

CEDAW SHADOW REPORT SUBMISSION



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

The Australian Civil Society Coalition for WPS – Steering Group

Anuradha Mundkur, Australian Council for International Development

Barbara O'Dwyer, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Barbara K. Trojanowska, Monash Gender, Peace and Security

Ludmilla Kwitko, Women's International League of Peace and Freedom

Melissa Monteiro, Community Migrant Resource Centre

Michelle Higelin, ActionAid Australia

Roslyn Dundas, CARE Australia

Navanita Bhattacharya, Plan International Australia

Contact the Australian Civil Society Coalition for WPS

wpscoalition@gmail.com

Summary of recommendations for Australia's 2nd National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security

- Prioritise peace and conflict prevention
- Implement an interlinked domestic and international focus on women, peace and security
- Resource and promote robust, diverse and vibrant civil society spaces
- Foreground women's substantive participation and agency in conflict prevention, protection and post-conflict reconstruction
- Resource and implement monitoring and evaluation which promotes accountability
- Incorporate all recommendations made in the Global Study on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and CEDAW General Recommendation 30

Background

Australia's bid for a temporary seat on the UN Security Council (2013-2014) provided the impetus for the development of the 1st Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018, now extended to 2019 (henceforth the Australian NAP).

The 1st 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 1st Australian NAP is 'outward looking' in orientation – i.e. more focused on Australia's work overseas than on domestic policy and activities. The 1st 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 government departments with NAP implementation responsibilities include the Department of Defence (Defence), Australian Federal Police (AFP), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australian Civil-Military Centre (ACMC), Attorney-General's Department (AGD) and the Commonwealth Office for women (OFW, in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet). OFW is tasked with coordinating this whole of government effort.

Australian NAP governance mechanisms

OFW coordinates the Women, Peace and Security Inter Departmental Committee (IDC), which comprises high-level representation from implementing agencies with NAP responsibilities (listed above). The IDC is the primary Australian Government mechanism responsible for the governance and implementation of the Australian NAP. The work of the IDC is supported by an IDC Sub-committee which monitors on a regular basis the implementation of the Australian NAP.

The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women Peace and Security (the Australian WPS Coalition)¹ was established in 2013 to provide a platform for individuals, organisations and networks to reshape the peace and security dialogue, policy and practice in Australia and in our region, by moving away from an increasingly militarised and securitised approach, towards a transformative women, peace and security agenda.

¹ The Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women Peace and Security. <https://wpscoalition.org/>

Recognising the instrumental role played by civil society in the development of the Australian 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.”² In practice, this has translated into civil society representation on the IDC. The Australian WPS Coalition nominates one member to the IDC and two members to the IDC Sub-committee.

Australian NAP reporting / accountability mechanisms

Progress Reports

The Australian Government has committed to tabling three Progress Reports (one every two years), before Australian Federal Parliament, which tracks the progress of the Australian NAP. The two Progress Reports published to date 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 undertaken by the Australian NAP implementing agencies as represented on the IDC.

Independent Reviews

The Australian NAP provides for the conduct of two independent reviews (Interim and Final) to assess the effectiveness of implementation, provide guidance on emerging issues, direction and focus of the next NAP.

The *Independent Interim Review of the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2012-2018)*³ completed in 2015, tracked the whole of government progress on the implementation, analysed the relevance of actions listed in the Australian NAP against the intended outcomes, and analysed the relevance of the Australian NAP to inform actions to implement the women, peace and security agenda more broadly. The Interim Review made 16 recommendations across five thematic categories, which focused on the need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation, particularly impact measurement; gaps in terms of institutionalisation, awareness, funding and resource allocation across implementing agencies; and formal engagement with civil society which was limited by access to resources. The government’s response was to note that most of these recommendations “will be addressed in the next National Action Plan.”⁴

The Final Independent Review is underway and its findings are expected to inform the design of Australia’s 2nd NAP.

Annual Civil Society Dialogues and Report Cards

The Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security was established in 2014 to promote a robust discussion on women peace and security in Australia and provide a civil society assessment of the progress made on implementing the Australian NAP. The five annual dialogues held to date are led by civil society and funded by the APMC. The annual dialogues provide a platform bringing together Australian civil society, government and policymakers to: facilitate effective dialogue between civil society and the Australian Government on women; peace and security in the context of UNSCR 1325; support reporting on the Australian NAP; and elevate the national discussion on women, peace and security.

