

Media Release

DOCTORS' GROUPS CALL FOR MILITARY CARBON COSTING

**Medical Association for Prevention of War (MAPW), and
Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA)**

Embargoed until Sunday 5 July 2009

Sunday 5 July 2009

Two medical organisations today called for a carbon audit of the large-scale joint US-Australian military exercises that will begin in Australia on Monday. The Talisman Sabre exercises will take place from July 6 to 25 at several locations, the major one being Shoalwater Bay, near Rockhampton in Queensland.

The Medical Association for Prevention of War (MAPW) and Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) said that climate change caused by carbon emissions poses an overwhelming threat to the health and security of all Australians, and all contributions to the problem – including our military activities – must be assessed.

MAPW President, Canberra GP Dr Sue Wareham, said, "Climate change poses a far greater threat to Australia than military invasion, and the Talisman Sabre exercises will simply make this threat worse."

DEA spokesperson, Brisbane GP Dr David King, stated that "Human health is already suffering greatly from carbon-induced climate change, and, as with other health threats, prevention is better than cure. We need to find different responses to climate change induced threats to security, and responses that have less detrimental effects on the environment."

Talisman Sabre will include land, sea and air combat and involve approximately 30,000 troops, bombing and other live fire exercises and over 1,600 armoured and other vehicles. While the Government has refused to disclose the quantities of fossil fuel needed for the exercises, citing security concerns, it is known that military aircraft and land vehicles use enormous quantities of fuels.

Shoalwater Bay is also environmentally sensitive, with Commonwealth Heritage listing because of the ecological importance of its coastal and hinterland areas. In 2008 Minister for the Environment Peter Garrett rejected, on environmental grounds, a proposed rail line and coal port for Shoalwater Bay.

Fur further information:

Dr Sue Wareham, MAPW: 0407 924 152 (Sunday 5 July to Tuesday 7 July);
02 6241 6161 or 02 6259 6062 (after 7 July)

Dr David King, DEA: 0424 068 797; 07 3365 6210 or 07 3365 5382.