



2017

Listening To Women's Voices And
Making The Connections To The Women,
Peace And Security Agenda

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**FIFTH REPORT OF THE
ANNUAL CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE ON WOMEN,
PEACE AND SECURITY**

The Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security

The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security is a non-partisan and independent coalition of civil society organisations, networks and individuals working to advance the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Australia, Asia and the Pacific region and globally.

Our vision is a world in which gender equality, and the contributions and rights of diverse women and girls, are at the forefront of transforming conflict to build peace.

Further details of the Coalition’s membership and information on how to join as a member is available at: www.wpscoalition.org

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Coalition would also like to thank all Roundtable participants and participants at the Policy Dialogue for sharing their ideas, stories, and contributions to promote diverse women’s voices in speaking about women, peace and security. The Coalition looks forward to working further with all participants on the women, peace and security agenda, particularly as Australia moves to develop its second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in 2018-19.

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INTRODUCTION:



Focus of the 2017 Annual Civil Society Dialogue

Focus of the 2017 Annual Civil Society Dialogue

As Australia nears the end of the current Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2019 (Australian NAP)¹ and looks toward the development of its next iteration, the Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women Peace and Security (the Coalition)² is focused on amplifying the voices of diverse women in Australia and across our region to inform and reshape dialogue, policy development, and practice related to the women, peace and security agenda.

The Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security (the Dialogue) is a key process through which civil society and government engage in constructive dialogue on women peace and security.³ The Dialogue, established in 2013, is led by civil society actors and seeks to:⁴

- Elevate the national discussion on women, peace and security;
- Facilitate effective deliberations between civil society and the Australian Government on women, peace and security in the context of UNSCR 1325; and
- Support shadow reporting on the Australian NAP.

In 2017, the Coalition structured the Dialogue in two complementary parts: the **Civil Society Roundtables (the Roundtables)**; and the **Civil Society-Government Policy Dialogue (the Policy Dialogue)**.

The Roundtables, held in September 2017 in each Australian capital city, provided a space for women from diverse backgrounds to discuss what peace and security mean in practice. A Talanoa discussion was also held at the Triennial Conference of Pacific Women. The Roundtables provided an important opportunity to:

- Hear from the diversity of women's voices in Australia and our region;
- Consider what we mean by peace and security in the current global climate and the context of

emerging issues in our region; and

- Expand the discussion beyond UNSC Resolutions and the first Australian NAP.

These Roundtables informed discussions at the Policy Dialogue held in Canberra on 30 November 2017. The Policy Dialogue was attended by Government officials (with portfolio responsibilities relating to the Australian NAP) and representatives of civil society organisations. Drawing on the Roundtable discussions, the Policy Dialogue focused on three questions:

- What are the key understandings of peace and security in Australia in the current global context? How do the issues raised at the Civil Society Roundtables confirm, challenge and/or develop these understandings?
- How can these understandings contribute to building an informed and effective approach to women, peace and security in Australia? What are the key parameters and issues that need to be addressed?
- How does the approach to women, peace and security we have discussed link to broader Australian discussions on conflict and peace processes; implications for domestic and foreign policy; and Australia's response to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goals 5 and 16?

DIALOGUE REPORT STRUCTURE

This report provides a summary of the deliberations undertaken as part of the 2017 Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security, both at the Roundtables and the Policy Dialogue. The report highlights key issues to be considered during the development of Australia's second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

Section 1 presents an overview of the International and National policy context for women, peace and security and of relevance to the development of Australia's second NAP. Section 2 summarises the findings from the Roundtables, which informed the Policy Dialogue deliberations; these in turn are summarised in Section 3. The report concludes with Section 4 by highlighting the key policy level questions and issues critical to the development of the second Australian NAP.

SECTION 1:



International and National Context for Women, Peace and Security



United Nations Global Study

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United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 was adopted in 2000, and underpins the international institutionalisation of the women, peace and security agenda. The 2015 review on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 which identified gaps, challenges, emerging trends, and priorities for action, has important lessons for Australia.

The review *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice and Securing the Peace* (popularly known as the Global Study),⁵ noted that the world has changed since the adoption of resolution 1325 and what we mean by ‘peace’ and ‘security’ is evolving.

The Global Study sets out detailed recommendations and outlines the following principles to realise the transformative potential of UNSCR 1325. These principles are relevant to Australia (and indeed the world) as we focus on the second Australian NAP.

GLOBAL STUDY: KEY PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTING UNSCR 1325

- Prioritise prevention of conflict, not the use of force
- Recognise UNSCR 1325 as a human rights mandate
- Acknowledge women’s participation as key to sustainable peace
- Hold perpetrators of violence to account and enabling transformative justice
- Understand the importance of localised approaches, inclusive and participatory processes as central to the success of national and international peace efforts
- Support women peacebuilders and respect their autonomy as important to counter extremism
- Appreciate that all key actors (UN Member States, regional organisations, the media, civil society and youth) must play their role to implement the WPS Agenda
- Introduce a gender lens into all aspects of the work of the UN Security Council
- Address the persistent failure to adequately finance the WPS Agenda

The Global Study provides important guidance for the second Australian NAP by emphasising the need for a strong focus on the prevention of armed conflict and violence and putting up front and centre the role women play in these processes. A key message is that the normalisation of violence at the local, national and international levels must cease and that networks of women peacebuilders and peacemakers must be expanded and supported to come to the fore if Australia is to act with conviction to prevent wars through dialogue and discussion.

Sustainable Development Goals

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The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is another key international commitment that has significant relevance to the second Australian NAP. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets connected to these goals universally apply to all UN Member States and seek to mobilise efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind. The preamble of the UN Resolution (A/RES/70/1) adopted on the SDGs recognises the connected and inextricable link between peace and sustainable development: “We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.”⁶

The two goals most relevant to the women, peace and security agenda are Goals 5 (achieve gender equality) and 16 (promote peaceful and inclusive societies).⁷ The achievement of peace and the achievement of equality and justice for all people together with the full inclusion and representation of women in all their diversity make these two goals inseparable.

There is, however, no target specific to women, peace and security, not even in Goal 16. Despite this omission, the 2017 report of the UN Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2017/861)⁸ details how the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda contributes to the achievement of the SDGs, enhances the effectiveness of interventions and facilitates sustained peace and the prevention of conflict.

Where peace is understood as being more than simply the absence of armed conflict, gender inequality

becomes a key indicator of a pre-conflict concept of security skewed in favour of men and towards the state. Militarism and cultures of militarised masculinities continue to create and sustain political decision making that normalises resorting to force as a mode for dispute resolution.

Women are largely excluded from processes and forums where decisions are made regarding approaches to national security and peace. This applies in Australia just as in conflict affected countries. Women’s voices must be heard in all decision making processes that lead to policy decisions on national security, in all its forms, so that all sources of preventing and resolving violent conflict are included – not only military or armed police action. All forms of peacebuilding must be included to ensure we have a genuinely inclusive and peaceful society which can influence other nations to pursue a less militarised approach to order, peace and security in the world.

To achieve this, peace needs to be reimagined and security redefined. While women’s meaningful participation in conflict prevention and resolution and their contribution to durable peace is recognised and that inclusive processes must be the norm, not the exception, inclusiveness in itself does not necessarily lead to change. This point was clearly articulated by women all across Australia in the Roundtable discussions – highlighted in Section 2. There must be specific goals to work towards sustainable peace and the second Australian NAP should include clear indicators to show whether these targets are being met.

Australia’s Foreign Policy and Women, Peace and Security

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The Ministerial forward to *Women Peace and Security: DFAT’s implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Australia* (2015)⁹ suggests that Australia “has been a strong and consistent advocate for women, peace and security. This agenda was a priority during Australia’s term on the UN Security Council and beyond.” However, the Department

of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper¹⁰ does not refer to either women peace and security or the first Australian NAP. This is a missed opportunity to shift gender equality and women, peace and security from being seen exclusively as a development issue to a strategic foreign policy issue.^{11, 12}

Australia's Defence Policy and Women, Peace and Security

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In comparison the 2016 Defence White Paper¹³ does a slightly better job of addressing some women, peace and security issues, particularly with reference to issues around women's participation in the Australian Defence Forces (ADF), the importance of integrating gender expertise on ADF operations and in providing training

on women, peace and security. However, similar to the Foreign Policy White Paper, there are several missed opportunities to frame women, peace and security in terms of strategic importance; for example in addressing defence responses to terrorism and violent extremism or in bilateral programs.¹⁴

Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

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Australia's bid for a temporary seat on the UN Security Council (2013-2014) provided an impetus for the development of the first Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018, now extended to 2019. The first Australian NAP acknowledges the intersectional and gendered impacts of conflict, presents an overview of the work done by Australia to promote the women peace and security agenda, lays down a rationale for the development of a national action plan, and outlines strategies and actions to be achieved over a six-year time frame. The first Australian NAP is 'outward looking' in orientation – i.e. more focused on Australia's work overseas than on domestic policy and activities.

