

People for Nuclear Disarmament (WA)

Newsletter, Early 2013

5 King William Street, Bayswater WA 6053

Tel: 9271 8786



HELP KEEP WA'S NUCLEAR-FREE FUTURE CAMPAIGN GOING
TO OUR BIG FUNDRAISING DINNER AT

COME

ANNALAKSHMI

at Jetty 4, Barrack Street Square, Perth

MONDAY, 6 MAY, 6.30 – 8.30pm

Enjoy a delicious vegetarian dinner, splendid speakers, great music and fine company ALL AT NO COST – but donations to the nuke-free cause will of course most WELCOMED. All donations will be TAX-DEDUCTIBLE and channelled through CCWA.

Greens Senator **Scott Ludlam** and Australian Conservation Foundation's Nuclear-Free Campaigner, **Dave Sweeney** will be speaking.

Great music from **Della Rae Morrison** and award-winning **Karla Heart**, the stars of the sell-out show, “**50 Shades of Black**” will warm your heart.

Funds raised will be dedicated to wages for other young stars working in the WA movement - a Nuclear-free Future Campaigner at Conservation Council WA, a worker in ANAWA (Anti-Nuclear Alliance of WA)'s office – and hopefully one employee to help keep WANFA (WA's Nuclear-free Alliance) strong.

PLEASE DO PUT THIS DATE IN YOUR DIARY NOW – and COME along.

RSVP (essential!) to mia.pepper@ccwa.org.au or ring her on 9420 7272

Funding sources for the nuclear-free future movement are drying up – but the need to keep going is greater than ever. Please spread the ‘Annalakshmi word’ among any of your friends with empathetic sentiments!

***If you WANT to support a strong voice for in protecting the environment and keeping W.A Nuclear Free – but making it to dinner at Annalakshmi is impossible for you - you can still do so by making a donation directly to ANAWA (Anti-Nuclear Alliance of WA) as follows:**

Send a cheque (payable to ‘ANAWA’) to ANAWA, 5 King William St, Bayswater. .. or make a Direct Deposit into ANAWA's bank account. BSB: 066155 ACC 10151803 (Sorry, this means of donating to the cause is not tax-deductible – but will be equally helpful to the cause!)

2 more EVENTS!



GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION ON MILITARY SPENDING

Monday, April 15

On this day, people all over the world will again come together to say that militarism will not solve the world's problems – but only create more. There are better ways to achieve human security.

We urge you to join us at corner of Hay and William Streets, Perth (outside Wesley Church), 12.30 to 1.30pm

In 2011, global military spending surged to US \$1.74 trillion. In Australia military spending is currently \$25 billion a year and rising. Given the crises facing the planet — global warming, economic, environmental, health, food— we must create a global movement to shift this money to human needs. There are millions of individuals who support this point of view. Over 80% of Australians don't want more of their taxes spent on the military.

Please come along and help People for Nuclear Disarmament hand out leaflets putting forward ideas for committing more

of Australia's military budget on addressing REAL needs of Australians.

27th ANNIVERSARY of CHERNOBYL DAY

FRIDAY, 26 APRIL, 12.30 - 1.30pm
Hay/William Street corner in Perth
outside Wesley Church

PND's vigil will remember the catastrophic Chernobyl accident & draw attention to its ongoing legacy of harm to human health and the environment.

Please join us!

Our banner will say,
**REMEMBER CHERNOBYL? IT ALL STARTED
WITH URANIUM MINING**



Judy Blyth, Sylvia Edwards & Jo Vallentine at a Chernobyl remembrance.

At our vigil, we'll be thinking much of the wonderful work of our friend **Ludmila Zhirina** in Bryansk, Russia as with her team of volunteers, she helps people still affected by the fallout from the accident 27 years ago – as their descendants will be for millennia yet.



Statue of Broken World, BRYANSK

POLITICS, URANIUM MINING & OUR FUTURE

The landslide return of the Barnett Government on March 9 was a blow to our long battle to stop the state's first uranium mine establishing near Wiluna. In Barnett's new Cabinet, Bill Marmion, formerly Minister for Environment transmogrified into the Minister for Mines and Petroleum where he'll no doubt feel more at home.

Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke was to deliver his decision on Toro's proposed uranium mine in late December last year but he extended his deadline to the end of March and later to April 5. He beat that by a few days. His decision was that he was satisfied the mine could proceed without unacceptable impacts on the environment, both during mining operations and beyond the 14-year life of the mine. However, to his approval, he attached 36 conditions which Toro must meet. These relate to risks to groundwater and surface water, and from radiation, and include precautions to ensure that once the mine is closed, the site will be made safe for humans and animals and will be non-polluting.

Toro's managing director Dr Vanessa Guthrie was pleased that the company's mine had both State and Federal approval saying this cleared the way for the regulatory certainty Toro wants to fully underpin its negotiating capacity and hence advance commercial financing arrangements and product off-take agreements with potential partners. She anticipates that the Wiluna mine will be producing by the end of 2015.

However Toro Energy is now required to provide Mr Burke with a detailed environmental management plan before substantial works can begin – and in that condition, we can feel hope that our long campaign to thwart this first uranium mine in WA can still be successful.

CCWA's Nuclear-free Future Campaigner Mia Pepper was ready for Burke's announcement and quickly organised a well-attended protest on April 3 outside TORO's office in Ventnor Street, West Perth. Greens

Senator Scott Ludlam spoke and fired us with his 3 strategies –

- to BE EVERYWHERE in our responses, attending protests, ringing talkback radio, writing letters to newspapers to keep the problems Toro presents high in public consciousness;
- to use the powerful financial argument to show how mining uranium is a dying industry as nuclear power declines; and
- thirdly, if all else fails, non-violent direct action, even at the mine itself.

Our fiery Jo V also spoke passionately about why we must leave nuclear power behind – and rely on renewable sources for our energy instead. As she belted a dangling piñata of a TORO bull to pieces, fine yellow bulldust was released thick in the air.

We protesters then walked with our many flags and banners to Parliament House. We hope that you caught footage of this event in the media – and also caught the resolve to carry on this campaign. Just DO IT – for present and future life on Earth!

Despite Fukushima's horrific, ongoing demonstration of the harm that nuclear power can wreak, and despite the declining global nuclear power industry, Toro is determined to mine at Lake Way & Lake Centipede, c. 30 km SE of Wiluna. Other uranium companies wait in the wings for their chance to develop new mines.

PND(WA) has submitted a series of submissions to the EPA over time to present our arguments that TORO ENERGY's Wiluna uranium mine ought not proceed. We have also sent many messages to Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke to put our case. There have been many other initiatives taken, rallies organised, banners painted, letters written to newspapers – In short, our small team at PND(WA) and other like-minded groups have tried many strategies, always peaceful and lawful, to turn uranium mining away from WA.

The re-shuffle of Julia Gillard's Cabinet after the latest leadership challenge fizzled, saw Martin Ferguson resign from his post as Minister for Resources & Energy and head for the Back Bench. However he has been replaced by WA Senator Gary Gray, a long time avid nuclear power advocate and keen uranium mining industry supporter. Out of the frying pan into the fire for us – with no reprieve!

A NOTE ON PND (WA)

Our funds are running low – but we'll keep going as long as possible in our quest to contribute to that much-desired nuclear-free future. In case you are unaware, PND (WA) has run without any paid staff for many years – However, any help from good-willed members or others to carry on would

be so much appreciated. With the US sending its warships into this sensitive region around the Koreas and flying a couple of nuclear weapons-capable B-52 bombers over South Korea – and rising belligerence in the language used by North Korea's new young leader and his country's increased capacity to use nuclear weapons, there's clearly a need for PND and like-minded organisations to remain alert & active. As Helen Caldicott used to say, "You don't threaten a disturbed client!"

Many thanks to those who renewed their annual subs for 2013 – which will help us stay active for now. Eventually there will be a need for a meeting of members to decide on what future is possible for PND (WA)! We'll let you know.... and in meantime, we roll up our sleeves AGAIN.

FOOTPRINTS FOR THE FUTURE

In 2011, the first great **WALK AWAY FROM URANIUM MINING (WALKATJURRA)** took place as around 70 nuclear-free future activists walked through WA's Goldfields area where uranium mining was being proposed. Our fiery Jo Valentine and one of PND's oldest members, Joan Hiller were among those dedicated walkers in 2011 who returned to Perth on Oct 28 during the final day of CHOGM.

