

JUST PEACE QUEENSLAND INC

13TH ANNUAL REPORT 1-7-2013 – 30-6-2014,
PRESENTED TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING,
2ND FLOOR TLC BUILDING, 16 PEEL STREET
SOUTH BRISBANE, TUESDAY 18TH NOVEMBER 2014

Introduction

In this 13th Annual Report we had hoped to report that this year the extent of inhumanity, injustice, discrimination, and the abuse, and denial of human rights to the disadvantaged and vulnerable people of the world would be in decline.

The reality is that despite the efforts of the many organisations, and individuals, dedicated to the achievement of universal peace and social justice for all, the overall situation appears to have worsened.

Wars, brutal conflicts, and various forms of aggression/oppression, are continuing in Syria, Ukraine, Gaza/West Bank, Iraq, Egypt, states/ regions in Northern Africa, and in many other countries across the globe.

As in past years we have witnessed the death, devastation, and deprivation, of many thousands of innocent civilians across the world as a direct or indirect consequence of those wars, armed conflicts, and violence in all of its forms.

Of great concern, and disappointment to us, has been the aggressive, hawkish, and callous, militaristic approach, to foreign and domestic policies adopted by the current Federal Government, for example;

- Extension of the Force Posture Agreement, with the US Government;
 - Commitment of ADF to a 3rd Iraq War;
 - Possible involvement in Wars in Syria/Ukraine;
 - Commitment of massive expenditures on military hardware, F35 Fighters, 12 Submarines, Sidewinder tactical/training missiles, and other weaponry;
 - Draconian anti human rights laws, “Anti-Terror Laws”;
 - Budget Cuts that impact on the poor, sick, under privileged, dis-advantaged, and the vulnerable;
 - Inhumane legislation, policies, and actions, against Asylum Seekers
- As in past years acts of inhumanity and injustice, wherever it occurs has been the motivation for your Management Committee to work

hard to in some way make a difference for the better.

Membership

The recruitment, and retention, of members over the year has remained stable, and we have maintained a membership of around 100.

For Just Peace to remain relevant, and effective, and to even exist in the future, there is a vital need to increase numbers, and more importantly to increase the level of participation of members in its activities.

Members are encouraged to join with the Management Committee in identifying, and recruiting members, who will make a positive contribution to the fight for universal peace and social justice.

Finances

As a result of the astute and committed management of our Treasurer Beth, our finances are in good shape.

The complexity, and pressures, related to the Treasurers task were further expanded this year, due to the increased financial transactions made on behalf of Ipan.

We also acknowledge the receipt of generous donations from the Union of Australian Women, Rally for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, and a number of loyal members, during the year.

We also express our sincere thanks to all who have assisted, our endeavours throughout the year, through the unconditional provision of time, materials, and services, that Just Peace could not have otherwise afforded.

Sub Committees

Just Peace 4 Palestine, has continued to operate effectively, in conducting street stalls in the Queen St Mall, on a regular basis throughout the year.

Over 800 signatures were collected on petitions against the detention of Palestinian children in Israeli military prisons, they were subsequently presented to the Federal Parliament.

Convenor Vicki Henry, and her committee organised a Public Forum, with the keynote speaker Vivienne Porsholz, from Sydney based Jews Against The Occupation. The subject of the presentation was her recent visit to Palestine, and the screening of a moving documentary, "The Gatekeepers".

Our thanks go to Convenor Vicki, Fay, Bec, Ken, Khalil, Margot, Margid, and Co-Convenor Annette, for their efforts in ensuring Just Peace 4 Palestine is active and effective.

Just Peace also acknowledges the encouragement and support given to the Committee by Executive members of the Australian Palestine Advocacy Network, (APAN), Nicole Erlich, and Wendy Turner.

Members may not be aware of the recent disbandment of "Rally For Peace and Nuclear Disarmament Inc".