The first Australian NAP aligns five thematic areas (preventing, participation, protection, relief and recovery and normative) with five strategies linked to 24 actions for six government agencies to implement. The Women, Peace and Security Inter Departmental Working Group, now known as the Inter Departmental Committee (IDC), is coordinated by the Office for Women (OFW) (in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet) and is comprised of high-level representation from Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of Defence, Australian Federal Police, Australian Civil-Military Centre, and the Attorney General's Department. The IDC is the primary Australian Government mechanism responsible for the governance and implementation of the Australian NAP.

Recognising the instrumental role played by civil society in the development of the NAP, the plan includes the provision "to nominate a selection of representatives to meet with the Women, Peace and Security Inter-Departmental Working Group each

year."¹⁵ In practice, this has translated into civil society representation on the IDC. To support the work of the IDC, an IDC Sub-committee was set up to monitor on a regular basis the implementation of the Australian NAP. The Australian Civil Society Coalition on WPS nominate one member to the IDC and two members to the IDC Sub-committee.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Three Progress Reports (one every two years), tabled before Australian Federal Parliament, tracks the progress of the Australian NAP. Also, two independent reviews (Interim and Final) serve as mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of implementation, providing guidance on emerging issues and the direction and focus of the next NAP.

To date, two Progress Reports have been completed and account for implementation during 2012-2014 and 2014-2016. The final Progress Report is due in 2018. These reports are highly descriptive and outline actions that were undertaken by the Australian NAP implementing agencies as represented on the IDC.

INDEPENDENT INTERIM REVIEW

The 2015 Independent Interim Review of the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018¹⁶ tracks the whole of government progress on the implementation, analyses the relevance of actions listed in the Australian NAP against the intended outcomes, and analyses the relevance of the Australian NAP to inform actions to implement the women, peace and security agenda more broadly.

In summary, the Interim Review found the current Australian NAP relevant, broad, flexible and consistent with approaches adopted by other UN Member States. However, monitoring and evaluation were insufficient to track progress, and most importantly insufficient to measure impact. With respect to implementation, the Review found gaps and challenges with the level of institutionalisation, awareness, funding and resource allocation across implementing agencies. While the Australian government was noted to value the role of civil society in implementing the women, peace and security agenda, opportunities for formal engagement were limited, with engagement from civil society limited by access to resources. With respect to the Final Review, the Interim Review suggested a participatory framework for the review and the development of the second Australian NAP.

The Australian Government’s response to the Interim Review notes some modifications to allocated actions and reporting and indicates that “most of the recommendations from the Interim Review apply at the whole of government level and many will be addressed in the next National Action Plan.”¹⁷

INDEPENDENT FINAL REVIEW

The Independent Final Review is expected to be undertaken during 2018. It is expected to review the effectiveness of the first Australian NAP, and provide recommendations for the development of the second Australian NAP.

Role of Annual Civil Society Dialogue and Report Cards

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Australian and international civil society organisations (CSOs) have been active in supporting the women, peace and security agenda well before the development of the first Australian NAP. Large numbers of CSOs and NGOs have undertaken advocacy and programs shaped around women, peace and security, while not initially recognising their work through the lens of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

CSOs also made substantial, constructive recommendations to the Consultation Draft of the first Australian NAP which was developed by the Australian government across 2010-11. The process and lack of effective engagement with civil society around the Consultation Draft were disappointing. As a result, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), UN Women Australia, and

the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) - later joined by the Australian National University’s Gender Institute - agreed to host an Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security in 2013. The expected output from the Annual Dialogue was to be a report card on NAP implementation, which over the life of the NAP, would form the basis of a shadow report.¹⁸

The Australian Civil-Military Centre has been providing funding for the Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security. The 2013-2016 Annual Dialogues have served to monitor progress against each of the NAP’s strategies and to ensure implementation of the first Australian NAP remains both accountable to civil society and informed by its input and deliberations.

Fifth Annual Civil Society Dialogue

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The 2017 Annual Civil Society Dialogue has specifically built on the experiences of the previous Dialogues and the Interim Review. The focus of this Fifth Annual Dialogue was on listening to the voices of diverse women in Australia and the region and their complex understandings of peace and security, and

to reflect on these understandings as a platform to be integrated into focused policy discussions, which bring together the domestic and the global. Section 2 provides an overview of the Civil Society Roundtables held during 2017.

SECTION 2:

Civil Society Roundtables: Listening to Women's Voices

Civil Society Roundtables: Listening to Women's Voices

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The Roundtables provided a forum for women and girls from diverse backgrounds in Australia and across our region to express their views on what peace and security mean in practice today. The Roundtables, which engaged individuals and organisations working domestically and those with an international focus were conducted in all Australian capital cities during September 2017; there were multiple events in Adelaide, Canberra, Melbourne, and Sydney.

The Roundtables were supplemented by a session on women peace and security organised at the 13th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women. This Talanoa¹⁹ discussion was hosted in the Pacific Feminist Hub, with Pacific feminists and women's human rights defenders coming together to voice their concerns, priorities, and ideas for Australia's women, peace and security agenda in the Pacific. Over 200 women from diverse backgrounds attended a total of thirteen roundtables and the Talanoa discussion.

THREE QUESTIONS FRAMED THE DISCUSSIONS AT THE ROUNDTABLES:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <h3>1</h3> <p>In today's global context, what does peace and security mean to women from diverse backgrounds, living in Australia and our region;</p> | <h3>2</h3> <p>What are the stories, experiences, and information which influence these understandings of peace and security; and</p> | <h3>3</h3> <p>What decisions/actions are required to promote peace and security in Australia and internationally?</p> |
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This section provides a summary of the key findings from the Roundtables. The complete **Roundtable Report Women Shape the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Roundtable Discussion Summary** is provided in Appendix 1.

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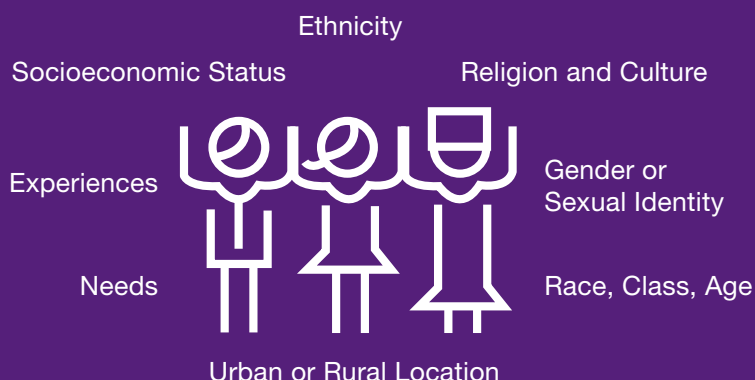
1 WHAT PEACE AND SECURITY MEANS TO WOMEN FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS, LIVING IN AUSTRALIA AND OUR REGION

Discussions on meanings of peace and security set the context for the Roundtables. Participants' ideas ranged across the personal, political, community, national and international, with four key themes emerging:

- Respect for human rights and gender equality;
- Acknowledging the diversity of women's voices around peace and security;
- Marginalisation and women's voices; and
- Freedom and "humanising" security.

Figure 1 highlights the main points discussed under each theme.

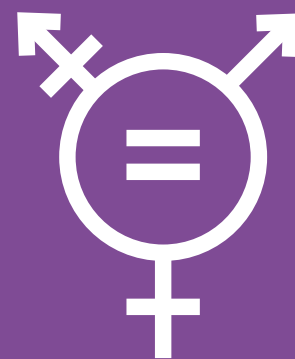
Figure 1: Key Themes on Peace and Security



Peace & Security Requires the Diversity of Women’s Voices

Respect for human Rights and Gender Equality

- Enabling people to claim their rights and holding governments accountable for guaranteeing all human rights.
- Ensuring public policy, programs, services adhere to principles of equality and non-discrimination.
- Crating spaces for people, especially women and girls from diverse backgrounds to participate in making decisions.



Marginalisation & Women’s Voices

- Individual and collective pressure to challenge discrimination & racism from a position of disadvantage
- Discussions on peace and security, within government and mainstream civil society organisation/movements have failed to listen to and acknowledge the needs, experiences and concerns of women from diverse backgrounds.

Freedom From and Freedom To

- “Freedom From” homelessness, statelessness, personal and intimate partner violence, sexual violence and harassment, all forms of discrimination, oppression, threats, intimidation, coercion, and stigma.
- “Freedom (and opportunity) to”: access justice, make informed choices and power to act on those choices; autonomy and control over one’s body; ability to protest and mobilise for action; speak and be heard; freedom of movement.



