



Peace

Health cannot be achieved without peace, one of humanity's highest values. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) defines peace as not merely the absence of violence or war, but the presence of concord or harmony, allowing people to live and develop in freedom and justice within and between nations. Living in peace means enjoying freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of movement and the right to self-determination. Access to adequate health care, education, justice, food, safe environments and shelter constitute a minimum humanitarian requirement which underpin the ability of people to live in dignity and exercise their human rights in a peaceful environment.

The ANMF calls on all governments to respect the legitimate aspirations of people to live in dignity and with full human rights and freedoms. Peace can only be a reality when all people enjoy basic dignity and human rights.

All the peoples of the world have the right to live without fear of aggression or subversion by their government, a foreign power, by military force or other means. The use of force to resolve political or economic problems is opposed, however nations and people should be able to defend their values, their way of life and their culture.

The gross inequalities that exist causing poverty throughout large sections of the world's population, authoritarian governments who are intolerant of the diverse opinions of their own people and those of other nations, and the continued upgrading and stockpiling of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction, are a threat to peace.

Unions have an important role to play in correcting these inequalities including the alleviation of world poverty and the development of freer and more tolerant societies. Achievement of these objectives provides the necessary foundations for creating a more peaceful world.

It is the position of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation that:

1. The pursuit of peace should have priority over all political objectives.
2. All serious efforts for peace are supported and encouraged.
3. Gross inequalities, poverty and the oppression of individuals, people and nations, and degradation of the environment are all threats to peace.
4. Freedom of access to health care, basic education, food, water, justice, a healthy environment and shelter are minimum humanitarian requirements for peaceful societies.
5. The production and use of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction, including those intended for biological warfare, is condemned as a means of defence, as their deterrent effect is outweighed by their threat to world security, peace and health. There should be further programs initiated immediately to disable and dismantle existing nuclear weapons and an immediate cessation of any further development, production and testing of nuclear weapons, biological weapons, or weapons of mass destruction. The United Nations (UN) *Biological Weapons Convention* key provisions¹ and the UN *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*² should be supported by all countries, including the Australian Government.



6. The production and use of landmines and the stockpiling, use, production and transfer of cluster munitions is condemned.³
7. Effective national and international control of trade in weapons should be in place.
8. Nurses and midwives should raise awareness about the potential political, social, environmental and health consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.
9. Nurses and midwives are encouraged to critically appraise expenditure on health and welfare at a national and global level in relation to that spent on conventional weapons, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.
10. Nurses and midwives should be involved in developing strategies of action to contribute to national and international peace.
11. Education for peace and disarmament is supported.
12. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*,⁴ the *UN Convention of the Rights of the Child*,⁵ and the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*⁶ are supported.

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Reviewed and re-endorsed May 2009

Reviewed and re-endorsed February 2011

Reviewed and re-endorsed June 2014

Reviewed and re-endorsed August 2017

Reviewed and re-endorsed May 2020

References

1. United Nations Sixth Review Conference (2006) *The Biological Weapons Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction* Available at <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/bio/>
2. United Nations (2017). *Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons*. Available at <https://www.un.org/disarmament/tpnw/index.html>
3. Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of a Convention on Cluster Munitions, 19-30 May 2008. *Convention on cluster munitions*. Available at <https://www.clusterconvention.org/>
4. United Nations General Assembly (1945). *The universal declaration of human rights*. Available at <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>
5. United Nations (1989). *Conventions on the Rights of the Child* Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
6. United Nations (2007). *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* Available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>

This position statement is to be read in conjunction with the ANMF Health and the Environment policy and the ANMF Climate change policy.