



JUST PEACE QUEENSLAND INC.
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Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP

Member for Rankin and Australian Treasurer

9/5/2023

Dear Dr Chalmers

Just Peace Qld Inc is a grassroots Peace and Social Justice organisation formed in 2001 following the attacks on New York and the Pentagon. Our first message was 'Our Grief is not a Call for War'. We are a Brisbane based organisation of citizens whose main aim is to raise awareness about the causes of conflict and advocate for peaceful resolutions to those.

Just Peace is a member of the national *Independent and Peaceful Australia Network* <https://ipan.org.au/> and the Nobel prize awardee *International Peace Bureau* (IPB) <https://www.ipb.org/> The IPB each year coordinates an annual Global Days of Action Against Military Spending campaign around the world which we in Just Peace support.

The recently released Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) 2023 report shows an upsurge in world military spending to an all-time high of US\$2240 billion in 2022, which includes an ever-greater military spend by Australia.

We believe this is unconscionable. As Australian citizens we're truly horrified, not just by global military spending, but by Australia's shameful contribution to it.

The widespread community concern was demonstrated in the national People's Inquiry into the Costs and Consequences of Australia's participation in US led wars following WW2 held during 2021-22. A copy of the Report ***Choosing our Own Course: Next Steps towards and Independent Peaceful Australia*** was delivered to your electorate office Manager on the 24th February this year for you to read. [Download an electronic copy of the report here.](#)

The October budget papers show total defence funding will reach \$48.7 billion in 2022-23, That's a shocking statement, not just about what the Australian government is spending our nation's money on, but what it's not spending public money on.

In directing those billions of 'defence' dollars to build Australia's military muscle and capacity for national belligerence, Australia's government is shunting those billions away from Closing the Gap for First Nations people, funding health, housing, education, community support and other expenditures essential for all Australian citizens' and national wellbeing.

In tragic irony is, you and the rest of our government could be using those 'defence' billions towards preventing what's widely accepted as the greatest danger confronting all Australians and all other life on earth: human-induced climate disaster.

The signals this 'defence' spend sends are not just to Australian people about how little our wellbeing matters. The signals are also to people of the world beyond, that Australia is a strategically naïve and hubristic lapdog of the United States out for military conquest!

The signals also point to whom our government answers. That's evidently not for most of the 26 million citizens of Australia, but a tiny few, perhaps in the US, who maximise their profits through military activity and so shrewdly cultivate both war and 'preparedness' for it.

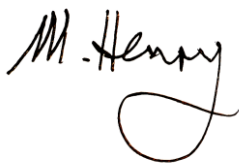
As aware and caring Australian citizens, we must demand that you, our government, drastically reduce this military spending. We urge our government to implement human and common-security-centred policies that nurture people and planet, not policies that answer to the destructive profit-driven agenda of the arms and fossil-fuel industries.

At this perilous historical moment, more than ever we need mutual trust, diplomacy and cooperation. We need a national culture that values justice, integrity, caring and courage, a culture rooted in appreciation of the need for shared wellbeing of all Australians. That's why we need our Australian government to spend the nation's money – our money – in ways that best support these objectives. Only with wise, community-focussed government action can the actions of Australian citizens contribute most effectively to national – and international – wellbeing. We must trust that you will do your best for us.

Redirect military spending to community wellbeing now. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Henry, Co-Convener, Just Peace QLD

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "M. Henry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping flourish at the end.