



02 October 2023

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT: LETTER TO GOVERNMENT OCT 2023

To: Anthony Albanese Prime Minister from Quakers Australia

Australian Quakers urge the Government to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) as soon as possible. This will ensure that the world is in no doubt about the commitment of Australia to nuclear disarmament.

Over many years Australia has been active in promoting steps to reduce the chances of the use of nuclear weapons. This has included support for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), for other limitations on nuclear weapons production and use, and for a ban on fissile material. On numerous occasions, you and your Labor colleagues have pledged a commitment to the importance of further steps to counteract the unravelling of existing treaties including the NPT by the indifference shown by the nuclear weapons states.

The moves by Australia to engage in the AUKUS arrangements with USA and UK raise doubts about Australia's commitment, and concern has been expressed in particular by Pacific and South East Asian countries in our region that we are undermining existing nuclear-weapons free zones and arrangements. It is important that we be seen to be part of the global efforts to reduce the chances of nuclear war.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong, when she addressed the UN General Assembly recently, emphasized that Australia has always pursued a world without nuclear weapons and will redouble its efforts towards this goal. She further stressed that we aspire to a stable, peaceful and prosperous world, and will use our diplomacy on this basis.

Quakers Australia

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We draw attention to the words of Melissa Parke, former ALP member of Parliament, now heading the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). She said after observing the United Nations General Assembly meetings that “the TPNW is the first multilateral treaty to outlaw nuclear weapons comprehensively, as well as the first to establish a framework for the verified, time-bound elimination of nuclear-weapon programs. The treaty also includes novel provisions for assisting victims of nuclear use and testing and remediating contaminated environments”.

The time has come for the Australia Government to join the many nations which have already acted, move rapidly to sign on to the TPNW, and make clear its determination that Australia will be part of the global solution to the threat of nuclear war.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce Henry', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Bruce Henry
Presiding Clerk
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia

Cc: Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs