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Organisation: Western Australian Quakers (Religious Society of Friends)

Submission: Question1

1. Mainstream peacekeeping: There is still a culture within the Defence Forces that their core work is making war, and that a peacekeeping role is subsidiary or secondary to this. We believe a cultural shift is needed in these values to enable our forces to be more effective.
2. Prioritise United Nations peacekeeping: Participating in Peace Support Operations, thereby supporting the United Nations peacekeeping functions, should be a core task of the Australian Defence Force.
3. Embed the Rules of War: There needs to be intensified and comprehensive training about the rules of war including interrogation to ensure Australia maintains respect for and observance of international humanitarian law.

Question2

1. Training peacekeeping as a core function of the military
2. Training civilians in nonviolent means of preventing, managing and resolving conflict, especially in circumstances where a disciplined armed force is not essential or would be counter-productive. (eg The United States State Department successfully funded Serbian nonviolent movements in this way. See "Downfall of a Dictator". By contrast, ignoring Kosovo peace movement in Serbia led to frustration and the valorisation of the KLA, to everyone's cost.)
3. Training military to value and respect the role of the fourth estate. This is not an abstract point. In the Iraq War, there is evidence our US ally lethally targeted non-embedded journalists reporting the war. (See Danny Schechter, "Weapons of Mass Deception"). Upholding journalists' role provides our democracy with accurate information that deepens civilian government accountability and ongoing decisionmaking about the use of force.
4. Value and respect the role of civil society organisations: In the last couple of decades, Non-Government Organisations have been targeted in conflict situations, so that their fatality rates are in fact higher than UN peacekeeping forces during periods of conflict. Funding programs that foster greater respect for civil society organisations and upholding their neutrality in war is likely to have in-country governance benefits as well.
5. Value and respect civilians, particularly women: Twentieth century combat shifted killing from fellow combatants to the overwhelming deaths of civilians. UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 relate to women's protection in all situations of violent conflict and their equal involvement with men in all peace processes, gender-sensitive training of peacekeepers and the mainstreaming of gender issues in the context of armed conflict, peacekeeping and reconstruction. We ask the ADF to extend the work they have done in implementing these resolutions to date and to participate fully in the development of an Australian Action Plan for their full implementation.
6. Shift from war technology to peace community skills: Technology has its benefits, but there are diminishing returns when huge sums are spent on hardware, and money for building international cooperation declines in real terms, or at least falls well below the UN target. Meanwhile, apart from the recent skirmish between Russia and Georgia, there are no wars (as understood in the UN Charter) currently occurring. Conflicts are overwhelmingly (if not exclusively) wars within countries. Settling conflicts in these situations needs not so much impressive hardware, as impressive negotiating and conflict resolving methods. There should be training in post-war reconstruction, not just of engineering infrastructure, but skills in forgiveness, restorative justice and renewal.
7. Shift from war as politics by other means to upholding the Millenium Development Goals and beyond: Wars are costly and damaging, at a time when the Millenium Development Goals look likely not to be fulfilled. Investigating ways that armies not at war can assist in furthering the MDGs would be of ongoing benefit, and also develop the community skills and awareness needed for successful resolving of conflict and

post-conflict situations.

8. Shift from war between humans to acting on climate change and the environment: Many areas cared for by defence forces are kept as relatively distinguished areas of bushland, but around the world the damage done by armies (during war and before and after), is long-lasting. Guam, for example, as a disproportionate number of superfund (seriously polluted) sites, as a consequence of having the military present for decades. Putting energy into how the defence forces can contribute to solving climate change, instead of contributing to it through the massive destructive forces tied up in its care, ought to be prioritised. An Earth Defence Force (giving emergency response to deal with the greatest threat to our security, according to Peter Cosgrove: climate change) has merits.

9. Fund the Costs of War: Quakers believe it is impossible to be touched by war and not be harmed by the experience, especially inwardly but also families and community. There needs to be an assumption that peacekeepers and active combat troops returning to Australia, and their families, need to be provided ameliorative support that recognises the insidious damage of war. This includes more assiduously addressing mental health and health needs, family relationship counselling, and trauma counseling.

10. Provide a Ministry of Peace: currently at Cabinet there is no one whose job it is to provide nonviolent options to resolve conflicts peacefully wherever they arise. There needs to be such a position, given the terrible effects of having a war.

11. Remove the Causes of War: the armed forces needs linkage in civil society (including universities and think tanks) to anticipate the causes of war and make recommendations to civil authorities about the need to remove the causes of war. In the twenty first century, issues around water, peak oil, environmental refugees, refugees, inequalities should be addressed by the Australian Government to anticipate and avoid the causes of war.

Question3:

1. Funding Research Into Peace The "war industry" has enormous sums of money to perpetuate the drive to war. For Australia to pursue peace, it must have sound research based on hard evidence and good costings. Funding is required to enable this.

2. Consider the Opportunity Costs of War: War causes lasting damage, which can continue its effects for several generations. Costing alternatives to war should factor the opportunity costs.

I agree to my submission being published on the Defence website

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