

David Kinsey



17th October 2022

Re: Parliamentary Inquiry into War Powers in Australia

To whom it may concern,

Full transparency and accountability should be required for any commitment by Australia to enter into any form of foreign conflict. Decisions to enter into conflict always carry implications that extend beyond both the scope and tenure of the contemporary executive. In line with fundamental democratic principles, the will of the people of Australia must be taken into consideration before committing to any form of foreign conflict.

Like a majority of nation-states, Australia expends considerable human and financial resources in preparing for armed conflict. This includes investment in weapons and associated delivery systems that have no useful civilian or peaceful purpose. By acquiring these systems, Australia participates in the global arms race, whereby nation-states (individually or as part of competing alliance blocs) compete to achieve an advantage in any hypothetical future conflict. Increased capital investment by one side leads directly to increased pressure on any perceived opposing side to similarly increase their investment.

As investment in destructive weapons systems increases, so too does the pressure on civilian governments to justify the extravagant costs by putting such weapon systems to effective use. In a world of limited resources, funding allocated to weapons systems cannot also be spent on more peaceful and productive outcomes (health, education, social welfare, public transport, environmental improvements, etc.). Individuals and corporations competing for scarce funding resources must argue the case that their particular area of interest is more deserving of investment than other competing interests. It is in the direct financial interest of weapons systems manufacturers and lobbyists to inflate, exaggerate and encourage conflict between nation-states and alliance blocs.

Weapons systems manufacturers in Australia enjoy unprecedented and dangerous levels of access to those in power. This includes subverting the purposes of the Australian War Memorial and desecrating the memories of Australia's many thousands of war victims. Under the current requirements, a small number of decision makers in key executive positions can commit Australia irrevocably to a foreign conflict that may result in more Australians joining the ranks of war victims commemorated at our national shrine.

By enshrining the need for parliamentary approval prior to any commitment to conflict, Australia can begin the process of de-escalating the global arms race and become a shining beacon of peaceful democracy in a time of rising authoritarianism on the international stage. We can encourage calm and rational diplomacy on the international stage to de-escalate the global arms race.

In summary, I strongly encourage the federal parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia to implement a requirement for full transparency and accountability when entering into any foreign conflict.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my submission.

Regards,

David Kinsey