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## **WILPF AUSTRALIA SUBMISSION ON AUSTRALIA'S 2<sup>ND</sup> NATIONAL ACTION PLAN (NAP) ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY (WPS)**

### **1. WILPF'S APPROACH**

WILPF works locally and globally to bring women together to abolish the causes of war and work for inclusive and permanent peace from a feminist perspective. WILPF works to unite women peacemakers to oppose injustice, inequality, militarism and patriarchy.

WILPF envisions a world free from violence and armed conflict, in which human rights are protected, and women and men are equally empowered and involved in positions of leadership and decision making at the local, national and international levels, across all aspects of peace and security.

WILPF strongly believes that the full enjoyment of women's human rights and attainment of gender justice are necessary preconditions for the meaningful and effective influence of women in conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict transitions to sustainable peace and security.

WILPF promotes a "Feminist Peace" using an integrated women-led approach which:

- is a transformative vision for permanent global peace, where a just economy and social, environmental, and gender justice is achieved for all;
- addresses the inter-linkages and root causes of power structures, drivers of conflict, and dynamics of peace;
- utilises feminist intersectional analysis and methodologies, values and principles; and
- links the local and global, since causes and consequences of war and conflict manifest both locally and globally, and therefore inclusive peace and security need to be addressed locally and globally.<sup>1</sup>

### **2. DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2ND NAP**

- While the 2<sup>nd</sup> NAP will build on the foundation of UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325, and the 8 following UNSCRs, WILPF would like to see the development of the Australian NAP and implementation of policies and practices emphasise conflict prevention and peace building over militarism.
- WILPF maintains that the focus of the NAP should be on **proactive peace building**. Current Australian government policies and practices, both domestic and foreign, lean towards increasingly militaristic approaches to dealing with global and local threats. This appears to steer Australia towards a militarised response to "national security", which seems designed to make the Australian public feel afraid and not secure. The inevitable result is that *force* is then viewed as the answer, and not peace building.
- **WILPF views disarmament as a key focus** for the NAP. Australia's current expansion of its arms sales stands in direct contradiction to the WPS agenda. Global leadership in sales of weapons is not a benchmark Australia should be aspiring to as an indicator of commitment to meaningful implementation of the WPS agenda. In addition, Australia should also consider signing and contributing to the Nuclear Ban Treaty and other international collaborative efforts towards promoting disarmament and a peaceful and safer world.

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<sup>1</sup> WILPF vision [wilpf.org](http://wilpf.org)



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- Crucially, the 2<sup>nd</sup> NAP should **ensure the participation of women in all forms of peace and security policy and practice**. Such inclusion of women strengthens durable outcomes and responsive solutions. Participation of women in formal institutions requires more support from foreign policy and diplomacy, aid, and civil society and not primarily a militarised response. Attention needs to be paid to the contributions of women and girls in all aspects of peace and security, not only those issues that are frequently gendered (such as sexual violence, education access, and protection). This is not to minimise these serious issues that fundamentally affect women's lives, but to advocate for a position that recognises the importance of including women in decision making about all aspects of peace and security and sustainable development. This would move beyond the **'add women and stir' approach** of the 1<sup>st</sup> NAP.<sup>2</sup>
  - While the participation of women in the military may offer opportunities for gender equality and for important engagement in conflict and disaster zones, the 2<sup>nd</sup> NAP should **resist the temptation to reinforce militarised responses to peace and security**. Instead, it should seek people-centered, and particularly women-centered, ways of building peace at local, national and international levels that place women's experiences of violence and insecurity and efforts for peace at the heart. This means taking a holistic approach which integrates gender equality, human rights, and intersectionality with the women, peace and security agenda.
  - The 2<sup>nd</sup> NAP should **include women's meaningful contribution within all the pillars**. Inclusion of women remains limited<sup>3</sup> and their capacities and experience could be better utilised in Australia in regional engagement across conflict prevention and peace building efforts. This would reflect a shift away from the 1<sup>st</sup> NAP's predominant focus on protection and build possibilities for women's substantive engagement and participation across all the pillars, **moving beyond essentialising a protection focus**.
  - **Violence in international contexts is not separate from violence in domestic contexts**. Participants in 2017 Roundtables<sup>4</sup> across Australia noted that "... the duality of vulnerability and agency in violent situations has shaped how participants engaged in peace and security" and "the need to acknowledge the continuum of violence." Constructions of masculinity that uphold entrenched gendered ideas reinforce cultures that permit violence on all levels; from the intimate/ family realm to the state context.
  - These fundamental connections **reinforce both the local/ domestic and global/ international links** across the WPS agenda, and provide an important opportunity for the NAP to negotiate a critical path across these intersections. For example, there is clear complementarity in the domestic and international spheres across the issues of violence, preventing/ countering violent extremism, refugees and displaced people, climate change, and health pandemics – all seen as "emerging WPS issues".<sup>5</sup>
  - There is also the opportunity for the **NAP to provide policy coherence** with other government policies and portfolios: e.g. Defence and Increased Arms; Foreign Affairs and Trade and a Foreign Affairs White Paper which neglects WPS; Domestic Violence and Australia's National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and

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<sup>2</sup> Fifth Report of the Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security. *Listening to Women's Voices and Making the Connections to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda*. 2017.

