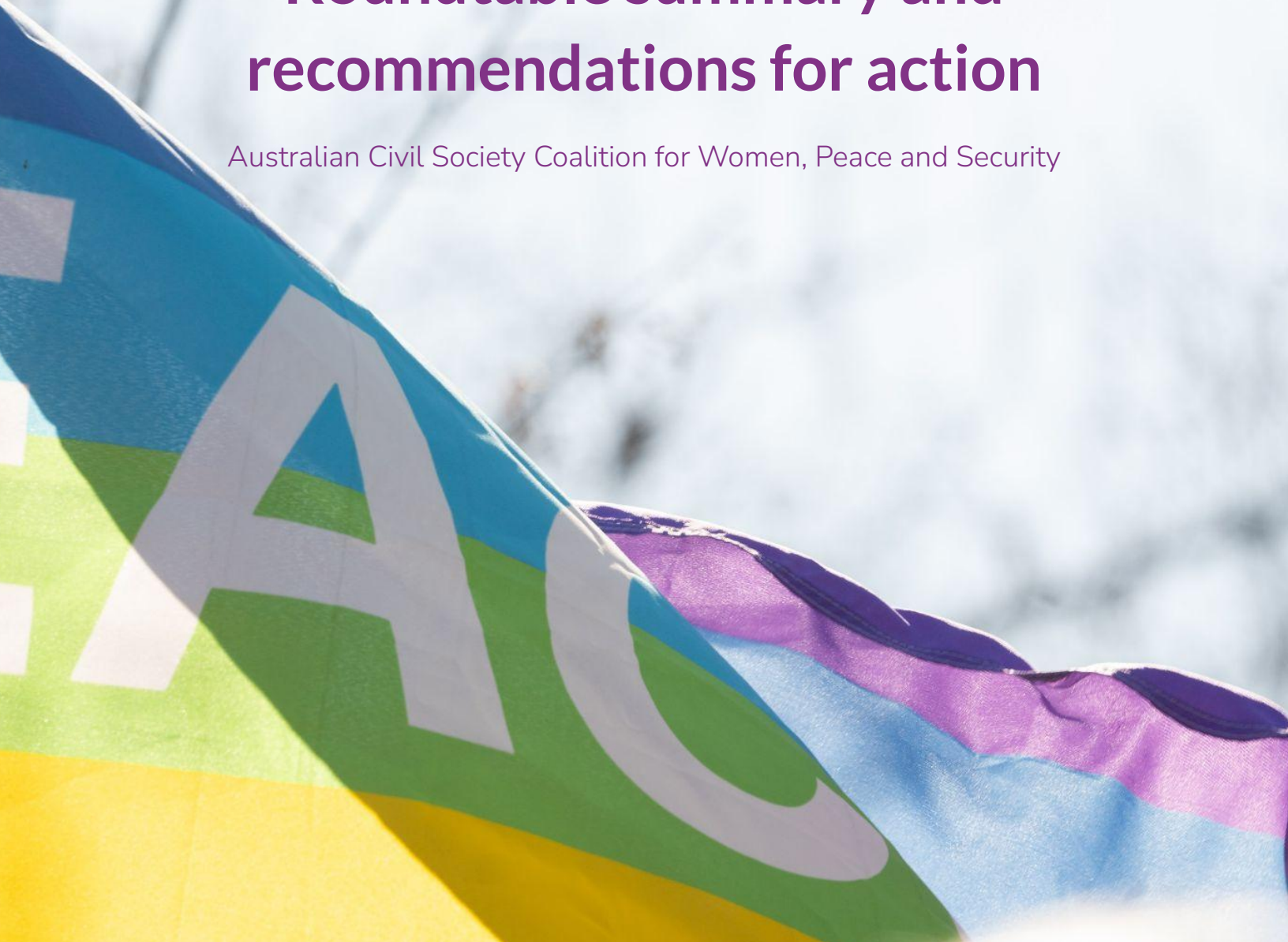


# What do peace and security mean to diverse women in Australia? Roundtable summary and recommendations for action

Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security



## Background

The Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security (the Coalition) is a non-partisan and independent alliance of civil society organisations, networks, and individuals working to advance the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Members build evidence for and understanding of best practice, raise awareness, facilitate dialogue, and support women's rights partners in Australia, through their networks across the Asia-Pacific region, and globally.

The Coalition is in the process of delivering a multi-year project, funded by the Australian Civil Military Centre, designed to support civil society dialogue and engagement on WPS as part of the implementation of Australia's Second National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (2021-2031). The first phase of the project (October-December 2022) involved a Consultation to explore understandings of peace and security amongst women and gender diverse people in Australia, how perceptions of peace and security have been shaped by the changing national and global context, and what action diverse communities want to see the Australian Government take to build a safer and more peaceful world. The findings from that Consultation were published in a report available [on our website](#).

