



MAPW - Health Professionals Promoting Peace

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House, Canberra

Dear Prime Minister,

We, the undersigned, call on the Australian government to support the banning of nuclear weapons, the world's most destructive and inhumane weapons, and to participate constructively in ban treaty negotiations in 2017.

As health professionals, we recognise the catastrophic effects that any use of nuclear weapons would have on human populations and the environment. Our professions would have very little to offer any survivors of such an event; no meaningful medical or disaster relief response would be possible. No other weapons can cause as much death, suffering and destruction as quickly, or leave such widespread and persisting toxicity in the environment.

We join with health professionals around the world in declaring that the only way to prevent these horrific devices ever being used again is to abolish them. We therefore strongly support the global efforts of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, the World Medical Association, the World Federation of Public Health Associations, the International Council of Nurses, the Red Cross/Crescent movement and many other bodies that call for a new treaty to explicitly prohibit nuclear weapons, just as chemical and biological weapons have been prohibited.

Thus far Australia has actively opposed current UN resolutions supporting negotiations for a nuclear weapons ban treaty. This places Australia out of step with rapidly growing global momentum to achieve such a treaty, with 123 nations supporting this at the UN First Committee of the UN General Assembly.

Australia is ignoring the overwhelming evidence that these weapons will be used again, with catastrophic consequences, unless they are abolished. It places us on the wrong side of history. As health professionals we regard such opposition as irresponsible in the extreme.

We ask you to ensure that the Australian government works constructively towards the negotiation of a nuclear weapons ban treaty.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Margaret Beavis MBBS, FRACGP, MPH National President MAPW

cc. Hon Bill Shorten MP – Leader of the Opposition