

## **Jemila Rushton submission in support of this item.**

Dear Mayor Giles-Gidney and Willoughby City Councillors,

Thank you for considering the [International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons Cities Appeal](#) at your July Council meeting. While I understand the council on that occasion could not reach consensus around supporting the Cities Appeal, it is heartening to see that the issue will again be brought before council this week.

While July may not seem so long ago, much has changed in the political landscape of nuclear disarmament, both at home and abroad. Below I will build on the previous information provided around the campaign (*attached as a separate pdf*), and include significant updates for your consideration ahead of Monday's council meeting.

### **Councils**

Willoughby Council has the opportunity to be the first council in Australia to celebrate the entry into force of the Treaty and join the [6 Sydney councils who have already endorsed the ICAN Cities Appeal](#). With entry into force imminent, we are looking forward to more councils pledging their support for Australia joining the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as the groundswell of international support for the treaty at all levels of government grows.

In the lead up to the 75th Anniversaries of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings in August, 4 more Australian councils declared their support of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in tribute to the victims and survivors of nuclear attacks. New endorsements from The City of Port Adelaide Enfield, Mount Barker District Council, the City and Brimbank and Byron Shire bring the total number of councils supporting Australia joining it to 31.

In August 2020, The Australian Local Government Association wrote to the Senator the Hon. Marise Payne Minister for Foreign Affairs with a message: *Councils urge the Australian Government to sign and ratify the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon*.

### **The Treaty**

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons received its 50th ratification last month. **This milestone means the treaty will become international law on January 22, 2021**, increasing pressure on nuclear armed states and other countries to support the treaty. It now has 84 signatories and 50 states parties.

Entry-into-force will cement the illegality of nuclear weapons in international law. This change will influence the behaviour of states, even those which don't join the treaty, interrupt the flow of funds to nuclear arms producers, stimulate debate and increase pressure on treaty hold-outs.

Why is entry-into-force important?

All countries that have ratified the treaty will be bound by it.

- It establishes clearly that nuclear weapons are inhumane, unacceptable, and now illegal, and that no state should possess, use or threaten to use them.
- It puts Australia out of step with international law on nuclear weapons.

- A ban treaty can change the behaviour of countries that haven't joined, as demonstrated by the bans on landmines and cluster munitions.
- More financial institutions will divest from companies that produce nuclear weapons, in line with policies to exclude weapons banned by international law.
- It creates pressure and momentum for more nuclear weapons abolition action.

I have also attached further information on the specific implications for Australia in relation to the treaty's entry into force.

## **Australia**

The Australian government has argued that nuclear weapons should only be prohibited once they have been eliminated. This is illogical, counterproductive and flies in the face of the consistent experience with every other type of unacceptable weapon. Australia supported the banning of biological and chemical weapons, landmines and cluster munitions in order to drive their elimination, not the other way round.

Australia has supported many measures seeking to control and reduce fissile materials and nuclear weapons and their testing and proliferation which also have not eliminated a single nuclear weapon. These include the NPT itself, the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, a fissile material cut-off treaty and nuclear transparency measures. A comprehensive legal regime to control and eliminate nuclear weapons and minimise the risks of their use in the meantime needs many different, complementary elements. A legal prohibition that codifies rejection of nuclear weapons for all states and provides the basis and motivation for the progressive work to eliminate them, in the words of the International Committee of the Red Cross, is a crucial basis for their elimination.

For more background on Australia's capacity act in the advancement of the Treaty on the prohibition of Nuclear Weapons I would suggest listening to this recent [Radio National Interview with ICAN co-founder and board member Dimity Hawkins](#) and this [Where will Australia Stand on Banning Weapons of Mass Destruction](#) article in the Lowy Institute, from board member and Associate Professor of International Relations at the University of Queensland, Marianne Hanson

I would welcome any further questions relating to the treaty, Australia's position and ways in which Willoughby council can participate in the nuclear weapons debate of our time.

Sending my best

Jemila Rushton