

DEFENCE PAPER SUBMISSION

We would like to contribute towards two of the three key questions

Can We Afford Such Forces?

We believe that too much money is being spent on the military. Three reasons we give for this statement.

- 1.) Firstly, there is no identifiable armed threat to Australia and thus not a great need to spend enormous amounts of money on the military. As far as we are aware the last threat to Australia's soil was many years ago in World War II by Japan. The so called threats of terrorism seems largely to be exaggerated by certain sources, exacerbated by the violent and vengeful attacks on entire countries and is not an opposition that the standard military equipped with guns can deal with adequately.
- 2.) Secondly, Australia has many current issues that require a more generous share of the wealth. We live in Doveton which is of great social and economic disadvantage. We see many issues today, that people face that is not being addressed adequately and would be of benefit to shift some defence budget into these other areas. These other areas include housing, employment, health, centrelink and education. Much of the community development work we undertake in Doveton could be addressed with merely 1 day of the current defence budget. Recently I've had single mothers turning up to employment training in tears, unable to focus on the training because they have no food for their children. I've worked with families with children living in a single caravan trailer, in some of the roughest and most unsafe environments I've seen (these caravan parks are close to third world slums). And most recently I've talked a young guy on a disability pension from ending his life because he cannot find any work and thus do anything meaningful with his life. There are so many Australians out there who are hurting and need greater assistance from its government and it is 'urgent'!
- 3.) Thirdly with the growing global concerns over our biosphere, we need to redirect a large portion of our defence budget to our environment defence budget. This is also extremely urgent. Unless we address these environmental challenges there may not be a world left to fight over anyway.

What kinds of armed forces should we develop?

We would like to see the Government develop new kinds of forces equipped to deal with conflicts. We no longer want to see our armed forces killing, destroying and using violence around the world. We are tired of this being done in our name and we are tired of our taxes going to these actions. We would like the Australian forces to arm themselves with the weapons of peace. These would include greater diplomacy skills, higher amounts of aid and nonviolence. If the Australian government continues to use weapons of violence on our brothers and sisters around the world, we will regretfully continue to stand in its way as we have done in the past.

We acknowledge that the armed forces operate in order to bring us peace and we respect their commitment to making Australia and the world a safer place. However, we believe that reliance on violence to bring about peace is contradictory and wrong. We become no better than those who are using violence and we are fighting against. We ourselves become the very thing we wish to oppose. Violence creates more problems than it solves, destroying people's lives, towns, families, the environment and our cities. This includes problems that our own soldiers develop aswell. In the end using violence only breeds more hatred, greater retaliation and a cycle we can't break out of. It does not bring about peace. And it creates insecurity. Since we went to war in

Afghanistan and Iraq in response to world security, I have felt extremely more insecure and now live with a fear of reprisals. However, if we had of gone to those countries and done things that didn't involve violence, I believe we could have developed friendships that could have resulted in greater security, trade and more happiness for all. We all know that real security comes from creating jobs, housing, schools, infrastructure and doing good to one another, even when they don't deserve it. I don't think it is too late to stop using violence in areas of conflict and led the world in trying new and braver approaches such as the ones just mentioned.

At the same time we need to be investing in training an Australian Nonviolent Force that can deal with immediate violent conflict without resorting to the use of violence. This will still require much discipline, courage and maybe even loss of life. In the past 50 years or so, many social movements have successfully employed nonviolence as a direct strategy for social change. We can learn from them. Lets put Australia on the leading edge in world history, and reduce our reliance on violence and expand the number of conflict resolving tools in our toolbox. People once thought it was impossible to rid the world of slavery but it happened. The same is now happening for wars. People are beginning to believe that we can rise above the use of violence and solve conflict in nonviolent ways. The examples are increasing throughout history and will continue to do so. We can join in this movement, away from violence to nonviolence.

Thankyou for taking the time to read this and we are praying that you can hear what we are saying and congratulate you even considering adopting some of our contributions which we acknowledge are slightly different to how we do things now.

Courage and Peace

Simon and Kaylene Reeves

We are 27 and 22yo married and living in an intentional community in Doveton (Jahwork Christian Community). We chose deliberately to work part-time and live among some of the poorer people in our society in order to contribute what we can to making this world a better place. Simon works part-time as a Youth Worker helping young people to become trained in automotive and find apprenticeships. Kaylene works for a Salvation Army Cafe and also as a youth developmental facilitator for a bible college gap year program. We both are very involved in our local neighbourhood, running youth and children's programs, helping seed residents groups, supporting women and men coming out of the justice system, volunteering at local soup kitchens, various food gardens and helping our neighbours. Our Intentional Community trains in nonviolence and is actively invalved in the peace movement, whilst teaching others to do the same. We are growing with the aim of becoming a peace community that embodies a future without violence or war.