

Joint Submission to the People's Inquiry

A People's Inquiry: Exploring the Case for an Independent and Peaceful Australia

What are the costs and consequences of Australia's involvement in US-led wars and the US-Alliance?

And what are the alternatives?

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September 2021

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Introduction

This is a critical time in the history of our nation and world for global relations, peace and security. We believe that with the right policy direction Australia can play a key strategic role in developing a safer and more sustainable future.

We write as concerned individuals from northern Australia. Our submission outlines the way a nonviolent approach can play a crucial role in a plan to address national, regional and global peace and security. We focus on the costs of war globally, to Australians, to the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and to First Nations people, and the opportunities for Australia to promote the development of a nonviolent approach to conflict. We question the nature and consequences of the Australia-U.S. Alliance, and call for its review, particularly in relation to Australia's involvement in US led wars. We believe open dialogue between the Australian Government and the Australian Community in relation to national defence spending and strategic direction is critical.

Our submission focuses on the following terms of reference of the Inquiry:

The costs and consequences of the Australia-US Alliance relating to:

- i.** Social, political, military/defence, economic and environmental impacts – including:
 - The impact on First Nations Peoples
 - The impact on all Australian people
 - The impact on other countries and their people as a result of the US/Australian wars in the name of the Alliance

Recommendations about the future of the Australia-US Alliance, including in relation to:

- ii.** The priorities and future objectives of Australian foreign policy
- iii.** Proposed changes in relationships with other countries, including the United States
- iv.** The budgetary implications and opportunities of any proposed changes to the Alliance.
- v.** Sustainable and humane alternatives to current defence industries' dependency on endless wars of aggression

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1: Because of the disproportionate adverse impacts of military activities on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, governments should actively seek out First Nations voices in defence and foreign affairs policy.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Emergency Public Health Orders established to protect the health of First Nations and other Australians should override defence powers. Rotation of U.S. marines through Darwin should be paused until public health safety can be assured.

RECOMMENDATION 3: A high level review of the ANZUS Treaty and other contributions to the Australia-U.S. alliance, including its costs and benefits, the extent to which Australia is bound to assist U.S. in conflict and the differential relationship between Australia and the US and Australia and New Zealand should be conducted.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Australia should enact war powers reform to ensure that decisions to send Australian troops into armed conflict require Parliamentary debate and approval.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Practitioners, policy makers and academics should actively engage with learnings of the Nonviolent Peaceforce global review of good practices in the field of unarmed civilian protection.

RECOMMENDATION 6: The peace movement in Australia should support and advocate for wider adoption of non-violent approaches in situations of conflict to safeguard human lives and dignity.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Australia should re-establish itself as a leading diplomatic nation through high level diplomatic positions with all our trade partners, and throughout our region and in other priority regions and nations to promote global stability and peace.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Departments of Defence and Education should provide support for career expos and advisors to promote careers based on nonviolent approaches to resolving conflict to complement careers in defence.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Australian should establish a Nonviolent Peace and Stability Unit within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [DFAT] or Department of Defence.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Military and foreign affairs training should provide knowledge, skills and experience in relation to nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution and transformation.

RECOMMENDATION 11: Australia should establish a Nonviolent Civilian Corps, under the existing Australian Civilian Corps Act 2011 and its 2013 amendment on an equal footing with the military to assist in the resolution of conflicts and reduce or avoid the use of military forces.

Social, political, military/defence, economic and environmental impacts

Impact of military activity on First Nations Australians

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been disproportionately impacted by military activities since European settlement. Examples include in the nuclear weapons testing in Australia and in the installation of defence facilities. Therefore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's voices should be actively sought out and strengthened in the development of Australia's military and foreign affairs policies.

Nuclear weapons testing on Aboriginal desert lands

Anangu people have borne the cost of nuclear testing in Australia. Between 1952 and 1963 Britain with Australian government support tested nuclear weapons, in Anangu desert homelands around Woomera and Maralinga. Anangu rights were ignored because of the perceived urgency to test weapons of mass destruction. Without warning or protection over 1000 people were exposed to nuclear explosions, causing blindness, cancer and other chronic health conditions, and perpetual contamination of their lands.¹ While these were over 50 years ago, and did not relate directly to the U.S.-alliance, the decision to engage in weapons testing to satisfy British authorities disregarding the health and wellbeing of Australians, set a disastrous precedent that continues today. First Nations Australians remain outside Australian political decision making, and their request for a voice to parliament has yet to be fulfilled. Unceded lands and sovereignty of First Nations' peoples continue to be used for military bases and exercises.

Pine Gap Joint Defence Facility establishment

The establishment of Joint Defence Facility at Pine Gap (JDFPG) in 1966 continued the history of Australian Governments proposing desert spaces for military installations, disregarding the rights and significance of the land to local people. No consultation was conducted with the traditional owners of Pine Gap.

"Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a specific right that pertains to indigenous peoples and is recognised in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)...allowing them to give or withhold consent to a project that may affect them or their territories".² While FPIC was not recognised in Australia until 2009 when the Federal Government signed the UNDRIP (which came

¹ Synott 2017

² United Nations 2021

into effect internationally in 2007),³ the way decisions were made by the Australian Government in the 1960s provides a stark contrast to the kind of best practice principles underlying UNDRIP, and that historical decision making process still requires examination, as we come to terms with the history of colonisation in this country. We do not believe that the fact UNDRIP did not exist in the 1960s excuses the decision-making process that took place at that time.

John Hughes' recent film, 'Peace Pilgrims', included an interview with two Traditional Owners for the land on which Pine Gap Facility was built, Peter 'Coco' Wallace Peltharre and Felicity Hayes. Hayes queries why the base was built on their land and Wallace expressed that: "We didn't know about all this space base or whatever they call it... old Aboriginal people...our elders"⁴, with Hayes adding that "Some old people didn't really understand what it's for" and that no compensation was ever paid for the base being put there.⁵ Wallace stated that "We never really got told about all this...and we still don't know now,...they...put in there without our permission, without asking the elders"⁶ and he explained that "it was the land of our elders way back, our grandfathers, their fathers, grandmothers, their mothers...that's how they kept the culture and the land"⁷.

Hayes further described that "It's like you're stealing, it's all big secrets... must be because of...people getting killed in other countries. They [sic] having war over there in that place and we don't know it, might be coming from here".⁸ While apparently many people in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) supported the development of the facility at the time, this polling was before white Australians agreed that Aboriginal people should be recognised as Australians in the 1967 referendum.⁹

On-going opposition to Pine Gap Joint Defence Facility

There has always been significant opposition to the presence of Pine Gap within the Mparntwe population. In 1987, the Alice Springs Town Council conducted a community consultation, in relation to their proposed policy to support retention of the "Joint Defence Space Research facility". The Alice Springs Peace Group distributed leaflets providing background information to residents and sought responses to three questions. 106 respondents (39.7%) supported the statement: "I agree with the Council's policy of support for Pine Gap", while 160 respondents (60.0%) disagreed.¹⁰

³ *Australian Human Rights Commission 2009*

⁴ *Wallace 2021*

⁵ *Hayes 2021*

⁶ *Wallace 2021*

⁷ *Wallace 2021*

⁸ *Hayes 2021*

⁹ *Cooksey 1968*

¹⁰ *Alice Springs Town Council 1987*

In addition to the responses to the Peace Group's survey, the council also received written submissions with many opposed to the retention of Pine Gap. Notable amongst those submissions opposing Pine Gap's retention was the Yipirinya School, a school "founded on the initiative of the Indigenous Elders of the Town Camps of Alice Springs" in the 1970s.¹¹

Impact of Pine Gap Joint Defence Facility on housing in Mparntwe

When Pine Gap was being established in the 1960's, the Gillen area of Mparntwe was selected as a site for both housing and schools to cater for the families from the U.S. who would be coming to work at the base. This meant that "Aboriginal people camping in the area had to relocate or be relocated elsewhere. (The siting of the base itself required similar relocations).¹² This represents another example of the rights of First Nations Peoples' being ignored or set aside, in preference for the demands of the U.S.

