

Morrison – Don't Cook Us With Gas!



Nick G. (20 May 2021)

The federal government has been widely condemned for its decision to fund a \$600 million new gas-fired power station in Kurri Kurri in the New South Wales Hunter Valley.

Even many of the government's own supporters are bemused by the decision, saying that it goes against the conservative philosophy of leaving such investments to the private sector, and not throwing government money at projects that cannot win private sector funds.

The Renew Energy website hit the nail on the head: "What's clear now is that what was once marketed as a 'free market' ideology was mostly rhetorical cover for extremely mundane and ideologically devoid crony capitalism. The goal isn't to avoid market interventions; it's to erase any market interventions that don't explicitly enrich the fossil fuel

industry."

The decision is not just bad in itself; it totally ignores the authoritative International Energy Agency view that no more fossil fuel projects should be approved.

Morrison touts it as a transition measure from coal, with its damaging CO2 emissions, but a transition means moving away from something, not prolonging the problem with yet another fossil fuel.

He has simply revealed himself and his government as the paid hirelings of the fossil fuel corporations that regularly top up the Coalition's donations piggy-bank.

It has angered companies in the renewable resource sector who do not enjoy the support of this government. Shaun Scallan, head of products of Capricorn Power, said; "This proposal flies in the face of all logic, science, engineering, economics and community interests. It is an appalling misuse of taxpayer funds and stands as

an example of naked corruption of politicians serving the vested interests of big business, yet again. This is an act of environmental, social and economic vandalism."

Marija Petkovic, managing director of Energy Synapse, said: "It is bewildering that the federal government would choose to fund a very mature fossil fuel technology, like gas-fired generation, especially at a time when we should be working towards deep decarbonisation of the grid. The ill-thought-out interventionist approach of the federal government continues to create a huge and unnecessary risk for private investors in the sector. Ultimately, is it consumers who will pay for this."

The IEA says that even if net zero commitments are achieved there will still be a temperature rise of 2.1C by the end of the century.

Morrison, with his background in advertising, is making sure that we'll all be "cooking with gas"! ■

Geelong Maritime Workers Fight for Jobs

Duncan B. (28 June 2021)

Recently over one hundred maritime workers and their supporters in Geelong, Victoria held a protest against international maritime company Svitzer. They marched behind a banner which read “Svitzer Snakes.”

Svitzer was the operator of tug boats in the Port of Geelong until late last year. On the 22nd of December last year, Svitzer made 18 full time masters, engineers and deck hands redundant, claiming that the operation was no longer viable. Svitzer claimed that it had suffered significant financial losses due to changed market factors and its inability to respond effectively to those changes.

This followed a breakdown in negotiations with the Maritime Union on wages and conditions. The MUA was close to finalising a new agreement with Svitzer when, using

COVID as an excuse, Svitzer introduced 30 new claims which attacked workers’ rights, conditions and job security.

Now, surprise, surprise, Svitzer is back, seeking to resume operations in Geelong, with the use of contract crews supplied by a maritime labour hire company.

The sacked workers are campaigning to get their jobs back. A Maritime Union spokesman described the company’s behaviour as appalling. He said, “We’re open to all negotiations with Svitzer to get these blokes back on the job. We’d love to get to the table and negotiate an outcome that suits everyone.” Not surprisingly, Svitzer is sticking to its position.

Founded in 1833, Svitzer is based in Denmark and is owned by Maersk, which is the largest container ship and supply vessel company in the world. World-wide, Svitzer employs over 4000 workers with 405 vessels

working in 118 ports and 28 terminals. In Australia, Svitzer employs over 1000 workers with 100 vessels operating in 28 ports and terminals in Australia and Papua-New Guinea. ■

“Ambos won’t be silenced!”

Nick G. (31 May 2021)

South Australian ambulance officers have had a “first round” win in their battle for safe staffing levels and increased funding from the state government.

After months of campaigning during which ambulances were chalked with anti-government messages, and a joint stop-work, rally and march with the state’s firefighters, members of the Ambulance Employee’s Association (SA) voted by 91% to accept a government offer which would see an extra 74 paramedics trained and employed.

This follows record levels of ramping at regional and city hospitals.

State secretary of the AEA, Phil Palmer said yesterday that “the Union Executive does not for one minute discount the concerns of those who voted no”.

“Their concern is that 74 new ambos are nowhere near enough to resolve all the chronic shortages in every corner of SA Ambulance.”

Palmer said union members at a general meeting last week had “unanimously demanded that the



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Government commit to continue hiring more ambos until safe levels have been reached”.

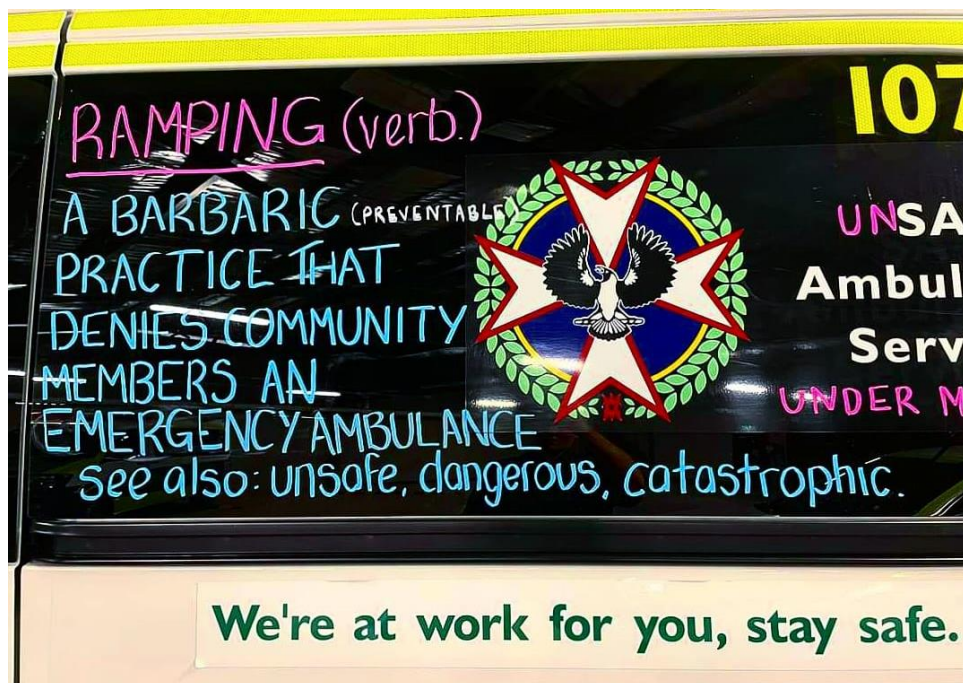
During the bargaining period, the government had demanded that ambos take their messages off the sides of the ambulances. They refused.

