



**World Council
of Churches**



**National Council of
Churches in Australia**

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Stakeholder Submission on Australia

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Introduction

This submission is made jointly by the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA)¹.

The submission was prepared by the NCCA, with assistance from the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers Australia), Salvation Army Australia Territory, the Uniting Church in Australia and the World Council of Churches.

This submission draws on research and policy positions on social justice and human rights from member Churches in Australia,² and their agencies that work closely with vulnerable people on the peripheries of society whose human dignity and rights are at greater risk of infringement.

1) Climate Change and Human Rights

During the last UPR of Australia just 7 recommendations focused on climate change.

¹ See for list of the 18 member Churches: <https://www.ncca.org.au/member-churches/>

² We wish to acknowledge the social justice policy work of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference <https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/resources/social-justice-statements/>; the Salvation Army's Social Justice Stocktake 2025, which surveyed 16,000 participants across Australia on the issues most affecting their communities; <https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/socialjusticestocktake/national/#climate-change>; the Uniting Church in Australia <https://uniting.church/justice/>; Catholic Religious Australia, Society of St Vincent de Paul Australia; Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) Australia, and Anglicare.

2024 was the hottest year on record globally, when the average global temperature exceeded 1.5°C above its pre-industrial level. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that warming beyond this threshold poses severe risks to the planet. In Australia, climate change has led to more frequent and intense weather events like floods, heatwaves, extreme bushfires and loss of World Heritage coral reefs and forests. All of these impact on human rights, as well as on the population's physical and mental health and on Australia's biodiversity. Disaster trends are becoming more complex, compounding and cascading, and expected to get worse.

Regional and remote Aboriginal housing is not able to withstand climate change and will be unsuitable for future living, forcing people to consider migrating away from their traditional lands if nothing is done. Rising sea levels, warmer atmospheric and ocean temperatures, more acidic waters, changes in ocean circulation, and more intense rainfall patterns are expected to impact the Torres Strait into the future.³

Our neighbours in the Pacific and elsewhere are suffering from the impacts of climate change. Australia is providing migration pathways for people from Tuvalu facing the existential threat of climate change which is the world's first bilateral agreement on climate mobility. Our Pacific nation neighbours, contributing less than 0.03% of total global emissions, are disproportionately affected by climate change.

On the positive side, the Climate Council has determined that Australia is on track to reach its national target to reduce our emissions by 43% by 2030.⁴ However, while Australia is making progress, it is moving too slowly. The UN's 2023 Global Stocktake⁵, which assesses the world's progress towards the Paris Agreement's goals, makes clear that global efforts towards net zero need to be drastically accelerated. This will be challenging for Australia as in 2024, Australia emitted 441 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, with plans to reduce this to 352 million tonnes by 2030.

Coal and Gas Exports

The continued expansion of coal mining projects undermines these efforts. In December 2024, the government approved extensions for four coal mines—three in Queensland and one in NSW—and in September 2024, sanctioned three new coal mines in NSW capable of producing 1.4 billion tonnes of emissions, over three times Australia's annual emissions. Moreover, there are 36 additional coal mining projects and six gas projects awaiting government decisions. That Australia is the third-largest exporter of fossil fuels globally underscores its substantial contribution to carbon emissions.

Australia's dual role as an emitter and significant fossil fuel exporter calls for urgent and decisive action to align with global greenhouse gas reduction efforts for the collective good of humanity and the environment. Australia needs a strong emissions reduction target that responds with urgency to the climate crisis, and a suite of policies to reach this target,

³ <https://www.csiro.au/en/news/All/Articles/2023/November/Torres-Strait-climate-change>

⁴ https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/CC_MVSA0394-CC-Report-Next-Wave_V8-FA-Screen-Single.pdf

⁵ <https://unfccc.int/topics/global-stocktake>

moving towards renewable energy and transport systems, and away from fossil fuels, the largest emissions contributor.