The Alice Springs Peace Group noted in 1987, that "the need to provide housing and educational facilities for Pine Gap personnel and their families in Alice Springs is a prime example of community subsidisation of foreign bases in Australia", even if there was some "stimulating effect on the building economy"¹³. The subsidisation extended to high electricity and water bills of some U.S. families, because NT electricity was heavily subsidised. This meant "that a substantial component of the bill [was] at Australian Taxpayers expense"¹⁴; similarly, "the allowable consumption of water before excess charges [were]... attracted [was]...\$50 kl p.a., so that all JDSRF [Pine Gap] houses would be charged excess water bills...Once again the Facility, and hence the taxpayer covers the cost"¹⁵. Effects of this usage of electricity and water is contributing to "long-term ecological problems and costs for Alice Springs"¹⁶.

In their submission, Scientists Against Nuclear Arms (SANA) NT also highlighted in 1987 that: "Government housing is probably provided on a higher priority to Australian personnel working at Pine Gap than it is to local residents; the latter may have to wait in excess of two years for Housing Commission accommodation, living in caravan parks and other forms of temporary accommodation".¹⁷ They noted that "These sorts of priorities are also accorded some other government employees, but represent another hidden cost to Alice Springs of having the base nearby".¹⁸

While public housing is no longer provided to staff working at JDFPG, the issue remains that there is a significant housing shortage in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), so the issue highlighted by SANA NT in 1987 is

¹¹ *Yipirinya School 2021*

¹² *SANA NT 1987, p.8, cited in Alice Springs Town Council 1987*

¹³ *Alice Springs Peace Group 1987, p. 8, cited in Alice Springs Town Council 1987*

¹⁴ *Alice Springs Peace Group, 1987, p.10, cited in Alice Springs Town Council 1987*

¹⁵ *Alice Springs Peace Group 1987, p. 10, cited in Alice Springs Town Council 1987*

¹⁶ *Alice Springs Peace Group 1987, p. 10, cited in Alice Springs Town Council 1987*

¹⁷ *SANA NT 1987, p.9 cited in Alice Springs Town Council 1987*

¹⁸ *SANA NT 1987, p.9 cited in Alice Springs Town Council 1987*

still pertinent today. Specifically, there is currently a significant shortage of rental properties with only 14 private rental properties available on the market in Mparntwe in July 2021. Even professional people with full time employment struggle to secure a rental property.¹⁹

While there are other factors currently at play, such as the huge influx of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) providers into Mparntwe, there are still several hundred U.S. employees from JDFPG accessing housing which contributes to housing shortage in Mparntwe, with pressure on all housing types. The impact of housing shortages is particularly felt by First Nations’ people as they make up the bulk of the people who are homeless (see below) and the majority of applicants waiting for public housing.²⁰

The rate of over-representation of First Nations’ peoples in homelessness figures is stark. While “NT homelessness is estimated at 13,717 persons, a rate 12 times the national average”, First Nations’ people represent “a staggering 88% of all homeless persons, far beyond their share of the population (30%)” in the NT²¹.

There are currently around 1300 applications for public housing in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), only around 10 per cent of whom are seeking a transfer²². This means over 1000 individuals or families are waiting for the scarce public housing, the majority of them First Nations people.²³

Public Housing Wait Times and current applications for Urban Housing (Dec 2020) ²⁴

Region – Mparntwe (Alice Springs)	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom
Wait Time	4 to 6 years	4 to 6 years	6 to 8 years
Current Applications*	578	324	398

Impact of Pine Gap Joint Defence Facility on the Mparntwe Economy

SANA NT also highlighted in their 1987 submission to the Alice Springs Town Council that personnel from the U.S., who work at JDFPG “do not pay income tax in Australia”; school fees were of a “token amount”

¹⁹ Housing Services Manager 2021

²⁰ Central Australian Aboriginal Congress 2018, p.2

²¹ NT Shelter 2020, p. 18

²² NT Government 2020

²³ Central Australian Aboriginal Congress 2018, p.2

²⁴ NT Government 2020

and housing was rent free²⁵ . This changed in 2018, when employees no longer had their housing supplied and they now must “rent or buy their own accommodation.”²⁶

SANA NT pointed out that according to the Lands Department in 1987, “housing occupied by Pine Gap personnel was held in the name of the Commonwealth of Australia” with the U.S. government “presumed to pay Australia for general housing establishment”²⁷ but they identified that numerous factors were hidden.²⁸ “The cost of education, and of the establishment and maintenance of civil facilities such as electricity, water, sewerage, roads, rubbish removal, and any other services” was “borne entirely by the Australian tax-payer”, with the NT Government being subsidised by the Federal Government for these costs – but as SANA NT pointed out at the time “the component of the costs which results from the base is further hidden”.²⁹

Many years of rent free accommodation and low school fees have greatly reduced the contributions from U.S. employees at JDFPG to the Mparntwe economy.

Ongoing concerns from Mparntwe residents regarding presence of JDFPG Pine Gap have been demonstrated by the 1983 Women’s Peace Camp, Women for Survival Protest; the 1985 Bicycles vs USAF Galaxy Action; the 1987 Close the Gap action and the 2002 Desert Peace Protest³⁰ as well as a 2016 protest which was held ahead of the IPAN National Conference.

Activities conducted at the Pine Gap Joint Defence Facility

We are very concerned about the activities that occur at Pine Gap and the consequences for the Mparntwe population, particularly First Nations’ people. We defer to the specific issues and recommendations in the submission by the Alice Springs Peace Action Think Tank (ASPATT), of which we are members, about involvement in drone activity and the role Pine Gap plays regarding nuclear weapons .

Recommendation 1: Because of the disproportionate adverse impacts of military activities on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, governments should actively seek out First Nations voices in defence and foreign affairs policy.

²⁵ SANA NT 1987, p.9, cited in Alice Springs Town Council 1987

²⁶ ABC 2018

²⁷ National Times 1985, cited in SANA NT 1987, p.9, cited in Alice Springs Town Council 1987

²⁸ SANA NT 1987, p.9, cited in Alice Springs Town Council 1987

²⁹ SANA NT 1987, p.9, cited in Alice Springs Town Council 1987

³⁰ Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainability 2021

Risks of U.S. marines' rotation through Darwin during COVID-19 Pandemic

In 2020, after an initial decision by the Minister for Defence Linda Reynolds to postpone rotations of U.S. marines through Darwin, rotations proceeded despite strict international border restrictions established by the Australian Government to protect Australians from the COVID-19 pandemic³¹. The health of Australians was not prioritised ahead of the rotation of U.S. marines, who are involved in training for offensive wars. It appears that the alliance with the U.S. was given greater priority than the health of Australians. Concerns were raised at the time about the possibility of COVID-19 re-entering Australia through U.S. military personnel.³²

Around that time, United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres called for “a global ceasefire amid the current pandemic” and for an immediate cessation of all military operations, however, this call was not heeded by the Australian Government.³³

The fact there are many vulnerable population groups in the NT, particularly First Nations people, meant that the health and wellbeing of all Territorians would have been at grave risk had there been a COVID-19 outbreak. As it was, a U.S. marine tested positive for COVID-19 in July 2020³⁴, and three U.S. marines tested positive across February and April 2021³⁵. While thankful that the U.S. marine rotations have not led to community transmission of COVID-19, we believe that continuing the rotation during this period is a risk that should not have been taken place.

We do not support the U.S. marine rotation through Darwin particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. We do not believe Australia should provide support for the U.S. in its training for offensive wars. Australia should prioritise efforts and resources towards diplomatic solutions to international conflict.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Emergency Public Health Orders established to protect the health of First Nations and other Australians should override defence powers. Rotation of U.S. marines through Darwin should be paused until public health safety can be assured.

³¹ ABC 2020c; ABC 2020d

³² IPAN 2020

³³ United Nations (UN) Secretary General Antonio Guterres, cited in IPAN 2020

³⁴ ABC 2020b

³⁵ Australian Government 2021a; ABC 2021

Impact of military/ defence on all Australians

Current and former ADF personnel

We have concerns about the impact involvement in wars has on the health and wellbeing of ADF personnel and their families, who risk developing mental health issues and suicide. It is important to acknowledge the relationship between the perceptions about reasons military personnel have been deployed to particular military operations and their mental health. Dr Matt Beard, Program Director of the Vincent Fairfax Fellowship at the Cranlana Centre for Ethical Leadership has explained that where ADF personnel are not clear about their purpose in a given conflict, it can significantly impact on their mental health³⁶. As Dr Beard states:

“one of ...the experiences that veterans suffer most with is when they feel like everything that they risked, the people who they cared for, who were harmed, who lost their lives, the civilians who died, that all of that was for no real reason of substance. And so I don’t think that we can necessarily get too ‘chest beaty’ about some of these things, we need to be really careful about the politicisation of conflict and sure that’s not a quick fix, there’s not an easy solution”.³⁷

These findings are pertinent to the wars of the past 20 years in Afghanistan and Iraq. IPAN have pointed out (earlier in 2021) that for all the positive work that may have been done by the ADF in Afghanistan building schools and other infrastructure, after the longest war in Australia’s history, it will likely revert to the pre 2001 status of political leadership.³⁸ Sadly this has since been proven right, in events in Afghanistan in mid-August 2021.

There is also the psychological impact of knowing or later learning that the wars Australia has followed the U.S. into such as Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria were illegal, without endorsement by the UN.³⁹ In addition, there is a growing awareness of crimes against humanity perpetrated in these wars. We believe that the impact on serving personnel who have been exposed to war crimes committed by others puts them in a difficult situation, which may also have impacts on their mental health.

There may also be substantial impacts on the mental health of personnel who have committed war crimes, having to live with the memories of what they did. This also raises the issue of the culture of the ADF that may have bred the conditions that has led to war crimes being committed. The recent Brereton report’s findings of possible war crimes being committed by members of the ADF means these issues are very current.

³⁶ Beard 2021

³⁷ Beard 2021

³⁸ IPAN 2021

³⁹ IPAN 2021

Impact of war globally

About thirty armed conflicts are underway at any given time ⁴⁰ and the costs are staggering:

- “Wars and armed conflicts around the world kill hundreds to thousands of people each year.
- Wars turn families into refugees, forcing people to flee from homes, countries and regions, leaving cultures, traditional medicines and foods.
- Wars turn children and adults into soldiers and victims, which can create an on-going and intergenerational spiral of future conflict.
- Wars destroy lives and economies and the environments on which they depend.”⁴¹

Long term impacts of war include chronic physical and mental health conditions, human displacement, environmental and infrastructure damage, particularly to water supplies and sanitation, and disruption to communities and livelihoods.⁴² Displaced people, particularly women and children “are at high risk of suffering violence, illness and malnutrition”.⁴³ In 2018, “An estimated 13.6 million people were newly displaced due to conflict or persecution”, including 10.8 million individuals displaced within the borders of their own country and 2.8 million new refugees and new asylum-seekers”.⁴⁴ During 2018 there was an increase of 2.3 million in the global population of forcibly displaced people, culminating in the highest total number on record of “almost 70.8 million individuals ...forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations” by the end of 2018.⁴⁵

Up to 80% of refugees are women and children, who are “often drawn from the poorest sections of society”.⁴⁶ In refugee camps people “suffer from food shortages and lack of healthcare, with complications arising during childbirth a leading cause of death for women. Displaced children are at high risk of malnutrition and disease”⁴⁷, with refugee camps also often “chosen as a target by warring groups”.⁴⁸ Children under 18 years were about half the refugee population in 2018, up from 41 per cent in 2009.⁴⁹

“In situations of armed conflict it is vulnerable members of society, such as children, who fare the worst, with civilians making up more than 70% of casualties” in recent conflicts, “mostly women and

⁴⁰ MAPW 2014

⁴¹ MAPW 2014

⁴² MAPW 2014

⁴³ MAPW 2014

⁴⁴ UNHCR 2018

⁴⁵ UNHCR 2018

⁴⁶ MAPW 2021

⁴⁷ MAPW 2021

⁴⁸ MAPW 2021

⁴⁹ UNHCR 2018

children”.⁵⁰ “Existing discrimination on the basis of gender is exacerbated during wartime and this can be seen in the specific effects of armed conflict on women.”⁵¹

“Children as young as seven have been reported as child soldiers. These children are often press-ganged into service and are valued for the fact that they are readily controlled by adults”.⁵² Women and children affected by war often experience difficulty in re-integrating into post-war society.⁵³

Impact on nations of US/Australian wars in the name of the Alliance

This is all very disturbing, and leads us to reflect as a nation, and it is critical that we embark on a new way to reduce the carnage of war. We are therefore concerned that Australia has followed the USA into wars over more than half a century, including in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Iraq War

- There have been between 186,000 and 209,000 civilian deaths from violence since 2003 according to the conservative independent assessment by Iraq Body Count⁵⁴. The medical journal Lancet, calculated that by 2006 there had been 600,000 civilian deaths, “with subsequent studies validating and expanding this number to well over one million”.⁵⁵
- “Successive waves of violence since 2003—insurgency, airstrikes, terrorism, communal violence—exacted a terrible toll by displacing people and destroying homes, infrastructure and livelihoods”. This contributed to the alarming situation where in 2018, 8.7 million Iraqis out of a population of 37 million “are in need of humanitarian assistance, 2.6 million of whom [were]...displaced” and the country is “reliant on food imports” due to war and sanctions over 5 years.⁵⁶

The Afghanistan War

- As of April 2021, “more than 71,000 Afghan and Pakistani civilians are estimated to have died as a direct result of the war”, with “a massive increase in civilian casualties” resulting from a relaxation in the US’s “rules of engagement for airstrikes in Afghanistan”.⁵⁷
- The people of Afghanistan face the situation where their land is “contaminated with unexploded ordnance”, which has led to death and injuries for tens of thousands of people, in particular