In May 2012, the EPA recommended approval for Toro Energy's planned uranium mines near Wiluna. Traditional Goldfields elder, Kado Muir expressed his concerns about environmental and safety issues, rightly pointing out that it will be Aboriginal communities all the way along the transport corridor that will be most affected if anything goes wrong. People in the city of Perth, he said, would not like the idea of having uranium bearing trucks driving through their suburbs.

A **second WALKATJURRA WALK** in the Goldfields returned to Perth in September 2012. Many of the young walkers came to the Breakfast at Barnett's on the pavement outside the Premier's electorate office in Cottesloe the following Friday to share their refreshed enthusiasm for a nuclear-free future with passing commuters. It was a joyful and memorable morning in the two year history of the weekly 'Breakfasts' that had served up messages to the Premier on environmental issues right up to the day before the March 9 State election this year.

However October 2012 saw another moment for Toro to celebrate as then Environment Minister Bill Marmion announced the State Government's decision to approve Toro's mine. Several hurdles still stood in the way for the company – as its proposals failed to adequately address details of some issues like safe transport of their mines' product and impact on water. Our hopes turned again to Tony Burke, Fed Minister for Environment who had to assess the project. Without his approval, it could not go ahead. (*This was granted in early April 2013 – with 36 conditions the company must first meet before mining. See more on this elsewhere in your newsletter.)

So it's time for another **WALKATJURRA**

WALKABOUT... and soon! The next will run from **4th to 28th of May, 2013** and it looks like being bigger than ever.

As organisers Mia Pepper, CCWA's Nuclear-free Future Campaigner and Marcus Atkinson and Kerry-Anne Garlick of Footprints for Peace tell us:

The walk will continue to be a celebration of Wangkatja country, a testament to the strength of the community who have fought to stop uranium mining at Yeelirrie for over forty years, and a chance to come together and continue to share our commitment to a sustainable future without nuclear. It is a chance to reconnect with the land, and to revive the tradition of walking for country.



It is a non-violent direct action that plays an important role in the broader environmental and Aboriginal sovereignty movements. It is a partnership to share knowledge, culture and environmental awareness in a campaign supporting the sovereign rights of Aboriginal people to protect their lands and support a nuclear free future. Can you support it by joining it? Or in other ways?

To register to be a part of the walk, go to: <http://walkingforcountry.com/registration-to-walk-for-country/>
Help spread the word! Go to www.walkingforcountry.com and share with your friends via facebook and any other social networking you do.

Maybe you could help out by donating items on the WALK's Wish List. See <http://walkingforcountry.com/walkatjurra-walkabout-get-involved-2/walkatjurra-walkabout-wish-list/>

or make a tax deductible donation to the walk through Everyday Hero via <https://give.everydayhero.com/au/walkabout> or deposit straight into the WALK's bank account at <http://walkingforcountry.com/donate-to-walkatjurra-walkabout-walking-for-country/>

This is an opportunity for all of us, as WALKERS or SUPPORTERS, to come together and to share our commitment to a sustainable future without the nuclear component. It is a chance to reconnect with the land, and to revive the tradition of walking for country.

There's a FRENCH CONNECTION too. Plans are underway for participants in Footprints for Peace (FFP), the Walkatjorra Walkabout and others to go to France for a **4 week WALK** in collaboration with the French network Reseau Sortir du Nucleaire. This liaison arises from a FFP WALK from London to Geneva in 2008 which strengthened the Australian-French peace movement connection. In 2011, some members of Reseau Sortir du nucleaire came to Australia for the "Walk away from Uranium Mining."

More information see walkingforcountry.com and footprintsforpeace.org

A DECADE AGO IN IRAQ

Ten years ago, Australia joined the US in the Coalition of the Willing to invade Iraq on grounds that country possessed weapons of mass destruction. Polls had indicated that 70 per cent of Australians were UNWILLING for our country to be involved. Prime Minister John Howard had decided to ignore that truly vital statistic along with the million-strong protest marches around Australia. Simultaneously, 30 million around the globe marched their streets too against that war. The UN had not sanctioned it and ordinary people at least wanted evidence that Saddam Hussein's supposed WMDs existed before the drastic step of war was taken. Iraq had been labelled a "terrorist state" – but too many forgot that war itself is terror.

