



**The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia
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The world is commemorating the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the 6th and 9th of August 75 years ago. But is about more than just reflecting on the past. Nuclear arms control agreements are collapsing, nuclear spending is **increasing**, new kinds of nuclear weapons are being deployed and we are far from the "peace and security" they supposedly provide. This week is also a call to action. ([ICAN](#))

Australian Quakers are alarmed at the steady rise in the risk of a nuclear arms race and the reversal of many of the gains made towards nuclear disarmament.

- The first resolution of the newly-formed United Nations in 1945 was for the elimination of atomic weapons.
- Since the end of the Cold War, the total number of nuclear warheads in the world has fallen from 70,000 to 15,000, thanks in large part to a series of treaties and conventions put in place through hard-won diplomacy and public support.
- The nuclear weapons states' proclaimed doctrine of nuclear deterrence, and ongoing undermining of multilateral agreements, have revived fears of an arms race. They are re-arming and upgrading their weapons, withdrawing from or questioning agreements (e.g. Iran nuclear deal, Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, Open Skies Treaty, New START Treaty, Test Ban Treaty).
- More and more non-nuclear states and NGOs around the world (including Quakers) have raised their voices against these dangerous trends, leading to adoption by a large majority of the United Nations General Assembly of the 2017 treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

We are concerned that Australia has not done its part to support the UN Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty, the first global treaty to ban nuclear weapons and all activities related to them. It has taken a position of opposition during the development of treaty and refused to sign or ratify so far, apparently convinced of the need to remain under the US nuclear umbrella for security, in spite of a survey in November 2018 showing that 79 % of Australians want the government to sign the treaty.

As the risk of a nuclear arms race rises, we must commit ourselves to the task of reversing the trend towards global disaster.

Quakers encourage all Australians to make known to their friends, colleagues and political representatives their concern for the future of humanity. Advocate strongly for international cooperation to meet the threat of nuclear weapons, and support the campaign of and the events organised by the ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons <https://icanw.org.au/>).

Signed,

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