⁵⁰ MAPW 2021

⁵¹ MAPW 2021

⁵² MAPW 2021

⁵³ MAPW 2021

⁵⁴ IRAQ Body Count 2021

⁵⁵ Dunning and Doyle 2018

⁵⁶ Dunning and Doyle 2018

⁵⁷ Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs 2021

children simply going about daily life.⁵⁸ The war has also exacerbated the effects of poverty, malnutrition, poor sanitation, lack of access to health care, and environmental degradation on Afghans' health".⁵⁹

- It is also of extreme concern, that "The CIA has armed and funded Afghan militia groups who have been implicated in grave human rights abuses and killings of civilians".⁶⁰
- In 2020, the Brereton inquiry highlighted the disturbing report of 39 murders by Australian special forces on service in Afghanistan.⁶¹
- We also draw your attention to an article by Photo Journalist Andrew Quilty as a further reference: [*The worst form of defence: New revelations of Australian war crimes in Afghanistan | The Monthly*](#)

The Vietnam War

- Australia committed over 42,000 troops to the US war in Vietnam between 1966 and 1971 in the climate of uncertainty and fear that had shaped Australian conceptions of Asia since the mid-nineteenth century.⁶² The Cold War and Mao's victory in China heightened Australian fears of Asia and led to distorted images of postcolonial nationalist movements in Southeast Asia and their significance for Australia.⁶³ Rather than viewing decolonization as an indigenous effort to achieve national independence and improve welfare, Australian policymakers saw events in Southeast Asia as part of an aggressive Chinese effort to assert communist power.⁶⁴ Australia's then Minister of External Affairs, Richard Casey, claimed in 1954 that: "With the black cloud of Communist China hanging to the north, we must make sure that our children do not end up pulling rickshaws with hammer and sickle signs on their sides".⁶⁵ These fears and perceptions led to bipartisan Australian support for Australia to back US forces in Vietnam.⁶⁶
- This began 50 years of Australian backing of the US in its conflicts, with Australia in the "militarily marginal but ideologically indispensable" support team. As head of Australia's armed forces, General Peter Cosgrove conceded that during the Vietnam War, 'although the Australian army acted in an honourable way, this is not to say that what we did was sensible.'⁶⁷

⁵⁸ Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs 2021

⁵⁹ Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs 2021

⁶⁰ Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs 2021

⁶¹ ABC 2020e

⁶² Bradley 1994

⁶³ Bradley 1994

⁶⁴ Bradley 1994

⁶⁵ Bradley 1994

⁶⁶ Bradley 1994

⁶⁷ Beeson 2003

Future of the Australia- U.S. alliance

Many Australians question the way Australia fulfills what it considers its obligations to the U.S. under the alliance, particularly regarding our involvement in U.S.-led wars. For example, recent Lowy Institute polling shows that a majority of Australians do not believe that Australia should simply follow the U.S. into wars.

2020 Lowy Institute Polling found:

- 63% of Australians disagree that Australia should act in accordance with our security alliance with the U.S. if it means supporting U.S. military action in Asia, for example, in a conflict between China and Taiwan (34 % disagree)
- 68% of Australians agree that “Despite support for the alliance, Australia should only support U.S. military action if it is authorised by the United Nations” (17% disagree)
- 58% of Australians disagree that “Australia should act in accordance with our security alliance with the U.S. if it means supporting U.S. military action in the Middle East, for example, against Iran” (40% disagree)⁶⁸

2021 Lowy Polling found:

- 57% of Australians believe “Australia should remain neutral” in the instance of military conflict between the U.S and China, while 41% believe that “Australia should support” the U.S. in the event of such a military conflict”⁶⁹

Polling shows that Australians do not believe that Australia’s good relationship with the U.S. should be at the expense of our relationship with China.

- The 2021 Lowy Poll, found that 72% of Australian believe that “it is possible for Australia to have a good relationship with China and a good relationship with the United States at the same time”⁷⁰
- 2019 polling showed that there was not a big difference in opinion on whether Australia should put a higher priority on maintaining strong relations with the U.S. or China even if this might harm our relations the other country. 50% of Australians believed we should put a higher priority on maintaining strong relations with the U.S. and 44% believed we should put a higher priority on building stronger relations with China.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Lowy Institute 2020

⁶⁹ Lowy Institute 2021

⁷⁰ Lowy Institute 2021

⁷¹ Lowy Institute 2019

Interestingly, in response to a survey question asking Australians to name which country (selecting from 9 countries⁷²) that they consider to be Australia's best friend, the U.S. declined from 35% support in 2014 to 19% support in 2019. New Zealand came out on top in 2019, preferred by 59% of Australians (up from 32% from 2014). While Donald Trump's presidency may have contributed to these results, the increased support for New Zealand was greater than the decreased support for the U.S., as well as the combined decrease in support for the U.S. and China.⁷³

Concerns regarding Australia following the U.S. into U.S.-led wars

There has long been concern among Australians about Australia entering U.S.-led wars. In 2003, there were 600,000 Australians who protested against Australia following the U.S. to war in Iraq. People protested in capitals, major cities and towns around Australia and the Sydney demonstration included 10,000 trade unionists. Several polls in 2002 and 2003 revealed that around two thirds of Australian people did not support Australia's involvement in military action against Iraq without United Nations approval.

A 2003 Nielson poll revealed:

- 62% of people said "Australia should be involved in a conflict only if approved by the UN"
- One third of people "believed war against Iraq was not acceptable under any circumstances."⁷⁴

A March 2003 poll reported in Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Group Reporting Conflict in Iraq found

- 68% oppose Australia's involvement in military action against Iraq without United Nations approval, consistent with the Nielson Poll.⁷⁵

In 2002 and 2003 Roy Morgan Polls regarding military force used to depose Saddam Hussein, *seeking responses to the question "About Australians being part of an American military force used to depose Saddam Hussein, do you approve or disapprove of Australians being part of the American military force?"* found:

Sept 2002: 57% did not approve; 43% approved

Dec 2002: 54% did not approve; 46% approved

March 2003 (just days after the start of the Iraq War): 48% did not approve; 52% approved⁷⁶

⁷² Note: The nine countries were the U.S.A, the U.K, New Zealand, Japan, China, Indonesia, India, South Korea and Singapore.

⁷³ Lowy Institute 2019

⁷⁴ Nielson 2003

⁷⁵ Parliament of Australia 2003

⁷⁶ Roy Morgan 2002 & 2003, cited in Roy Morgan 2015

The lack of appetite for war amongst a large proportion of Australians is also reflected in polling around Budget Priorities. Before the 2019 Federal Election, there was more support for increasing expenditure on health (81%), education (74%) and social welfare (47%) than on defence (31%). More people (16%) would choose to decrease spending on defence, rather than reduce spending on health (3%) or education (3%).⁷⁷

We believe that now is a critical time for Australia to take steps towards making independent foreign policy decisions and as part of this to review the ANZUS Treaty.

RECOMMENDATION 3: A high level review of the ANZUS Treaty and other contributors to the Australia-U.S. alliance, including its costs and benefits, the extent to which Australia is bound to assist U.S. in conflict and the differential relationship between Australia and US and Australia and New Zealand should be conducted.

