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Submission: As a citizen I am happy to take this opportunity to contribute to the discussion about Australia's future Defence priorities. The Discussion paper asks, "what types of security challenges might the future hold? Are armed forces the best way to manage such challenges? Can we afford them?"

1. The greatest threat to Australia's and global security is climate change. I would agree with the participants of the Australia 2020 Summit that the primary threats to our national, regional and global security are climate change, water and energy supply and poverty" and in the absence of any identifiable military aggressor posing a threat to Australian territory "that a sounder basis for national and regional security lies in the strengthening of international institutions and adherence to the international rule of law, the pursuit of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, and a deeper institutional engagement to national and peace building including the implementation of gender equality". Similarly that a sounder basis for international relations lies in building trust and sound cooperative mechanisms for working together to counter the threats facing us all, rather than seeing our neighbours as potential future enemies.

2. Australia's present policy of 3% annual increase in military spending is doubly counterproductive to our national security. It encourages our neighbours to increase their military spending, reinforcing the regional arms build-up with increasing likelihood of armed conflict. And, secondly, rather than combatting the threat of climate change, it accelerates it through environmental destruction and substantial production of greenhouse gases.

3. The Environmental footprint of our Defence Policy.

Does the Australian Defence Budget include serious accounting for its environmental footprint? What is the magnitude of the carbon emissions produced by the full range of defence related activity: preparing for violent conflict/war, maintaining readiness for war, waging war, dealing with the aftermath of war and weapons?

- The researching the mechanisms of war and weapons. It would be salutary to compare both the objectives and the budgets of the CSIRO and DSTO in relation to climate change.
- The mining, manufacture and testing of weapons
- The training of military personnel to use weapons, including the devastation to the environment of "war games": one hour of fighter bomber training is equivalent to 2 years average motorist's consumption of oil
- The maintenance and storage of equipment, storage of dangerous and obsolete weapons, WMDs chemical, biological, possibly nuclear
- The cleaning up of unexploded weapons left in war zones: land mines, cluster bombs, depleted uranium
- The restoring of destroyed infrastructure, polluted water supplies and land (and this is not estimating untold human suffering during war and in the succeeding generations)

4. A paradigm shift is needed in resource allocation. By directing scarce funds to military spending less is contributed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, which by reducing poverty and population growth could reduce environmental degradation and the onset of climate change. Reversing a real security threat, like catastrophic climate change, will require a paradigm shift in resource allocation. Bombs, guns and landmines will not deter or remove the threat of a Tsunami, a hurricane, a flood, a virus, or a water shortage, but 8 million lives could be saved with an investment of US\$57 billion. These levels of investment are tiny in comparison with the levels of military expenditure.

5. Spending trillions of dollars on armaments, presently \$1200 billion p.a. globally, is potential suicide for the human race. We cannot afford to both save the planet and continue our current spending on armaments, either nationally or globally. The choice facing us is disarm and cooperate to counter climate change or face the deaths of millions of our fellow human beings in an uninhabitable world. In Australia as we make decisions about future defence policy expenditure we must think seriously about the consequences of our decisions.

6. I believe we stand at a point in our history where must choose. Are we going to lead in disarmament just as we are deciding to lead, not follow, in climate change? I believe that Australia has a great opportunity to provide world leadership, in both areas, by choosing not to increase its defence expenditure but to divert it instead to human need and ameliorating climate change so increasing both our own and global security.

I agree to my submission being published on the Defence website

I agree to my submission being quoted in the Community Consultation Report