Australian NAP: Some Achievements

The 1st Australian NAP lacks a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess progress, achievements and impacts. The descriptive nature of indicators only allows for a recounting of

² Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2018, pg. 26. <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/office-women/australia-national-action-plan-women-peace-and-security-2012-2018>

³ 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>

⁴ 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>

actions undertaken under each of the five strategies. At this very basic level, assessing the progress of the Australian NAP indicates ongoing efforts to:

- Include references to women peace and security in key policy and guidance documents of implementing agencies such as in the 2016 Defence White Paper; AFP's International Operations Gender Strategy and Concept and Agency Implementation Plan for Women Peace and Security; 2016 DFAT Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy; and Protection of Civilian Guidelines.
 - However, the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper does not include any reference to women, peace and security. The paper acknowledges that "Gender inequality undermines global prosperity, stability and security. It contributes to and often exacerbates a range of challenges, including poverty, weak governance and conflict and violent extremism."⁵ However, the White Paper fails to embed a gendered approach to foreign policy, instead choosing to only address gender inequality as a development issue.
- Increase the number of women deployed in international military and police missions as well as internally across all occupational groups/ ranks/ grade levels as well as established Gender Advisor positions at the strategic and operational levels within the Australian Defence Force
- Develop and deliver specific training and workshops on women, peace and security to Defence and AFP personnel as well as at a whole-of-government level
- Maintain a zero-tolerance policy for sexual assault and exploitation
 - Changing gender norms, within organisations that disadvantage, marginalise and violate women, is a slow process. Despite a zero-tolerance policy for sexual assault and exploitation, the Australian Defence Force culture has been in the spotlight with alleged reports of active and former military personnel publishing jokes and memes about rape, violence against women and child sexual assault on a social media platform.⁶
- Promote women peace and security through its aid program for example being the largest contributor to the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.
 - According to DFAT's *Performance of Australian Aid 2016-17*, the gender equality target – that 80% of aid investments effectively address gender equality issues – has not yet been met. DFAT data for FY2016-17 (the most recent year that performance data is available) notes that 77% of aid investments were assessed as effectively addressing gender equality – a decrease on the previous year. This is the only one of the ten performance targets set in 2014 which has not yet been met.⁷ DFAT data as published in *Official Sector Statistical Summary (2016-17)*⁸ is not clear as to the extent to which conflict prevention and resolution, peace and security, security system management and reform, civilian peace-building, and post-conflict peace-building address gender issues as a primary or secondary objective, and therefore how effectively gender is integrated.⁹

⁵ 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper. pg. 93. <https://www.fpwhitepaper.gov.au/>

⁶ ADF's links to 'vile' Facebook group show 'backlash against progressive politics'. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/oct/25/adfs-links-to-vile-facebook-group-shows-backlash-against-progressive-politics>

⁷ Performance of Australian Aid 2016-17. <http://dfat.gov.au/news/news/Pages/performance-of-australian-aid-2016-17.aspx>

⁸ Australia's International Development Assistance: Official Sector Statistical Summary (2016-2017)

<http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/aus-international-dev-assistance-official-sector-stats-summary.pdf>

⁹ ACFID Analysis of the 2018-19 Federal Budget. pg.18.

https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/ACFID%20Federal%20Budget%20Analysis%20FY2018_19.pdf

- Be active in regionally promoting the women, peace and security agenda. For example the first ever ASEAN – Australia Women, Peace and Security High-level Dialogue was held in April 2018. At the time of writing this submission the outcomes document from the Dialogue is not publically available.

Australian NAP: Some Challenges

Lacks a vision statement

The 1st Australian NAP has no clearly articulated vision and as a result there is no robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess progress, achievements and impacts, and transparent accountability.

Lack of policy coherence between international commitments and domestic policy

There is a disturbing lack of policy coherence between Australia’s international commitments on issues related to women, peace and security and domestic policies.

This is most evident when it comes to arms trade. Australia is a strong supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty, noting at the time of its adoption “we look forward to the contribution that implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty can make to reducing gender-based violence in conflict settings”¹⁰. Further Australia supported the integration of gender-related text into Resolution 2117 on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the first ever SCR dedicated to addressing small arms and light weapons. In addition, Australia’s 2016 Foreign Policy White Paper notes that, “Australia has an abiding interest in working towards the ultimate goal of a world without weapons of mass destruction...Chemical weapons are again being used, as seen recently in Syria. Proliferation networks, including for missile technology and small arms, threaten the security of the Indo–Pacific.”¹¹ These commitments stand in stark opposition to the Australian Government’s announcement in January 2018, of its global Defence Export Strategy and intention to become one of the world’s biggest arms manufacturers and exporters over the next decade.¹²

Australia’s 1st NAP is externally focused, despite domestic understandings of women, peace and security as expressed in the Fifth Annual Civil Society Dialogue (2017),¹³ and the significant changes to domestic security architecture in Australia. With respect to the latter, the recent establishment of Department of Home Affairs (December 2017) whose “portfolio brings together Australia’s federal law enforcement, national and transport security, criminal justice, emergency management, multicultural affairs and immigration, and border-related functions and agencies,”¹⁴ has raised concerns regarding the increasing securitised approaches to keeping “Australia safe.”