Now the government is again demanding that they be removed.

“It is part of employees’ ordinary duties to clean and maintain SA Ambulance Service vehicles and stations,” said Ambulance Service CEO David Place in a written message today.

“Effective immediately, employees are directed to:

- not chalk messages on, or otherwise deface, SA Ambulance Service vehicles and stations;
- remove chalk messages and graffiti from SA Ambulance Service stations as a matter of priority; and
- remove chalk messages and graffiti from SA Ambulance Service vehicles before they are driven.”



Palmer dismissed the directive as an attempt to silence his members and said union members would continue to chalk ambulances to “highlight the failings of this Government”.

Indeed, defiance in the face of reactionary authority is a good thing, and South Australians will continue to stand by the AEA’s members. ■

Foreign Investment continues to pour into Australia

Duncan B. (20 May 2021)

Australia continues to be a popular destination for foreign investment thanks to its stable economy, low interest rates and handling of the pandemic.

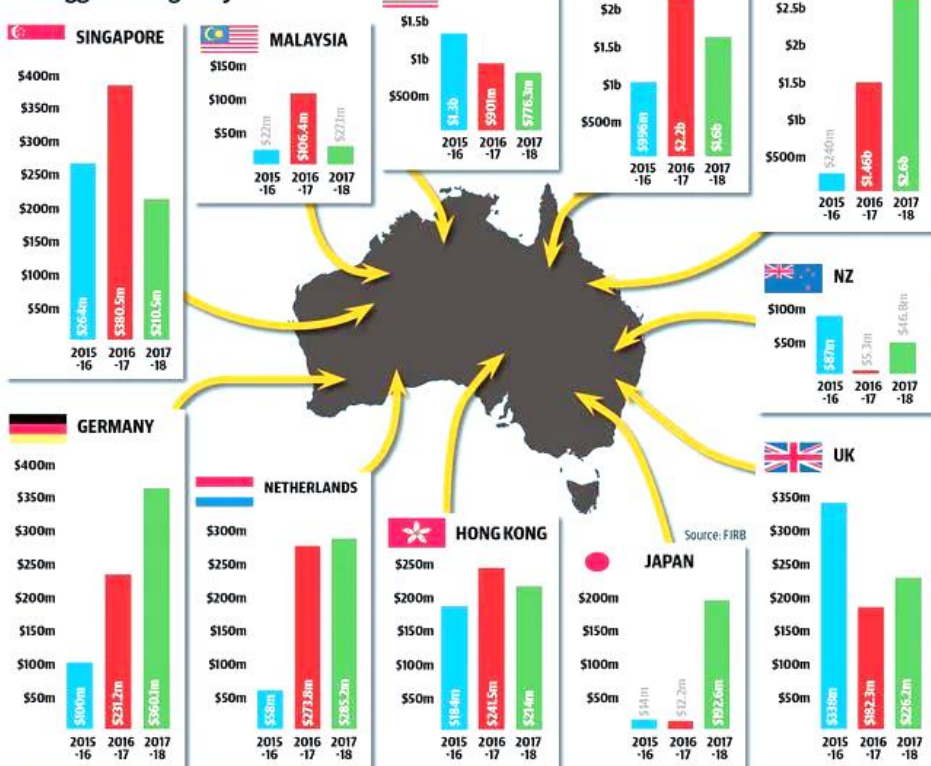
The MinterEllison 2021 Foreign Bank Tracker reveals that in 2020 North American banks grew their investment in Australian assets by 26%, Asian banks by 12% and European banks by 7%.

Meanwhile, PSP Investments, the Canadian-based pension fund which is already the biggest investor in Australian land and water assets, has just spent over half a billion dollars for one of the country’s biggest farming portfolios.

Australian Food and Fibre, a joint venture between PSP investments and the Robinson family of northern NSW, has acquired 100% of NSW cotton grower Auscott from its American owners. The deal includes 22,000 ha of developed irrigation land and more than 143,000 megalitres of water entitlements, five ginning plants capable of producing more than one million bales of cotton per year plus warehouses and a laboratory.

A GRAB BAG

Annual rural investment from the biggest foreign buyers



The Weekly Times

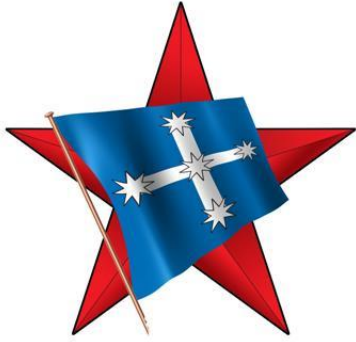
PSP Investments has over \$180 billion worth of investments under its management. PSP recently told an Australian rural newspaper that it expects to double its investments in

Australian agriculture over the next decade.

Statements such as this make the need for Australian Independence even more urgent! ■

STATEMENT

Victory to the People of Palestine!



Central Committee, CPA (M-L)
(17 May 2021)

The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) hails and stands in solidarity with the heroic people of Palestine in their long and resolute struggle to end the brutal US backed Israeli Zionist oppression and occupation of Palestine.

The resistance and courage of four generations of Palestinians since the catastrophe of Nakba 73 years ago has inspired the world's people fighting for freedom and liberation from colonialism and imperialism.

Organised mass resistance by the Palestinian people in Sheikh Jarrah, Al Aqsa Mosque, East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza is sending fear into the colonial-occupier Israeli Zionist state and imperialists all over the world. More Israeli Jews are supporting and joining the Palestinian

fight against the occupation and brutality of the fascist Zionist state.

In the past week, hundreds of mass rallies with tens of thousands of supporters have been held across the world in solidarity with the Palestinian people's struggle to end the colonial occupation and genocide. The call to end the occupation and return Palestinians to their homes and country reverberates across the world. In Australia thousands took to the streets across the country this weekend in solidarity with the people of Palestine.

The worldwide protests will continue to grow over the next week to commemorate the Nakba of 15 May 1948 when 800,000 Palestinians were forcefully expelled by Zionist colonialists and British imperialists from their homes and land that they had previously shared with Jewish people peacefully for centuries.

In the Italian port of Genoa, in a show of solidarity with Palestinians, wharves refused to load and crew ships with weapons bound for Israel. They walked off the job and joined protests calling for end to Israeli state violence against the Palestinians.

Behind the Zionist occupation and genocide stands US imperialism. The colonial occupation, expansion and aggression could never be sustained by

the Zionist colonial state without the heavy continues economic, military and political support and encouragement by US imperialism. The expansionist Zionist state is a crucially important base to US geo-political, economic and military hegemony in the region. The Gaza strip coastline borders Mediterranean Sea rich in recently discovered gas and oil. Israel is a lucrative market for the US multinational weapons industry. The US bankrolls the fascist Israel military to the tune of \$3.8 billion annually.

And Australia, the lackey of US imperialism, obediently provides support for all US economic, political and military domination around the world. A large part of Australia's budget of \$230 billion over next 10 years on "defence" (imperialist aggression) is allocated in contracts to multinational weapons manufacturers like Lockheed Martin and BAE who develop and sell arms to Israel, including \$1.8 billion in contracts to Israel weapon manufacturer Elbit System since 2010.

Seventy-three years of Israeli Zionist violent occupation and relentless aggression has not cowed the Palestinian people. It only strengthened their determination not to give up their just fight for freedom and self-determination. Again, they are sending a clear message to the world that as long as the brutal occupation continues, the resistance and the fight for sovereignty will continue to grow. The just cause of Palestinian struggle is victorious!

•Build the Australian people's support for the just cause of the Palestinians!

•Oppose Israeli Zionist Occupation!

• End US imperialist and its puppet Australia's support for the occupation!



Kick IAI out of Australia!

Nick G. (27 May 2021)

Less than a week after Israel was forced to agree to a ceasefire with Hamas following its vicious attacks on the people of the Gaza Strip, a leading Israeli military company has announced that it will open an office in Australia, and promote its wares at a weapons fair that is only a week away.

Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI)

- Provides surveillance technology for Israel's illegal wall that cuts deep into the occupied West Bank territory, expanding Israel's theft of Palestinian land and resources.
- Produces the armour for the Caterpillar D9 bulldozer, largely used to demolish Palestinian homes and farms.
- Produces technology for fighter jets and the Heron TP, Israel's biggest drone that includes strike capacity and was used repeatedly in the attacks on Gaza.

It is Israel's major aerospace and defense manufacturer.



According to an announcement released today on the Australia-Pacific Defence Reporter website, "IAI looks forward to participating in the Land Forces Exhibition 2021 (June 1-3, Queensland, Australia). During the Land Forces exhibition, IAI will present a variety of land solutions such as end-to-end and cutting-edge sensors for force protection. Furthermore, IAI will present awareness solutions including information gathering reconnaissance, surveillance, communication as well as a selection of loitering munitions capabilities."

A loitering munition (also known as a suicide drone or kamikaze drone) is a weapon system category in which the munition "loiters" around the target

area for some time, searches for targets, and attacks once a target is located. The image below is of IAI's Harop loitering munition.

IAI already has a partnership with Australian-based company BIS (formerly Brambles and now privately-owned by US private equity companies Carlyle and Varde) to produce equipment and systems for autonomous mining operations (that is, operations that don't require workers).

Protests have already been planned against the arms fair by a number of activists groups, including Friends of the Earth, Waging Peace in Nth Qld and Whistleblowers Activists and Communities Alliance (WACA) based in Melbourne. The intention of Disrupt Land Forces Direct Action is to shut down the expo.

Israel's Elbit, which has contracts with the Australian military, is also displaying its wares at this expo, and their offices at Port Melbourne were targeted during the bombing of Gaza.

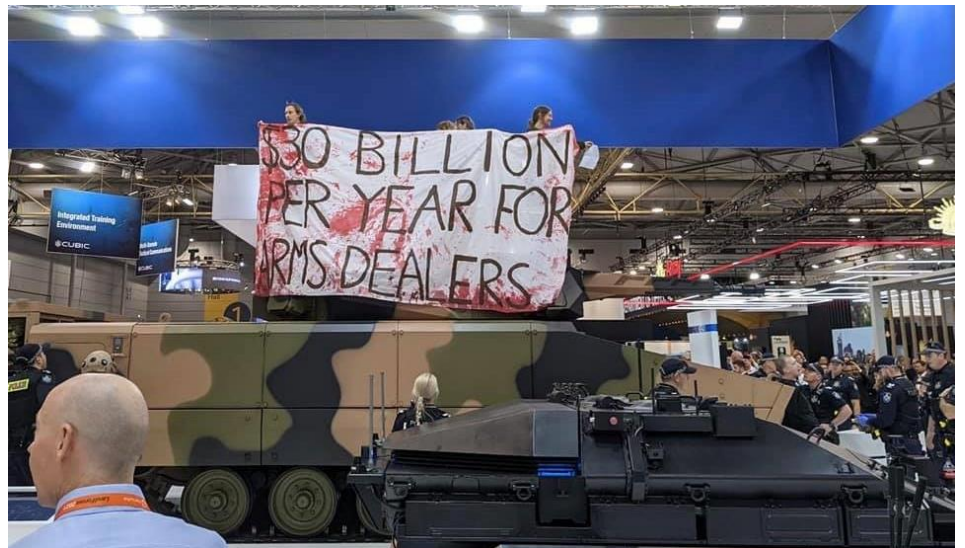
We must oppose IAI's presence in Australia, and any cooperation between it and the Australian military.■

A Message to the Masters of War

Ross Gwyther (12 June 2021)

Tanks, guns, drones, AI goggles – all these and more were on display in Brisbane Convention Centre last week for the bi-annual arms expo, this year entitled "Land Force 2021".

This arms fair is aimed at connecting business, government, security contractors and the armed forces with large and small weapons manufacturers. It is dominated by large corporate multinational weapons companies, for example Thales (weaponised vehicles), Rheinmetall (battle tanks and heavy and light munitions), Boeing (military helicopters, troop carriers, counter-insurgency jets), EOS (missile fire systems), Israeli company Elbit (military drones) as well as Australian companies such as NIOA munitions.



The expo was organised by a high level defence and security organisation called the Maritime and Defence Foundation of Australia – AMDA, which not only is Federal Government funded but has charitable status. AMDA has previously organised the Avalon weapons expo, and is set to run an Indo-Pacific Expo of maritime warfare in May 2022, according to Michael West reports. The Land Forces 2021 expo was financially supported by the Queensland Government.

The Australian Government has demonstrated that it will commit \$270 billion over the next 10 years to purchasing offensive military equipment (jets, ships and submarines) that are designed for "interoperability" with US military forces – in other words to be used in US wars, not for the defence of Australia. The Government also aims for Australia to be in the 10 largest arms exporters in the world, and has budgeted \$billions for a loan fund to assist multinational (continued on pg.6)

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arms companies manufacture weapons in Australia for export around the world. Already some of these weapons are being sold to the Indonesian Government for its war on the West Papuan independence movement, to the Saudi government for its war on the people of Yemen.

This year some 200 to 300 people demonstrated their opposition to this arms bazaar. Hundreds of local Brisbane people turned up over three days to hold noisy demonstrations outside the entrance, as some of the 12,000 attendees entered the expo. People travelled from other Australian states, and were welcomed by local Jagera peoples to camp on their traditional land at Musgrave Park close by the Convention Centre. A wide range of grass roots activities were held – including concerts, teach-ins, workshops, protests outside weapons manufacturing factories, and a 24 hour fast by local Quaker activists.

The protest brought together the quite different parts of the Australian peace movement. Some people were opposed to all weapons and arms, and committed to non-violence as the only way to resolve international disputes. Others were focussed on the use the weapons sold at the Expo in violently suppressing people's struggles in West Papua, Yemen, Palestine. Still others were highlighting the fundamental nature of capitalism in promoting violent suppression of peoples' rights.

Some young people were able to courageously and creatively enter the exhibition hall, distribute leaflets, and take over one the largest exhibits – a Rheinmetall battle tank – by chaining themselves to it, and streaming video of their protest to social media.

The protest this year was significantly larger and more militant than protests at previous arms expos held in other Australian cities. However, the nature of the protest was such that there was little organised working class involvement. This is a lesson which can be used to build even larger protests at future arms expos. The working class movement has a long and proud history of involvement in struggles for peace. A campaign aimed at building sustainable and socially useful industries (instead of war-related industry) will resonate strongly with workers and unions. ■

U.S. War Preparations: Push for NATO to expand into Indo-Pacific Region

Contributed (2 July 2021)

US-led moves to expand NATO into the Indo-Pacific region to counter China has raised serious questions about the future designated role of Australia.

If Australia was used to host expanded NATO facilities the country would be placed in the front-line of US-led regional military and security provision and become a large-scale player in a future war with China.

Throughout June a flurry of media releases surrounding the recent high-level diplomatic meetings of the G7 and NATO publicised US military planning to step-up regional military and security provision in the Indo-Pacific.

A number of official media releases actually advocated US-led plans to transform NATO 'from a European to a global security collaboration', with specific interest in the Indo-Pacific. It was noted that 'NATO would bring an established defence network and command structure to Asia, decades of operational experience and military capacity', leaving little to the imagination about future planning for real-war scenarios.

The statements coincided with two further additional media releases from the Australian Defence Department that a war with China was possible and Australia was planning to increase the US troop presence in the Northern Territory.

A statement from the US diplomatic services also high-lighted that 'pre-positioning of US weapons in Australia offered strategic advantages ...and that...it just makes sense to forward deploy US war stocks in Australia', drawing Australia ever closer to US-led regional military planning.

In recent times there has also been a dramatic increase in western military activity in the Indo-Pacific. While most European countries have historically had involvement in US-led regional military exercises, from a standpoint of being previous colonial



powers and possessing present-day neo-colonial ambitions, the Indo-Pacific has always been regarded differently. The region is vast and composed of thousands of small islands: 'policing' type action has been extremely difficult. The many smaller island countries have historically, nevertheless, existed under US-led tutelage and relied upon Australia and Japan as major regional hubs for 'US interests' although geographical distances remain problematic with their involvement in military and security provision.

Faced with the rapid rise of China, however, the US appears to be now panicking as their traditional hegemonic position across the vast region has entered into competition with China. In fact, as early as 2018, a US Congressional Commission found 'the US is no longer clearly superior to the threats it faces around the world and that it would struggle to win wars against China or Russia'.

At the recent G7 summit a separate trilateral meeting took place between US President Biden, British PM Boris Johnson and Australian PM Scott Morrison, who subsequently issued an official diplomatic statement that they had 'discussed a number of mutual concerns, including the Indo-Pacific region'.

The three countries form part of the elite 5-Eyes intelligence-sharing network; a major player inside NATO, with nineteen members of the 54 British Commonwealth countries in Asia and the Pacific. It is, therefore, hardly surprising to find the three countries agreed 'that the strategic context in the Indo-Pacific was changing and that there was a strong rationale for deepening co-operation between the three governments'.

The move would appear set to counter geo-strategic problems experienced by the US in the region: many countries with strong relations with China have been reluctant to take sides between the US and China; they have too much to lose. The US has, therefore, been confronted with a credible challenge to their existing military and other agreements and alliances.

Expanding NATO would appear the favoured realistic option for the US, Britain and Australia; they appear set to foist the European-based structure upon the Indo-Pacific in due course, as a fall-back position to already existing US-led military and security provision.

Two further factors have to be taken into consideration.

A recent defence publication announced Australia was in a prime position as part of the US present global force posture review to work even more closely with the Pentagon and that discussions had already taken place about considering the establishment of a new US fleet headquarters in the Indian Ocean, with the specific reference to siting the facility at HMAS Stirling in Western Australia. It was, furthermore, noted that 'while the South Pacific will remain vital to Australia's national security...the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia far out-rank the South Pacific in every key measure of importance'.

The announcement coincided with a report from a leading Canberra



Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison meeting with US President Joe Biden and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson at the G7 meeting in June

government advisory organisation, the Lowy Institute, that 'Australia is well positioned to become a crucial hub for an enlarged NATO'. The matter would also appear to have been discussed in Canberra as it was officially acknowledged that the Morrison government have 'enthusiastically endorsed' such a proposal.

The announcement that Australia had officially joined the US Maritime Safety and Security Information System (MSSIS), based with the US 6th Fleet in Naples, Italy, which in turn, is part of NATO Forces Europe, would appear to signify Australia had established near real-time communications inside NATO. While

ostensibly concerned with monitoring and tracking suspicious maritime vessels, the MSSIS is a sophisticated signals satellite facility linking 75 countries with the US military.

In conclusion, moves appear well under-way to expand NATO into the Indo-Pacific region with active support from the present Morrison Coalition government: Australia has been drawn even closer to Pentagon regional military planning as a target and as an active participant for real-war scenarios across the wider region should they take place.

