



MAPW health professionals promoting peace

MAPW E-NEWS

November 2017

Welcome to the latest edition of e-news

MAPW President's report

In this, my first report as MAPW President since our national council meeting in October, I want to say what a privilege it is to be in this role. MAPW's impact is particularly evident as we celebrate the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to ICAN, the campaign that MAPW launched a decade ago, and, more importantly, ICAN's remarkable efforts that led to the adoption by the UN of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in July this year.

With the Australian Government still strongly supporting a role for nuclear weapons in our own "defence", we in MAPW will be continuing the pressure on parliamentarians to support the new Treaty. Our Foreign Minister Julie Bishop is fond of holding other nations accountable to "the rule of international law"; Australia must also be held accountable.

We will also continue our outreach to health professionals, urging them to do all that they can to keep up the pressure. Please let me know what avenues

you have access to, small or large, to reach more of our colleagues in the health professions, and take every opportunity yourself to tell others about our work.

In addition, MAPW is working to highlight Australia's growing addiction to warfare. Our country has been at war for 16 years, the longest period ever, with no end in sight. Meanwhile our weapons sales contribute to a world awash in killing machines. As the cholera epidemic in Yemen takes a horrendous toll, and Saudi Arabia continues its large scale bombing of civilians in that country, [MAPW wrote to the Foreign Minister and Minister for Defence Industry Christopher Pyne last week to urge that Australia stop selling weapons to the Saudi government.](#)

I want to say an enormous thanks to Immediate Past President Margie Beavis, who has done an outstanding job in leading our organisation so capably and energetically during times that have been both challenging and very productive.

I very much look forward to working with you and hope to meet many of you in the months to come. Please email me anytime with your ideas or feedback: sue.wareham@mapw.org.au

Sue Wareham
President, MAPW



Australian volunteer and MAPW member, occupational therapist Leigh Dix, is working with Handicap International (HI) to support cross-border initiatives in preparation for the forthcoming return of refugees from Thailand to Myanmar. The 'wet season' meant travel to the camps was an adventure at times!

Working as an OT with Handicap International's Myanmar-Thailand Program

A group of 20 MAPW members and supporters gathered in Perth on 3rd November to hear long-time MAPW member Leigh Dix speak about her experiences working as an Occupational Therapist with Handicap International's Myanmar/Thailand Program.

Leigh, who was visiting Perth for a week before returning to Yangon, gave details of her practical experiences working on a number of projects within Myanmar, but also her regular visits to the refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border where she works as a technical advisor to Community Based Rehabilitation teams, supporting the provision of Occupational Therapy services within the camps.

Handicap International (HI), as well as providing services within the camps, is now establishing programs in Karen State in eastern Myanmar in preparation for the return of the refugees. The three pillars of HI's work are health and rehabilitation, disability awareness and inclusion, and armed violence reduction.

Leigh also spoke about the refugee crisis currently engulfing north-western Rahkine State, with more than 500,000 refugees fleeing to refugee camps in Coxs Bazar, Bangladesh in recent weeks. [Click here](#) to read Leigh's presentation.



Peace Pilgrims Found Guilty of Praying for Peace

Margaret Pectorious, Jim Dowling, Andrew Paine, Tim Webb, Franz Dowling and Paul Christie - known as the "6 Peace Pilgrims" - were found guilty of illegally entering the joint Australian and US military intelligence base, Pine Gap on 29 September 2016. The jury also found Andrew Paine guilty of the additional count, possessing a photographic apparatus in the prohibited area. The "Peace Pilgrims" entered the top secret base to pray and draw attention

to the role Pine Gap plays in supporting US drone strikes across the Middle East.

Prof Richard Tanter, an academic and authority on the workings of Pine Gap, recently gave an interview to Late Night Live. Prof Tanter outlined the role of the base and you can listen to the interview by [clicking here](#).

Sentencing will take place in early December 2017.

MAPW Media Comment on the situation in Yemen

Clean Water, NOT Weapons, Needed in Yemen

24 November 2017 Health professionals today called on the Australian government to take urgent action in response to the deepening humanitarian crisis in Yemen, rather than selling weapons to the Saudi government that is leading the bombing of this impoverished country. Saudi Arabia is also leading the naval blockade that is drastically reducing availability of food, clean water and medical supplies.

The President of the Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia), Dr Sue Wareham, said, "It is unconscionable that Australia continues to actively arm a government that has such an appalling record of past and current human rights abuses. Australia should be pouring in food and other supplies to bring relief to the people, and should also be putting maximum pressure on the Saudi government to stop their assault on innocent people. Instead we are profiteering from the conflict."

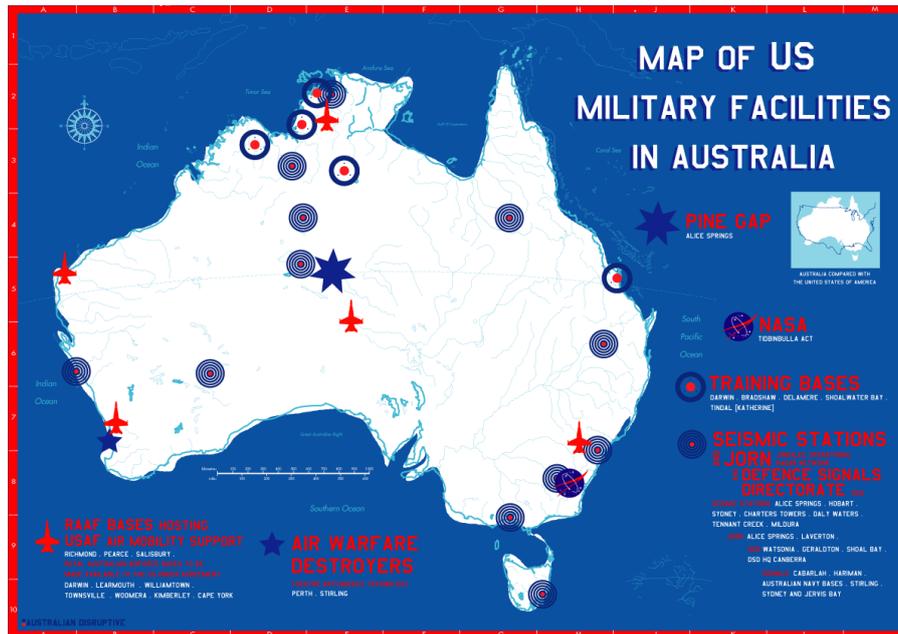
The UNHCR estimates that over 20 million Yemenis are now in need of aid,