2 WHAT ARE THE STORIES, EXPERIENCES, AND INFORMATION WHICH INFLUENCE THESE UNDERSTANDINGS OF PEACE AND SECURITY?

Women’s perspectives on peace and security are drawn from lived personal experiences, including inherited narratives, and public discourse through the media, government institutions, politically expressed positions, and positions taken by community leaders. Across the Roundtables there were four main themes that contributed to this discussion.

LIVED EXPERIENCE AND AGENCY

Lived experiences of conflict and peace and stories inherited through generations informed understandings and influenced how participants viewed the world and their place in it. Specifically, the duality of vulnerability and agency in violent situations has shaped how participants engaged in peace and security.

DIVERSITY OF WOMEN’S VOICES

The diversity of personal and collective experiences of peace and security was a recurrent theme. The backgrounds (race, class, age, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual identity, religion, culture, ethnicity, physical or mental ability, urban/ rural location) of participants clearly influenced their perceptions of peace and security, and the reality of their peace and security experiences.



3 WHAT DECISIONS/ACTIONS ARE REQUIRED TO PROMOTE PEACE AND SECURITY IN AUSTRALIA AND INTERNATIONALLY?

Roundtable participants identified a broad range of ideas, activities, and strategies for promoting peace and security. Notably, there was an emphasis on the need for a **dual focus** as captured in Figure 2:

- A domestic program built around addressing inequality; and
- A peace-based foreign policy grounded in principles of ensuring gender equality, promoting

PUBLIC DISCOURSE AND THE ROLE OF MEDIA

Participants at the Roundtables noted that persistent stereotypical representations of particular communities and women in the media are related to the way that ideas about threats and insecurities are produced and reinforced. This discourse is seen as justifying the inevitability of violence, undermining alternative means to resolve conflict, and resulting in solutions which divert funds from investing in peaceful non-violent initiatives to militarised and securitised responses.

TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

The *lack of* trust in institutions was a recurrent theme at the Roundtables. Participants noted that safety in everyday life requires trusting institutions to uphold the rule of law and further trusting those in positions of power to work for the common good. A sense of security was also seen as emerging from having power and access to mechanisms that influence public and political decision-making.

peace and stability, focusing on preventing conflict and reflective of our international human rights commitments.

Participants were clear that both spaces, domestic and international, will require bold actions: ‘business as usual’ will not achieve the deep structural change required for sustainable peace and security.

FRAMING THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

The 2017 Roundtables have provided a valuable and timely lens on what peace and security mean in practice across the diversity of women’s experiences in Australia and across our region. Discussions provided unequivocal community support for a peace and security agenda that has a strong domestic focus, while recognising the need to be linked with international priorities and activities as well. **The recommendation is therefore that the second Australian NAP will need to demonstrate how Government policies, plans, and actions are promoting peace and security both domestically and internationally.**

Figure 2: Dual Focus for Peace and Security



SECTION 3:

Civil Society- Government Policy Dialogue: Key Themes

Civil Society-Government Policy Dialogue: Key Themes

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The Civil Society Roundtables provided an important platform for discussions at the Civil Society-Government Policy Dialogue held on 30 November in Canberra.²⁰ The Policy Dialogue included representation from Government agencies (with portfolio responsibilities relating to the Australian NAP) and representatives from civil society organisations and focused on:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>1</p> <p>What are the critical understandings of peace and security in Australia in the current global context? How do the issues raised at the Civil Society Roundtables confirm, challenge and develop these understandings?</p> | <p>2</p> <p>How can these understandings contribute to building an informed and effective approach to women peace and security in Australia? What are the critical parameters and issues to address?</p> | <p>3</p> <p>How the approach to women, peace and security discussed links to broader Australian discussions on conflict and peace processes; implications for domestic and foreign policy; and Australia's response to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goals 5 and 16?</p> |
|--|---|---|

This section provides a summary of the key themes that emerged from the Policy Dialogue.

1 WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN AUSTRALIA IN THE CURRENT GLOBAL CONTEXT? HOW DO THE ISSUES RAISED AT THE CIVIL SOCIETY ROUNDTABLES CONFIRM, CHALLENGE AND DEVELOP THESE UNDERSTANDINGS?

Similar to the Roundtables, participants at the Policy Dialogue framed peace and security in terms of human security. There was a strong recognition that the security of states (and peace within a system of states) are increasingly bound up with the security of individuals within them. Described as intergenerational, and encompassing the personal and the public spheres of life, dimensions of security extend beyond the physical to include environmental, economic, civil and political. In this context, meaningful participation in decision-making and civil society, i.e. having a voice that is respectfully heard and not discounted, was seen as vital to inclusive peace and security. To enable meaningful participation, participants highlighted the need to focus on social inclusion and a human rights-based approach to peace and security policy.

Another point of convergence with themes raised at the Roundtables was the focus on equality. However, at the Policy Dialogue, equality was most often spoken about with reference to the principle of non-discrimination. At the Roundtables, greater emphasis was placed on substantive equality and in particular gender equality as fundamental to peace and security.

Common to both the Policy Dialogue and the Roundtable was the emphasis on recognising the continuum of violence that spans across times of conflict and peace. The artificial separation of domestic violence from gender-based and sexual violence during conflict obscures the deep structural and socio-economic causes that lie at the heart of gender inequality and contributes to perpetuating violence against women.

2 HOW CAN THESE UNDERSTANDINGS CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING AN INFORMED AND EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN AUSTRALIA? WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL PARAMETERS AND ISSUES TO ADDRESS?

The Australian NAP was the primary focus of these discussions on building towards an informed and effective approach to women, peace and security. The current Australian NAP articulates a purpose, thematic areas of work, high-level strategies and detailed actions to deliver on the strategies. What is conspicuously absent is a vision and goal. The development of the second Australian NAP provides an opportunity to address this omission.

Participants at the Policy Dialogue highlighted four core elements of a vision for the second Australian NAP:

- 1. The second Australian NAP's vision must be grounded in a human security approach that recognises freedom from fear and oppression as fundamental to the promotion of peace and security.** This approach resonates with ideas of positive peace rather than bounding peace and security by an absence of conflict and violence alone. The framing of 'freedom from' and 'freedom to' by Roundtable participants was seen as providing a good starting point.
- 2. Foregrounding women's substantive participation and agency in conflict prevention, protection and post-conflict reconstruction is an essential element for the second Australian NAP's vision statement. This will require giving primacy to women's roles as change agents - a shift from the current focus of the first Australian NAP from protection to participation and conflict prevention is advised.**
- 3. The vision statement should also underscore the vital importance of ongoing of engagement with civil society (especially women's organisations) in all aspects of peace and security policy development and implementation.**
- 4. The second NAP must make explicit the link between achieving gender equality and peace and security.** There is growing evidence that gender equality is the best predictor of a country's peacefulness and stability. The second Australian NAP should unequivocally state that women, peace and security is not a "women's agenda" alone but a peace and security agenda with broader implications for sustainable development. The recognition that power imbalances, resulting from gendered norms and institutions, fuel conflict and violence is at the heart of the women, peace and security agenda. Therefore, to achieve sustainable peace and security, gender inequality must be addressed.

In addition to outlining the core elements of a vision, participants also delineated a range of issues that could be part of the scope of the second Australian NAP. Notably there was a strong proviso that addressing all these issues may be impractical, and may run the risk that that the second Australian NAP attempts to do too much and ends up achieving little. At the same time, participants did recognise that there needed to be better recognition of, and linkages at, the policy level, and in practice, between the issues identified and the NAP. The potential range of issues discussed included: overseas aid, climate change, internally displaced people, refugees, asylum seekers, justice reform, arms trade and proliferation, trafficking, preventing violent extremism, sexual and reproductive health, violence and conflict prevention, and humanitarian and disaster response.

At the centre of all these issues was an emphasis on the role of women, and specifically women's agency in addressing all the issues identified, and their contribution to building an informed and effective approach to women, peace and security in Australia.

3 HOW THE APPROACH TO WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY DISCUSSED LINKS TO BROADER AUSTRALIAN DISCUSSIONS ON CONFLICT AND PEACE PROCESSES; IMPLICATIONS FOR DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY; AND AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, PARTICULARLY GOALS 5 AND 16?²¹

The Policy Dialogue's participants acknowledged that broader Australian discourse on conflict and peace had neglected critical concerns articulated by the women, peace and security agenda. The current Australian NAP, developed in 2010-11, is based for example, in the existing priorities of the current stakeholder and implementing agencies. Participants recognised that the women, peace and security agenda needs to build better linkages and to re-examine Australia's approach to conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding from a gendered perspective. **The development of the second Australian NAP provides a space for policy makers, implementing agencies and civil society to adopt a gendered lens in elucidating Australia's approach to security, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution.**

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Participants at the Policy Dialogue appreciated the cyclical link between sustainable development, peace and security. Conflict, instability and insecurity impede socio-economic development; similarly, reducing poverty and inequality contributes to fewer conflicts and increased stability and security.