Recommendations

1. The Australian government must improve and make explicit the connections in its policy development on mitigating climate change to its human rights frameworks.
2. As the largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the region, the Government must take bold action to rapidly reduce emissions from all sources and sectors including through agriculture. While Australia is on track to meet the target set by the Paris Climate Agreement, by reducing carbon emissions by 45% on 2010 levels by 2030, the government must continue to work towards net zero emissions by 2050 to keep global warming to no more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
3. The Government must work in partnership with all state and territory governments, local governments and businesses who have already committed towards net zero emissions, to adopt renewable energy sources as a matter of urgency.
4. There must be a ban on all new coal mines and coal-powered electricity generation, combined with the orderly phase-out of the existing plants to create the low-carbon and renewable energy industries of the future. There must also be a reduction in gas production and methane emissions which are key contributors to Australia's carbon budget. Social and economic support to the employees of extractive industries and their communities who will be affected must be ensured.
5. Measures to reverse the alarming loss of unique Australian species and for the preservation of vulnerable ecosystems must be adopted, as well as national water-use policies that can protect rural communities facing continuing drought.
6. Australia must support the human rights of local and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities whose cultural heritage, way of life or livelihoods have been negatively affected by climate change.
7. At the international level, Australia must add its voice to those Governments who are seeking to strengthen climate finance commitments, supporting initiatives that build climate resilience and adaptation and assist recovery from climate-induced disasters. Current climate financing around USD\$0.2 - 0.6 billion is far short of the USD\$1.5 billion needed per year for mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage. Australia, a professed member of the 'Pacific family', needs to make a greater financial contribution.

2) First Nations People

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot because we have no love for them. And our youth

*languish in detention centres in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.*⁶

The poignancy of this statement is felt ever more acutely today with multiple crises impacting the human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are part of the oldest living culture in the world, as well as amongst those who experience the most disadvantage. There were almost 64 recommendations in the last UPR, reflecting the serious global concern about the human rights infringements of Australia's First Peoples. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities experience lower life expectancy and poorer health outcomes, while encountering higher rates of infant and maternal morbidity and mortality, family and domestic violence, suicide, and incarceration.

There are both historical and current contributors to this disadvantage and infringement of human rights, and the experience of colonialism and suppression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures have an ongoing negative effect on people from these cultures. Many of the drivers of disadvantage are systemic and structural. As well as addressing disadvantage as it is experienced, there is need to address the underlying structures which cause, or lead to, discrimination and hardship.

Closing the Gap

Successive governments have committed to "Closing the Gap" between outcomes experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those enjoyed by non-Indigenous Australians. With the Closing the Gap targets, there have been positive outcomes. Near universal enrolment in pre-school has been achieved. Over the last 12 years the number of First Peoples commencing university courses has more than doubled.⁷ After adjusting for population growth and ageing, there was a 15% decrease in total burden of disease for First Peoples between 2003 and 2018, based on the most recent analysis.⁸

While there are positives that include increased life expectancy, better health outcomes, improved educational opportunities, and greater economic participation, the progress that was intended in the Closing the Gap targets is not being achieved. The Productivity Commission Review report⁹ in February 2024 encourages governments to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations, and communities in assessing and addressing institutional racism and unconscious bias. The report also highlights the importance of empowering Indigenous communities to drive their own solutions and participate actively in decision-making processes.

While governments have committed to "Closing the Gap" there are still issues with how the policies and programs created to close the gap are designed and implemented. It is critical that governments co-design and work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in good faith to design programs that are truly fit for purpose and culturally appropriate.

⁶ Uluru Statement from the Heart 2017, developed by 250 Indigenous representatives from across Australia. <https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/view-the-statement/>

⁷ [Higher education commencement, attrition, and completion rates - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways - Dashboard | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission](#)

⁸ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024), Health and wellbeing of First Nations people.

