

To the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee,

On the outset of this submission, I would like to make it clear that I am a late 20s software engineer and that I am in no way an expert in foreign or military affairs, and as such all my opinions on this issue are the result of my own personal interest in global affairs and geopolitics. I am also not a member of any political party and do not generally subscribe to a particular political leaning. While I aim to be as objective in my consumption of news and reporting as possible, I am of course subject to my own personal biases.

Whether the support is timely, coordinated, and comprehensive.

To the comprehensiveness of our support. While I acknowledge that Australia has given a somewhat substantial amount of aid to Ukraine it must be said that it pales in comparison to what other countries are doing to assist. Going by the data collected by the [Kiel Institute for the World Economy](#) in raw dollars spent, the US and Germany have given the most amount of military aid to Ukraine, followed by several other European nations. However, other nations that are likely under no threat of a Russian invasion, such as Denmark, the Netherlands, and Belgium have given more in not just general aid but military aid. Denmark as of February 29th, has given around \$9 billion AUD. Australia at the time had only provided just under \$1 billion AUD. This kind of discrepancy becomes even greater when we compare our GDP; Australia's being \$1.7 trillion USD and Denmark's around \$400 billion USD according to the IMF.

While I appreciate the latest announcement from the government that includes \$100 million AUD in military aid it still puts us far below what one would expect given our fortunate economic position in the world and barely lifts our overall contribution per GDP, which as of February 29th was 0.04%. We simply should do more.

As for the timeliness, the best time to send more support was yesterday, the next best time is today. We are already starting to see the Ukrainians losing ground to the overwhelming force of the Russians and the predicted spring offensive operation has yet to even begin. The Ukrainians are simply asking for ammunition and equipment to even the odds. They are not asking for Australian soldiers. I don't see any reason we should refuse to provide more of what they are asking for, even if it is simply more funds to purchase the supplies they need.

I can't comment on the coordination of the support as I am aware that the logistics of the task is complex and generally above the understanding of a member of the public such as myself.

Whether support is appropriately coordinated on a whole-of-government basis and whole-of-county basis.

I can understand the necessity of managing internal affairs as a primary goal, as any good government does. Especially given the cost-of-living crisis many Australians are currently experiencing. Despite this, support for Ukraine remains high. This [article](#) in the Financial Review shows overwhelming support from an upcoming Lowy Institute Poll. In terms of military assistance, 74% of Australians polled support it. There will always be people who will resist any foreign aid; however, they are clearly the minority and should not be swaying the government's policy away from what the greater Australian public want.

Any related matters

To summarise my position on Australia's responsibility overall. I believe that Australia could and should be doing more to assist in the defence of Ukraine. It has become clear to me that no amount of negotiating, or appeasement will dissuade the Russian Federation from its conquest. If the Donbas and Crimea is surrendered to Russia, they will see it as not just legitimacy to their claims in Ukraine but the claim to the broader 19th century Russian Empire that included Finland, the Baltics, Belarus, parts of Poland and of course Ukraine. Vladimir Putin has even compared himself to figures such as Peter the Great to reinforce the point of his imperial ambitions. If the West cannot defend the sovereignty of Ukraine, then how could we deny Russia's claims to South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia, China's claim to Taiwan or any future imperialist claims.

Australia is, whether we like it or not, a part of the liberal structure that guarantees sovereignty to states that are unable to defend themselves from larger neighbours. If Australia were to be invaded, we would never expect our European or American allies to simply claim that a conflict on the other side of the world is not their concern. We would expect their help just as Ukraine expects ours. After all, how can we claim to honour the ANZAC spirit if we aren't willing to do everything in our power to help our mates.

Thank you for taking my submission into consideration on such an important issue.

Samuel Podbury