While participants noted that the SDGs and women, peace and security agendas are complementary, they also recognised that the focus of the two is different; with the former outlining global development outcomes and the latter representing a framework for explicitly addressing the gender dimensions of peace and security. What links the two agendas is the focus on gender equality.

However, participants at the Policy Dialogue were cautious about recommending a new National Action Plan with a dual domestic and international focus. This is in contrast to the unequivocal support for a dual focus advocated by participants at the Roundtables. For participants at the Policy Dialogue, Australia's Federal structure posed a challenge to a domestically focused NAP and raised both policy and practical implementation concerns.

CONNECTEDNESS AND COLLABORATION

The overarching theme that binds together the discussions at the Policy Dialogue is connectedness and collaboration. The Policy Dialogue, through its format and in its deliberations highlights the value of ongoing engagement and collaboration between government and civil society. At the same time, the importance of a whole of government mechanism connecting relevant government agencies is vital to ensuring dual accountability to both women, peace and security issues and the individual work of government departments in advancing the women, peace and security agenda.

The Policy Dialogue acknowledged the need to understand the continuum of violence and its connection to peace and security. Importantly, the discussions also recognise the importance of opening and sustaining conversations about peace for all, especially diaspora and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands communities. In recognising and acknowledging these key points, the participants also illustrated the significance of locating the second Australian NAP at the intersection of domestic and foreign policy.

SECTION 4:

Building a Women, Peace and Security Framework

Reframing Peace and Security

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In the 21st Century, the global challenges of climate change, extreme poverty and inequality, armed conflict and widespread human rights violations require global solutions. Yet rather than seeing the threats of war and violence recede we are faced with greater numbers of refugees than ever before; actions affecting large ethnic populations verge on genocide; and tensions on the Korean Peninsula threaten to lead to the unthinkable – nuclear war.

In this context, last year's open debate in the Security Council on Women, Peace and Security²² demonstrated that the women, peace and security agenda is no longer considered simply as a thematic issue but as an essential pillar of global affairs. The debate's focus on women's participation in crisis prevention, mediation, peacebuilding and maintenance of international peace and security highlights that preventing conflict and violence occurring in the first place is the most desirable way of dealing with it. All countries need to play a role in preventing violent conflict, not simply responding to it. To do so, governments must have the confidence that they have the backing of their own citizens in pursuing such a path.

Australia needs to develop and implement policies and practices that emphasise peacebuilding over militarism and, crucially, ensure the participation of women in all such processes. What makes for a peaceful and secure society within Australia informs how we deal with conflict prevention and peacebuilding internationally and how we, as a nation, can contribute to a peaceful and secure world; i.e. how our domestic policies contribute to, intersect with and influence our foreign policy. Current Australian government policies and practices, both domestic and foreign, lean towards increasing militaristic approaches to dealing with threats; for example - the creation of the 'super' Ministry of Home Affairs; increasing defence expenditure; issuing the police with military style weapons; proposals to make Australia a prominent arms manufacturer and exporter; and the refusal to sign the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty.

The development of the second Australian NAP presents a window of opportunity to change this trajectory, and to critically reframe the peace and security agenda towards human security and conflict prevention. The second Australian NAP needs to include ideas and action that provide new ways of dealing with war and threats of war and violent conflict. This means looking at conflict prevention through different eyes, including countering the normalisation of military action as the pre-eminent way of dealing with conflict. It also means increasing the focus on disarmament and recognising the role of women in disarmament efforts. Peace must be visible and tangible and needs to be sustainable. Australia has a long way to go to achieve this. The views expressed by many of the women attending the Roundtable discussions indicate that **they feel neither safe nor secure, either at home, in their communities or within the world.**

The 2017 Security Council open debate on WPS revealed that there was some recognition of the critical role of women in maintaining peace and security. But it also revealed that the meaningful inclusion of women remains an under-utilised tool in conflict prevention, disarmament, and peacebuilding. The second Australian NAP needs to exhibit full support for the women, peace and security agenda by making clear the relevance of gender equality to conflict prevention and peacebuilding and by ensuring the participation of women and their voices in peace processes.

TWO LEVELS OF ACTION ARE REQUIRED:

- **A gender analysis of power and a questioning of systems and practices that deepen traditional gendered roles**, particularly where practices facilitate conflict and militarised security, limit women's participation, and promote women as victims not actors; and
- **Specific initiatives to strengthen and sustain women's participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding** in a meaningful way.

Building a Women, Peace and Security Framework

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As Australia looks to advance its women, peace and security agenda, the proposed second Australian NAP will be an important tool. The first Australian NAP has been primarily internationally focused. However, Roundtables demonstrate that there is unequivocal community support for a peace and security agenda that has a strong domestic focus while recognising the need to be linked internationally as well.

The four key elements for developing a robust Women, Peace and Security framework for Australia include:

- 1. Giving primacy to peace and conflict prevention in ways that resources and supports the work of diverse women and their organisations;** including adopting a rights-based human security approach to peace and security policy.

- 2. Implementing an interlinked domestic and international focus on women, peace and security;** and in this regard, the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 5 (gender equality and women's empowerment) and 16 (promote peaceful and inclusive societies), can provide a pathway to peace and stability.

- 3. Resourcing and protecting robust, diverse and vibrant civil society spaces that proactively engage (on an ongoing basis) with policy makers** on framing what peace and security means; especially ensuring that diverse women's leadership and voices are heard in this space; and which sees civil society organisations and involving women's organisations as partners not instrumentalised for their expertise, or just as a mechanism for consultation.

- 4. A collaborative approach to peace and security policy making and implementation** that recognises that no one actor alone can achieve collective impact.

Critical Issues for the Second Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

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The 2017 Fifth Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security has provided a valuable opportunity to discuss critical messages on the women, peace and security agenda. It provided a vital opportunity to hear from a diversity of women’s voices and experiences on peace and security, followed by a reflection on the Roundtables within the context of a civil society-government Policy Dialogue to consider the vision and issues for the second Australian NAP.

Throughout the Dialogue, the following key issues and questions have emerged as critical to furthering the understanding of women, peace and security in Australia and the development of the second Australian NAP.

FRAMING THE SCOPE OF THE SECOND AUSTRALIAN NAP

1 What will be the vision and goal of the second Australian NAP?

2 How will the second Australian NAP take a holistic approach to the women, peace and security agenda which integrates gender equality, human rights, and intersectionality, and demonstrates the links between gender equality and peace and security?

3 What approach will the second Australian NAP take to include a specific focus on prevention of conflict and participation of women and girls across all aspects, to move beyond the promotion of protection of women and girls, which dominated the first Australian NAP?

4 How will Australia address its focus on conflict prevention, disarmament and peace building, to implement the women, peace and security agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 5 and 16)?

5 What approach will the second Australian NAP take to addressing the broad range of issues identified as part of the women, peace and security agenda? For example - *overseas aid, climate change, internally displaced people, refugees, asylum seekers, justice reform, arms trade and proliferation, trafficking, violence against women, preventing violent extremism, sexual and reproductive health, violence and conflict prevention, humanitarian and disaster response.*

LINKING THE INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC

6 How will the second Australian NAP link and integrate the local, national and global perspectives of the women, peace and security agenda?

7 How will the second Australian NAP demonstrate how Government policies, plans, and actions are promoting peace and security both domestically and internationally?

8 How will the vision, policy and implementation of the second Australian NAP provide complementarity and policy coherence with other government policies and portfolios? For example – *Defence, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Refugees, Domestic Violence, Countering Violence Extremism, Climate Change*.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

9 Who are the stakeholders for the second Australian NAP, and how will they be involved in its development?

10 How will an appropriate strategy be developed and resourced for development of the NAP in a timely manner? For example – *will this be stakeholder engagement, consultation, face to face meetings, or online interaction?*

ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

11 What will be the role of civil society in contributing to the development of the second Australian NAP?

12 What will be the approach to ensuring that the diversity of women's voices in Australia and the region, civil society organisations and individuals with interest in women, peace and security - can be heard and meaningfully integrated into the development of the second Australian NAP? For example – *how will indigenous Australian women, diaspora women, and civil society organisations from our region be included?*

Looking Forward to 2018-19

The 2017 Annual Civil Dialogue has delivered an explicit message. The development of the second Australian NAP needs to be grounded in an approach that recognises:

- the primacy of the link between gender equality, human rights and peace and security;
- women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding as the norm;
- women, peace and security is not a "women's agenda" alone but a peace and security agenda with broader implications for sustainable development; and
- the vital importance of ongoing engagement with civil society (especially women's organisations) in all aspects of peace and security policy development and implementation.

The Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security will be taking up the issues and questions raised in this report in further Civil Society Roundtables and Civil Society-Government Policy Dialogues throughout 2018-19. We look forward to working with all stakeholders to promote the women, peace and security agenda and to critically informing the development of the second Australian NAP.

Endnotes

- 1 Australian National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (2012-2018). The plan was officially extended (in late 2017) until 2019, to accommodate the development of the second NAP. It is anticipated that the second NAP will be launched in mid-2019. The Australian NAP, Progress Reports and the Independent Interim Review are available at <https://www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/international-forums/australian-national-action-plan-women-peace-and-security-2012-2018>. The Addendum to the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018 is available at <https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/addendum-australian-national-action-plan.pdf>
- 2 The Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security is a non-partisan, independent coalition of civil society organisations, networks, and individuals working to advance women, peace and security agenda in Australia, Asia-Pacific region, globally. <https://wpscoalition.org/>
- 3 Reports from the past Dialogues are available at <https://wpscoalition.org/annual-civil-society-dialogue-on-women-peace-and-security-2/>
- 4 An additional aim of the Annual Civil Society Dialogues from 2013-2016 was to showcase civil society contributions to the women, peace and security agenda.
- 5 Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice and Securing the Peace. <http://wps.unwomen.org/>
- 6 Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (page 2/35). http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_1_E.pdf
- 7 SDG Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; SDG Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>
- 8 Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security. http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2017_861.pdf
- 9 Women, Peace and Security: DFAT's implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/women-peace-security-dfats-implementation-unsc-resolution-1325.aspx>
- 10 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper. <https://www.fpwhitepaper.gov.au/foreign-policy-white-paper>
- 11 This contrasts with the DFAT *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy* which notes Global advocacy on women, peace and security as one of its gender and foreign affairs practice examples. Annex 2. 2016. p. 40.
- 12 See also Sarah Boyd, An opportunity missed for a feminist foreign policy <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/opportunity-missed-feminist-foreign-policy>
- 13 2016 Defence White Paper. <http://www.defence.gov.au/WhitePaper/>
- 14 See also Lisa Sharland DWP 2016: women, gender advice and future defence capabilities <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/dwp-2016-women-gender-advice-and-future-defence-capabilities/>
- 15 Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018, p. 26.
- 16 Independent Interim Review of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018. <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/office-women/independent-interim-review-australian-national-action-plan-women-peace-and-security-2012-2018>
- 17 2016 Progress Report on the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018, pg. 136 (Annex B – Interim Review Response). <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/office-women/2016-progress-report-australian-national-action-plan-women-peace-and-security-2012-2018>
- 18 August 2013 Annual Civil Society Report Card on Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018. <https://wpscoalition.org/category/2013/2013-report-card/>
- 19 Talanoa is a traditional word used in Fiji and across the Pacific to reflect a process of inclusive, participatory and transparent dialogue. The purpose is to share stories, build empathy and to make wise decisions for the collective good.
- 20 Policy Dialogue participants were provided with a copy of the Roundtable Report before the meeting, and a summary of key Roundtable findings was presented at the Policy Dialogue.
- 21 SDG Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; SDG Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>
- 22 Focused on women's meaningful participation in prevention and resolution of conflict. Importantly, the debate demonstrated that the women, peace and security agenda is no longer considered simply as a thematic issue but as an essential pillar of global affairs.

APPENDIX 1:

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Women Shape The Women, Peace And Security Agenda:

Roundtable Discussion Summary

WOMEN SHAPE THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA: ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION SUMMARY

AUSTRALIAN CIVIL SOCIETY COALITION FOR WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY
23 November 2017



The Australian Civil Society Coalition for WPS

The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women, Peace and Security is a non-partisan and independent coalition of civil society organisations, networks and individuals working to advance the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda in Australia, Asia and the Pacific region and globally.

Our vision is a world in which gender equality, and the contributions and rights of diverse women and girls, are at the forefront of transforming conflict to build peace.

www.wpscoalition.org

Acknowledgements

The Coalition gratefully acknowledges the financial support for the 2017 Dialogue provided by the Australian Civilian-Military Centre. In addition, generous in-kind and voluntary support from members of the Coalition has significantly contributed to the planning and implementation of the 2017 Roundtables and Policy Dialogue.

The Coalition would also like to thank all Roundtable participants for sharing their ideas, stories, and contributions to promote diverse women's voices of Australia and our region in speaking about women, peace and security. The Coalition looks forward to working further with all participants on the **women, peace and security agenda**, particularly as Australia moves to develop its 2nd National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in 2018-19.

Introduction: Listening to women's voices

As Australia nears the end of its current National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (2012-2018) and look toward the development of the next iteration of the NAP, the Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women Peace and Security ('the Coalition') is focussed on amplifying the voices of diverse women in Australia and our region to inform policy development. In September 2017, the Coalition organised a series of roundtables in each Australian capital city, with the support of the Australian Government, to provide a space for women to discuss what peace and security mean in practice. A Talanoa discussion was also held at the Triennial Conference of Pacific Women.

This report provides a summary of these roundtable discussions and will inform the discussions to be held on 30 November 2017 at the Annual Dialogue between the Australian Government and civil society. The Dialogue discussions, together with this summary, will be published in a report in early 2018.

The Global Picture

The 2017 Global Peace Index presents a mixed picture of good and bad news. While on one hand as a global community we are slightly more peaceful than in 2016; on the other hand looking over the last decade shows us that actually, the globe has become less peaceful. There is a trend in rising peace inequality – “with most countries having only small increases in peacefulness, while a handful of countries have had very large deteriorations in peace.”¹ Overall 93 countries improved while in 68 countries, peace deteriorated.

Iceland remains the most peaceful country in the world, a position it has held since 2008. It is joined at the top of the index by New Zealand, Portugal, Austria, and Denmark. There was also little change at the bottom of the index. Syria remains the least peaceful country in the world, followed by Afghanistan, Iraq, South Sudan, and Yemen. Countries at the bottom of the Global Peace Index are also at the bottom of the newly released Women, Peace and Security Index (2017) which ranks 153 countries across 3 dimensions of Inclusion, Justice and Security. Australia ranks 12th on the Global Peace Index and 17th on the Women, Peace, and Security Index.²

Women's leadership and substantive participation are essential for sustainable peace, yet women are still being excluded from peace talks. Post-conflict recovery processes are still failing to reflect the priorities of women and girls; police and peacekeeping forces remain male-dominated and women and girls continue to face violence on an alarming scale.

Women's participation is critical to the 'Women, Peace and Security Agenda'

From Bogotá to Baghdad, women are on the front lines of providing services, heading households, caring for the sick and the elderly, and sustaining and ensuring the survival of their families ... It is often women who first give voice to civilians silenced by atrocities. Increasingly, they are claiming their place as major stakeholders and active agents in resisting war, building peace, and defining security on their terms.... There is no single ideology, approach, or even motivation that defines this growing sector, which veteran activist Cora Weiss calls “peace women.” In effect, these women—be they antimilitarists, former fighters, the elite, or grassroots actors—come together through their commitment to social justice, fairness, and equality for all.

Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why It Matters by Sanam Naraghi Anderlin. 2007.

¹ Global Peace Index 2017. <http://visionofhumanity.org/indexes/global-peace-index/>

² Women, Peace, and Security Index. <https://giwps.georgetown.edu>

For over 100 years **women have been shaping and actively engaging in the Women, Peace and Security Agenda**. During World War 1, suffragettes convened the International Congress of Women at The Hague 'to protest against war and to suggest steps *which may lead to warfare becoming an impossibility*'.³ It took another 85 years before the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed a resolution, on 30 October 2000, acknowledging for the first time women's pivotal role in building and maintaining peace, as well as the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls. This resolution – *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (UNSCR 1325) - forms the foundation of the framework that has become known as the **Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda**.

Since 2000, there have been seven additional resolutions from the UNSC seeking to support and expand the provisions of UNSCR 1325.⁴ These resolutions build on a critical body of work that has sought to "guide work to promote gender equality and strengthen women's participation, protection, and rights in conflict prevention through post-conflict reconstruction contexts".⁵

To implement United Nations Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, and to ensure that women's participation is central to all aspects of peacebuilding, the Member States of the United Nations have been encouraged to develop National Action Plans (NAPs). To date, 71 countries, including Australia, have developed NAPs. Australia's first NAP was released in 2012.⁶

In 2017, as Australia prepares to develop its 2nd NAP what do these resolutions and the WPS agenda mean to *women from diverse backgrounds living in Australia and our region, and what do women from diverse backgrounds have to say about what peace and security mean to them?* For women and girls from diverse backgrounds in Australia and our region, this is a critical time to have our voices heard on peace and security.

