



Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN)

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Background document for public use ('Work in Progress')

'Make Peace a Priority' Campaign

Strengthening local and international relationships

The 'Make Peace a Priority' campaign proposal aims to enhance Australia's role in international agencies working to achieve peace.

The success of such a progressive agenda would work to enhance relationships in the region and globally and provide a positive vision for the future.

We believe that working for long-term systemic change, within the existing social and geopolitical frameworks, provides a pathway to long-term peace.

IPAN supports the building of a peaceful future that benefits all Australians and ultimately has a beneficial global impact. As we free up resources that currently fund military action, we will have the finances available to combat the social and environmental crises that are already evident. By seeking to achieve meaningful change in Australia, we increase our opportunities to collaborate and cooperate with our regional leaders.

Addressing historical conflicts and value differences will promote social cohesion within Australia. It will be essential if we are to partner with other countries for positive change in our region and to strengthen global systems for peace.

As we work towards an independent Australian defence, rather than a US-led offence, this will also serve to de-escalate geopolitical tensions regionally and internationally.

Most Australians see peace as an objective worth striving for:

1. People just need to know that peace is achievable and how they can contribute to making peace a high priority for the government.
2. Peace as an objective could help unite Australia and our region.
3. This could provide a platform for our leaders to promote and create social change, and a vision that all Australians could aspire to.

IPAN recognises the need to listen and understand, whilst not necessarily agreeing. Listening promotes discussion and conflict resolution that is fair to all. It is our hope that such an approach allows for people and communities to grow and thrive.

Peace is many things to many different people. By harnessing the inherent desire for peace in all its forms, reinforcing the things that unite, rather than divide - peace is possible.

This proposal has the potential to bring leaders from different backgrounds to a united approach to achieving peace.

Avenues already exist for regional contributions to peace

For example, Australia has been appointed to the UN Peacebuilding Commission for 2025 and 2026, and the Government is campaigning for a seat on the UN Security Council in 2029. Such initiatives provide additional opportunities to pursue a peace agenda.

- Currently, major wars are being conducted in countries with nuclear power stations ([Ukraine](#)) and with countries that possess nuclear weapons, namely Russia and Israel. If the Ukraine war widens to *overtly* include NATO, then this would involve most nuclear powers, and escalation would be almost inevitable.
- Without peace, we roll the dice each day: The world forgets that nuclear weapons exist, the number of nuclear powers is increasing, and in increasingly unstable regions such as Pakistan, Israel, India, etc.
- North Korea is opaque, and the USA seems increasingly unstable. *A nuclear war would be the end of societies everywhere, if not the end of all life; it would mean the end of the majority of species on earth.* See [Doomsday Clock - Atomic Scientists](#) and [SIPRI](#)

A peace initiative can progress *concurrently* with Australia's existing defence initiatives notwithstanding policy contradictions. The success of such a progressive agenda would work to enhance relationships in the region and globally and provide a positive vision for the future.

The existing state of foreign affairs perpetuates the reality of great power politics, that the usual state of the world is conflict. This model is self-fulfilling and can only end in conflict – and conflict is not a zero-sum game; everyone loses. As has been proposed many times, we need to look beyond this model, recognising that the only way to progress is through cooperation and negotiation.

Whilst we continue to view the world as competing nation-states that jockey for power and influence, if we cannot proceed humanely, it is likely that we will end up in war, death and misery. The alternative, however, is working towards a system that acknowledges that we are living on the same precious planet with shared needs with all species on earth.

Rather than tackling short-term issues that may wedge politicians, a vision for peace can be embraced by all.

War Is Our Most Urgent Problem - By John Horgan, Scientific American.

Is there a more urgent problem in the world today than war? And when I say "war" in this post, I mean also militarism, the culture of war, the armies, arms, industries, policies, plans, propaganda, prejudices, rationalizations that make lethal group conflict not only possible but also likely.

My answer to the above question: No, there is no more urgent problem than war. Not climate change, pollution, overpopulation, oppression, poverty, inequality, hunger, disease.

If you seek solutions to any of these problems, you should also devote at least some effort to ending war, for several reasons. First, war exacerbates or perpetuates our other problems, either directly or by draining precious resources away from their solution. War subverts democracy and promotes tyranny and fanaticism; kills and sickens and impoverishes people; ravages nature. War is a keystone problem, the eradication of which would make our other social problems much more tractable.

Second, war is more readily solvable than many other human afflictions. War is not like a hurricane, earthquake or Ebola plague, a natural disaster foisted on us by forces beyond our control. War is entirely our creation, the product of human choices. War could end tomorrow if a relatively small group of people around the world chose to end it.

Third, more than any of our other problems, war represents a horrific moral crime. Particularly when carried out by the U.S. and other nations, or by groups that aspire to or claim the legitimacy of states, war makes hypocrites of us and makes a mockery of human progress. We cannot claim to be civilized as long as war or even the threat of war persists.

From the declaration of St James's Palace 1941:

The only true basis of enduring peace is the willing cooperation of free peoples in a world in which, relieved of the menace of aggression, all may enjoy economic and social security ... It is our intention to work together, and with other free peoples, both in war and peace, to this end.

From The Australian Dictionary of Biography:

“Evatt argued that, in the U.N., Australia should not align itself automatically with any major power bloc, but should judge questions on their merits. By enabling the U.N. to develop in its early years as a forum whose outcomes were not always predictable, Evatt’s Australia may have helped to secure legitimacy for the new organisation, and perhaps allowed the U.N. to act as a force for restraint in the Cold War.”

Extracts from Senator the Hon Penny Wong, United Nations General Assembly speech:

Australia has always pursued a world where differences and disputes are settled through institutions, agreed rules and norms, and not by power and size.

We have been active in the UN’s peacebuilding agenda since its inception, focused on addressing the underlying factors that contribute to conflict.

We are proud of our peacebuilding reform work with Angola in leading negotiations for parallel Security Council and General Assembly resolutions that shaped the Sustaining Peace Agenda.

We look forward to 2025 when Australia will have a seat on the UN Peacebuilding Commission, coinciding with the review point for those resolutions.

Since the creation of the UN Peacebuilding Fund, we have been a consistent partner, and we are a top ten donor.

We support a strong role for regional leadership on peacekeeping. Our commitment to international peace and security is why Australia seeks a seat on the Security Council for 2029-2030.

And it is why we pursue Security Council reform.

And given that it is nuclear weapons that most risk catastrophe, we must work harder to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

We will continue to work with others to strengthen the NPT – the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime – despite those who seek to damage it for their own gains.

For further information or to join as a Partner in Peace: contact Jonathan Pilbrow on 0403 611 815 or ipan.alicesprings@gmail.com

13 August 2025