer at jbryce@anmf.org.au or on 0409 221 699.



Yours Sincerely

Annie Butler

Federal Secretary

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation

Encl.



Peace

Health cannot be achieved without peace, one of humanity's highest values. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) defines peace as not merely the absence of violence or war, but the presence of concord or harmony, allowing people to live and develop in freedom and justice within and between nations. Living in peace means enjoying freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of movement and the right to self-determination. Access to adequate health care, education, justice, food, safe environments and shelter constitute a minimum humanitarian requirement which underpin the ability of people to live in dignity and exercise their human rights in a peaceful environment.

The ANMF calls on all governments to respect the legitimate aspirations of people to live in dignity and with full human rights and freedoms. Peace can only be a reality when all people enjoy basic dignity and human rights.

All the peoples of the world have the right to live without fear of aggression or subversion by their government, a foreign power, by military force or other means. The use of force to resolve political or economic problems is opposed, however nations and people should be able to defend their values, their way of life and their culture.

The gross inequalities that exist causing poverty throughout large sections of the world's population, authoritarian governments who are intolerant of the diverse opinions of their own people and those of other nations, and the continued upgrading and stockpiling of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction, are a threat to peace.

Unions have an important role to play in correcting these inequalities including the alleviation of world poverty and the development of freer and more tolerant societies. Achievement of these objectives provides the necessary foundations for creating a more peaceful world.

It is the position of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation that:

1. The pursuit of peace should have priority over all political objectives.
2. All serious efforts for peace are supported and encouraged.
3. Gross inequalities, poverty and the oppression of individuals, people and nations, and degradation of the environment are all threats to peace.
4. Freedom of access to health care, basic education, food, water, justice, a healthy environment and shelter are minimum humanitarian requirements for peaceful societies.
5. The production and use of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction, including those intended for biological warfare, is condemned as a means of defence, as their deterrent effect is outweighed by their threat to world security, peace and health. There should be further programs initiated immediately to disable and dismantle existing nuclear weapons and an immediate cessation of any further development, production and testing of nuclear weapons, biological weapons, or weapons of mass destruction. The United Nations (UN) *Biological Weapons Convention* key provisions¹ and the UN *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*² should be supported by all countries, including the Australian Government.



6. The production and use of landmines and the stockpiling, use, production and transfer of cluster munitions is condemned.³
7. Effective national and international control of trade in weapons should be in place.
8. Nurses and midwives should raise awareness about the potential political, social, environmental and health consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.
9. Nurses and midwives are encouraged to critically appraise expenditure on health and welfare at a national and global level in relation to that spent on conventional weapons, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.
10. Nurses and midwives should be involved in developing strategies of action to contribute to national and international peace.
11. Education for peace and disarmament is supported.
12. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*,⁴ the *UN Convention of the Rights of the Child*,⁵ and the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*⁶ are supported.

Endorsed June 1998

Reviewed and re-endorsed February 2006

Reviewed and re-endorsed May 2009

Reviewed and re-endorsed February 2011

Reviewed and re-endorsed June 2014

Reviewed and re-endorsed August 2017

Reviewed and re-endorsed May 2020

References

1. United Nations Sixth Review Conference (2006) *The Biological Weapons Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction* Available at <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/bio/>
2. United Nations (2017). *Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons*. Available at <https://www.un.org/disarmament/tpnw/index.html>
3. Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of a Convention on Cluster Munitions, 19-30 May 2008. *Convention on cluster munitions*. Available at <https://www.clusterconvention.org/>
4. United Nations General Assembly (1945). *The universal declaration of human rights*. Available at <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>
5. United Nations (1989). *Conventions on the Rights of the Child* Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
6. United Nations (2007). *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* Available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>

This position statement is to be read in conjunction with the ANMF Health and the Environment policy and the ANMF Climate change policy.