³ The Hague, Kingdom of the Netherlands. Report of the International Congress of Women

<https://ia800306.us.archive.org/15/items/internatcongrewom00interich/internatcongrewom00interich.pdf>.

⁴ Women, Peace and Security resolutions: UNSCR 1325 (2000); UNSCR 1820 (2008); UNSCR 1888 (2009); UNSCR 1889 (2009); UNSCR 1906 (2010); UNSCR 2106 (2013); UNSCR 2122 (2013); UNSCR 2242 (2015).

⁵ Peacewomen, The Resolutions <http://www.peacewomen.org/why-WPS/solutions/resolutions>

⁶ <http://www.peacewomen.org/member-states>

The Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security

The Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security (the Dialogue)⁷ was established in 2014 to promote a robust discussion on WPS in Australia and globally. Led by civil society, this platform brings together Australian civil society, government and policymakers to:⁸

- Facilitate effective dialogue between civil society and the Australian Government on women, peace and security in the context of UNSCR 1325;
- Support shadow reporting on the Australian NAP; and
- Elevate the national discussion on women, peace and security.

In 2017, the Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security (the Coalition)⁹ has structured the Dialogue in two complementary parts: **Civil Society Roundtables (the Roundtables)**; and **the Civil Society-Government Policy Dialogue (the Policy Dialogue)**. The Roundtables focused on expanding our understanding of **what women, peace and security mean in practice across the diversity of women's experiences in Australia and our region**. Overall the Dialogue provides a key opportunity to:

- Expand the discussion beyond UNSC Resolutions and Australia's 1st NAP 2012-2018;
- Consider what we mean by peace and security in the current global climate and the context of emerging issues in our region; and
- To hear from the diversity of women's voices in Australia.

The Policy Dialogue, to be held on 30 November 2017, will be informed by the discussions held at the Roundtables. Together, the Roundtables and the Policy Dialogue will provide a critical platform for the work that will follow in 2018-2019 as Australia moves forward to a 2nd National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. The Dialogue discussions, together with this summary, will be published in a report in early 2018.

The Civil Society Roundtables

The Roundtables provided a forum for women and girls from diverse backgrounds in Australia and our region to express their views on what peace and security mean in practice today. The Roundtables, which engaged both individuals and organisations working domestically and those with an international focus, were conducted in all Australian capital cities (with multiple events in Adelaide, Canberra, Melbourne, and Sydney) during September 2017. Over 200 women from diverse backgrounds attended a total of thirteen roundtables and the Talanoa discussion.¹⁰ Three questions framed the discussions at the Roundtables:

- In today's global context, what peace and security mean to women from diverse backgrounds, living in Australia and our region
- What are the stories, experiences, and information which influence these understandings of peace and security; and

⁷ Reports from the past Dialogues are available at <https://wpscoalition.org/annual-civil-society-dialogue-on-women-peace-and-security-2/>

⁸ An additional aim of the Annual Civil Society Dialogues held between 2013-2016 was showcasing civil society contributions to the WPS agenda.

⁹ The Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security is a non-partisan, independent coalition of CSOs, networks, individuals working to advance WPS agenda in Australia, Asia-Pacific region, globally. <https://wpscoalition.org/>

¹⁰ Information provided in this report is not individually attributed, and quotes are provided by permission of participants, noting only Roundtable locations.

- What decisions/actions are required to promote peace and security in Australia and internationally?

The Roundtables were supplemented by a session on women peace and security organised at the 13th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women. This Talanoa discussion was hosted in the Pacific Feminist Hub, with Pacific feminists and women’s human rights defenders coming together to voice their concerns, priorities, and ideas for Australia’s WPS agenda in the Pacific.

Key Themes from the Roundtable Discussions

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the key themes that emerged from the Roundtables. This will inform the discussions at the 2017 Annual Civil Society Dialogue as well as a forthcoming report to be launched in 2018.

1. What do peace and security mean to you?

Discussions on meanings of peace and security set the context for the Roundtables. Participants’ ideas ranged across the personal, political, community, national and international, with 4 key themes emerging:

- 1) Respect for human rights and gender equality;
- 2) Acknowledging the diversity of women’s voices around peace and security;
- 3) Marginalisation and women’s voices; and
- 4) Freedom and “humanising” security.

Respect for human rights and gender equality

“The real weapons of mass destruction are inequality and the denial of human rights – the unhealed prejudices under the surface of every community on earth.” – Adelaide Roundtable participant

“Inequality underlines war.” – Hobart Roundtable participant

“Gender equality is basic to peace and security.” – Canberra Roundtable participant

Participants saw equal rights for all members of society as the foundation for peace and security; and peace and security as inseparable from gender equality. Empowerment, gender equality, participation, and inclusion were seen as essential elements of peace and security. Key points included:

- Enabling people to claim their rights and holding governments accountable for guaranteeing all human rights;
- Ensuring public policy, programs, services adhere to principles of equality and non-discrimination, focusing specifically on anti-discrimination policies related to sex and gender, race, disability and age; and
- Creating spaces for people, especially women and girls from diverse backgrounds and marginalised groups to participate in making decisions that affect their personal and collective lives.

Acknowledging the diversity of women's voices around peace and security

Across all Roundtables, participants highlighted the importance of understanding the diversity of women's needs, experiences, and concerns about peace and security. This was seen as fundamental to understanding the different ways that women experience and need peace and security. These critical understandings include women's race, class, age, socioeconomic status, gender or sexual identity, religion, culture, ethnicity, physical or mental ability, urban/rural location.

Need to be mindful of exclusion of diverse women from peace and security discussions; silencing of older women; more space needed for LGBTQI; young women see peace and security differently; minority women often don't get to decide on or define peace and security. – Comments compiled from across Roundtable participants

Marginalisation and women's voices

Most women participants expressed experiencing discrimination, but the intersection of race and gender was seen as exacerbating the discrimination and marginalisation experienced by diaspora, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Diaspora women, in particular, expressed the overwhelming individual and collective pressure they felt in having to challenge discrimination and racism from a position of disadvantage. This experience amplified women's sense of insecurity and contributed to a retreat to perceived "safer" spaces in their immediate communities; often inhibiting efforts to find a place and voice in the mainstream. This added to isolation, leading to more tension, and inhibiting the valuable contributions that diaspora, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women can make to Australian society. Some groups of women felt that discussions on peace and security, within government and mainstream civil society organisations/ movements (e.g. the women's movement), failed to listen to and acknowledge the needs, experiences, and concerns of women from diverse backgrounds.

"The minute you begin talking about discrimination, people withdraw or get defensive." – Perth Roundtable participant

"There is a big gap between the efforts made to discuss peace and security with government and civil society and the most marginalised communities." – Sydney Roundtable participant

"We can't talk about peace and security without talking about the sovereignty of the First Peoples. Complete cultural dispossession means no peace and security for ATSI [people] so we can't talk about peace and security without acknowledging that." – Brisbane Roundtable participant

"Freedom from, freedom to" and humanising security

Peace and security were also defined in terms of "freedom", bringing together the "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" aspects of human security. Participants focused on not only economic, health, food and personal security but also cultural and social needs, such as community and political security. Peace and security were often described as "freedom from" homelessness, statelessness, personal and intimate partner violence, sexual violence and harassment, all forms of discrimination, oppression, threats, intimidation, coercion, and stigma.

This "negative" conceptualisation of peace and security was offset by "positive peace" descriptions interpreted as "freedom (and opportunity) to": access justice, make informed choices and power to

act on those choices, autonomy and control over one's body, ability to protest and mobilise for action, speak and be heard, and freedom of movement. These dimensions are related to agency and predictability over everyday life and a sense of being safe; i.e. peace of mind, "lack of anxiety" or "peace as not having to worry".

The Roundtables also generated considerable discussion on gender-based violence in the home, on the street, at workplaces, and within communities - within and outside Australia. Many participants commented on the disconnect between women's daily experiences of violence, the focus of political discourse in Australia on domestic terrorism, framed in terms of threats to security, the apparent lack of commitment to addressing fundamental "human security", and what makes women and girls from diverse backgrounds feel unsafe; i.e. the everyday occurrences of gender-based violence and discrimination that takes away women's safety, dignity and mobility.