The second phase involved an in-person Roundtable, held in Sydney in March 2023, bringing together Coalition members and partners. The purpose of the Roundtable was to formulate a set of recommendations for action by the Australian Government. These recommendations are focused on the five priorities identified in the wider consultation:

- Priority 1: Enable all Australians to achieve peace, security and their inalienable rights
- Priority 2: Reposition Australia as a global and regional peacemaker rather than a strategic military partner
- Priority 3: Rebalance priorities and restructure departments and processes to enable Australia to become a world leader in global diplomacy, peacebuilding, and mediation
- Priority 4: Enhance and amplify the agency of diverse women, girls, and gender diverse people, and enable those most impacted to lead
- Priority 5: Position Australia at the forefront of global efforts to address climate change and insecurity

This report aims to collate and build from inputs to both the consultations and roundtable, also incorporating ideas and concerns from partner organisations representing diverse women who were unable to attend in person.

Consultation with, and the leadership of, women and gender diverse people is a fundamental underpinning of the WPS agenda. Action to secure peace and security is strengthened when it draws from diverse knowledge, perspectives, and experiences, and the Australian Government has explicitly committed to support women and girls' capacity to speak out, be heard, innovate, and drive change. Recommendations contained in this report are not intended to represent an exhaustive list. Each recommendation includes (in brackets) a suggestion for the Australian Government departments and agencies with responsibility for taking it forward.

Further and regular consultation is warranted to ensure that Australia's policy and action on WPS is shaped by the perspectives and priorities of diverse women, girls and gender diverse people.

## Key themes

From the consultation findings, it is clear that intersectional and intergenerational analysis is crucial to informing and advancing the WPS agenda as the lived experiences and perspectives of women are impacted by factors such as their age, race, ethnicity, location and residential status. Despite this, too often, decisions are taken without a proper examination of how diverse women experience and understand these issues.

Participants in both the consultation and roundtable advocated for action that recognises and responds to following three themes:

1. **Interconnectedness:** participants wanted to see much more done to address the links between insecurity and crises at the local, national and international levels, as well as to address the compounding and intersecting nature of insecurity, crises and conflict.
2. **Intersectionality and intergenerationality:** with calls for more attention to be given to diverse women's different understandings of insecurity and how these are impacted by personal experience of intersecting and overlapping forms of oppression on the basis of race, age, class, visa status and other characteristics.
3. **Localisation and agency:** ensuring that those most impacted by insecurity, particularly those whose insecurity is compounded by marginalisation, have the space and resources to safely lead responses.

## Priority 1. Enable all Australians to achieve peace, security and their inalienable rights

Consultation and roundtable participants highlighted the links between domestic and international dimensions of peace and security. Conflict and insecurity overseas have impacts within our borders and

Australian foreign policy impacts the peace and security of women across Australia and beyond. At the same time, personal and local insecurity within Australia also has ripple effects, destabilising households, communities and contributing to international insecurity, the impact of which is felt disproportionately by women, girls and gender-diverse people.

Participants called for Australia to adopt an intersectional, intergenerational and human rights-based approach that enables women and gender diverse people facing overlapping and intersecting oppressions on the basis of race, age, disability, visa insecurity and other factors, to realise their rights, with expanded social safety nets and investment in quality and accessible public services.

### Action 1.1: Recognise and address the links between domestic and international dimensions of peace and security

Approaches to women's peace and security in Australia need to recognise and respond to the intersecting nature of domestic and international dimensions of peace and security, and reflect the importance of a continuum of care for women impacted by insecurity, conflict and climate related disasters.

Australia's Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS NAP) currently focuses solely on international dimensions of peace and security. The WPS NAP should be reviewed to incorporate a human security framework that takes into account the interconnectedness of domestic and international dimensions of peace and security. This requires a focus on addressing the intersectional root causes of conflict, including economic inequality, political instability, and environmental degradation. The WPS NAP should also be revisited to include more concrete measures to address issues arising from gender-based violence and discrimination within Australia.

**Recommendation:** Review the WPS National Action Plan, in collaboration and consultation with women in all their diversity and their representative organisations, to ensure it coherently addresses the links between domestic and international dimensions of peace and security and incorporates an explicit human security framework. This will establish linkages with domestic policy agendas such as the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan to End Violence against Women and Children, National Women's Health Strategy, the recommendations of Wiyi Yani U Thangani and the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which are essential to the security of diverse women in Australia. (WPS NAP implementing agencies, National Indigenous Australia Agency (NIAA))

**Recommendation:** Ensure agencies tasked with the implementation of Australia's Second WPS National Action Plan have their own action plans and report against them publicly on an annual basis. (WPS NAP implementing agencies)

**Recommendation:** Allocate a dedicated budget for the WPS NAP; shared across all Federal government implementing agencies. (Treasury, WPS NAP implementing agencies)

**Recommendation:** Develop WPS action plans at the State/ Territory and local government levels to ensure the WPS NAP is coordinated across Federal, State and local government policies and frameworks. (State/Territory and local governments)

## Action 1.2: Prioritise the peace and security of First Nations women and gender-diverse people

First Nations women live within the legacy of colonisation and the intergenerational traumas caused by dispossession of land and culture and state-sanctioned violence and genocide. This includes higher rates of gender-based and family violence and barriers to accessing services caused by racism, gender inequality and the ongoing impacts of colonisation. Many First Nations women in Australia also live in communities under intense securitisation and policing.