<sup>3</sup> UN Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security. October 2017. <https://securitycouncilreport.org/>

<sup>4</sup> Fifth Report of the Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security. p. 14, 19.

<sup>5</sup> Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice and Securing the Peace. <http://wps.unwomen.org/>



Their Children 2010-2022; reconciliation and indigenous issues; and Home Affairs and Social Services work with refugees and displaced persons from conflict areas.

- Fundamentally, **the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, specifically Goal 5 (achieve gender equality) and Goal 16 (promote peaceful and inclusive societies)<sup>6</sup>, recognise that sustainable development is not possible without peace and peace is not possible without sustainable development, and provide the further powerful linkage between Australia's domestic and international responses and reporting on WPS. The NAP should not only align with the UNSCRs on WPS, but also additional **existing international commitments**, including: CEDAW, Refugee Convention, Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People, Arms Trade Agreement, Paris and other climate change agreements, and the Global Migration Compact.

### **3. ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY**

- The **Independent Interim Review (IR)<sup>7</sup> completed in 2015** tracked the whole of government progress on implementation, and analysed the relevance of actions listed in the Australian NAP against the intended outcomes. The IR **made 16 recommendations** including: the need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation; and highlighting gaps in institutionalisation, awareness, funding, resource allocation across implementing agencies, and civil society engagement. **The government's response was to note that most of these recommendations "will be addressed in the next National Action Plan"<sup>8</sup>.**
- **At a minimum, these 16 recommendations made in 2015 need to be addressed** to ensure basic accountability and transparency. In addition, sustainable resources and skills are needed to design, monitor and evaluate and implement to NAP; and reporting should not be confused with the need for a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, linked to a meaningful "theory of change". All of this takes resources and the commitment to follow through on monitoring and review recommendations.
- **WILPF recommends the following:**
  - develop and resource NAP consultations in a timely manner to ensure diverse and representative engagement of civil society, and especially at key Review moments throughout the NAP Implementation cycle;
  - provide dedicated sustainable resources to a WPS Secretariat to ensure regular communication and coordination across implementing agencies and WPS stakeholders;
  - develop and implement a Communications and Engagement Strategy to regularly inform stakeholders (local and state government and civil society) on NAP implementation progress, achievements and lessons learned; and to update on key issues across the domestic and international WPS continuum;
  - establish an Advisory Panel - including civil society and WPS specialists - to provide regular feedback on implementation and monitoring and evaluation; and
  - identify from the outset realistic resource allocations for NAP implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation, and agency and civil society stakeholder communications and engagement.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>

<sup>7</sup> Independent Interim Review of the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2012-2018) Final Report: 30 October 2015 <https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/nap-interim-review-report.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> 2016 Progress Report on the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-18. pg.136 (Annex B – Interim Review Response). <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/office-women/2016-progress-report-australia-national-action-plan-women-peace-security-and-security-2012-2018>



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***Without adequate and sustainable resources there is a significant risk that accountability and transparency may be jeopardised.***

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security provides the opportunity for policy makers to adopt a gendered lens in proposing and implementing Australia's approach to security, peace building and conflict prevention, especially in our own region.
- ***The NAP on WPS is not an end in itself.*** It is a means to an end - the end of violence and armed conflict. A gendered approach takes account of the impact of armed conflict, on all members of a community - women and men - and focuses on the participation and views of all participants. This should be the basic premise that guides the development and implementation of government policies that will ultimately lead to peaceful processes and solutions to violence and armed conflict.
- ***This will require courage and vision, not more of the same attitudes and practice*** that have seen the world become consumed by greater levels of conflict in recent years, with the world today less peaceful than any time in the last decade.<sup>9</sup> The vision provides the opportunity to build a common platform and focus for the NAP and its implementing stakeholders, and critically the goal against which impact can be measured.
- ***In summary***, the 2<sup>nd</sup> NAP needs to have:
  - a critical gender perspective;
  - robust monitoring and evaluation framework;
  - resources to fully implement and evaluate the NAP;
  - effective governance;
  - consistent engagement with civil society (particularly women's groups); and
  - the courage to meaningfully address the WPS agenda, conflict prevention and peace building.
- ***And to ask and answer the hard question: what contribution and impact has the NAP made to:***
  - ***building a durable peace;***
  - ***increasing women's participation in all aspects of peace and security development and implementation; and***
  - ***transforming structures contributing to violence, extremism, militarisation and armament to a focus on human rights, human security, and peace at local, national, regional and global levels?***

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<sup>9</sup> Global Peace Index 2018. <http://Visionofhumanity.org/>