"If [security] is about moving from survival to living, then peace is about flourishing." – Melbourne Roundtable participant

"Peace is more than the absence of war and conflict: it's an overarching umbrella that every issues should come under – safety in home and the work place from violence, being able to participate in decision-making, being able to walk down from the street safely, being able to access services (equally and affordably): health care, transport, clean water, education, childcare, communications, justice." – Pacific Triennial Participants

2. What are the stories, experiences and information which influence these understandings of peace and security?

Perspectives on peace and security are drawn from lived personal experiences, including inherited narratives, and public discourse through the media, government institutions, politically expressed positions, and positions taken by community leaders.

Across the Roundtables there were 4 main themes that contributed to this discussion:

- 1) Lived experience and agency;
- 2) Diversity of women's voices;
- 3) Public discourse and the role of media; and
- 4) Trust in institutions.

Lived experience and agency

Lived experiences of conflict and peace and stories inherited through generations informed understandings and influenced how participants viewed the world and their place in it. Many women saw these lived experiences as a form of strength, authority, expertise, and agency, particularly in the resistance to violence; in protecting other women and family from violence; and in speaking about experiences of conflict, and/or gender-based violence in personal relationships.

"Living through war and having family that have lived through war makes people invested in peace." - Canberra Roundtable participant

Specifically, the duality of vulnerability and agency in violent situations has shaped how participants engaged in peace and security. This was particularly apparent in the case of migrant and diaspora communities, where often the relative peace in Australia is benchmarked against the lack of peace in their country of origin.

Diversity of women's voices

The diversity of personal and collective experiences of peace and security was a recurrent theme. The backgrounds of participants clearly influenced their perceptions of peace and security, and the reality of their peace and security situations. The Coalition made a concerted effort to reach out to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's organisations and diaspora organisations. Their limited participation in the Roundtables demonstrates the need for a more proactive strategy to reach out to diverse communities.

Without such a strategy, Australians will not understand how marginalised women see and understand peace and security, nor be able to ensure that there is understanding of the ways in which diverse women are leading and showing agency in resisting violence and promoting peace in their own communities. Interactions with people from other cultures including those seeking refuge and asylum have great potential to widen Australian understandings of peace and security.

In this regard, the conspicuous absence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and the limited participation of diaspora women at the Roundtables were raised as issues of concern for the continued marginalisation and silencing of certain voices.

"I came from a country where there was war [Sri Lanka] and many atrocities occurred based on ethnicity. Australia does not have the same complications. Yes, there is discrimination [in Australia] but getting things done are not hindered by your surname as this is an identifying marker in Sri Lanka." - Perth Roundtable participant

"It depends what your benchmark is: in PNG for example they are not 'at war' but are women secure? It's the same in Australia with our Indigenous communities, where we might not be at war but these communities face huge insecurities." – Canberra Roundtable participant

Public discourse and the role of the media

Roundtable discussions also focused on how, through the use of specific language and images, the media (including social media) plays a key role in shaping how people think about peace and security. Participants noted that persistent stereotypical representations of particular communities and women in the media are related to the way that ideas about threats and insecurities are produced and reinforced. This discourse is seen as justifying the inevitability of violence, undermining alternative means to resolve conflict, and resulting in solutions which divert funds from investing in peaceful non-violent initiatives to militarised and securitised responses.

"This constant badgering about our physical insecurity creates a particularly fearful and distrustful state of mind. The attitude is that 'everyone is my enemy', except those who look, think and act like me." – Adelaide Roundtable participant

"Peace means the end of patriarchy, white supremacy, compulsory heterosexuality, capitalism and all the other systems of lies that make violence appear possible, inevitable and justified." – Brisbane Roundtable participant

Participants expressed their concerns that news media (and social media) are also guilty of emphasising and manufacturing certain kinds of threats, fear or insecurity, such as constant terrorism, while ignoring other 'everyday' kinds of threats and insecurity faced by women, such as gender-based violence, homelessness, and lack of access to healthcare and justice institutions.

Trust in institutions

The *lack of* trust in institutions was a recurrent theme at the Roundtables. Participants noted that safety in everyday life requires trusting institutions to uphold the rule of law and further trusting those in positions of power to work for the common good. This was also expressed as a desire for effective, fair and inclusive institutions that promote peace and security (including good governance, law, and security institutions themselves such as the police and military).

With respect to gender-based violence, some participants highlighted the lack of trust in justice institutions, their ability to be fair and impartial, lack of equal access to these institutions, and therefore a lack of recourse to justice. For example, some participants felt unsafe to report acts of violence, continuing to live in insecure and violent situations.

You are judged already even if you are the one who has experienced violence, you have to prove that you even have the right to tell your story...it can be a real source of insecurity when you don't know where to go for help." - Sydney Roundtable participants

Linked to good governance, a sense of security was also seen as emerging from having power and access to mechanisms that influence public and political decision-making. This was otherwise expressed as having a “voice” on issues that affect everyday lives. Being, or feeling, powerless or not knowing how to influence what constitutes “national interest” leads to poor trust in institutions because powerful vested interests are seen as driving policy, rather than policy being driven in the best interest of communities. Collectively, the concern was that “national interest” was being narrowly defined by powerful political and corporate interests, without broader community consultation, resulting in a lack of representation and a sense of manipulation.

“This morning I read that [some people are] calling for Australia to call on its defence powers to access gas reserves in communities, a real power play. It essentially forces us to do something that we don't want to do.” – Darwin Roundtable participant

3. What decisions/actions are required to promote peace and security in Australia and internationally?

Roundtable participants identified a broad range of ideas, activities, and strategies for promoting peace and security. Notably, there was an emphasis on the need for **a dual focus**:

- A domestic program built around addressing inequality; and
- A peace-based foreign policy grounded in principles of ensuring gender equality, promoting peace and stability, focusing on preventing conflict and reflective of our international human rights commitments.

Participants were clear that both spaces, domestic and international, will require bold actions – ‘business as usual’ will not achieve deep structural change required for sustainable peace and security.

Localising the peace and security agenda within Australia

“We need to make sure we aren’t just looking outwards. This approach has led to a lot of countries doing the same thing – they are not adopting WPS [women peace and security] at a national/local level. Our Government needs to start adopting it holistically as a domestic policy.” - Melbourne Roundtable participant

Roundtable discussions emphasised the importance of domestic-focussed actions and strategies in relation to peace and security. Notably, participants recognised the need for better links across local, urban/rural, national and regional contexts in Australia and between diverse women and organisations, communities, institutions, and policies.

Participants identified a range of strategies for promoting peace and security in Australia including:

A. Gender equality

Peace and security cannot be separated from gender equality. Persistent gender inequalities need to be addressed, including the gender pay gap, strengthening the representation of women in leadership roles, and valuing and recognising unpaid caring work. While there were increasing numbers of women in leadership positions, participants agreed that simply “adding women”, without addressing structural, institutional and cultural gender issues would result in limited success. A sustainable transformative approach requires **challenging taken for granted values, ways of thinking and working, around gender equality, and specifically in relation to WPS.**

B. Eliminating gender-based violence

Participants raised the pervasiveness of gender-based violence in Australia as a critical issue that deserves as much, if not more attention than terrorism. There was frustration that despite persistent evidence of the number of women being killed weekly by a partner or former partner in Australia,¹¹ the Government’s focus and funds were on ‘national security threats’.

“We are sick of being told that the terror is out there, when the terror is in the next bedroom.” – Brisbane Roundtable participant

The critical point being made by the participants was not that a focus on terrorism and violent extremism is unwarranted, but **rather that policy responses seem to take an “either/or” approach. Participants called for a rebalancing of priorities.** Specifically, participants suggested that more effective connections need to be made to related national plans, such as the Australian National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022.¹²

C. Building social cohesion and inclusion

An important strategy for sustainable peace, according to participants, is the **promotion of social cohesion and inclusion while recognising and respecting diversity and human rights.** To build social cohesion and inclusion, participants also recognised that holistic approaches to addressing discrimination and inequality are critical.