We need an independent foreign policy! ■

Independent & Peaceful Australia

PEOPLE'S INQUIRY: THE CASE FOR AN INDEPENDENT AND PEACEFUL AUSTRALIA

What are the costs and consequences of Australia's involvement in US-led wars and the US Alliance?

The Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) invites you to participate in a national public inquiry into the costs and consequences of the Australia-US Alliance for the Australian people, and invites proposals in relation to measures that could assist in achieving a genuinely independent and peaceful foreign policy for Australia.

To read more about the inquiry, forward a submission or donate towards it visit **INDEPENDENTPEACEFULAUSTRALIA.COM.AU**

Collective efforts provide relief for forgotten victims of disasters

Louisa L. (5 June 2021)

Australia is beset by disaster, but you wouldn't know it without scratching the surface of laid-back Dunbogan village on Birrpai Country beside the Camden Haven River, just south of Port Macquarie.

'Been there Dunbogan' T shirts once sold from Dunbogan Boatshed. Even the riverbank's civic artworks don't impose – life-size corten steel silhouettes include a dog taking a dump.

Not all are so light-hearted. An artwork by Rick Reynolds, one of three in the wider area, marks the height of historical floods (*See accompanying image*).

The whole of Dunbogan and much of nearby Laurieton was one of the worst hit in last March's catastrophic floods. Now a rusted old man silhouette wears a life jacket, snorkel and mask.

Survival has many mechanisms, including laughter.

Easy to forget

Across from the taped-off Boatshed which was boat hire, café, fishing shop combined, every house went under. The single employee of the fish and chip shop lived next door. She awoke to knee deep rising water, and spent the night on the shop's counter. A long-term worker, she lost everything in her rental and will not return to work. Caravan park residents, even those built on second storeys to protect from flood, saw their community smashed.

Much of neighbouring Laurieton was deluged, not only from below as waters rose, but as drains were overwhelmed and water cascaded down Dooragen, or North Brother Mountain.

From 1898 huge break walls began to tame the once deadly river entrance. The Camden Haven area became a quiet backwater, so far barely touched by the deluge of rapacious over-development swamping the east coast.

It became easier to forget the deadly power of nature, to ignore generally unpoliced building regulations banning ground floor living areas.

It was front page news for a week or so, with occasional media flood-flashbacks. The clean-up seemed to be over, though half of the two local newspapers deal with flood aftermath, overwhelmingly voluntary. For many, forgetting is not so easy.

Banking bad and insurance

To get reasonably priced flood or fire insurance, you need to live where it doesn't flood or burn.

At least this time insurance companies didn't inform residents, as they did in northern NSW in 2017, that the sad stinking piles of their belongings, often everything people owned, had to remain inside houses until assessors arrived. Instead, they were removed by a goodwill volunteer army.

Walls were scrubbed and repainted. Then checks uncovered dangerous black mould. In June, houses remain empty.

The brief royal commission into banks and insurance companies mean people won't have to face such awful treatment as in the past, but only if they have the strength to fight back.

In '*Banking Bad*', journalist Adele Ferguson gave public voice to those who stood up – sometimes for decades before having outrageous injustices dealt with by the banking and insurance industry. She meticulously and powerfully documented how corporations, their compliant governments and tame state "enforcement" agencies conspired against corporate victims, to threats of bankrupting legal action rather than medals for heroism.



'Shark' flood marker in Laurieton by Rick Reynolds.
Photo: Port Macquarie Hastings Council

Insurance companies are now settling even (very rare) vexatious claims. Pay up to shut up is the modus operandi. Settling with those who might spearhead negative publicity and inspire others to claim is top priority. They bank on most people being too devastated and isolated to fight back. A few dollars here and there can save a whole lot more on the bottom line.

Passing commentary

Delay also benefits insurance giants. Years after the 2017 floods, a single mother still living in a caravan spoke of her shame at being homelessness.

Why wasn't it front page news instead of passing commentary? And all the other stories? Why are the oppressed made to feel shame? How many Australians remember the viciousness of the banks and insurance companies, the compliance of governments which bleat that they represent the people? The royal commission lasted only two months in payment of lifetimes of damage.

During the 2019 fires this writer was in Laurieton evacuation centre and wrote, "As the emergency unfolded on Friday, local radio announced Victoria's Kinglake residents were finally receiving compensation, eight years after bushfires destroyed their homes. The announcement provided no comfort in this new disaster zone."

Nor this one, unless collective power again shakes the corporate profit machine. ■

Barngarla People Request Help to Fight Kimba Nuclear Waste Dump

Nick G. (29 May 2021)

The Barngarla People are the Traditional Custodians over much of the Eyre Peninsula, including the proposed site for a National Radioactive Waste Management Facility (NRWMF) at Kimba in South Australia.

We have previously pointed out how, despite being Native Title Holders, they were denied the right to vote in the official ballot on the proposal for the dump, used to test community support.

The Government is now trying to remove their rights to judicial review and remove independent scrutiny from this matter. Schedule 1 of the proposed National Radioactive Waste Management Amendment Bill 2020 would prevent judicial review of any Ministerial decision to locate the NRWMF on their traditional land.

The SA government has also tried to frustrate the opposition by keeping documents and information on the Kimba dump from the public. Senator Rex Patrick made a Freedom of Information application last August asking for access to correspondence between the SA and Federal Government relating to the establishment of the dump. He received four documents with significant redaction on one of them. When he challenged the redaction, the SA Energy and Mining Minister threatened him with legal costs. But on May 18 a Supreme Court Justice overturned the decision rejecting the Minister's arguments and found that the document he wished to keep secret was not exempt under FOI.

Although the Kimba community is divided over the issue, the Barngarla are part of an opposition to the dump that includes Kimba residents and local farmers. The farming community have their own organisation, "No Radioactive Waste on Agricultural Land in Kimba or SA", which had its AGM at the Kimba Golf Club on March 13.

One of the reasons for division amongst Kimba residents has been the amount of federal money spread around the community as an inducement in the form of paved footpaths, cement gutters and



improvements to community facilities like the swimming pool and playgrounds. More than \$4 million was made available as part of the consultation process. To try and shore up its supporters, the government has made another \$2 million available through its recent Budget.

That, and delays in getting the Kimba bill through the Senate, suggest to some activists that the government wants to delay the Senate vote until after the next federal election in the hope that it may then have the numbers. In any case, after repeated delays the next sitting of the Senate is Tuesday June 16, and at this stage the Coalition does not have the numbers to get it through.

The Barngarla People have released

an appeal for funding, saying that they "do not support the building of an NRWMF at Kimba and deserve to have our voice heard by the Federal Government."

Help Us Protect Country:

We need your support to continue fighting to protect this land and the local community.

Donations will contribute towards lobbying for appropriate legislation, advocating, and any future challenge against a government decision to establish an NRWMF at Kimba.

Donations can be made to 'Barngarla: Help Us Have a Say Pty Ltd' via this link:

<https://gofund.me/d264cc96> ■

Global Warming: The Threat to Australia's Agriculture

Duncan B. (1 April 2021)

The leadership of the National Party can deny the existence of Climate Change as much as they like, but there is no denying the reality of Global Warming. Worse is yet to come.

In a report recently released by the Australian Academy of Science, leading Australian scientists considered what a 3-degree rise in global temperatures would look for Australia.

They paint a grim picture of the effects of a three degree rise on Australian agriculture. A 3-degree would reduce the yields of key crops by 5 to 50%.

Reductions are expected in oil seeds (35%), wheat (18%), fruits and vegetables (14%), plant fibres (7%), rice (2%) and fibres (11%). Crops such

as wheat and barley have fallen in profitability by up to 22% since 2000.

Damaging storms are expected to increase while rainfall overall will be reduced. The report predicts between a 13 and 21% drop across the Murray Darling Basin. Hotter areas would become far drier. A 3-degree rise would lead to a massive increase in extreme fire days with fiercer bushfire seasons. Heatwaves would be more frequent and longer, causing increasing harm to livestock and to farmers and other rural people.

Professor Hughes of Macquarie University said "heatwaves are the silent killers in Australia. They're responsible for more deaths than any other climate-related disaster but they also affect our agricultural productivity."

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The report details many other effects of rising temperatures on Australia, including damage to the Great Barrier Reef, coastal flooding and the loss of many species of wildlife. Australian workers, farmers and everybody else affected by Climate Change need to unite and take action to ensure that Australia plays its part in preventing Global Warming. ■

Farm Land Prices Hit Record Highs

Duncan B. (14 June 2021)

Reflecting what is happening in the housing market in Australia, the prices paid for farming land in Australia have hit record heights. For example, in Victoria's Wimmera district, land prices have more than doubled in the last year. Prices paid for properties in Victoria's North-East and Western districts also set new records this year.

Farmers are expressing concerns



that these high prices will make it impossible for young people wanting to become farmers to buy a property.

They are also warning that it would be difficult to earn a sufficient return from a property bought at a high price to cover the loan repayments, let alone make a living from the property.

Good seasons, high commodity prices and the relative cheapness of Australian farm land compared to other countries, are making Australian farm properties attractive to investors in recent years. *Vanguard* has reported the massive purchase of Australian rural properties by overseas corporate investors, especially the Canadian superannuation fund, PSP Investments.

There are also a number of wealthy individuals both foreign and Australian, who have large stakes in Australian rural real estate. Topping the list is Sir Li Ka-Shing (Hong Kong), who has about \$1 billion

invested in a wide variety of enterprises.

Other overseas investors include Ray Dalo (US), the Rausing Family (UK), Hui Wing Mau and Feng Hailiang (both China). They all have extensive investments in cattle stations, forestry and other types of farming.

The three richest Australian investors in agriculture need no introduction to *Vanguard* readers. They are mining tycoons Gina Rinehart and Andrew Forrest and Channel Seven owner Kerry Stokes. Their interests are mainly in beef cattle farming.

Ms Rinehart, whose net worth is over \$30 billion, controls one of Australia's biggest pastoral empires with about 10 million hectares of land. She has about 1.9 million hectares on the market with a view to raising capital to buy out her Chinese partner in the legendary Kidman and Co. pastoral company they bought in 2016.

Placed against investors with this sort of money at their command, small farmers and would-be farmers don't stand much of a chance of buying farm properties. Australia's farm land must be run for the benefit of all Australians, not wealthy companies and individuals. ■

New Book Released: Fight capitalism's destructive impact on nature

The book is a 120-page compilation of 29 articles relating to contemporary environmental issues taken from our Party's website from 2017 to 2020.

Although the content of some articles will have dated, what is more important is the analysis of these events and issues from a Marxist-Leninist perspective.

That perspective differs from some environmental writings in clearly foregrounding some of the basic contradictions inherent in environmental issues:

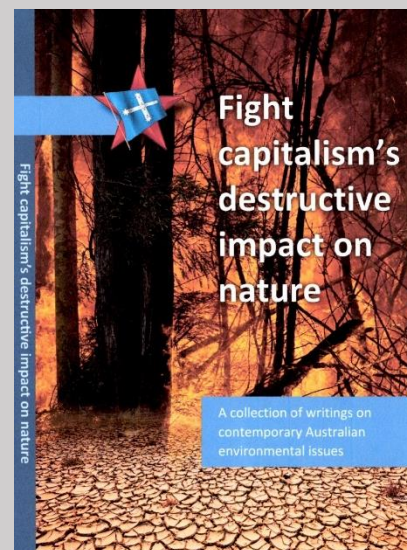
- The contradiction between capital and labour
- The contradiction between capital and nature
- The contradiction between imperialism and the Australian people.

Our perspective also differs in clearly foregrounding the rights of the working class, the environment, and the broader Australian people against capitalism and imperialism.

Our perspective is that the workers can and must exercise leadership in resolving the three contradictions above, that their right to struggle and win is entirely just and bound to succeed.

While it is likely that readers will learn details of some of the struggles covered in this book, we hope that a more substantial learning will be from the approach taken towards the issues covered in the content.

In this way, environmental activists will be better placed to analyse and form responses to new and unforeseen issues and thus strengthen the connections between the struggle for socialism, for anti-imperialist independence and for a healthy, clean and sustainable living planet.



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MARXISM TODAY**Don't Get BITen!***Duncan B. (2 May 2021)*

Nobody knows who invented Bitcoin. It was invented in 2008 by a person or group of people using the pseudonym Satoshi Nakamoto. Bitcoin came into use in 2009.

Bitcoin and its imitators do not exist physically. Bitcoin is a cryptocurrency - a type of money that is completely virtual - an online version of cash. Bitcoin can be used to buy products or services the same as cash. Each bitcoin is a computer file stored in a digital "wallet".

Bitcoins can be transferred between "wallets", each transaction being recorded in a public ledger called a blockchain. Bitcoin is not controlled by governments or banks and does not have one single administrator. Transactions are sent from user to user on the Bitcoin peer-to-peer network. These transactions are anonymous.

Bitcoins are created by a process called "Bitcoin Mining". The "Miners" are people who use specialised computer equipment to perform complex cryptographical problems and are rewarded by payment in Bitcoins. The total output of Bitcoins is limited to 21 million of which about 18 million have been mined so far.

Unlike conventional money which is supported by the gold reserves of a country, Bitcoin does not have a commodity or product tied to its value. Bitcoin has a value because its supporters decide that it has value. People have trust in the Bitcoin system and its processes. The finite number of Bitcoins is also a factor.



In *Capital*, Volume I, Chapter III, Marx analysed the various functions of money:

- 1) The measure of value and the standard of price.
- 2) Ideal Money.
- 3) Money of Account.
- 4) The means of circulation.
- 5) The means of payment.
- 6) Universal money.

Bitcoin can perform these functions of money the same as conventional money. Most financial transactions today involve ledger entries rather than actual cash. However, unlike conventional money where governments and central banks try to keep the currency stable, the extreme volatility of Bitcoin makes it unsuitable as a store of value or medium of exchange. Bitcoin has become a medium of speculation.

The value of Bitcoin is very volatile. Bitcoin has seen spectacular rises in value and equally spectacular falls. At the time of writing, one Bitcoin was worth about \$70,000, up from about \$10,000 a year ago. The rise is attributed to investors seeking higher returns at a time of low interest rates, and the actions of big players like Elon Musk, who recently purchased \$1.3 billion dollars' worth of Bitcoin.

Despite the volatility of Bitcoin's value, the anonymity of Bitcoin transactions, the absence of controls and the difficulties of scrutiny by authorities makes Bitcoin the payment method of choice of money launderers,

drug dealers, child pornographers, scammers and all the other evil inhabitants of the dark web.

There are objections made to Bitcoin because of the enormous amount of electricity needed to power the computers used to mine Bitcoins. It is estimated that Bitcoin mining is consuming energy for computing power more than the annual consumption of Ireland. There are also objections because of the ideology of Bitcoin's supporters- a mixture of Anarchists, Libertarians and far-right extremists.

Governments and central banks are looking at getting in on the cryptocurrency act. Australia's Reserve Bank and the Bank of England among others, are looking at creating digital currencies. China is also looking at an e-yuan. These digital currencies will not be attractive to the current users of Bitcoin because they will be regulated by governments and their central banks.

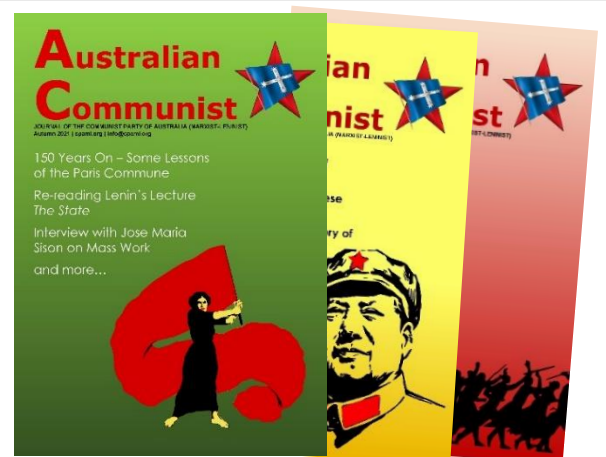
In Volume III of *Capital*, Chapter XXV, Marx discusses the workings of the credit system as it functioned in his day. He also discusses what he calls "fictitious capital", devised by capitalists for the purpose of speculation and swindling.

Speculation and swindling still exist today in forms undreamed of in Marx's day. Finance-capital has invented many new vehicles for speculation such as the securitised mortgage packages and their derivatives that helped fuel the Global Financial Crash of 2008. A glance at the financial press will show there many other new financial creations that are allowing some people to become millionaires out of something that doesn't exist. Bitcoin is shaping up to be another one of these. ■

Australian Communist**Journal of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist)****AUTUMN 2021 EDITION*****OUT NOW!***

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Protect people's health and well-being as Covid vaccine arrives

John G. (29 April 2021)

As Covid-19 vaccines roll-out and border isolation services resemble dykes with odd leaks, business and some parliamentary leaders and business bosses call for people to 'learn to live with the virus'.

The pandemic crisis has entered a new phase, with business and government attempting to go on the attack to assert business interests against the people's.

In this phase big business and its government target overcoming the people's achievements in protecting health and economic well-being across the country.

They work to remove restrictions protecting health that interfere with business operations and profits. They have started to remove government supports that have kept people in jobs and out of poverty, and small businesses in operation despite dire conditions continuing to strike people in many sectors, like parts of tourism and university education.

Plans to open up international travel, limit Covid safe restrictions to a bare minimum, bring in vaccine 'passports' to unrestricted travel and activity, are touted amidst calls for there to be 'balance' between health and economic concerns.

The community is scolded by advocates from the Prime Minister to Qantas boss Alan Joyce and for widespread concern to protect people's health. We are told to 'learn to live with the virus.'

What they really mean is 'learn to die with the virus.' They are happy to take risks with our health so they can return to 'normal' operations and profits.

They pursue steps away from protecting people's health and economic well-being. They push for acceptance of people becoming sick as outbreaks become the norm, and we again see people dying as well as the growth of poverty and intensifying economic crisis as government support is taken away.

Business and government want profit-making including government austerity to shake off the shackles

CORONA VIRUS & CAPITALISM



people have demanded and achieved to protect people's health and well-being.

In the process of controlling the virus, with elimination of community transmission despite Federal government resistance, restrictions on people's interactions have become less necessary. The virus has been eliminated in the community outside of border isolation centres, treating hospitals and sporadic outbreaks.

It is a triumph of democracy. The people and their interests have generally led the way until now. It is a remarkable achievement of the people's struggle, with support and guidance from medical scientists, against Federal Government, big business, sectoral advocates and a number of people drawn into anti-scientific frauds.

It is not a time to drop our guard as medical experts and the economically battered attest.

Reject business calls for people to 'Learn to die with the virus'

The situation in Australia and the world generally is characterised by volatile economic and social conditions.

As the Covid-19 pandemic hit, economic crises and failures of the domestic capitalist system's governments at various levels saw government and big business vacillation. Their system of neoliberal economic (ir)rationalism, imperialist globalization and exploitative greed unravelled in floods of unemployment, poverty, food queues, small-business collapses, unpaid rent and mortgages.

People were devastated and as they came to grips with what was happening. People were outraged.

Here, Federal Government leaders were poorly placed to stand against people's emerging demands for protection from the virus and support as the capitalist system of employment was crumbling for 5 and a half million Australian workers, 40 odd per cent of the workforce.

Those leaders had failed in their responses to the catastrophic fires of 2019-20, faced a crisis in the aged care system, had been exposed for false accusations and abuses of impoverished social welfare recipients in the Robo-debt scandal. They oversaw and stood accused of various corrupt rorts in a wave of electoral

opportunism. They stood exposed while 4 in 10 Australian workers faced the devastation of unemployment, with many just one payday from poverty and homelessness.

They baulked at the outrage that welled up amongst the hopelessness facing the working class and small business.

The fear of the people's wrath at the collapse of their system in the face of the epidemic spurred their opportunist hides into actions inconceivable in their neoliberal-small government, surplus budget, government-debt free ideology.

Trillions were spent propping up the failing system. Government opened its vaults and borrowed trillions. Federal Government spending on supports for people and small business amounted to \$250 billion last year. It amounted to about 12% of economic output in Australia.

More was spent on big business with hundreds of millions handed to banks, airlines, and others in addition to JobKeeper payments. JobKeeper support went to business, sustaining millions in the workforce.

Unemployed social security payments going to a third of the workforce were more than doubled to be above the poverty level for the first time in living memory. Banks were handed \$120 million in exchange for suspending small business and mortgage loan repayments. Housing evictions were to an extent banned and rent reductions flagged though generally only partially implemented. Laws criminalising trading while insolvent were suspended to allow small business to continue through difficulties.

Queues at Centrelink and food handouts were slashed.

The Covid-19 pandemic emergency, the job crisis of March-April 2020, the fire, flood and storm disasters of 2019-2020 have exposed intensified contradictions within Australia.

As the first panic of the crisis faded in the middle of 2020, tensions blew up between imperialist determination to maintain production for profit with their catchcry of 'learning to live with the virus' and the people's determined action to look after people's health and well-being, rejecting 'learning to die

with the virus' for the profit system. It found expression in support for state government leaders standing against Federal Government demands.

Commonwealth/State Government tensions were driven to unseen heights by the people's demands to protect the people. Neoliberal austerity policy was thrown to the dustbin by some of its greatest advocates under the demands for people's economic well-being to be secured in the new conditions demanded by the people.

Tensions in Australia reflect the world situation

Contradictions between the imperialist powers and oppressed nations have intensified in the pandemic. The major imperialist powers have exercised vaccine monopolisation, enforcing intellectual property rights to restrict use of technology in vaccine and medicine production to the big imperialist pharmaceutical monopolies, imposing monopoly pricing on vaccines and medicines.

Not only poor nations of the third world have been affected. Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and many European countries find themselves denied deliveries of vaccines as the US, and the UK monopolise them. Even French and German access has been limited.

Meanwhile the virus rages and has reached new heights in many parts of the globe, particularly in developing countries. India is a terrible tragedy, joining Brazil in the authorities' neglect of the people's health. New waves of disease have hit many countries including Indonesia and New Guinea. The virus is penetrating areas Covid free for the last year like Fiji's recent outbreak. Many countries are seeing new waves of growing case numbers and death while they scramble to loosen the imperialist powers' hold on vaccines.

At the same time people are scrambling for necessities of life. Poverty stalks the globe. Improvements in people's economic situation achieved this century are being lost in many parts of the globe. It is not unusual to see countries' economic output down 10% for the year. In India the PEW research Centre has estimated 32 million have been

driven from the middle class into hand-to-mouth existence last year. How many more have had their improvement taken from them as the present wave of disease and death besieges South Asia.

All this has alarmed people across the globe.

The basic contradictions of imperialism are sharpened. Contradictions between the people particularly the working class and significant sections of small business, and the imperialist rulers of the country and their government administration stand out. Among imperialist powers themselves, there are contradictions notably between the US on one side and China allied to Russia on the other, as well as tensions between the US and Europe, which Biden is striving to ease. The Covid crisis with its health and economic aspects, including vaccine hoarding and enormous debt burdens, sees tensions between the imperialist powers and oppressed nations rise to new heights.

It leaves the world more volatile. It recalls the developments around the wave of struggle in the wake of the Dot-Com and global financial crises with the Arab Spring, the Occupy Movement and many other outbursts of people's struggle. People's resistance to capitalist attacks in past crises found its feet over time, maturing over a period of 18 months to two years.

People resist attacks on health and well-being

People generally are alert to the dangers and yearn for people's health to be protected, and their economic well-being to be secured. The attacks by business and government confront widespread resistance.

The response is straightforward: protect people's health and well-being.

Keep people healthy, in jobs, small businesses operating, support hard hit sectors like tourism and universities, ease the burden on families and single parents with free childcare, more support of aged care, and keep people out of poverty by restoring the full welfare supplement.

Times of great tensions are times of great changes and struggle. ■



Rally for Peace

- No war with China!

End Australia's involvement in US-led wars!

**The US drums of war are beating loudly again.
Truth is the first casualty of war.**

This time against China, in the Indo-Pacific and close to Australian shores. The servile Australian government is obediently following the US into a war that can lead to devastation for all people and the environment, risking the use of nuclear weapons.

More than 2,500 US marines are now permanently stationed in Darwin. Dutton has announced more US marines will be sent to Darwin. Australia's defence and military facilities are being upgraded and opened to US war ships (Point Stirling in WA), hosting US marines, navy and air force. Pine Gap and other US intelligence and military bases across Australia are constantly used for US global wars. Bi-annual joint US and Australian war exercises of tens of thousands of soldiers are held in Queensland, this year at the end of July, preparing for wars and invasions of other countries. Australia's military is embedded in US military machine. We are a virtual US base, a launching pad for US war against China.

- On average \$50 billion of people's taxes will be spent annually, mainly on Australia's involvement in US wars and multinational weapons corporations. These are public funds taken away from public health, education, housing, welfare, environment. Over the next 10 years \$575 billion will be spent mainly on US wars
- Trade with China, our largest trading partner, is put at risk
- Soldiers and ordinary people of all nationalities are the real casualties of wars
- Wars create refugees and suffering
- Wars are catastrophic for the environment
- Anti-China rhetoric breeds racism

We oppose Australian involvement in a suicidal conflict between US, NATO and China.

We call for a peaceful negotiated resolution to conflict between China and its neighbours, the US and Australia.

Don't Let us be Yanked into another US War!
For an independent and peaceful Australian foreign policy!
July 4 is US independence day - Time for Australian's independence!
Join us!



Independent and Peaceful Australia Network
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