The Australian Government must recognise and resource the work that First Nations women do as peacebuilders in their communities and around the world, and recognise truth telling, treaty, and voice as an essential to their experience of peace. First Nations women need every opportunity to address their trauma, speak, and tell their stories through systemic and radical analysis and truth-telling.

**Recommendation:** Endorse and implement the Uluru statement from the Heart as critical to upholding the security of First Nations women and revisit Australia's Second WPS National Action Plan to integrate truth telling, treaty, and voice within appropriate state, territory and federal government policies and frameworks. ( WPS NAP implementing agencies, NIAA)

**Recommendation:** Implement the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security. The Declaration should be incorporated into domestic law and monitoring and reporting mechanisms developed to track progress and outcomes and hold government agencies and departments accountable to its provisions.. (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, WPS NAP implementing agencies, NIAA)

**Recommendation:** Ensure Australia's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan to End Violence against Women and Children is fully resourced and linked into the WPS National Action Plan. (WPS NAP implementing agencies, NIAA)

## Action 1.3: Ensure the peace and security of women from the Pacific and their families

Women from the Pacific face particular barriers to peace and security while in Australia, including isolation from their cultures and families, limited access to education, language barriers, and lack of access to social safety nets such as Centrelink. They also face disproportionate hostility, racism, as well as sexual

harassment and violence in the workplace. Pacific women are concentrated in low skilled, low income and the most precarious and dangerous jobs and often work in isolated remote and rural areas.

Without concerted action, women from the Pacific will be increasingly forced to journey to Australia due to climate change and the conflict and instability it creates in the region. Upstream action is needed to increase Pacific women's security and ensure Australia lives up to its duty to protect and care for Pacific women in Australia.

**Recommendation:** Strengthen labour laws and reform the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme to ensure that women from the Pacific region are protected from exploitation and abuse. This includes implementing measures to prevent wage theft, increasing penalties for employers who breach labour laws, and ensuring that women have access to legal recourse and violence prevention and response services. (Home Affairs, DFAT)

**Recommendation:** Develop a funded program to provide core support for organisations working to ensure the security of diverse Pacific women and their families in Australia. (Home Affairs, Social Services, Office for Women)

### Action 1.4: Ensure a continuum of security for asylum-seeking and refugee women and their families in Australia

Women forced to flee conflict or humanitarian crises in other countries often find themselves retraumatised and isolated by their experience of Australia's immigration system and the difficulties they experience settling in a new home. Australia's obligations to displaced people do not end when those people settle within its borders.

Asylum-seeking and refugee women must be enabled to thrive, build community, prosper and contribute to the general wellbeing of their communities and Australia as a whole. All women in Australia deserve access to quality education and vocational training, accessible social services and safety nets, affordable housing and services provided in multilingual, multi-culturally appropriate formats that also address the needs of older women.

Particular insecurity is caused to asylum seeking and refugee women on certain classes of visa and temporary visas. This includes reduced access to violence and domestic violence services including legal aid, Centrelink, shelters, housing, and mental health support, paid family and domestic violence leave and childcare benefit payments, the lack of which increases women's vulnerability to violence and abuse. The same level of care should be provided to all women, regardless of visa status.

**Recommendation:** Develop an intersectional feminist immigration and asylum policy, codesigned with women's and refugee-led civil society, that explicitly aims to realise the rights of and reduce harm to diverse women and girls, support mental health and wellbeing, aid trauma recovery, address

intergenerational trauma, and enable families to reunite and provide each other with practical and emotional support. (Home Affairs, Department of Health and Aged Care, Office for Women)

**Recommendation:** Revisit Australia's asylum and resettlement policies, to make it easier for women and their children impacted by conflict and crises to seek asylum here, and to access resettlement. (Home Affairs)

**Recommendation:** Strengthen Australia's Second WPS National Action Plan by ensuring coherence between international and domestic responses to support survivors and victims of gender-based violence facing displacement as a result of armed conflict or humanitarian crisis. This should include concrete domestic action to provide accessible gender-based violence prevention, trauma recovery, and access to justice services. (WPS NAP implementing agencies)