The war started a little over a month after those massive marches. Time proved that Iraq's supposed WMDs were non-existent – so justification for that war moved to deposing its cruel and despotic leader and liberating the people. He was hunted and killed and his statue toppled, but no need to reiterate that familiar history to you. A decade later, look at that war's dreadful legacy. As always in modern warfare, the civilian population bore the most terrible brunt with way over 100,000 deaths. Think too of survivors whose injuries brought permanent disabilities, or whose babies miscarried or were deformed by exposure to depleted uranium weaponry. Childhood cancers and other diseases rose accordingly. The wreckage of infrastructure for electricity, water supply, sewerage systems and provision of health and education services meant huge needs for humanitarian assistance to affected Iraqis. War didn't do them any good and their country is a long way from being healed yet. Its people still live under the daily possibility of suicide bomb attacks.

Over the past year, the **Independent & Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN)** has formed, aiming to deter our country from being led again into such militarist solutions imposed by other nations. IPAN includes many peace organisations around Australia, including PND(WA). Apart from monthly national phone hook-ups, representatives from these peace groups communicate frequently by email, sharing information and planning strategies and events.

This February 13th, under IPAN's banner, PND(WA) held a 2 hour lunchtime vigil outside Wesley Church in Perth to honour and remember those 30 million street marchers

around the world, including 1 million in Australia. We wore simple calico tunics, each saying NO MORE WARS, echoed by 3 large placards bearing same simple message and fixed to a backdrop of scaffolding. A large cardboard placard described those massive marches of Feb 2003. Two days later, the IPAN statement was published in The Australian, endorsed by the signatures of prominent Australians, just a small portion of the hundreds of signatures from others who agreed with IPAN's stance. We had gathered further signatures from members of the public that day at our memorial vigil. Here is the Statement.

ADVERTISEMENT

Calling for an Independent and Peaceful Australia



Ten years ago in February 2003, unprecedented numbers of people joined the largest demonstrations in recorded history to oppose the invasion of Iraq. They were right; there were no weapons of mass destruction and war was not the answer.

Learning from recent history, we, the undersigned call for an independent and peaceful Australia. We are concerned about developments that appear to jeopardise Australia's friendship and cooperation with nations in our region. In particular, we are concerned about the basing of foreign troops on Australian sovereign territory.

We are opposed to the stationing of US marines in Darwin; the presence of the Pine Gap surveillance facility; the use of West Australian naval facilities by US warships and the possibility of US military aircraft and warships being stationed at Stirling in WA or the Cocos Islands.

Rather than being of benefit, we hold that the presence of US forces on Australian soil to be a handicap to Australia's international relationships. We see domestic costs to us in financial, social and environmental terms.

Through recent decades we have witnessed a steady increase in the level of Australia's military involvement with the US. We believe the integration of the two countries' defence forces and foreign policies has reached a point where our independence is at risk.

We are witnessing expanding US military presence in the Asia Pacific region, with the apparent aim of 'containing' China. We fear a consequent rise in regional tensions and an expensive arms race.

We are convinced that these developments are not in Australia's best interests. They have the potential to sour existing good relations with our neighbours and even to embroil us in further warfare on behalf of a foreign power.

We want to live in an Australia with an independent foreign policy, under which our country is free to choose what is truly in our best interests.

Endorsed by Eminent Australians Dr Peter Catt, Emeritus Professor Frederick Mondelsohn AO, Senator Scott Ludlam, Prof Stuart Ross, Emeritus Professor Ian Lowe, Andrew Dostmer National President AMWU, Irene Gale AO, Noel Preston AM ethicist and theologian, Manning Clark House, former Senator Andrew Bartlett, and many others. Supported by MAPW, Just Peace, Silver Wattle Centre, WLPF, Spirit of Australia, Many Unions, Faith and Community organisations.

For full list www.ipan.org.au or <http://www.facebook.com/#IndependentAndPeacefulAustraliaNetwork?ref=ts>, email: ipan.australia@gmail.com. Authorised by A.Brownlie PO Box 573 Coorparoo, 4151

If any members or friends of PND would like make a donation to IPAN, here's how to do so...
Cheques, payable to "Just Peace Q'ld" can be posted to IPAN, PO Box 573, Coorparoo, Q'LD 4251
Direct credit donations – to "Just Peace Q'ld", BSB 814 282
Account No: 30385606

WHAT'S PND BEEN UP TO SINCE YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER?

