

PEACE, DISARMAMENT AND DEMILITARISATION

A fairer and safer world: peace and prosperity, not more weapons and war

Australia's wars cost lives and billions of dollars, and they make huge profits for the war industry. The defence estate also generates huge volumes of carbon emissions, significantly contributing to the climate crisis.

We need a new approach to keep people safe.

The Greens will cut wasteful defence spending and cancel failed defence procurement programs. We will give Parliament the power to decide whether we go to war or not, and we will ratify the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty.

It's time to stop handing public money to corporate weapons makers, refocus our defence forces on keeping people safe from the climate crisis, and build cooperative relationships with our friends and neighbours.

THE GREENS WILL:

- ▲ **Renegotiate the US alliance and let Parliament decide whether we go to war** to prevent us from being dragged in to senseless violence and conflict
- ▲ **Reduce military spending** from 2.2% to 1.5% of nominal GDP by 2025-26, and redirect this money where it is needed most
- ▲ **Decarbonise the defence estate** to meet net zero by 2030 emissions targets
- ▲ **Develop a climate security white paper** to coordinate a response to ongoing large-scale climate risks
- ▲ **End the Coalition's commitment to making Australia a global arms dealer** by abolishing the Defence Export Facility
- ▲ **Invest \$10 million to promote peace and non-violent conflict resolution, and ban military advertising** to ensure the truth of war is told

▲ Holistically and meaningfully address the harms the Australian Defence Force has caused to both personnel and civilians

Renegotiate the US alliance and let Parliament decide if we go to war

The current US alliance is not making us any safer.¹ We have outsourced our decision-making to a country that has a history of military follies.

The Liberal and Labor parties have formed a dangerous consensus to appease the US by increasing military spending. In doing so, they have given up on rational defence policy, instead conflating it with industry policy.

heedless support for the US and more machines of war is not the right path. Genuine peace rests on parliamentary scrutiny, international cooperation and development, and respect for human rights. A country as wealthy and as fortunate as Australia should be an international champion of multilateral moves towards peace and disarmament.

The Greens will:

- Renegotiate the US alliance with the terms of a new relationship focused on making Australia safer and a better global citizen;
- Pass War Powers legislation to require Parliamentary approval for decisions that commit Australia to war;

¹ See: Fraser (with Roberts), Dangerous Allies, 2014.

- Close all foreign military bases in Australia;
- Sign and ratify the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty; and
- Ban the development and use of lethal autonomous weapons in line with the international campaign ‘Stop Killer Robots’.²

Put human rights at the centre of foreign policy

The Australian Greens will adopt a human-rights centred approach to foreign policy. That starts with using diplomatic relationships to advocate for human rights around the world, and strengthening multilateral relationships based on a commitment to human rights. The Australian Greens will support the passage of Magnitsky-style legislation to target those who commit serious human rights abuses, and protect human rights around the world.

Cut military spending

The Liberal and Labor parties are in lockstep over increased spending on warfare. Both parties support the arbitrary target of defence spending equalling 2% of GDP, and as of now

² See Campaign to Stop Killer Robots <https://www.stopkillerrobots.org/learn/>

we are on track to exceed that commitment.³ We are spending \$122.2 million per day on defence.⁴

Billions of dollars are being thrown at weapons manufacturers with little scrutiny. Many of the government's costly acquisitions will be obsolete by the time they are deployed. All of this is taking place while the threat of attack on Australia remains unchanged.

Our plan will save us \$191.7 billion out to 2032, allowing us to reinvest this money into things that will genuinely keep us safe. The Greens believe we should stop wasting money and redirect these funds where they are needed.

We have a plan to:

- Reduce defence spending to 1.5% of nominal GDP by 2025-26 by reducing the size and speed of planned procurement programs, and ensuring that Australia has a light, readily deployable and highly mobile force that is commensurate with our size and location;
- Invest \$5 million to develop a climate security white paper to guide a coordinated and large-scale response to climate change risks. This will ensure Australia's defence forces are prepared for humanitarian and peacekeeping missions in the region, given that climate change looms as a threat multiplier and an

ongoing trigger for instability and humanitarian crises;⁵

- Use the current Defence budget to increase oversight of defence procurement by establishing a Parliamentary Defence Office to provide independent advice to Members of Parliament; and
- Demilitarise non-naval maritime issues like search and rescue, marine pollution and large-scale illegal fishing by establishing a dedicated civil maritime service.