with over 2 million people displaced. Malnutrition is rife and cholera rages due to destruction of sewerage and water treatment facilities.

In April, Human Rights Watch [called](#) on the Australian government to suspend military sales to Saudi Arabia. On 21 June the Australian Senate passed a motion calling for disclosure of the nature of the sales. Both calls were ignored by the government. It is virtually impossible to find out exactly what weapons are being sold to Saudi Arabia because such sales are labelled “commercial-in-confidence” and lack all transparency.

“Australians are told that our weapons exports are subject to strict controls, but when the bombing of civilians is not regarded as a barrier to receiving our weapons, then any controls appear to be illusory”, Dr Wareham said.

Minister for Defence Industry Christopher Pyne has visited the Saudi kingdom to spruik Australia’s weapons. Photos of him shaking hands with Saudi officials are reminiscent of those of Donald Rumsfeld, then US Special Envoy to the Middle East, shaking hands with Saddam Hussein in 1983.



US Militarism - what are the costs to Australia?

Australia has seen a steady increase in the number of US bases and military personnel stationed within its borders. Who can forget Prime Minister Julia Gillard welcoming Barack Obama to Darwin, announcing the permanent rotation of US Marines to the Northern Territory. The ANZUS Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America, is often touted as one of the most important elements to Australia's defence, but at what cost?

MAPW Secretary, Dr Margie Beavis, has recently published an article on the blog site Pearls and Irritations, on the subject and you can read it by [clicking here](#).

To find out more about the Pearls and Irritations blog or to subscribe, [please click here](#).



The Marshall Islands and the Two Greatest Existential Threats of Our Time

In the late 1970s, Runit Island, on the remote Enewetak Atoll, part of the Marshall Islands, was the scene of the largest nuclear clean-up in United States history.

Highly contaminated debris left over from dozens of atomic weapons tests was dumped into a 100-metre wide bomb crater on the tip of the uninhabited island. US Army engineers sealed it up with a half-metre thick concrete cap almost the size of an Australian football ground, then left the island.

Now with sea levels rising due to climate change, water has begun to penetrate the dome.

A report commissioned by the US Department of Energy in 2013 found that radioactive materials were leeching out, threatening the already tenuous existence of Enewetak locals. "That dome is the connection between the nuclear age and the climate change age," says Marshall Islands climate change activist Alson Kelen. "It'll be a very devastating event if it really leaks. We're not just talking the Marshall Islands, we're talking the whole Pacific." The US government conducted over 40 nuclear tests at the atoll, some of which

vaporised

whole

islands.

Journalist Mark Willacy from ABC's Foreign Correspondent program, has made a remarkable film examining the threat to the people of the Marshall Islands, the US military personnel exposed to the radiation from the tests and the whole of the Pacific Ocean. [Click here](#) to watch the documentary.

What's

on

ACT



VICTORIA



Melbourne's Nobel Peace Prize celebration!

Sunday 10 December

7.30 - late

Swanston Hall at Melbourne Town Hall

[Free event but bookings essential!](http://www.trybooking.com/SKZG)

On Sunday 10 December ICAN will be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo. So in partnership with the City of Melbourne, we're getting together to celebrate the city where the ban movement began! The evening will feature short speeches from ban champions including Karina and Rose Lester, Vanessa Griffen (from Fiji), Senator Lisa Singh and Senator Richard Di Natale and others. Our Australian team in Oslo will be sending messages to the gathering. There will be live music, a fundraising art auction with unique Australian artworks. And you can stay on late to watch the Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony live!

Book now as places are limited! Come and celebrate this wonderful achievement for the Melbourne-born International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

PERTH



THE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION FOR PREVENTION OF WAR
MAPW(WA) PRESENT

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE: PERTH CELEBRATES

WITH GUEST SPEAKER, ICAN AMBASSADOR
MELISSA PARKE

Join us as we celebrate **International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear weapons (ICAN)** receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for spearheading the 2017 UN treaty to ban nuclear weapons.

Sun 10 December | 6-9 pm | \$35PP (pay at the door) | Spirit House Thai restaurant | (18 Risely St Ardross)

RSVP by Friday 8 December | BYO

Eventbrite.com | Nobel Peace Prize Celebration Dinner

John Stace 0419 733 377

Glenys Davies 0409 974 760

Have you renewed your MAPW membership for 2017/18?

MAPW is successful because of the support we receive from you, our members and supporters. Thank you to all our members who have already renewed their membership. If you haven't done so already, please renew today by clicking [here](#). Thank you to everyone for your continued support.

Thank you to all our contributors for sharing their articles and reports with MAPW. If you would like to write an article for enews or have information about events in your area you think would be of interest to MAPW members, please email Phyllis at eo@mapw.org.au

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