War Powers Reform

In shifting away from war as a solution to international conflict, we believe that reform is required in relation to Australian war powers. Currently “a prime minister can send Australian troops into action without democratic constraint, parliamentary debate, or public accountability.”⁷⁸

According to Paul Barratt AO, former Secretary of Defence and President of Australians for War Powers Reform (AWPR), “The disastrous Iraq conflict and the drawn out Afghanistan deployment have made people rethink how we as a nation view overseas wars”.⁷⁹

War powers reform would align with the preferences of Australians, of whom 83.3% want decisions about troop deployment into armed conflict abroad to be made by Parliament (November 2020 Roy Morgan opinion poll)⁸⁰. Only 16.7% of Australians favour the current system whereby the Prime Minister and the executive decide if Australia goes to war.⁸¹ Barrett argues that the “survey result is an overwhelming demand for more oversight and transparency”.⁸² We wholeheartedly believe that war powers reform is needed as a matter of urgency.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Australia should enact war powers reform to ensure that decisions to send Australian troops into armed conflict require Parliamentary debate and approval.

⁷⁷ Respondents were asked, re the federal budget. If you were making up the budget for the federal government this year, would you personally increase spending, decrease spending or keep spending about the same for: Health, Education, Social Welfare, Defence, Border Protection and Foreign Aid

⁷⁸ *Australians for War Powers Reform 2015*

⁷⁹ Barrett 2020, cited in *Australians for War Powers Reform, 2020*

⁸⁰ *Australians for War Powers Reform 2021*

⁸¹ *Australians for War Powers Reform 2020*

⁸² Barrett 2020, cited in *Australians for War Powers Reform, 2020*

A new vision for Australia: Australia as a proud contributor to a just world⁸³

Australia could be a leading light in our region, do good across the globe and be a “proud contributor to a just world”⁸⁴. This would require a significant shift in the approach of the ADF to a more proactive role in promoting peace through nonviolence, as well as legislative reform of war powers, so that decisions to go to war face greater scrutiny, leading ultimately to fewer decisions to go to war.

Consultation by Australia Remade conducted since 2017, where they engaged in a process of “Listening to hundreds of people, from many walks of life” found a range of shared hopes and dreams for Australia’s future.⁸⁵ They found that one priority identified by Australians is that Australia as a nation stands on its own feet in developing “a fair and just approach to working with other countries”.⁸⁶

Critical feedback provided in the consultation was that Australia “not blindly follow others, no matter how powerful”. This is a strong statement from Australians that reform is needed, for example, in relationship between Australia and the U.S. We believe that for too long Australia has seemed to unquestionably agree to participate in U.S.-led wars.

In particular a common thread in the responses regarding the kind of Australia people hope to see is a belief that our country be “active in building a safer, more peaceful, more united globe...uphold[ing] the international laws and conventions that make our world fairer and more secure for all people.”⁸⁷

A priority focus from respondents was that Australia “work in partnership with countries tackling poverty, injustice and disadvantage...[with an underpinning] belief that children growing up in East Timor and Uganda are no less deserving of health, education or safety than children growing up in Sydney and Melbourne...[and that] We put our money where our values are. We not only welcome refugees, we do whatever we can to make the world right for everyone, so people don’t need to flee their homes in the first place.”

The incorporation of a nonviolent peace approach in the function of the ADF, as outlined below could be a component of efforts towards Australia being a proud contributor to a just world.

Alternative peacekeeping roles for the Australian Defence Force

Civil society organisations have been engaged in unarmed civilian protection (UCP)⁸⁸ since the early 1980s, for example Witness for Peace and Peace Brigades International.⁸⁹ Recent examples of successful

⁸³ Australia Remade 2021

⁸⁴ Australia Remade 2021

⁸⁵ Australia Remade 2021

⁸⁶ Australia Remade 2021

⁸⁷ Australia Remade 2021

⁸⁸ Unarmed civilian protection (UCP) refers to the use of unarmed civilians to do ‘peacekeeping’. (Source <https://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/unarmed-civilian-protection#:~:text=Unarmed%20civilian%20protection%20is%20a%20generic%20term%20that,UCP%2C%20using%20a%20variety%20of%20methods%20and%20approaches>.)

peacekeeping involves unarmed civilians deployed by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union (EU).⁹⁰

Dozens of international civil society organisations are presently involved in this kind of work in conflict zones around the world.”⁹¹ In fact, “the first international peacekeeping interventions by the United Nations [UN] were unarmed ‘observer missions’, using military officers but without weapons”.⁹²

Since 2002 Nonviolent Peaceforce, an international NGO has trained ‘Nonviolent Peaceforce Workers’ as “unarmed civilian protection officers local to the conflict zone and from around the world where they prevent violence”.⁹³ The work of Nonviolent Peaceforce is described in greater detail below.

Current ADF roles in peacekeeping missions

We note that the ADF has already had troops engaged in overseas operations in non-combat roles. One example is Operation Mazurka, where troops play a role in assisting the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai, Egypt, overseeing long-standing peace agreements by monitoring the Egypt Israel border, preparing daily operational briefings and supporting the Headquarters.⁹⁴

Another example has been the stationing of troops in the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) as part of Operation PALATE II. This was established in 2002 as “a political mission ... to promote reconciliation and rapprochement, and manage humanitarian relief, recovery, and reconstruction in Afghanistan”.⁹⁵ It involved two Army Officers “as military advisers within the UNAMA Military Adviser Unit”, “maintaining contact and liaison with all military forces throughout Afghanistan on behalf of UNAMA”.⁹⁶ These examples demonstrate how ADF can play a peacekeeping role, reducing and avoiding violence.

Nonviolent Peaceforce – An alternative approach to achieving peaceful resolutions

Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) workers, however, take on a different role to these ADF ‘peacekeeping’ roles. They are “unarmed civilian protection officers from the conflict zone and around the world, preventing violence”.⁹⁷ NP Workers are also different from UN Peacekeepers, as “UN peacekeepers are not trained in nonviolence and frequently act as an armed force to restrain civil disorder or violence at the request of the UN Security Council”, and are “not trained to resolve underlying tensions or

⁸⁹ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2021a*

⁹⁰ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2021a*

⁹¹ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2021a*

⁹² *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2021a*

⁹³ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2021a, 2021b*

⁹⁴ *Australian Government 2014, p.44*

⁹⁵ *Australian Government 2014, p.45*

⁹⁶ *Australian Government 2014, p.45*

⁹⁷ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2021a*

conflicts”⁹⁸. A further limitation of armed peacekeeping is that the peace that armed peacekeepers are seeking “is not grounded in the knowledge, practices and traditions of the people directly involved in the conflict”, but instead is imposed externally, “introducing temporary resolutions from the outside” and is often applied in a relatively uniform formulaic way⁹⁹, which may not necessarily take into account regional differences or the type of conflict.