6 Aug 2012 – Hiroshima Day Peace Vigil – corner Hay/William Streets (with thanks again to Wesley Church/Uniting Church in the City for use of this traditional Perth space for peace.) Bernard Carney's new song, Peace on Paper Wings, telling the story of Sadako in a different light was played throughout our 2 hour event on an extremely windy day. Our table welcoming people to learn how to fold paper cranes for peace became an impossibility – but our banner and photo display of post-bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki survived to portray our message to the public. We handed out leaflets appealing for a Nuclear Weapons

Convention. Our wonderful, faithful long-time member, 86 year old **Sylvia Edwards** participated as usual, arriving and departing by bus. Other PND stalwarts, **Pat Gralton** and **Ann Pickett** plus a few extra supporters came. Two new young women we'd met the previous day at FFP's much larger Hiroshima day event in Perth Cultural Centre really wanted to help us – which they did very well. Thank you Mina from Taiwan and friend Taka!

Tuesday lunch hour PEACE VIGILS continued every second week outside Wesley – with Brian Smith and Judy Blyth (and Jo when possible) turning up to collect more signatures on the petition to reinstate the ban on uranium mining in WA. A large banner explaining the nuclear fuel chain was always mounted between flag poles to explain our purpose. We continued the peace vigils until end of 2012 – and then regretfully decided that without a few extra hands, it was becoming too hard to continue.

IPAN's monthly national phone Hook-ups – Jo Vallentine has been our main participant in these, keeping us in touch with other peace organisations around the country and planning events here.

21 September - UN International Day of Peace was celebrated by PND with a 12 to 2pm vigil outside Wesley Church, under the banners of IPAN and the Alternatives to Violence Project. The Quakers, with their banner, Quakers for Justice & Peace, gave strong support. Via the vigil, we showed our concerns over the escalating US-Australia's military relationship and how that could be seen by regional neighbours as provocative. US warships using Garden Island facilities, US forces returning to North West Cape near Exmouth where US Space Surveillance Network sensors will be sited are a part of the major realignment of US forces and military capacity to our region. The new US doctrine places China at the centre of US "security" concerns and prioritises expansion of US war making capacities in Asia and the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and is including Australia into its strategy. Where is Australia's sovereignty and our projection of a posture of peace into our region in all this?

7 November – PND (WA)'s AGM at our Bayswater office – Very few attended – We hope that this was merely due to newsletter announcement only reaching members several months prior to this meeting! With only two newsletters annually, it's a trick to post them out at best times strategically.... **We thank those members who have agreed to receive their newsletters electronically.** This helps our funds to last for a bit longer – and provides a means for occasional messages including reminders, to be emailed in between our occasional newsletters.

Tuesday, 13th November With considerable PND involvement, a group of women bared all outside Swanbourne Barracks, headquarters of the SAS, to deliver a peaceful message in advance of the visit of Leon Panetta, United States Secretary for Defence to advance AUSMIN talks. Bearing the letters of **NO MORE WARS** across their buttocks, the concerns of 5 women at the US-Australia military build-up was cheekily, if briefly, clear... and somewhat of a traffic stopper! The intention of this cheeky protest was to draw attention to the hundreds of thousands of Australians who do not want our country further embroiled in wars of US' choosing. Neither did they want an "upgrade" of Stirling Naval Base to suit US Navy requirements, meaning more warship visits, some of which carry nuclear weapons and are powered by nuclear reactors.

"Interoperability" which suits US war-fighting plans, but not necessarily the requirements for the defence of Australia, was also not these women's cup of tea. Nor US marines on Australian soil, or further military exercises which are damaging to our environment. "What's happened to Australian sovereignty?" they asked. "Gone missing in action, while U.S. forces get the nod" was their answer.

The media studiously avoided reporting the event – but a US peace organisation asked permission to use the photo in their 2013 calendar. Granted!

Mid-November – AUSMIN TALKS in Perth – A letter (from Judy B) re implications of talks was published in Post Newspapers. (Throughout the year, Jo V and Judy have each submitted many letters to print media addressing 'PND issues' – with reasonable publication success. Subjects include nuclear power/Fukushima, uranium mining/renewable energy, militarism and Australia's defence issues.

14 November – an anti-militarist peace vigil (organised by a number of organisations including PND/WA on behalf of IPAN) in parkland opposite Fraser Avenue, Kings Park This coincided with AUSMIN talks. Later our contingent of peaceniks was able to move without harassment to the War Memorial precinct where we saw large floral wreaths had been placed by our US visitors and our Australian Minister for Defence, Stephen Smith. Honouring the dead from past wars while preparing for future warring? About 20 or so of us stood around with our peace banners and NO MORE WARS placards for a couple of hours talking over the meaning of the juxtaposed events of that day.