**Recommendation:** Commit to ensure all women and gender diverse people in Australia receive the same level of protection and access to violence prevention, protection and recovery services and support, regardless of visa status, and ensure they have access to culturally and linguistically appropriate domestic and family violence services. (Office for Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Home Affairs, Attorney-General's Department)

### Action 1.5: Address the peace and security of diverse women living with disability

Women and gender diverse people with disability experience significantly higher rates of all forms of violence, including routine egregious violations of fundamental human rights, including the right to autonomy, agency and decision making, as well as the right to peace, security and safety. This is particularly true for First Nations women, who experience higher rates of disability, due to factors such as the ongoing impact of colonialism, a eurocentric health system, dispossession, and state-sanctioned racism. Asylum-seeking and refugee women are also significantly more likely to be living with disability than the general population, often because of the violence and traumatic experiences that displaced them in the first instance. Those very disabilities may then count against them and be used to block their immigration into Australia, their access to citizenship and increase the likelihood that they will be deported.

Ableist assumptions guide policies and practice governing the lives of women with disability in Australia, including having their ability to make their own decisions denied through enforced guardianship or custodial arrangements, and exposure to practices which qualify as torture or inhuman or degrading treatment, such forced sterilisation, forced abortion and the state removal of children. Women with disability face segregation in education and employment, as well as forced institutionalisation in psychiatric facilities, group homes and aged care settings.

**Recommendation:** In collaboration with state and territory governments, provide resourcing to ensure that the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability are fully implemented, in consultation and co-design with women with disability and their

representative organisations. (Office for Women, Department of Social Services, state and territory governments)

**Recommendation:** Improve the security of women with disability by, in collaboration with state and territory governments, establishing and implementing a national, time bound, strategy and framework that prohibits the use of restrictive practices against people with disability, particularly women, in all settings and contexts. Establish a similar framework for the closure of all segregated and closed settings for people with disability, including those operated by non-government and private sectors. (Office for Women, Department of Social Services, state and territory governments)

**Recommendation:** Review Section 52 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 to prohibit visa requests from migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees with Temporary Protection Visas being declined on the grounds of the applicant having a 'disease or condition', under the Public Interest Criteria 4005 and 4007. (Home Affairs)

## Priority 2: Reposition Australia as a global and regional peacemaker rather than a strategic military partner

Participants in both consultations wanted to see the Government realise its commitment to making peacebuilding a priority across Australia's foreign policy and diplomatic efforts and take a more vocal stance on Women, Peace and Security and against international human rights abuses. Participants at the roundtable built upon these priorities calling for increased diversity in the voices making and influencing peace and security decision making.

### Action 2.1: Lead by example

Several countries, including Canada, France, Mexico, Spain, Germany, and Chile, have adopted feminist foreign policies or are in the process of developing them, while others have codified their Women, Peace and Security commitments into domestic law. This represents a significant shift in the way countries approach foreign policy and reflects a growing recognition of the need to address gender inequalities and promote women's rights as essential components of international peace and security. Adopting an intersectional feminist foreign policy would lead to better policy coherence and better outcomes while, at the same time, giving Australia increased credibility in advocating for the rights of women, girls and gender diverse people, and enhancing opportunities for international collaboration.

Integrating First Nations worldviews and unique cosmologies in policy approaches aligns with intersectional, non-western feminist approaches, and offers valuable perspectives and expertise in areas such as sustainability, caring for Country, and relationality. Adopting a First Nations foreign policy that prioritises the genuine participation and engagement of First Nations peoples not only advances the interests of First Nations peoples but also sets global standards in respecting human rights and democracy.



**Recommendation:** Explicitly commit to adopt a feminist foreign policy across all Government departments to demonstrate the Government's commitment to promoting gender equality and women's rights, and helping to create a safer, more just, and more equitable world. (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, DFAT, NIAA)

**Recommendation:** Prioritise the genuine participation and engagement of First Nations peoples as a core principle within Australia's First Nations Foreign Policy. (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, DFAT, NIAA)

**Recommendation:** Develop a process of Parliamentary accountability for the implementation of the WPS NAP to ensure that the obligations and commitments to the WPS agenda are fully funded, and addressed through a coordinated and coherent approach at both policy and implementation levels by all responsible agencies. (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office for Women)

**Recommendation:** Facilitate and support gender mainstreaming in peace processes by providing new resources for training, workshops, and dialogue, in partnership with key Australian and Asia-Pacific regional feminist civil society. (DFAT, WPS implementing agencies)

## Action 2.2: Ensure coherence across Australia's foreign policy and practice

Participants wanted to see the Australian government proactively building its capacity to respond to and prevent future challenges, in ways that promote principles of anti-racism, non-violence, human rights, gender equality and sustainable development. This includes a greater emphasis on prevention and an examination of the principles that underpin our involvement in conflict, and investment in capacity to resolve existing conflicts through non-violent means, such as mediation and negotiation, providing humanitarian assistance and supporting post-conflict reconstruction efforts, including the provision of assistance to victims of violence and the promotion of transitional justice.