⁹ Productivity Commission. (2024). Closing the Gap Information Repository. [\[Link\]](#)

Only five out of 19 “Closing the Gap” targets are on track. Children thriving in early childhood, imprisonment rates, the proportion of children in out-of-home care, and social and emotional wellbeing, have all worsened in recent years.¹⁰ The most recent review identified that the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians was still substantial (8.6 years for males and 7.8 years for females)¹¹. The Australian government should commit to sustainable funding and resourcing of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations that provide early intervention and diversionary services. Federal and state governments are failing to embed the priority reforms in policy and funding decisions, with the commitment to shared decision-making rarely achieved in practice. Community-driven solutions work, yet little has been done to move away from top-down approaches.

Most incarcerated

Proportionally, Australia’s First Peoples are the most incarcerated people on the planet. First Peoples comprise over 30% of the adult prison population. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth constitute 6.6% per cent of the total youth population in Australia but represent 60% of youth in detention aged 10 and over across the country.¹² UN Special Rapporteurs have expressed concern about these statistics.¹³ The Closing the Gap target is that by 2031, there will be a reduction in the rate of Indigenous young people (10–17 years) in detention by at least 30%. Australia has made no progress on this target.

Failure of the Voice referendum

October 2023 saw the failure of a constitutional referendum to create a Federal Voice to Parliament that would be a permanent advisory body to the government about the issues affecting First Nations peoples. 60 % of Australians voted against it. The impact of this is still being felt by communities across the country, as First and Second Peoples try to discern the way forward. The Australian government has committed to implementing the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full. In the wake of the “No” referendum result in 2023, it is critical that action to address historic and contemporary human rights injustices, and centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in every conversation that concerns them, is maintained.

Recommendations

1. The request for a national Makarrata (Treaty) Commission from the Uluru Statement from the Heart still stands. The federal government should not leave treaty and truth-telling processes to State and Territory governments alone, but should commit to a national approach to truth-telling that would inform and support the local, State and Territory processes, and provide a national repository of Australian history. The government at federal and state levels must develop appropriate structures for formal Truth-telling to occur, leading to communal acceptance of the ongoing impact

¹⁰Productivity Commission. (2024). Closing the Gap Information Repository. [\[Link\]](#)

¹¹ Productivity Commission. (2024). Closing the Gap Information Repository. [\[Link\]](#)

¹² <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/youth-justice/youth-detention-population-in-australia-2024/contents/summary/first-nations-young-people-in-detention>

¹³ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/media-advisories/2025/05/youth-justice-systems-across-australia-crisis-un-experts>

of colonisation, including the story of the Stolen Generations, and the ongoing impacts of trauma on First Peoples' families and communities.

2. Self-determination at Federal, state and local levels must be informed by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), giving First Peoples' communities full control over decisions impacting their lives, country and cultural sites.
3. The Government must commit to shared decision-making and sustainable, needs-based funding and support that allows Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to grow and strengthen their services.
4. While governments have committed to "Closing the Gap" policies and programs created to close the gap are insufficiently designed and implemented. Governments must co-design and work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in good faith to design programs that are truly fit for purpose and culturally appropriate.
5. The age of criminal responsibility in most Australian states and territories is 10. This contravenes the benchmark of a minimum age of 14 established in international law. Australia has been widely criticised for not adhering to international recommended standards.¹⁴ In the 2020 UPR, 25 countries called on Australia to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 14 and this recommendation remains valid. The Australian government should enshrine a National Children's Act to domesticate the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ensure that state and territory juvenile justice systems are fully compliant by raising the minimum age of imprisonment.
6. Sufficient funding targeted to achieve the Closing the Gap outcomes must be provided, prioritising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations to deliver services wherever possible. Government departments must provide significant and consistent resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled community health and wellbeing services, to improve health, education, mental health and social outcomes particularly in remote communities.
7. First People languages must be preserved, taught and incorporated into civic functions. True bilingual education must become a reality for First Peoples where English is not a first language.
8. All Governments must redouble their efforts to address Target 13 in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, to reduce the rate of all forms of family violence against First Nations women and children by at least 50% by 2031.

3) Asylum Seekers, Refugees & Migrants

In 2025, Australia will grant its one millionth refugee visa since 1947. This is a powerful reminder of how many lives have been rebuilt in Australia, and how deeply refugees have

¹⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/media-advisories/2025/05/youth-justice-systems-across-australia-crisis-un-experts>

shaped the country that is Australia today. Across the country, people who arrived as refugees, or whose parents or grandparents came through the program, are now part of every community. Australia's embrace of migrants and their culture has helped shape the country into a vibrant, prosperous democracy.