28 November – TORO's AGM in Adelaide – so PND made most of opportunity to protest outside the company's West Perth office by joining a small team of appropriately attired CLEANING LADIES who occupied the office and mopped up 'yellowcake' that mysteriously appeared on floor! (Throughout the regular Friday morning Breakfast at Barnett's protests outside Premier's Cottesloe office, there were many featuring TORO's plans for the Goldfields. Judy became 'Breakfast coordinator' early last year so made sure that other B@B's themes relevant to PND were featured – uranium mining, nuclear power, renewable energy etc.)

5 December – PND's End-of-Year party – at cafe next to our office in Bayswater – a small but enjoyable get-together.

26 Jan to 1 Feb 2013 – Walkatjorra Busabout Cultural Exchange – A Yeelirrie-to-Leonora trip led by Traditional Goldfields elder, Kado Muir in a 'new' bus. This was supported by PND as best we could. It was in part preparation for the NEXT big WALK, starting 4 May.

13 Feb – 12 noon to 2pm outside Wesley Church PND organised a vigil to mark 10th anniversary of the 30 million around the world who marched in protest at preparation for invading Iraq. (See report earlier in this newsletter.)

20 Feb – PND sent submission to the **2013 Defence Review Enquiry**. Here's a truncated version, in which we explained that while our main objective has been nuclear disarmament, we have also lobbied for disarmament of conventional weapons, and promoted a more independent foreign policy for Australia. Our firm commitment to the inextricable linkage between peace and justice, makes our concerns very wide-ranging.

We saw the scope of the Defence Review as narrow, within the ambit and operations of the ADF, and all its

facilities; also that foreign policy direction has an enormous influence on decision-making, outcomes and future possibilities.

Over the years, we have seen successive governments of both major political persuasions, commit themselves to the upholding of international law, and generally supporting the efforts of the United Nations. We welcome these policy directions, but puzzle over apparent contradictions within our governments' behaviour, and that of its major ally.

Preaching and teaching democracy by going to war does not seem consistent to us. Time and time again, Australia has weakly followed the suit of the US Government (and before that, of course, of Britain) taking us into war after war, when there is no obvious threat to Australia. The only exception to that of course, was the investigation by Japan, of the possibility of successfully invading Australia in 1941-2, which was decided by that country, in the negative. Apart from that, when our country was actually at risk from Japan, all other wars Australia has engaged in have been of others' making, and serving others' interests. There are no such things as perpetual allies, only perpetual interests. These often do not correlate with Australia's best interests.

PND(WA)'s interests are global, not just local, or national. By calling for full nuclear disarmament, we are into international territory by definition. We commend various Australian governments for their commitment over the years to UN initiatives such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, but we would wish to see greater support from Australia, a middle power nation, for many well-founded proposals over the years from a variety of different country combinations, for a global nuclear weapons ban treaty. Various Australian governments have prevaricated on this, while we have supported bans on chemical and biological weapons - why not nuclear? It is because we follow the lead of the United States, and its status as a major nuclear player is something it seems unwilling to relinquish? The reduction in numbers of nuclear weapons by Russia and the United States is significant, but the horizontal proliferation continues.

It is crazy thinking that allowed George Bush to go to war, taking Australia with him, against the Iraq regime ten years ago, when in fact there were no nuclear weapons in Iraqi territory, and while there were over 200 nuclear weapons nearby in Israel, to which the international "western" community turns a blind eye. The major hypocrisies of American administrations, one after another, prevent a break-through in the matter of complete nuclear disarmament, and we bemoan the fact that Australia always swings on United States' coat-tails. In the US-North Korea relationship, will a similar scenario be played out?

We encourage Australia to use its current coveted position in the Security Council to show more courage on nuclear matters than has been its practice in this nuclear age.

However, it is not only how we vote at the United Nations, or how we jump in to support U.S. wars, that is of concern, but how we aid and abet their war-fighting strategies on a daily basis that worries us at PND(WA). The presence of United States bases on Australian soil totally compromises Australian sovereignty, and puts us at risk of upsetting relationships with our neighbours and trading partners in the region. We are not interested in the niceties of calling such operations "joint facilities", or in denying that marines in Darwin are "based" there - if such co-operation amounts to helping the United States fight its wars, we deem these places and activities to be in service to a foreign power, and as such they are totally unacceptable to us.