“A lot of what we’re struggling with in the world today... dealing with diversity which we don’t know how to work with. The primary characteristic of our identity is our humanity.” – Hobart Roundtable participant

¹¹ National Homicide Monitoring Program report, Australian Institute of Criminology 215 <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/mr/21-40/mr23.html>

¹² The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022. <https://www.dss.gov.au>

Discussions about social inclusion focused on promoting multiculturalism by investing in a genuine commitment to reconciliation and through proactive ongoing engagement with diaspora communities (especially diaspora women and girls). While Australia celebrates cultural diversity, it also promotes assimilation. This contradicts the **promotion of multiculturalism which requires working simultaneously on enabling a sense of collective belonging and retaining the distinctiveness of smaller community groups.**

Part of promoting multiculturalism is the unfinished work on reconciliation. This begins with supporting solutions to the problems of marginalisation, discrimination, and disadvantage led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Roundtable recommendations included: **strengthening the racial discrimination legislation; ensuring support for national representatives bodies** (like the now defunded National Congress of Australia's First Peoples) that give voice to the needs and aspiration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and **adopting the Uluru Statement's approach** to constitutional reform to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which has been recently rejected by the Government.¹³

"We are still having this conversation because we haven't been able to make peace with our history – reconciliation is still to be achieved and we will continue to have this conversation until we are able to acknowledge our violent past and human rights abuses so we can find a way forward together." – Adelaide Roundtable participant

D. Creating spaces for ongoing sustained engagement with diverse women and their organisations

Participants linked multiculturalism, reconciliation, and inequality, and recommended the creation of **safe spaces for diverse communities (in particular, spaces for women and girls from diverse backgrounds) to exercise agency and participate in making decisions** that affect peace and security in their everyday lives. In the case of diaspora communities, this participation is seen as extending to influencing how the Australian Government responds to issues happening in their countries of origin. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and social movements (e.g. women's movement/ peace movement) were seen as providing opportunities to amplify community dialogues and to engage in a national conversation about peace and security.

E. Rewriting national discourses to promote peace

A number of suggestions were put forward to build a domestic culture of peace. These included: peace education in schools as a preventative strategy, resourcing ongoing community engagement and dialogues on peace and security (especially ensuring women's leadership and participation/representation in peace and security discussions), and instituting progressive legislation which respects and supports the independence of civil society, and their advocacy role.

There was unequivocal recognition among participants that peace and security cannot be brought about by governments alone. Active engagement with and within civil society is seen as a key element for sustainable peace. Promoting policy making and implementation that is grounded in principles of **collaborative governance and collective impact** would contribute to working in partnership with civil society.

Participants emphasised the importance of creating a space for diverse CSOs to shift the tenor of the national dialogue away from militarised and securitised responses to peace towards ways of thinking that incentivise non-violent means to resolve conflicts. In **calling for a rejection of war and violence as a tool for conflict resolution**, many participants commented that the profitability in arms manufacture and trade clearly inhibits the move away from militarisation.

¹³ In this light, the recent rejection of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, by the Coalition government, reflects a lack of commitment to peace. <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/sad-day-t Turnbull-government-rejects-indigenous-referendum-proposal-20171026-gz8mpj.html>

Embedding peace in Australia's international engagement

Participants also noted the need for a **more holistic approach to local, national and global issues, including Australia's international commitments and foreign policy, with respect to promoting gender equality, preventing conflict and building sustainable peace and security.**

Participants identified a range of strategies for integrating peace into Australia's international engagement including:

A. Foreign aid budget

There have been successive cuts to the foreign aid budget, with 0.23% of Gross National Income (GNI) being spent on overseas aid, but 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on Defence. From a budget perspective, this signals a militarised approach to peace and security as opposed to a human security approach. Even though Australia's overseas aid program has a strong commitment to gender equality, in the face of these cuts to the aid budget, it is highly unlikely that the objectives outlined in the 2016 *Gender equality and women's empowerment strategy*,¹⁴ namely enhancing women's voice in decision-making, leadership and peace-building, promoting women's economic empowerment, and ending violence against women and girls, will be achieved. Participants recommended that Australia **increase the overseas aid budget to 0.7% of GNI.**

"We are spending too much on the military and need to rebalance. Foreign aid should be at the very least 0.7% of GNI." - Adelaide and Melbourne Roundtable participants

B. International Trade

While roundtable participants acknowledged the importance of international trade, there were serious concerns that a sole focus on economic gains without due consideration for human rights, equity, and social justice would do more harm than good, particularly to the pursuit of regional peace and security. Participants recommended that trade partnerships (specifically the Trans-Pacific Partnership) should be subject to **social and environmental impact audits** to ensure a more equitable distribution of benefits.

"The system of trade we have reinforces the importance of profit rather than people's ability to survive and flourish." – Hobart Roundtable participant

C. Refugee and asylum seeker policies

Roundtable participants seriously criticised the current Government's (and the former ALP Government's) refugee and asylum seeker policy. Off-shore detention was seen as inhumane and in violation of the Refugee Convention, with an urgent call for Australia to live up to the commitments made in the Refugee Convention. Deterrence policies (maintaining offshore processing, onshore mandatory detention and boat turn-backs) have come at a significant budget cost, but more importantly there are human costs: mental health issues, exposure to continued violence, abuse and exploitation, family separation, poor access to health and education, social isolation, and statelessness, to name just a few. Roundtable participants strongly support a **shift from a policy of deterrence to alternative policies that are in compliance with international law and human rights standards.** These recommendations were also put forward at a discussion on women peace and security at the Triennial Conference for Pacific Women.

¹⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade *Gender equality and women's empowerment strategy*. 2016.

“Peace and security in Australia is only as strong as peace and security in our region – so our off-shore detention policy (in fact our refugee policy as a whole) is not an example of peace.” – Adelaide Roundtable participant

“Refugees are vulnerable. They continue to feel unsafe, it is a tragic situation. We must bring the refugees from Manus and Nauru back here and resettle them here in Australia.” – Melbourne Roundtable participant

D. Bilateral/ multilateral agreements

In considering Australia’s foreign policy more broadly, Roundtable participants spoke about the need to embed the principles of peace and equality in all bilateral and multilateral agreements. The implication would be that Australian foreign policy is reframed to **focus on the long-term prevention of conflict and violence, as part of a peace and security agenda**. The specific recommendations include a greater focus on diplomacy as a mechanism for conflict prevention and resolution, disarmament (including nuclear disarmament), strengthening the focus of regional bodies (e.g. ASEAN/SAARC) on human security and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and implementation of collective responses to climate change. Specific reference was also made, both at the Roundtables and the Triennial Conference for Pacific Women, regarding mainstreaming women’s participation in conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution, and recovery from conflict into Australia’s foreign policy, and in particular resourcing and supporting local women-led community initiatives for peace.

Building a Women Peace and Security Framework

“SDGs is beautiful language – the goals are the headlines of what a peaceful world could look like. If we’re accountable to the SDGs, what a beautiful and peaceful world it would be.” - Melbourne Roundtable participant

The Roundtables have provided a valuable and timely lens on what women, peace and security mean in practice across the diversity of women’s experiences in Australia and our region. There is a strong endorsement for linking and integrating the local, national and global perspectives of the WPS agenda.

The women peace and security agenda is grounded in a feminist approach to advancing peace and security which is first and foremost about the long-term prevention of violent conflict/ instability and enabling sustainable peace. In practice, this means on one hand, increasing women’s substantive participation in all aspects of peace and security policy development and implementation. On the other hand, women peace and security is equally about transforming structures contributing to violence, militarization, and armament to a focus on human rights, human security, and peace, at the national, regional and global levels.

Women want more than just a seat at the table; they want equal opportunity and access to (re) frame what peace and security mean. These Roundtables and the creative contributions of participants have provided a small step along this journey.

As Australia looks to advance its women peace and security agenda, the proposed 2nd NAP on Women Peace and Security will be an important tool. The 1st NAP has been primarily internationally focused. However, Roundtable discussions provide unequivocal community support for a peace and security agenda that has a strong domestic focus, while recognising the need to be linked internationally as well. The recommendation is therefore that the 2nd NAP will need to demonstrate how Government policies, plans, and actions are promoting peace and security both domestically and internationally.

The four key elements for developing a robust Women Peace and Security framework for Australia, arising from the roundtable consultations include:

1. Giving primacy to peace and conflict prevention in ways that resources and supports the work of diverse women and their organisations; including adopting a rights-based human security approach to peace and security policy;
2. Implementing an interlinked domestic and international focus on women, peace and security; and in this regard, the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular goals 5 (gender equality and women's empowerment) and 16 (promote peaceful and inclusive societies), can provide a pathway to peace and stability;
3. Resourcing and protecting robust, diverse and vibrant civil society spaces that proactively engage (on an ongoing basis) with policymakers on framing what peace and security mean; especially ensuring that diverse women's leadership and voices are heard in this space. This should see civil society organisations and women's organisations as partners not instrumentalised for their expertise, or just as a mechanism for consultation;
4. A collaborative approach to peace and security policymaking and implementation that recognises that no one actor alone can achieve collective impact.



2017

Listening To Women's Voices And
Making The Connections To The Women,
Peace And Security Agenda

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**FIFTH REPORT OF THE
ANNUAL CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE ON WOMEN,
PEACE AND SECURITY**

*Dialogue Coordinating Group: Ludmilla Kwitko, Anu Mundkur, and Barbara O'Dwyer
on behalf of the WPS Coalition.*



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