At the last UPR, 53 recommendations were made concerning asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

At the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, Australia pledged to "gradually increase Australia's Humanitarian Program ... allowing us to highlight the ways in which humanitarian entrants enrich Australian society and boost the economy with their skills, talent and diverse cultural backgrounds".¹⁵ Since February 2023, over 20,000 refugees who had been left for years on temporary protection visas in Australia have been granted permanent residency - this is a positive development.

Australia can do more

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees reported that in 2020 there were over 4 million refugees in the Asia-Pacific region, which does not include people internally displaced in their own country. Australia must step up to increase its refugee intake to meet current worldwide demand. In the period between 2012 to 2022, Australia recognised or resettled only 0.75% of the 23.99 million refugees who were recognised or resettled around the world in that time. Australia can and must do more.

Discrimination against those arriving by sea

Australia continues to take a hardline approach to people arriving by boat to seek asylum, adopting a policy of deterrence and punishment towards those seeking asylum via sea.

People seeking asylum are detained indefinitely in offshore detention. Despite the release of children from detention, there remains a number of refugees who were transferred offshore to PNG and Nauru. A dispute between Australia and PNG about responsibility for the welfare of these people has resulted in homelessness and destitution for stateless refugees who are not permitted to work or receive income support.

Australia must prioritise just and compassionate policies for refugees and people seeking asylum. Approximately 8,500 people who sought protection in Australia 12 to 15 years ago and whose cases have not been resolved are being denied the right to work, study or access support from the Australian government.

The Australian government must ensure that these people are treated humanely and allowed to support themselves through work and/or access to appropriate levels of government support. Parents whose children were born as Australian citizens must be permitted to remain with their children and be granted permanent visas.

The abolition of fast-track policy and Immigration Assessment Authority is welcomed, and introducing the Administrative Review Tribunal. There is now the need to provide a pathway to permanency for people previously rejected through the "fast-track" process,

¹⁵ <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/pledges-contributions/multi-stakeholder-pledges-2023/multi-stakeholder-pledge-resettlement>

acknowledging both the changed circumstances and country conditions and their strong connection to the Australia community. All people seeking protection must have a valid Bridging Visa with work rights and Medicare, enabling people who can support themselves to do so.

Migration Amendment Bill 2024

The Migration Amendment Bill 2024 passed by the Australian Parliament on 28 November 2024 fails to meet the human rights of asylum seekers and refugees. Parliament passed three controversial migration bills, increasing powers to deport non-citizens, reverse refugee protection, enact travel bans and enforce strict detention measures, including confiscating phones.

The Act now permits the Australian Government to pay undisclosed third countries to take non-citizens, including recognised refugees with Australian citizen family members, without any safeguards to prevent any harm, detention or return to persecution; to imprison people who will not return to countries where they fear for their lives; to create travel bans on citizens trying to visit Australia for study, business, tourism or to see family, in an effort to pressure their governments into accepting forced returns; to reverse refugees' protection findings in order to remove them from Australia, and to seize mobile phones and conduct unwarranted searches on people in immigration detention.

The Australian Human Rights Commission has raised significant concerns about the Migration Amendment Act 2024, with the expansion of powers to deport individuals to unspecified third countries having the potential to undermine human rights protections.

There is an increasing trend toward excluding migrants (including expanded and extended waiting periods for new permanent residents) from social security and basic social protections afforded to other residents and citizens. This includes access to social security and family payments, childcare subsidies, paid parental leave, subsidised education, etc. This discrimination risks creating a two-tier society, in which one class of residents are denied the basic supports and protections that citizens and other residents take for granted.