We are alarmed at the increasing enmeshment of the ADF into United States military activities: increased joint exercises, like Talisman Sabre, inter-operability acquisitions of materiel which is often unsuitable for the defence of Australia, but which suits U.S. military purposes. What we need is plenty of coastal surveillance vessels, and aircraft spotters, not jet fighters with mid-air refuelling capacities, not submarines. We abhor the stationing of U.S. marines in Darwin, whether permanent or not. We object to the possible upgrading of Stirling Naval base to accommodate U.S. warships and submarines, which may be nuclear armed and/or nuclear powered. We reject Australia being used for spy bases like Pine Gap, and other surveillance stations like Kojarena & Watsonia.

And we feel sickened by the sycophantic gesturing which our political leaders engage in whenever a U.S. President, Foreign Secretary or Defence Secretary comes to Australia - not as gestures of friendship, but to give us the latest marching orders, dressing them up to sound like gifts to us, instead of the encroachments to our sovereignty. Thus we become further and further tied into whatever is the next foreign military adventurism which the American empire sees fit to launch to protect its own interests.

We look forward to the return to Australia of ADF forces currently serving in Afghanistan. We implore the Veterans' Department to look after these returned servicemen & women, for whom re-entry to relatively peaceful lives in Australia can be tainted with traumatic memories, and which produce high rates of mental as well as physical after-effects. People who serve in the ADF would expect to be working hard in the defence of their own country, not to be doing the bidding of a foreign power. How much better it is for their morale when an Australian Government requests that the ADF assist after a disaster, or to actually help build a democracy (as in Timor Leste) as opposed to demolishing

communities, as they did in Iraq. Afghanistan has been a mixture of demolition/killing and community building, which in itself, is highly confusing for the locals, if not for ADF personnel.

With their excellent resources, the ADF is well placed to render assistance in the face of disaster, as we see in our region, and in our own nation, after floods, for example. Communications, transport, logistics, medical and engineering skills, and with the discipline of good training in teamwork, the ADF has better things to focus on than being lackeys of the U.S. military.

If Australia were not so tied to the U.S. regime, we could be free to be much more effective agents for peace on the international stage, joining other middle power nations to exert influence for the good. With climate change being the real threat to security facing the global community, it seems senseless to us to waste time and effort on damaging and negative behaviours with our ally, as well as wasting vast resources on war machinery, when the world is crying out for co-operation to solve the most pressing issue of our time.

Our plea to this enquiry then is to cast aside the usual parameters of discussion, and to engage in seriously thinking about the future of our children, and theirs, in a rapidly changing world, where military “solutions” will provide no answers, but where genuine co-operation should be given the chance to provide future frameworks which will be sustainable. Before this half century is out, we will be facing climate change which affects not only our comforts, but we will be grappling with food and water shortages and much bigger migrations of people forced from their current abodes as the climate renders their home territories unliveable. Surely this is what the ADF should be preparing for, not for more military engagement with the United States. Let’s do ourselves and our descendants a favour and cut the war-making, debilitating alliance, and do what is right for the future.

10 March, REMEMBERING FUKUSHIMA

Due to exhaustion after our State election efforts, PND didn’t organise an event for this anniversary – but are so grateful to CCWA’s Mia Pepper and Marcus and Kerry-Anne of Footprints for Peace who did perform that miracle. Their beautiful thought-provoking commemoration was held at Perth Cultural Centre’s water garden, this year involving many more from Perth’s Japanese community. However Jo, Judy and Glenys Davies were there on 10/3 – and we hope other PNDers made it too.

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARIES!

15 April – GDAMS VIGIL, and

23 April – CHERNOBYL anniversary Vigil Both these events will be held from 12.30 to 1.30 pm on Hay/William Street corner. See details on page 2 in this newsletter.

6 May – FUNDRAISER DINNER AT ANNALAKSHMI *(Please see page 1 for details)* **IF YOU CAN DO NOTHING ELSE FOR PND IN THE NEXT MONTHS, PLEASE COME ALONG AND HELP MAKE THIS MOST NECESSARY EVENT A SUCCESS!**

The future of the nuclear-free movement in WA is very dependent on the outcome.