Women, attending the Fifth Dialogue Annual Civil Society Dialogue (2017) emphasised the importance of domestic-focused actions and strategies in relation to peace and security, in particular, noting that domestic policies and practice such as those related to for example indigenous peoples and domestic violence, are silent on the connection to women, peace and security.

Under-emphasis on conflict prevention

The Australian NAP also under-emphasises conflict prevention, despite its identification as one of five thematic areas. The Interim Independent Review highlighted that conflict prevention, and a

¹⁰ Statement by HE Mr Gary Quinlan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations <http://dfat.gov.au/international-relations/international-organisations/un/unsc-2013-2014/national-statements/Pages/women-peace-and-security-3.aspx>

¹¹ 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper. <https://www.fpwhitepaper.gov.au/> pg. 83

¹² Australian Government Department of Defence. Defence Export Strategy 2018. <https://defence.gov.au>

¹³ Listening to Women’s Voices and Making the Connections to the Women Peace and Security Agenda: Fifth report of the Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women Peace and Security. http://wpscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CivilSociety_2018_report_ART_web.pdf

¹⁴ Australian Government Department of Home Affairs. <https://homeaffairs.gov.au>

gendered analysis of conflict is subordinated to a focus on protection and sexual and gender-based violence.

Lack of specific budget allocation

There is no specific budget allocation for the implementation of the Australian NAP. It is assumed that planning for, and implementation and monitoring and evaluation of NAP responsibilities will take place within existing resources. This brings into serious question the ability to effectively undertake women, peace and security policy and practice, and to demonstrate accountability in the domestic and international contexts.

Recommendations for Australia's 2nd NAP

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, militarisation, and armament to a focus on human rights, human security, and peace, at the national, regional and global levels.

As Australia looks to advance its women peace and security agenda, the 2nd Australian NAP on Women Peace and Security will be an important tool. The 1st Australian NAP has been primarily internationally focused. However, 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 2nd Australian NAP will need to demonstrate how Government policies, plans, and actions are promoting peace and security both domestically and internationally.

For Australia timing is critical as the design for the 2nd NAP is expected to be completed late 2018. Australia's 2nd NAP must:

Prioritise peace and conflict prevention

- By resourcing and supporting the work of diverse women and their organisations, including international domestic organisations, such as indigenous women's rights agencies, migrant and refugee organisations, and diaspora communities.
- Adopting a rights-based human security approach to peace and security policy that recognises freedom from fear and oppression as fundamental to the promotion of peace and security.

Implement an interlinked domestic and international focus on women, peace and security

- A domestic program built around addressing inequality (promoting gender equality, eliminating gender-based violence, building social cohesion and inclusion, rewriting national discourses to promote peace, creating spaces for ongoing sustained engagement with diverse women and their organizations – including indigenous and diaspora women).
- A peace-based foreign policy grounded in principles of ensuring gender equality, promoting peace and stability, focusing on preventing conflict and reflective of international human rights commitments.
- Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals; in particular goals 5 (gender equality and women's empowerment) and 16 (promote peaceful and inclusive societies), which can provide a pathway to peace and stability.

Resource and promote robust, diverse and vibrant civil society spaces

- To proactively engage (on an ongoing basis) with policymakers on framing what peace and security mean – so that civil society organisations and women’s organisations are seen as partners and not instrumentalised for their expertise, or just as a mechanism for consultation.
- To ensure diverse women’s leadership and voices are heard in all aspects of peace and security policy development and implementation.

Foreground women’s substantive participation and agency in conflict prevention, protection and post-conflict reconstruction

- The 2nd Australian NAP’s vision must highlight the role of women and adolescent girls as change agents and mark a shift from the current focus on protection to participation and conflict prevention.
- The vision statement should also underscore the vital importance of ongoing engagement with civil society (especially women’s organisations, including proactively seeking to engage with indigenous women’s rights activists and organizations, and diaspora organisations) in all aspects of peace and security policy development and implementation.
- 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.

Resource and implement monitoring and evaluation which promotes accountability

- By resourcing and implementing monitoring and evaluation which promotes accountability, there can be more effective monitoring of progress towards achieving women, peace and security activities, and meaningful measurement of impact, as well as learning across all government and civil society stakeholders.

Incorporate recommendations made in the Global Study on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and CEDAW General Recommendation 30

- Reducing military expenditures and controlling the availability of armaments
- Promoting non-violent forms of conflict resolution
- Fostering a culture of peace
- Resourcing and supporting women’s rights organisations and women’s human rights defenders with the aim of enabling women’s and girls’ leadership and meaningful participation in all dimensions of conflict prevention
- Addressing gendered impact of international arms trade and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty (2013)
- Adopting gender-sensitive migration policies, and regional agreements for the rights of women and girls
- Ensuring measures to prevent statelessness are applied to all women and girls
- Protection to be available to stateless women and girls before, during and after conflict, including those seeking asylum