Recommendations

1. The Government should work proactively with Governments and agencies in Asia-Pacific to ensure that refugees and people seeking asylum moving through the region are safe, are protected from human trafficking and exploitation, have access to services, have their claims assessed and can begin to rebuild their lives.
2. Australia's intake of refugees must be increased through the expansion of Australia's Refugees and Humanitarian Intake Program. Australia has the ability and the community support to offer more people safety. The Refugee and Humanitarian Program should be increased to 27,000 places per year plus an additional 10,000 community sponsorship places, so that more families have the chance to rebuild their lives in safety.
3. A fair, robust and timely process for assessing the protection claims of people seeking asylum should be established, which includes a pathway to permanency for

all asylum seekers failed by Australia's flawed asylum processes, including those subjected to the Fast Track system. Work rights and basic support for all asylum seekers should be given while claims are processed, and visas that extend until claims are processed—ending the bureaucratic nightmare of applying for a new visa every three to six months.

4. Those found to be refugees must be granted permanent protection so they can begin to rebuild their lives and contribute to Australian society.
5. Legislative safeguards must be enacted to protect against arbitrary and indefinite detention in Australia, including for refugees whose visas are cancelled but cannot return to their country of origin due to the risk of persecution or refusal of states to readmit them. This includes those who were held in Nauru and PNG who are now in Australia but do not have another country to be resettled in.
6. A review of the Migration Amendment Bill 2024 is required.
7. New permanent residents should be eligible for social security and other basic protections immediately upon having their permanency granted.

Migrant workers

8. The Australian government must introduce a national labour hire licencing scheme based on the models that already exist in Victoria and Tasmania;
9. The Australian government must establish a covert investigation unit within the Fair Work Ombudsman to conduct operations to detect and prosecute employers exploiting migrant workers;
10. Workers on the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme must be given access to Medicare;
11. The Australian government must establish an independent regulator with sufficient resources and powers to govern registered migration agents and police those illegally selling migration advice to reduce exploitation of migrant workers;
12. Stronger national labour rights protections for migrant and seasonal workers, including guaranteed minimum wages, collective bargaining rights, and protection from deportation for speaking out should be ensured.

4) Homelessness and the Right to a Home

One recommendation on the right to a home was made in the previous UPR, primarily concerned with housing for Indigenous people. However, homelessness is a widespread and serious issue in Australia — on any given night, 122,494 people in Australia are homeless¹⁶ however the number is likely much higher given the numbers of people not recorded as “no fixed address” and the increasing impact of a tight rental market.

Affordability

Housing affordability in Australia has collapsed, with the average house cost equivalent to 16.5 years of the average household income. Home ownership is out of reach for many new

¹⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023). *Estimating Homelessness*. [Link] ↩

home buyers. This is fuelled in part by tax incentive policies, as well as an undersupply of houses due to critical shortages of skilled labour and the increasing cost of building materials and construction costs. This is creating an intergenerational housing wealth gap, reducing the home purchase opportunity for young people. Many potential buyers are being forced into an expensive rental market, where the cost of private rental accommodation has also increased substantially over recent years.

Anglicare's 2024 Rental Affordability Snapshot¹⁷ found that affordability has crashed to record lows, to the point that there are no rentals available across Australia that would be affordable for a young person on Youth Allowance. For a single person on the Disability Support Pension or the Age Pension, only 0.1 and 0.2 percent of properties respectively were affordable.

A Grattan Institute report¹⁸ has also found that two-thirds of retirees who rent in the private market live in poverty, including more than three in four single women who live alone. Housing and rental unaffordability means people are at risk of experiencing homelessness, being the most rapidly growing cause of homelessness in the past four years

Rising homelessness across Australia is overwhelming the capacity of services to offer emergency help. Particularly at risk of homelessness include those who have experienced family and domestic violence, young people, children on care and protection orders, First Nations people, people leaving health or social care arrangements, and older Australians. Poverty is a driver of homelessness and housing insecurity. Tragically, homelessness has now taken the lead as Australia's largest and most damning disparity in life expectancy.¹⁹

Recommendations

1. The Australian government must establish housing as a human right, protecting the right to shelter and human dignity. Such legislation should uphold the principle of homelessness prevention rather than just providing a homelessness response.
2. A new National Housing and Homelessness Plan is needed to include a comprehensive package of interventions, coordinated between all levels of government and the private sector, that supports rental tenants, as well as aspiring homeowners. Legislation should provide for a rights-based approach by the institutions required to support the Plan.
3. Increased investment in public and social housing to address chronic under-supply is critical.