Australia has broadly committed to not profiting from or exploiting human suffering, however this commitment is not practised across all its international and diplomatic efforts. Australia needs to be aware of how it is contributing to women and girls' insecurity across all its international policies and programmes. There was also recognition of the impact that Australia could have on WPS by joining international partners in ratifying and implementing key international instruments.

**Recommendation:** Publicly commit to ensuring that WPS principles and priorities guide all Australian humanitarian and military deployments and responses in Australia and internationally. (DFAT, Defence, AFP)

**Recommendation** Systematically embed the WPS Agenda and a broader human security lens in the Government's funding and prioritisation of issues in response to emerging conflicts, humanitarian crises and climate change in order to drive gender transformative change. (DFAT, Defence, AFP)

**Recommendation:** Amend Australia's Defence Export Controls to prohibit the sale of weapons to countries with a record of violations of women's and girls' rights. (DFAT, Defence)

**Recommendation:** Review and report publicly on Australia's role in the AUKUS trilateral security pact, assessing its potential impact on the peace and security of women and girls. (Defence)

**Recommendation:** Ratify and implement the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. (DFAT, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet)

### Action 2.3: Leverage Australia's influence in multilateral groupings

By promoting the WPS agenda in international fora, Australia can contribute to advancing gender equality, enhancing the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts, protecting the rights of women and girls, and building more resilient and stable societies. Leveraging its influence in international and multilateral spaces to promote the WPS agenda is both a moral imperative and supports a broad range of Australia's stated international policy priorities and objectives.

**Recommendation:** Conduct an annual Australian Government-led consultation with feminist civil society and diaspora communities on the WPS agenda and influencing opportunities to advise the Governments' participation ahead of key meetings, for example the UN General Assembly, UN Security Council, G20, Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, Bali Process conferences and meetings and ASEAN summits and meetings. (Office for Women DFAT, Defence)

**Recommendation:** Commit to prioritising the WPS agenda across all multilateral forums, and specifically if Australia secures a non permanent seat on the UN Security Council from 2029-30. (DFAT, Office for Women)

## Priority 3: Rebalance priorities and restructure departments and processes to enable Australia to become a world leader in global diplomacy, peacebuilding, and mediation

Participants in the Listening Circles and survey called for a better distribution of staffing and resources between Australia's national security and military priorities and its human security and peacebuilding

commitments. Participants wanted this shift in priorities to be reflected in the development of new structures and processes to ensure that Australia's efforts are aligned with its human security and peacebuilding commitments, and to promote a more holistic and integrated approach to national security that prioritises the well-being and safety of all its citizens, as well as those affected by conflict and insecurity beyond its borders.

### Action 3.1. Create structures within Government to coordinate Australia's peacebuilding efforts

There were calls for Australia to demonstrate leadership by joining the growing number of countries that have a dedicated ministry able to serve as a focal point for government efforts to promote peace and prevent conflict, and ensure that peacebuilding is given greater emphasis within national policy and decision-making processes. At the same time, new structures should be created within DFAT to coordinate cross-departmental peace, security and gender equality efforts.

**Recommendation:** Establish a dedicated Government department or ministry responsible for coordinating and implementing policies related to peacebuilding, conflict prevention, reconciliation, nonviolent conflict resolution and human security. (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet)

**Recommendation:** Create a Conflict Prevention and Stabilisation Group or Division within DFAT responsible for coordinating and providing coherence and oversight across teams and departments working on peace and security issues, and with a clear WPS mandate. (DFAT)

### Action 3.2. Fund peacebuilding

Participants wanted to see a shift in spending from defence budgets to those that deliver human security and peace; recognising their potential to deliver far-reaching, long-term peace and security, reduce the need for future military expenditure and prevent human suffering and the loss of military and civilian life.

**Recommendation:** Create a dedicated peace and human security budget to balance Australia's defence and military spending. The budget should equate to a minimum of 1% of the Defence budget in year 1 and increase by 1% a year of the Defence budget in the first 10 years of its operation. (Treasury, DFAT, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet)

**Recommendation:** Ensure a dedicated budget for implementation of Australia's Second WPS National Action Plan and report publicly on this annually. (Treasury, WPS implementing agencies)

**Recommendation:** Adopt a target for the percentage of DFAT investments that require partners to have indicators and outcomes in humanitarian programs focused on WPS efforts specifically led by local actors. (DFAT)

### Action 3.3. Ensure Australia's foreign policy is underpinned by strong WPS analysis and research

Increased investment is needed in research and analysis incorporating an intersectional and gendered analysis into defence, development and security policies. Such research should promote the principle of localisation and centre non-Western perspectives and knowledge.

