

# Marrickville Peace Group

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*A co-ordinated day of protests against the imminent Iraq War occurred in more than 600 cities around the world on February 15 & 16, 2003. MPG participated in the Sydney demonstration on Sunday February 16 that attracted over 200,000 protesters.*

## **Mission Statement**

The Marrickville Peace Group (MPG) is committed to eliminating war and addressing the social inequalities and injustices that are its causes. Through educational activities and a range of actions on both international and domestic issues, we seek to empower our members and our community to be a more influential force in challenging militarism and securing a peaceful future.

We advocate policies at home and abroad that are based on peace, justice, human rights, democratisation (in reality, not rhetoric) and respect for international law, rather than coercion and military interventions.

Accordingly MPG advocates the following:

- Development of an independent defence and security policy including a rejection of America's "nuclear umbrella" and nuclear deterrence;
- The transfer of resources from military to human needs which would help lessen economic and social disparities within and among nations;
- A greater emphasis on eliminating nuclear, biological, chemical and conventional weapons by all nations and entities;

- Recognition of the environmental costs of war, its contribution to human-induced climate change and the imperative for Australia to be part of an effective global carbon reduction program. This would help prevent tensions arising within and between countries from the impacts of dangerous climate change.
- The resolution of international conflicts peacefully via the United Nations and compliance with international law.

## **Who We Are**

MPG is a diverse network of residents living in and around the Marrickville local government area in Sydney's Inner West who are alarmed by the militarisation of our society and Australia's propensity to engage in foreign wars such as those in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan.

We engage in a range of actions and events including:

- Community meetings and forums;
- Film screenings;
- Information stalls;
- Petitions;
- Speaking tours;
- Government submissions;
- Meetings with elected officials;
- Partnerships with other groups within the anti-war movement;
- Participation in rallies and demonstrations.

In addition, we publicise informative articles plus video and radio interviews and programs on international and domestic issues and conflicts.

MPG is a democratically functioning non-aligned group. We provide a host of opportunities for local residents to promote peace and social justice in ways that can accommodate busy life-styles. We believe ordinary people, with the right tools and strategies, can be a force for progressive change in the world.

The group is affiliated with the Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition (AABCC), the local Gallipoli Centenary Peace Campaign (GCPC) and the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN).



*A replica of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter built to protest against the Abbott government's order of 72 of these "lemons" at a budgeted cost of over \$17 billion. Given the aircraft's manifold problems, the Canadian government has cancelled its order. MPG argues that the Australian government should do the same. The replica was built by Nick Deane from MPG.*

## **Our History**

MPG was established in November 2002 in response to the possibility of a US-led invasion of Iraq. The group's very first action was to participate in the massive anti-war protest that brought Sydney to a complete halt on February 15, 2003.

Following the invasion of Iraq on March 20, 2003, the group organised a rally in Enmore Park and continued to campaign against the US-led invasion force in subsequent years.

MPG's focus is not limited to opposing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. All members oppose the existence of nuclear arsenals and are alarmed by the humanitarian catastrophe posed by nuclear war. Consequently MPG has developed close relations with the International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and has actively supported the movement to eliminate and ban nuclear weapons.

A primary focus of MPG's activities is the unequal military alliance between the US and Australia.

The group has called for an end to this alliance as well as an end to America's military presence. This includes the closure of the Marine Air Ground Task Force in Darwin and all US military bases on Australian soil.

From its inception, MPG has campaigned for Australia to develop a self-reliant defence and security policy. We believe that facilities such as Pine Gap and North West Cape are incompatible with Australian sovereignty and integrity as an independent nation. The Coalition and Labor parties have never told Australians how, little by little, our strategic alliance with the US has changed and how, in the name of the alliance, we are deeply enmeshed in America's global military network.

Given the above, the group has protested against the biennial Talisman Sabre joint US and Australian military exercises. Most recently these joint exercises also included NZ and Japanese forces in July 2015.

MPG has also campaigned for:

- A just and peaceful settlement to the conflict in Israel and Palestine;
- An end to the US military's global assassination campaign involving the extensive use of drones and Australia's complicity in this program via US run facilities such as Pine Gap;
- War Powers Reform i.e. a change to the Defence Act so that any decision to deploy the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to an armed conflict overseas be vested in our Parliament, not solely in the PM or the Executive;
- The rights of asylum seekers who have arrived by boat and who have been the victims of Australia's cruel asylum seeker policies.

As well, MPG has regularly joined events to mark the International Day of Peace (IDP, September 21 each year) and the Global Day of Action Against Military Spending (GDAMS, April 18 in 2016).

### **How Can You Participate?**

We welcome and encourage people to participate in MPG's monthly meetings and political campaigns and events to whatever extent is possible.

Our monthly meetings are normally held on the first Saturday each month from 10.00am to 11.30am. For location and agenda details, contact Nick Deane on 0420 526 929 or send us an email at [marrickvillepeacegroup@gmail.com](mailto:marrickvillepeacegroup@gmail.com)

### **More Information**

For more information about MPG's activities, visit our website at [www.marrickvillepeacegroup.org](http://www.marrickvillepeacegroup.org)



*"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good people do nothing." Edmund Burke*