5) Family, Domestic and Gender-based Violence

Over 30 recommendations in the previous UPR called for measures to reduce the incidence of violence against women and children. Despite concerted efforts by the government with a National Plan²⁰ that commits to ending gender-based violence within a generation; such

¹⁷ <https://www.anglicare.org.au/research-and-advocacy/rental-affordability-snapshot-2024/>

¹⁸ <https://grattan.edu.au/news/how-best-to-help-struggling-retirees/>

¹⁹ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/people-receiving-shs-support-last-year-of-life>

²⁰ National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032

violence remains a serious and widespread concern and human rights abuse. It affects all communities and cultures. The following statistics paint a harrowing picture: 2 in 5 women (39%) have experienced violence since the age of 15; 1 in 3 women (31%) has experienced physical violence since the age of 15. Gender based violence is much worse in Aboriginal communities. 1 in 16 men have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner. On average, one woman is killed in Australia every nine days by a current or former partner.²¹

These are not just statistics: they represent the experience of real people every day. Nevertheless, there have been slow but significant improvements across many of the key measures of progress in the prevention of violence against women.

- Australians' attitudes and understandings of violence against women and gender inequality have improved significantly in recent years²²
- While violence against women remains a national emergency, the prevalence of physical and intimate partner violence has decreased over the past decade.
- There is still significant work to do across Australia to end violence against women and their children.²³
- There are non-physical forms of gender-based violence where reported prevalence has increased. There have been some promising advances with several states having now made coercive control illegal and there has been progress on researching and implementing safeguards against financial abuse.²⁴

It is a human right for all people to live free from fear of gender-based violence. However, women escaping violence have few resources and choices. They usually end up in a continuous housing loop - sleeping rough, couch surfing, staying with friends and family, moving to crisis accommodation and back again, or returning to an unsafe home. The link between violence and poverty is well established.²⁵ The choices, and the consequences, are very stark for women wanting to escape domestic violence.

While the causes of family and domestic violence are complex, alcohol is a risk factor involved in 23–65% of all family violence incidents reported to police in Australia.²⁶ The lack of restrictions on late night home delivery of alcohol is particularly associated with family and domestic violence.²⁷ The risk of lethal intimate partner violence has been found to be significantly heightened by heavy alcohol use.²⁸ Research from 2022 found that 54% of

²¹ <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/quick-facts#key-statistics-on-violence-against-women>

²² <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/attitudes-matter-the-2021-national-community-attitudes-towards-violence-against-women-survey-ncas-summary-for-australia/read/>

²³ <https://assets.ourwatch.org.au/assets/Key-frameworks/OurWatch-Tracking-progress-report-card-web-AA.pdf>

²⁴ <https://www.hopgoodgan.com.au/uploads/images/Coercive-control-reform-tracker-2025.pdf>

²⁵ <https://www.violenceorpoverty.com/the-choice>

²⁶ Patrick Noonan, Annabel Taylor and Jackie Burke, *Links Between Alcohol Consumption and Domestic and Sexual Violence Against Women: Key Findings and Future Directions* (Report, No 8, November 2017) 1 <<https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/links-between-alcohol-consumption-and-domestic-and-sexual-violence-against-women-key-findings-and-future-directions/>>.

²⁷ 'Dangerous Practices of On-Demand Alcohol Delivery Companies Place Victorian Children and Vulnerable People at Risk of Harm', *Alcohol Change Vic* (Web Report, 2021) <<https://www.alcoholchangevic.org.au/our-work/research>>;

²⁸ Boxall H, Doherty L, Lawler S, Franks C & Bricknell S 2022. *The "Pathways to intimate partner homicide" project: Key stages and events in male-perpetrated intimate partner homicide in Australia*. Special reports.

those responsible for intimate partner homicide had alcohol or other drug problems.²⁹ Australian Governments at the Federal, State and Territory level have failed to act on implementing restrictions on alcohol supply and marketing that have been shown to reduce the prevalence and severity of family, domestic and sexual violence.

Recommendations

We commend the Australian Federal and State governments on work to date and call on governments to ensure:

1. there is sufficient funding for crisis supports, and that those supports allow victim-survivors to be physically safe while continuing to be employed, pursue education and be connected.
2. specialist training for key first responders to ensure they can correctly identify person/s in need of protection and respond with meaningful support options.
3. access to safe and secure housing — we need to increase the availability of suitable housing so that all victim-survivors can access support.
4. that children and young people affected by family violence need to be treated as victim-survivors in their own right,³⁰ and police, can apply for family violence orders.
5. increased family and domestic violence payments as financial insecurity is a major contributing factor in the decision to leave, stay in or return to a violent relationship.
6. implementation of restrictions on the access and marketing of alcohol that have been shown to reduce family, domestic and sexual violence, including the time after which alcohol cannot be home delivered and the density of home delivery liquor outlets.

6) The Right to Peace

In 1963, the world was on the brink of nuclear war. It was at that time that Pope St. John XXIII issued his groundbreaking encyclical letter, *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth). It was a heart-felt plea to the Church and all people of goodwill for an end to war and for the banning of nuclear weapons. He promoted a peace which is grounded in the inalienable and inviolable dignity of every person.³¹ The need for peace is greater than ever. The best way to build genuine and lasting peace is to build trust between nations.

Sydney: Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), 10.
<https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/special/special-15>

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ See on the importance of listening to the voice of young people: <https://www.anrows.org.au/conference-2025-young-advocates-statement/>

³¹ <https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/2024/07/25/social-justice-statement-2024-25/>

The UN Declaration on the Right to Peace while not a binding treaty, nevertheless, spells out the importance of the right to peace as underpinning all other human rights. It stresses “that peace is a vital requirement for the promotion and protection of all human rights for all”.³² We call on the Australian government to deepen its commitment to work for the right to peace.

Violence that happens overseas can reverberate in multicultural Australia. Parts of Australian society have deep roots in the Middle East. The Australian government’s explicit commitment to multiculturalism and freedom of religion is to be commended. The recent appointments of envoys for Antisemitism and Islamophobia, should complement the work of the Race Discrimination Commissioner and contribute to the work of social cohesion and a peaceful society.

The Christian Churches have a strong tradition of opposing war, seeking to remove its causes and promoting peace. Peace is not only the absence of conflict but also requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation, and the promotion of socioeconomic development. We support growing calls for Australian foreign policy to embed the principle of human security, including by increasing our foreign aid commitment, upholding international law and by strengthening our diplomatic capability.

Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear weapons are a threat to all life on earth. There are 12,000 nuclear weapons in the world with 2000 of them on high alert status. In line with international treaties Australia has joined, the Australian government needs to show its commitment to nuclear disarmament by signing and ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW); and changing our defence policy to explicitly distance Australia from US extended nuclear deterrence.

There are fundamental concerns about the AUKUS nuclear submarine partnership, as it limits Australia’s sovereignty in foreign policy, is against the wishes of our Pacific neighbours, diverts public funds that could be better spent elsewhere, and sets our focus on preparations for war rather than on peace.

Recommendations

We urge the Australian government to:

1. Increase official overseas development aid to meet the UN target of 0.7% of gross national income.
2. Increase investment in diplomacy for peace-making, strengthening ties with Pacific neighbours
3. Instead of increasing defence spending, there should be increased funding for health, education, housing and other social needs. The job seeker and related payments should be increased.

³² <https://www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/unga/2017/en/115405>

4. Conduct a transparent review of Australia's participation in the AUKUS pact
5. Sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
6. We must protect the right to protest. The right to peaceful legitimate protest is a fundamental human right that allows us to express our views, shape our societies and press for social and legal change.
7. Invest in and promote education for peace.