End the Coalition's commitment to making Australia a global arms dealer

The Coalition Government, supported by Labor, is intent on making Australia a top 10 global arms exporter.⁶

Despite the government's rhetoric, the 'Defence Export Facility' has no proven link to local job creation.⁷ Instead, it taints Australia's global reputation and makes us complicit in overseas atrocities, like war crimes committed by the Saudi regime in Yemen.⁸

The Greens will immediately abolish the Defence Export Facility, and introduce legislation that prohibits Australia from exporting weapons.

⁵ See Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade inquiry report into the Implications of climate change for Australia's national security, 2018
https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/Nationalsecurity/Final_Report

⁶ Defence Export Strategy 2018

⁷ Productivity Commission, Trade and Assistance 2016-17.

⁸ Defence Export Facility, 2018, [Supporting global defence projects | Export Finance Australia](#)

³ See the 2021 Intergenerational Report
https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-06/p2021_182_464.pdf

⁴ See the Australian Strategic Policy Institute's 2021-22 Cost of Defence report [The cost of Defence ASPI defence budget brief 2021–2022 | Australian Strategic Policy Institute | ASPI](#)

Decarbonise the defence estate

Defence is one of the biggest sources of carbon emissions in the public service.⁹ Any plan to decarbonise the Australian economy urgently needs to extend to the defence estate, which includes defence capabilities, bases, operations and other activities. Doing so will bring Australia closer to the Greens' emissions reduction target of net zero by 2030, which in turn will help mitigate the already visible effects of climate change.

Promote peace and ban military advertising

Sensationalised imagery and advertising propagated by weapons manufacturers and beneficiaries of war fail to tell the truth on the real costs of war. We must be honest about what war is and what it does to people and communities, and we must build our understanding of what peace means across our cultural institutions.

To achieve this, the Greens will:

- End proactive public recruitment advertising campaigns by the Australian Defence Forces, particularly those that target children and school leavers. This will save us \$47.5 million per year out to 2031-32.
- Redirect funding that these programs receive to peace-based education initiatives;

- Ban all public advertising by weapons manufacturers. These companies are responsible for the proliferation of violence across the world. Their advertising campaigns are often targeted at parliamentarians to put pressure on them to support increasing expenditure on their weapons;
- Scrap the \$498 million War Memorial redevelopment and end arms manufacturer and corporate sponsorship of the War Memorial;¹⁰
- Invest \$10 million over four years to promote peace and the importance of non-violent conflict resolution in our national institutions; and
- Establish a Global Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, which will undertake human rights-centred research, advocacy, analysis and policy work that advances peace and conflict resolution around the world.

Holistically and meaningfully address the harms the ADF has caused to personnel and civilians

The ADF is in crisis. An institutional culture permissive of mental and physical abuse – and war crimes, as the Brereton report revealed in 2020 – has led to high rates of mental illness and suicide among serving personnel and veterans. It's a vicious cycle that must be broken, and we must make amends to both personnel and civilians that have already experienced harm.

To achieve this, the Greens will:

⁹ The Canberra Times, Labor sets net zero by 2030 target for public service, but more than half of emissions are exempt [https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7536987/aps-to-go-netzero-by-2030-under-labor-but-theres-a-major-catch/](https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7536987/aps-to-go-net-zero-by-2030-under-labor-but-theres-a-major-catch/)

¹⁰ ABC, Australian War Memorial's \$500m redevelopment clears final hurdle despite wave of public opposition <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-06-07/australian-war-memorial-expansion-given-approval-early-works/100196328>

- Establish a reparations fund in acknowledgement of the harms caused by ADF personnel during deployments, including paying reparations to the victims and families of alleged war crimes committed in Afghanistan at the hands of Australian Special Forces members;
- Establish a redress scheme for personnel who have experienced violence and abuse through defence institutions during their time of service; and
- Increase the availability of psychological and other wellbeing-based supports for serving personnel to address the high rates of suicide and other mental health issues.

FIND ALL OUR POLICIES:

greens.org.au/platform

HOW THE GREENS HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR YOU

In the last parliament, it was the Greens who:

- ▲ Introduced War Powers legislation which would require both houses of parliament to vote before deploying our defence forces overseas;
- ▲ Pushed for truth and accountability following the release of the Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force Afghanistan Inquiry Report, the Brereton Report, which found credible evidence of war crimes allegedly committed by Australian Special Forces personnel during the Afghanistan war;
- ▲ Worked with the community for the establishment of a Royal Commission into Veterans' Suicide;
- ▲ Campaigned alongside the Canberra community against the destruction and corporatisation of the Australian War Memorial.