

MEDIA RELEASE

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Cluster Bomb Ban Bill Introduced During Disarmament Week

Today, a Bill was introduced into the Federal Parliament to give effect to the Convention on Cluster Munitions which makes it illegal to assist in the production of cluster munitions.

The ANZ bank currently provides loans totaling \$135.8 million to cluster munitions manufacturers.

In light of the Bill, Act for Peace (the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia) urges Australian banks which currently fund cluster munitions manufacturers for any reason to now cancel their funding.

Mr Alistair Gee, Executive Director of Act for Peace said, "The introduction of this Bill provides an avenue for ANZ to cancel their loans to Lockheed Martin and L-3. Whilst ANZ does not directly fund the production of cluster munitions, providing finance to these manufacturers allows them to free up other funds to continue making an internationally banned weapon."

"Act for Peace's international project partners operate in areas where the remnants of war are scattered everywhere leaving agricultural land untenable and civilians at risk of maiming. Cluster bombs and unexploded ordinance are the scourge of nations recovering from conflict. It is morally reprehensible that ANZ can continue to be complicit on the cluster bombs issue", said Mr Gee.

Under the Criminal Code Amendment (Cluster Munitions Prohibition) Bill 2010, if a person assists another to produce cluster munitions, the penalty is imprisonment for 10 years and fines of up to \$330,000.

The debate on the Criminal Code Amendment (Cluster Munitions Prohibition) Bill 2010 was adjourned and is likely to take place in Autumn 2011.

-Ends-

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Further Information:

For Disarmament Week online actions and resources <http://www.actforpeace.org.au/disarm>