By contrast, NP work is preventive in nature, rather than being reactive, utilising civilians who are trained in techniques of nonviolence and it works to enable “conflicting groups to enter into a discussion where all parties are heard and real solutions can be found”.¹⁰⁰

Mission and goals of Nonviolent Peaceforce

Nonviolent Peaceforce is a non-profit NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.¹⁰¹ NP’s head office is in Belgium, with legal entities in the U.S., France and Switzerland. Its first conflict zone deployment was in 2002 in Sri Lanka.¹⁰² The mission of NP is “to protect civilians in violent conflicts through unarmed strategies, build peace side by side with local communities, and advocate for the wider adoption of these approaches to safeguard human lives and dignity”.¹⁰³ NP workers generally enter conflict zones after being invited “by credible local organizations committed to nonviolent solutions” where they “meet key players, including commanders from opposing sides, local police, religious, business, and civil society leaders..[and] live and work in communities within conflict zones alongside local people”.¹⁰⁴

Goals of NP are:

- “To create a space for fostering lasting peace.
- To protect civilians, especially those made vulnerable because of the conflict
- To develop and promote the theory and practice of unarmed civilian peacekeeping so that it may be adopted as a policy option by decision makers and public institutions.
- To build the pool of professionals able to join peace teams through regional activities, training, and maintaining a roster of trained, available people”.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2014*

⁹⁹ *Julian, 2018, cited in Hewitt, 2018*

¹⁰⁰ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2014*

¹⁰¹ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2021a*

¹⁰² *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2021a, Nonviolent Peaceforce 2021b*

¹⁰³ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2021c*

¹⁰⁴ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2021c*

¹⁰⁵ *DCAF Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, International Security Sector Advisory Team 2021*

Nonviolent Peaceforce methods used in Civilian Peacekeeping

- “Proactive engagement: Being physically present in a conflict zone and forging connections with all stakeholders.
- Protective accompaniment: Providing one-on-one protection to individuals or groups under threat, such as human rights defenders, journalists, leaders from targeted minority groups, internally-displaced persons and returnees, and unaccompanied children.
- Relationship-building: Forging the personal connections that underlie all unarmed civilian peacekeeping methods. Relationships with all stakeholders help to open channels of communication
- Rumour control: Tracking down rumours about imminent threats. Separating rumour from fact can reduce tensions.
- Early Warning Early Response: Monitoring early clues that violence could break out, so as to have time to defuse a situation.
- Interpositioning: Placing team members between conflicting parties in order to deter violence. This is done strategically and in close communication with armed groups, with whom the peacekeepers have already developed connections.
- Monitoring: Observing compliance to an agreement to ensure accountability and promote effective implementation.
- Capacity building: Supporting local groups as they identify their needs and interests, and helping them to develop strategies to protect themselves.”¹⁰⁶

NP teams include both experienced and new Peaceworkers with appropriate experience, skills, aptitude and attitude. Many are veterans of conflict zones. Recent NP deployments include:

Iraq: Presence in refugee camps to help internally displaced persons (IDPs) to “feel safe and secure, and improve their access to services”, where people “face some of the greatest challenges to being able to return to their homes”. “By consistently patrolling day and night, the NP Camps Team decreases violence and harassment, builds trust in camps, shares timely information about accessing services, finds cases to refer to other humanitarian organizations, and maintains the camps’ civilian character”. As required, NP provides protective accompaniments for IDPs [internally displaced persons] under threat or “at risk of physical

¹⁰⁶ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2012, p.2*

violence, or need access to services”. NP convenes regular meetings of groups to discuss protection concerns.¹⁰⁷

Myanmar: NP assists local participants with civilian protection and building peace in conflict regions, “training civil society and ethnic armed groups in ceasefire monitoring and civilian protection”.¹⁰⁸ “NP supports women and youth to become leaders, training them to respond to issues that are important to their communities” thus “creating opportunities for discussions between groups and allowing civilians to participate in the early stages of Myanmar’s peace process as well as local decision-making”.¹⁰⁹ NP collaborated with USAID to illustrate the wide range of women and organizations engaged in peace-related activities across Myanmar, with infographic maps to counter the claim that there are no women in Myanmar with the expertise needed to resolve longstanding conflicts.¹¹⁰

United States: Provide direct protection for civilians at particular flashpoints for violence (e.g. trial announcements, demonstrations, elections), e.g. “250 volunteers trained and deployed to provide protection at 30 polling sites in St. Paul and Minneapolis” during the 2020 election.¹¹¹

South Sudan: NP Workers have brought rival chieftains to the bargaining table, resolving territorial disputes between cattle-grazing groups and crop-farmers.¹¹²

The Congo: Peacekeepers have helped set up patrols, cell phone networks and worked with armed United Nations units to eliminate the rape of women in the Congo.¹¹³

Sri Lanka: Rival religious factions have been brought under control – largely due to intervention and negotiation with NP Peacekeepers. They have also nearly eliminated the abduction of young boys, which has been a practice intended to get boys to serve as soldiers.¹¹⁴

Guatemala: For journalists and other threatened individuals, they have served as unarmed “bodyguards” by accompanying them in high-risk situations.¹¹⁵

See also [MIR PEACE MAP 2.0.6 \(selkirk.ca\)](#)

¹⁰⁷ *Nonviolent peaceforce 2021d*

¹⁰⁸ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2021d*

¹⁰⁹ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2021d*

¹¹⁰ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2021d*

¹¹¹ *Nonviolent peaceforce 2021d*

¹¹² *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2014*

¹¹³ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2014*

¹¹⁴ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2014*

¹¹⁵ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2014*

“NP peacekeepers connect vulnerable communities and local peaceworkers to national and international resources, provide safe places for conflicting groups to meet, and facilitate dialogue, resolving conflicts at the lowest levels to prevent an escalation into violence.”¹¹⁶

Economic impact of Nonviolent Peaceforce

With an annual budget of around \$17 million, the NP operates its global reach on a shoestring, but it provides “a cost effective way to reduce violence. It is much cheaper than sending in soldiers to keep the peace”.¹¹⁷ The cost of maintaining an armed force is incredibly expensive with figures from 2014 cited by Dr Mark Thomson, a senior analyst from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, revealing the cost of sending one soldier to a country like the UAE was about \$670,000 per year.¹¹⁸ NP’s total budget of \$17 million per year is equivalent to approximately 25 soldiers (based on the above 2014 figures) but for NP this covers staff in six offices around the world¹¹⁹, allowing response to diverse conflict situations.

An investment of funding in nonviolent approaches, of even 0.1% of the projected Defence Budget (which is increasing \$70 billion over 10 years)¹²⁰, would provide \$70m per year. Such investment could make a profound difference in Australia and overseas without impacting the overall defence budget.

Effectiveness of Nonviolent Peaceforce

The NP has been effective even when few in number and in the face of gun-wielding combatants.¹²¹ Generally “half of the trained Peacekeepers are from the country where the conflict is”, and their local connections and knowledge of local languages are key assets in working towards peace.¹²² “Women Peacekeepers are often the most effective in the field” often working “with the United Nations to increase patrols locally, and advocate at the international level to negotiate a settlement”.¹²³ With the main focus being the power of presence, aided by high visibility, this assists in resolving conflict.¹²⁴

In addition, NP workers can “put pressure on the decision makers who are higher up the chain of command”. Usually “perpetrators of the violence... are not acting alone” but “following orders from tribal chiefs or higher authorities within the faction”.¹²⁵ With those at the top often “worried about their international image...those higher on the chain of command can be persuaded to halt violence”.¹²⁶

¹¹⁶ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2014*

¹¹⁷ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2021e; Duncan 2013 cited in Hoglund, 2013*

¹¹⁸ *Thomson 2014, cited in Sydney Morning Herald 2014*

¹¹⁹ *Nonviolent Peaceforce 2012*

¹²⁰ *ABC 2020a; and own calculations*

¹²¹ *Hoglund 2013*

¹²² *Duncan 2013, cited in Hoglund 2013*

¹²³ *Duncan 2013, quoted in Hoglund 2013*

¹²⁴ *Duncan 2013, quoted in Hoglund 2013*

¹²⁵ *Duncan 2013, quoted in Hoglund, 2013*

¹²⁶ *Duncan 2013, quoted in Hoglund, 2013*

The rise in prominence of International Criminal Courts globally, “even in remote, violence-torn areas” and the “impact of international courts of law, such as war criminal actions in conflicts such as those in Serbia and Bosnia, are carrying more weight internationally.¹²⁷ “Peacekeepers can and will serve as witnesses for international courts which gives activists additional leverage.”¹²⁸

NP workers are effective because they are “trained to follow strict security protocol” and “They are not there to stop a bullet - that only works once”.¹²⁹ In the first decade of work in conflict zones, peacekeepers had only sustained two injuries.¹³⁰ NP have received international recognition for their work, with them receiving the Luxembourg Peace Prize, ‘Outstanding Peace Organization’ award in 2018.¹³¹

Another peacemaker group doing similar work is Peace Brigades International (PBI) who “provide protection, support and recognition to local human rights defenders who work in areas of repression and conflict and have requested... [their] support”.¹³² Currently PBI protects human rights defenders in Colombia; Guatemala; Honduras, Kenya; Indonesia; Mexico; Nepal and Costa Rica (with exiled Nicaraguan human rights defenders).¹³³

RECOMMENDATION 5: For practitioners, policy makers academics and Government to actively engage with learnings of the Nonviolent Peaceforce global review of good practices in the field of UCP – see <https://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/what-we-do/developing-and-expanding-the-field>

RECOMMENDATION 6: The peace movement in Australia should support and advocate for wider adoption of nonviolent approaches in situations of conflict to safeguard human lives and dignity.

Investment in diplomacy as an alternative to military solutions

Geoff Gallop, Professor and Director of the Graduate School of Government at the University of Sydney and Former Premier of Western Australia, in the context of the current situation in Afghanistan (August 2021), highlighted that “one issue that needs addressing is the impulse to a military solution every time there’s a problem”¹³⁴. He described the “unbelievable military strength” of the U.S military, and its “unbelievable capacity to cause great harm... to communities all over the world”, but that the military solutions have not worked and he believes that if the U.S. is going to play a constructive role in the world

¹²⁷ Duncan 2013, quoted in Høglund, 2013

¹²⁸ Duncan 2013, quoted in Høglund, 2013

¹²⁹ Duncan 2013, quoted in Høglund, 2013

¹³⁰ Duncan 2013, quoted in Høglund, 2013

¹³¹ Luxembourg Peace Prize 2018

¹³² Peace Brigades International 2021

¹³³ Peace Brigades International 2021

¹³⁴ Gallop 2021

that they need to “rethink this trigger-happy business”, as it cannot produce the intended results and in fact has caused great harm to U.S society.¹³⁵ There are significant lessons in this for Australia, given our propensity to follow the U.S. into their wars.

Australia currently spends 22 times more on preparing for war (\$32,471m in 2018/19) than on working for peace (\$1,476m).¹³⁶ The lack of expenditure devoted to working for peace is reflected in Australia’s limited diplomatic engagement, having the second lowest number of diplomatic posts of OECD nations 118, significantly below the average of 196.¹³⁷ Less than one quarter of DFAT staff are based overseas, and budget estimates show the proportion of government spending allocated to diplomacy in 2023-24 is expected to be less than half its level in 1995-96.¹³⁸ “The proportion of total Commonwealth spending allocated to diplomacy has fallen from 0.38% in 1995-96 to 0.22% in 2018-19. That is, the proportion of Commonwealth funding used for diplomacy has declined during the last quarter century by 42%”.¹³⁹

Professor John Langmore (Melbourne University) has stated in this context that: “Yet active diplomacy is the principal means available to every country for avoiding violent conflict. If you want to avoid violence and to attempt to resolve a conflict you have to talk about it. That is the principal purpose of foreign policy. Yet the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs has been starved of funds – at the same time as Australian military expenditure has been doubling and spending on spying and surveillance has multiplied about fourfold.”¹⁴⁰

Alex Oliver, Former Director of Research at the Lowy Institute, described the 2020-21 Federal Budget as reaffirming “Australia’s skewed priorities” with Australia “skimping on diplomacy while investing heavily in defence”.¹⁴¹ Worryingly “funding for diplomacy will fall to just 0.08% of GDP by 2024” and expenditure on aid is at an all-time low, meaning defence expenditure “is on track to cross the ‘magic’ 2% of GDP” (in 2020) “increasing steadily across the forward estimates”.¹⁴² We must ask how this situation has occurred and consider if the alliance has played a role in driving military solutions as first option over diplomacy.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Australia should re-establish itself as a leading diplomatic nation through high level diplomatic positions with all our trade partners, and throughout our region and in other priority regions and nations to promote global stability and peace

¹³⁵ Gallop 2021

¹³⁶ Wareham 2021, cited in Toohey, 2021; Langmore, Miletic, Martin, & Breen 2020

¹³⁷ Langmore 2021, cited in Toohey, 2021

¹³⁸ Langmore 2021, cited in Toohey, 2021

¹³⁹ Langmore 2019

¹⁴⁰ Langmore 2019

¹⁴¹ Oliver 2020

¹⁴² Oliver 2020

One way to challenge this impulse to turn to a military solution is to strengthen and promote options for nonviolent responses. This could be done, for example, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Department of Defence, actively promoting the work of groups such as Nonviolent Peaceforce, in its work within countries experiencing or likely to experience conflict, to ensure communities are aware of the options available that they can draw upon to assist in preventing violence and avoiding the use of military as a solution.

It is encouraging to note that the “permanent missions of Uruguay and Australia to the UN” hosted a UN event in 2018 focused on unarmed civilian protection (UCP), which provided persuasive evidence that unarmed civilian protection works.¹⁴³ Now more than ever, this kind of approach is needed across the globe, and there are opportunities for Australia to put energy and resources into engaging in a process of exploring UCP as a legitimate alternative to military responses as the first option.

In addition, the Australian Government has recently stated that it “recognises the importance of peacebuilding and conflict prevention in their ‘Partnership for Recovery Strategy’, which identifies stability as a key pillar of Australia’s development program”¹⁴⁴ and Australia has also been a long-term supporter of “the UN Sustaining Peace agenda co-chairing with Angola, the landmark ‘Sustaining Peace Twin Resolution’ in 2016.”¹⁴⁵ These are encouraging signs that we believe can be built on.

Now seems an opportune time for Australia to further engage in the UCP movement given that Nonviolent Peaceforce has recently commenced a process for a global review of good practices in the field of UCP, “through a process of key stakeholders reflecting on “the needs, successes and failure of UCP”. The process has been put in place to research and document the experiences of organizations on the ground in the last decades, in order to articulate proven, effective strategies methods and “strengthen and grow” the relatively new field of UCP. Australia should seek an opportunity to actively engage in this process as much as possible. Part of this process is an upcoming inaugural UCP Good Practices conference (November 2021) to discuss findings of case studies and consultation that has occurred over recent years and improve practices and validate good practices that can be increased and replicated. In addition, there may be an opportunity for Australia to explore having representation in the soon to be formed international UCP network, that will be established at the 2021 UCP conference.