**Recommendation:** Significantly increase the level of funding available through the Australian Civil Military Centre, Australian Research Council (ARC) and the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), for multidisciplinary research applying a feminist and a WPS lens to foreign policy priorities and regional threats, including conflict, anti-democratic and anti-rights movements, humanitarian crises and climate change. (ACMC, ARC, NIAA)

**Recommendation:** Develop and resource a comprehensive response to the prevention of Sexual and Gender Based Violence in conflict under DFAT's new development policy. (DFAT)

**Recommendation:** Conduct a review of Australia's role in all recent United Nations Peacekeeping missions and mandates to ensure they are upholding the four pillars of the WPS agenda and identify cross issue linkages with relevant humanitarian laws and principles, including those on the protection of Children in Armed Conflict, Protection of Civilians and the regulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons. (DFAT, Defence)

## Priority 4: Enhance and amplify the agency of diverse women, girls, and gender diverse people, and enable those most impacted to lead

Participants in the roundtable echoed calls in the wider consultation for the Government to recognise diverse women and girls' agency, voice and capacities, provide long-term sustainable funding to women's organisations and movements engaged in peacebuilding, and ensure a greater voice for diverse women in national decision making.

There was also a call to frame security and the Women, Peace and Security agenda through non-Western perspectives, moving beyond a positioning of women mainly as victims of conflict and passive recipients of aid and protection. By contrast, non-Western perspectives emphasise the diverse roles that women play as peacemakers, negotiators, and community leaders. Framing women, peace, and security in non-Western perspectives involves recognizing and valuing the diversity of women's experiences and contributions

across different regions and cultures. It also means engaging with local communities, leaders, and organisations to ensure that policies and interventions are contextually appropriate and effective.

#### Action 4.1. Resource and promote peacebuilding by diverse women in Australia

Intersectional and intergenerational analysis is crucial to informing and advancing the WPS agenda as the lived experiences and perspectives of women are impacted by factors such as their age, race, ethnicity, location and residential status. As a result, more diverse voices should be consulted in, and supported to lead efforts to advance the WPS agenda. Women in the diaspora, First Nations women, younger women, and women living with disability, in particular, are able to contribute a deep understanding of the peace and security issues facing women in Australia and around the world, and are already actively engaged in peacebuilding at the local, national and international levels. However they face structural barriers to their participation in civil society and government decision making that require more focused attention.

Women in the diaspora may have personal experiences of conflict and crises or have close ties to affected communities, including family and loved ones in places impacted by war or humanitarian crises. This knowledge and experience can provide valuable insights into the dynamics of what is happening on the ground, and help to identify strategies for peacebuilding that are grounded in the local context. Engaging diaspora groups in peacebuilding can help coordinate efforts across borders and to build trust and confidence between different communities and stakeholders.

**Recommendation:** Commit to ensuring gender parity among Australia's senior peace negotiators by 2030 and set targets for inclusion of women from diverse and diaspora communities. (DFAT, ACMC, Office for Women)

**Recommendation:** Create a specific grant-making mechanism to fund local and international peacebuilding efforts by diaspora-led women's organisations and movements in Australia. (DFAT, ACMC, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet)

**Recommendation:** Resource civil society organisations to strengthen the capacity and awareness of women across Australia of the WPS agenda and the WPS National Action Plan. This should include funding for interpretation and translation into appropriate languages. (ACMC, Office for Women, Home Affairs, Social Services)

**Recommendation:** Create a dedicated peace building budget for young women to centre their participation in Youth, Peace and Security efforts. This will enable young women to engage in peace-building activities and contribute to creating more peaceful and secure communities. (DFAT, Home Affairs, Social Services)

#### Action 4.2: Promote and fund the participation of diverse women in global and regional peacebuilding

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by conflict and violence, yet are often excluded from peacebuilding efforts. Enabling diverse women and girls to lead peacebuilding efforts can help to ensure that their unique perspectives and needs are taken into account, leading to more effective and sustainable peace outcomes.

Australia should aim to meet or exceed the targets set by other countries for participation of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding infrastructure. Ensuring more, and more diverse, women and gender-diverse people are engaged in peacebuilding has been shown to lead to more comprehensive and longer-lasting results, contributing to more sustainable peace.

**Recommendation:** Publicly commit to ensure and fund the participation of local women peacebuilders in all peace negotiations to which Australia is a party or to which it lends support. (DFAT)

**Recommendation:** Publicly commit to financially and diplomatically support the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on WPS and assist in the creation of an Asia-Pacific regional training program to increase the number of WPS Ambassadors. (ACMC, DFAT)

**Recommendation:** Create a Track 1 dialogue for WPS Ambassadors in Asia Pacific to provide an opportunity for them to share best practices, discuss challenges and opportunities for advancing the WPS agenda in their respective countries, and identify areas for collaboration and joint action. (ACMC, DFAT)

### Action 4.3: Resource women's organisations and movements

Women, Peace and Security efforts must be led by women's organisations and movements. But without long-term, dependable sources of funding, women peacebuilders cannot continue their vital and often dangerous work. While emphasis on gender and localisation efforts are welcome, currently, DFAT often has one set of indicators on how well its programs deliver for women and other marginalised groups, and another set assessing the extent to which local organisations and people have been involved. All DFAT monitoring and evaluation frameworks should include indicators that combine localisation indicators and gender indicators to ensure leadership by diverse women and gender diverse people.

**Recommendation:** Set a target for a minimum of 5% of bilateral Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) budget to be directed to frontline women's rights organisations across all priority regions. This should be accessible, flexible, core and multi-year grant-funding, and include funding for feminist civil society in insecure or crisis affected contexts. (DFAT)

**Recommendation:** Develop new DFAT indicators, particularly in humanitarian programming, focused on both localisation and gender. (DFAT)

**Recommendation:** Prioritise gender equality in Australia's new development policy and direct 20 percent of all ODA to initiatives with gender equality as the principal objective, ensuring this includes investments targeted to advancing the implementation of a comprehensive WPS agenda. (DFAT)

## Priority 5: Position Australia at the forefront of global efforts to address climate change and insecurity

Participants encouraged the Australian Government to lead by example, significantly increasing international investment in reversing climate change, investing in approaches that mitigate climate related disasters and conflict, while, at the same time, phasing out fossil fuels and investing in renewable resources and systems.

Australia should centre plans for feminist just climate transitions that seek to address both the gendered impacts of climate change and the structural inequalities that contribute to climate change. Addressing climate change requires a transformation of our economic, social, and political systems to promote gender equality, human rights, and social justice. Feminist just climate transitions prioritise the participation and leadership of women and marginalised groups in decision-making processes related to climate change, and emphasise the importance of addressing the root causes of climate change, such as the exploitation of natural resources and the overconsumption of energy by wealthy countries, and call for a shift towards more sustainable and equitable models of development.

### Action 5.1: Address climate induced displacement and Australia's responsibilities to displaced people

Addressing climate-induced displacement is critical for Australia to fulfil its moral and international obligations, protect the rights of displaced persons, and contribute to a sustainable and resilient future. By taking action to support displaced people, Australia can help to reduce the impacts of climate change and build a more just and equitable world.

**Recommendation:** Support efforts to secure a regional agreement on climate-induced displacement that addresses the needs of Pacific island communities at risk. This agreement should be led by Pacific voices, particularly women and gender diverse people, and provide financial and technical support to Pacific island nations and women's organisations in the region. (DFAT, Home Affairs, Environment)

**Recommendation:** Contribute to defining new global and/or regional frameworks to ensure that the rights of people experiencing climate-induced displacement are protected, particularly those who are forced to cross borders. (DFAT, Home affairs, Attorney-General's Department)

## Action 5.2: Centre the voices of those most impacted

Those most impacted by climate change are often those who have least access to political influence and power. By centering their voices in debates around climate change, Australia can ensure that proposed policies and solutions are informed by women, girls and gender diverse people with valuable knowledge and expertise about their local environment and the challenges they face. This knowledge can inform the development of policies and solutions that are better adapted to the local context, more effective, and more sustainable.

**Recommendation:** Recognise and prioritise the knowledge and perspectives of Indigenous peoples in responding to climate change, including by making a public commitment to elevate Indigenous science and traditional knowledge in policy and decision-making processes, as well as to ensure ongoing First Nations women's participation in the United Nations Climate Change Conference process. (DFAT, NIAA)

**Recommendation:** Make dedicated funding available through the Australian Research Council (ARC) for multidisciplinary research on the intersection of gender, climate, security and adaptation. This funding should only be available to organisations that promote the participation of diverse stakeholders, including women from affected communities. (ARC, Environment, Office for Women)

**Recommendation:** Ensure additional funding to support the participation of and leadership of women from affected communities in disaster preparedness and response planning, including community-led data collection and analysis. (DFAT)

## Action 5.3: Recognise Australia's international obligations around water security and climate finance

Water security and climate finance are critical to supporting countries in their efforts to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Wealthier countries, including Australia, have a responsibility to provide financial and technical support to less wealthy countries to transition to low-carbon, climate-resilient economies. By recognizing its international obligations to climate finance, Australia can help to ensure that these countries have the resources and support they need to build resilience to the impacts of climate change, and to promote more sustainable and equitable development.

**Recommendation:** Revisit Australia's commitments to the Water Action Agenda, offering to provide leadership domestically and internationally to prioritise water security and access as a human right critical to conflict prevention. This should include funding research and learning and investing in women-led local solutions that promote sustainable water use and management. (DFAT, Environment)



**Recommendation:** Agree to deliver our fair share of global climate finance, currently estimated at \$4 billion annually. Significant funding should be directed towards women-led local solutions that address the impacts of climate change in Australia and overseas. (DFAT, Treasury)

**Recommendation:** Ensure DFAT requires gender indicators for all spending related to agriculture, food insecurity and financial security, particularly addressing the vulnerability of women farmers to climate and water insecurity and commits to ensure that 5% of funds to climate mitigation measures directly support women farmers. (DFAT)

## Implications for Australia's Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

This Report will be presented to the Australian Civil Military Centre as the lead coordinator of civil society engagement in the WPS NAP, as well as to all Government departments that act as implementing agencies, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Office for Women. The recommendations identified here also provide guidance on how to strengthen Australia's Second WPS NAP, including:

**a) Rationalisation of domestic and international dimensions of peace and security:** As previously discussed, Australia's Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security currently focuses solely on international dimensions of peace and security. The WPS NAP should be reviewed to incorporate a human security framework that takes into account the interconnectedness of domestic and international dimensions of peace and security. Through this process, there is an opportunity to integrate and link to relevant domestic policy agendas such as the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, Australia's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan to End Violence against Women and Children, the recommendations of Wiyi Yani U Thangani and the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which are essential to the security of diverse women in Australia.

Specifically, the WPS NAP should be reviewed and adapted to integrate concrete domestic actions to: further the rights of women, girls and gender diverse people displaced by conflict and climate crises; address harms currently caused by Australia's immigration system to asylum-seeking and refugee women; and to provide access to services for gender-based violence prevention, trauma recovery, and access to justice.

**b) Adaptation of the monitoring and evaluation framework:** The WPS NAP monitoring and evaluation framework should be revisited to adopt strengthened indicators, and outcomes and indicators that encompass the totality of Government action on and commitments to the WPS agenda, and enable clarity on and oversight of efforts undertaken by implementing agencies.

**c) Coordination across agencies:** Participants recommended that each implementation agency for the WPS NAP should have their own WPS action plan, against which they should report publicly on an annual

basis. This would greatly help to improve the visibility and transparency of the Governments' WPS efforts. Calls were also made for the development of local WPS action plans at the State/ Territory and local government levels to ensure the WPS NAP is coordinated across Federal, State and local government policies and frameworks.

**d) Funding:** Participants strongly recommended a dedicated budget be created for the WPS NAP; shared across all Federal government implementing agencies. Allocated funding is necessary to effectively implement the WPS agenda, ensure accountability and transparency, promote coordination and integration, and demonstrate the government's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment.

**e) Consultation and co-design with relevant stakeholders:** All reviews of Australia's second WPS National Action Plan should be undertaken in consultation and co-design with diverse women and gender diverse people. This should include women in the diaspora, refugee and asylum-seeking women, First Nations women, women with disability and their representative organisations.

**f) Parliamentary oversight:** Participants suggested a process be developed to enable Parliamentary accountability and oversight of the implementation of the WPS NAP, to ensure greater policy coherence and a greater voice for all Australians and their representatives in its design and implementation.

**g) Coherence with regional WPS NAPs:** Participants wished to see the Australian government publicly committing to support the WPS NAPs of regional partners, including the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on WPS, financially and diplomatically, with outcomes and indicators to reflect this adopted into Australia's WPS NAP.

## Next Steps

The Coalition will present the priorities for action and recommendations laid out in this report to Government through a series of meetings and events to be held over the course of 2023 and 24. They will further inform advocacy by the Coalition, its members and partners around Australia's second WPS National Action Plan and civil society shadow reporting processes.

This process has also underscored that while the WPS agenda provides useful tools for diverse women and civil society to lobby and hold their governments to account, general awareness of these instruments is low. The Coalition will continue to work to build the engagement of diverse Australian women on WPS issues, spread awareness of Australia's responsibilities and commitments, and ignite renewed discussion and debate to strengthen civil society responses.

Part of this work will aim to respond to an expressed desire by migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee communities for additional opportunities to speak and be heard, and for diaspora-led advocacy. The Coalition will look further at how to facilitate, and secure resources and spaces for these efforts. Equally,

we will work to actively strengthen our relationships with and raise the voices of diverse participants and members, in particular drawing stronger connections between the WPS agenda and the rights and campaigns of First Nations women, women living with disabilities and rural women.



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For further information on the issues raised in this paper please visit our website at [wpscoaliton.org](http://wpscoaliton.org).

This report was drafted by Rowan Harvey on behalf of the Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women Peace and Security. It aims to represent the voices of those individuals and organisations that participated in the roundtable and consultation and is not a representation of the views of all Coalition members. This project was oversighted by the Steering Committee of the Australian Civil Society Coalition for WPS.

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