



MEDICAL ASSOCIATION FOR PREVENTION OF WAR (AUSTRALIA)

www.mapw.org.au mapw@mapw.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

Doctors call for inquiry into Australia's war on Iraq

The Medical Association for Prevention of War supports calls for an independent inquiry into Australia's involvement in the Iraq War.

MAPW President, Dr Bill Williams, agreed, saying: 'It's time to quiz the men and women who sent Australians to war in Iraq: let us scrutinise their reasons: Were they valid? Was our intelligence accurate? Was our participation legal? Can we protect our national interests more effectively?'

"If the Dutch, the British and the American public can scrutinise their leaders' path to war, why can't we? We owe it to our soldiers and their families - and ourselves."

A recent Age editorial and a major piece in the Canberra Times have argued for an Australian inquiry, in discussing the UK's Chilcot inquiry which aims to obtain "a reliable account of the UK's involvement", and lessons for the future.

"The invasion of Iraq was opposed by the parliamentary Opposition and by the majority of ordinary Australians. As predicted by our organisation and many others, it was a humanitarian disaster with many negative long-term regional and international legacies. A formal commission of inquiry could help us avoid unnecessary, destructive and counter-productive military engagements in the future" said Dr Williams.

An inquiry could inform Australia of the following:

- How and on what basis, the decision to join the invasion was made
- How could this decision have been averted?
- Has Australia's participation broken Australian or international law, or breached our treaty obligations?
- Are individuals, including the former Prime Minister, legally culpable?
- How can such decisions be prevented, and democracy and transparency guaranteed, for the future?
- What have been the implications of our participation?

Testimony to the Chilcot inquiry indicates that democratic processes were distorted and citizens and Parliament misinformed by UK leaders in their determination to participate in the invasion and occupation.

Calls for an inquiry coincide with a Bill before Australia's Parliament, which would require the consent of Parliament before troops are committed to a war. This is a constitutional requirement in many countries.

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**Dr Bill Williams [m] 0428 616245, [w] 03 52 603 911
or via Nancy Atkin, MAPW, 8344 1637 or 0431 475 465**

MAPW is the Australian affiliate of the Nobel Prize (1985) winning International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.