Further work could be done at the national level to promote UCP work, including through advocating for the promotion of nonviolent peacework as a legitimate career option throughout Australia. Currently there is significant Government promotion of careers in the Army, Navy and Airforce at career expos and

¹⁴³ Hewitt 2018

¹⁴⁴ Australian Government 2021c

¹⁴⁵ Australian Government 2021c

career days at schools, for example. There is an opportunity for the Australian Government to provide equal or in fact greater weight to careers that are based on nonviolent approaches to resolving conflict.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Departments of Defence and Education should provide support for career expos and advisors to promote careers based on nonviolent approaches to resolving conflict to complement careers in defence.

Role for the Peace Movement in promoting Nonviolent approaches to resolving conflict

We have noted with great interest the recent (April 2021) launch of the Initiative for Peacebuilding, at the University of Melbourne. This initiative “brings together research, teaching, and policy development from a wide range of disciplines to support effective engagement in conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the Indo-Pacific region” and “will provide Australia with a nationally based, regionally grounded, high-quality, professional non-government peace centre”. We look forward to the ways this Centre may inform peace groups and Government regarding evidence-based approaches to peacebuilding.

Incorporating Nonviolence Principles into Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Defence

In addition, separate to the work of Nonviolent Peaceforce teams, but complementing the existing work done on the ground, we call for adoption of the principles of nonviolent peaceforce work into the ethos and operations of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Defence.

A ‘Nonviolent Peace and Stability Unit’ within DFAT or the Defence Department(s), would provide government with advice on nonviolent options in response to global, regional and national Australian security and stability threats. The unit would be an independent unit funded from within the DFAT or the Defence Budget, assessed against outcomes. Roles could include:

- i. Advise government on nonviolent and other alternatives to current combative responses to situations of conflict
- ii. Provide avenues for informed discussion and debate on Australian, regional and global security issues
- iii. Train Nonviolent Peace Workers to act as third-party mediators in localised conflict – see points under ‘Development of ADF civilian teams using nonviolent approaches to addressing conflict’ below.

- iv. Encourage discussion, research and use of nonviolent action and processes within the military, government and wider community, to inform existing and potential conflicts that may impact on the stability and security of Australians.
- v. Have the power to scrutinise all Cabinet submissions and legislation relating to foreign affairs and defence to ensure that diplomatic/peaceful options are considered before the use of military force (similar to the way in which environment issues, for example, must be considered in all cabinet submissions/legislation).
- vi. Recommend strategic thinking and action for consideration by Cabinet, Parliament, DFAT, the Department of Defence and other departments
- vii. Undertake research to inform defence related decision making, such as cost benefit analysis of outcomes of military and nonviolent interventions, noting human, social, financial and opportunity costs; addressing who benefits from war and decisions on war.
- viii. Encourage education, understanding and research regarding how nonviolence could be used to promote national, regional and global security goals.
- ix. Ensure the training of all ADF recruits in nonviolent peace principles as a priority, to reduce or avoid the use of violence wherever possible

RECOMMENDATION 9: Australian should establish a Nonviolent Peace and Stability Unit within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [DFAT] or Department of Defence.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Military and foreign affairs training should provide knowledge, skills and experience in relation to nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution and transformation.

Research is needed to inform anti-terrorism campaigns whose impacts can disenfranchise, alienate or frighten people into choosing violence, rather than building solidarity and peace. A Nonviolent Peace and Stability Unit could provide analysis and advice on the potential impact of Australian involvement in military action, both on the areas of conflict and in Australia.

Development of ADF civilian teams using nonviolent approaches to addressing conflict

In addition, we believe that there is a role for the ADF in engaging trained Australian nonviolent peace workers who could:

- Act as unarmed third-party mediators in localised conflict, being visible at the conflict location to facilitate communication¹⁴⁶;
- Protect civilians, without choosing sides in the conflict (a guiding principle for NP work)¹⁴⁷; and
- Carry out other nonviolent peace work (Refer also to p.20 above regarding methods of unarmed civilian peacekeeping)

This could include providing Australian and other governments with knowledge and skills to assist them in nonviolent or less violent management or resolution of local, regional and global conflicts.

The Australian Civilian Corps in ‘Australia Assists’ program

There already is Australian Legislation that provides a framework for the existence of a civilian teams in areas of conflict – in the Australian Civilian Corps Act 2011¹⁴⁸, which was amended in the Australian Civilian Corps Amendment Act 2013.¹⁴⁹ This was an initiative designed to “rapidly deploy specialists to countries affected by natural disaster or conflict” in order “to contribute to Australia’s efforts to assist stabilisation and recovery in affected countries” and to be able to respond to alarming situations with the urgency required.¹⁵⁰

When the concept of the Australian Civilian Corps was introduced, it was designed to have “a register of up to 500 civilian specialists, ready to respond to requests for assistance from affected countries”.

The specialists were to be sought from six fields of expertise including:

“Security, justice and reconciliation
 Machinery of government
 Essential service restoration
 Economic stability
 Community and social capacity building
 Stabilisation and recovery management.”

The specialists recruited by the Australian Civilian Corp were to be people who were in regular employment and would remain so until they were required for and offered a deployment. Examples of the kind of work intended include support as “election observers in the run-up to, during, and following...elections” in a country that is recovering from a situation of conflict.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ Duncan 2013, quoted in Høglund, 2013

¹⁴⁷ Nonviolent Peaceforce 2015, p.4

¹⁴⁸ Australian Government 2011

¹⁴⁹ Australian Government 2013

¹⁵⁰ Australian Government 2010, p.6

¹⁵¹ Australian Government 2010, p.6

Subsequent to its inception, the work of the Australian Civilian Corps was incorporated into the work of the Australia Assists program managed by RedR Australia, an international humanitarian response agency who are funded by the Australian Government (a 7-year, \$80.7 million program).¹⁵² This program “deploys technical specialists to work with governments, multilateral agencies and communities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters and conflict” in “geographic and thematic areas of priority in line with Australia's humanitarian responsibilities and ... [its] national interests”.¹⁵³

Australia Assists “involves a stand-by roster of over 750 Australian technical specialists, reflecting the skills and experience required in the multifaceted contexts of preparedness, response, and recovery”.¹⁵⁴ As an example of their work, Australia Assists has provided a critical role in the scaling up of Australia’s humanitarian assistance in response to COVID-19 pandemic in the Indo-Pacific region.¹⁵⁵

It appears that with the incorporation of the work of the Australian Civilian Corps there has been somewhat of a shift from its original intent, with it no longer being a separate entity. The fact remains, however that the Australian Civilian Corps Act 2011, and the Australian Civilian Corps Amendment Act 2013, remain in force and could provide a legislative basis for some of the recommendations in this submission. Given that the legislative framework still exists, we believe that one option for the Australian Government would be to establish a similar stand-alone entity (an Australian Nonviolent Civilian Corps) to what was intended with the Australian Civilian Corps, but that this entity be on an equal footing with the Australian military and be used to send civilians to assist in the resolution of conflicts in order to reduce or avoid the use of the military, in a similar way to the role of Nonviolent Peaceforce.

RECOMMENDATION 11: Australia should establish a Nonviolent Civilian Corps, under the existing Australian Civilian Corps Act 2011 and its 2013 amendment on an equal footing with the military to assist in the resolution of conflicts and reduce or avoid the use of military forces.

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¹⁵² Australian Government 2021b

¹⁵³ Australian Government 2021b

¹⁵⁴ Australian Government 2021b

¹⁵⁵ Australian Government 2021b

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