Generations of caring and progressive Queenslanders who fought for ideals and values such as universal peace, social justice for all, a nuclear free world, and a clean and sustainable environment, were part of, or acted in support of campaigns initiated and led by that iconic and much respected organisation. As a supporter of it's values, ideals, principles, and activities, and to honor and perpetuate the traditions established and maintained under the leadership of Joan Shears, Terry Hampson, and others Just Peace has established a sub-committee of that name.

The primary function of the sub-committee will be to plan, organise, and conduct, the traditional Palm Sunday event, where possible in consultation and co-operation with kindred organisations.

Discussions are also in progress with Palestinian Arts, Culture & Sports Incorporated, (PACSI), to canvass the possibility of setting up a sub-committee initiative under the Just Peace banner.

Committed and energetic sub-committees do play a vital role in organisations, as members can focus on specific issues of interest to them. Members are encouraged to participate in this aspect of Just Peace operations.

Affiliations – Networks

During the year we have strengthened existing affiliations, and working relationships with kindred organisations and groups.

Executive members Annette, and Ross, played a vital role in the planning, organisation, and conduct, of the first national meeting of Ipan, and other associated activities, that were held in Canberra in the week incorporating Easter/Anzac Day.

Beth was responsible for the onerous and vital task of handling and recording of registrations, and the collection of fees, and payment of accounts related to the meeting and subsequent seminar.

Mike prepared relevant first class material that was placed on public display during the seminar. Vicki, Margid, Willy, and Norm, also were present in Canberra, to support and participate in the weeks events.

Travel and accomodation costs of the seven Just Peace attendees were paid by them personally.

Annette, and Ross are on the Ipan Interim Committee, and continue the development of Ipan, by way of monthly phone hook-ups, and regular communication via the internet.

Annette and Vicki were involved in the organisation of 2013, 2nd Brisbane Peace Lecture, delivered by Michael Kirby (retired High Court Judge), at St John's Cathedral, as part of the International Day of Peace celebrations.

Just Peace has maintained it's strong relationship with the United Nations Association Australia Qld, (UNAAQ). Annette was elevated to a position of Vice-President this year, and Vicki whilst representing WILPF, has a watching brief for Just Peace.

In the coming year Just Peace will formally affiliate with the UNAAQ.

We have maintained our affiliation with the "Australian Palestine Advocacy Network", (APAN). It continues it's strong and effective advocacy at the national level on issues of vital importance to the lives, and future of Palestinians.

We continue to support the International Peace Bureau, the driver of the "Global Day of Action on Military Spending", (GDAMS), which is a global action conducted in April of each year.

During the year we have worked with the Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice, under the leadership of Peter Arndt, on issues of mutual interest.

Just Peace involvement with the organisers of the International Day of Peace event has enabled our ongoing working relationship with the Most Reverend Dean of St John's Cathedral, Dr Peter Catt.

Although the level of contact, with QCU officials, and affiliated Unions has been limited this year, we have received support from the QCU, and individual unions, when needed.

We continue to work with many progressive organisations, and groups, that are committed to objectives compatible with ours. In the upcoming year, we will be working to consolidate, and expand, on this aspect of our activity.

The number and diversity of National and International contacts continue to grow, due to the leadership, and networking skills of Annette, who is ably assisted by Committee members with expertise in that area.

Communications

Members continue to make favourable comments about the quality of our newsletter, “The Peace Issue”.

Editor Adrian Pollock has dedicated hundreds of hours, of his time, and much effort, in producing 46 Editions, over the 13 years Just Peace has been in existence.

On behalf of Members, the Management Committee, and all of those avid readers of the “Peace Issue”, we express appreciation, and thanks to Adrian for a job well done.

The printing, and at times the distribution of the “Peace Issue”, and other materials advertising events, would not have been possible without the unconditional support given by our valued member Senator Claire Moore and her ever obliging team.

To Stephanie and Alastair, we say thanks for providing information to Just Peace members, via the E-Bulletin/Breaking News, and by maintenance of the website, over many years.

Annette has kept members informed on issues and events by E-Mail, and by post, regularly throughout the year. As spokesperson for Just Peace she has also issued a number of media releases, and taken part in radio interviews about issues of concern to Just Peace. Secretary Michael, and Committee member Ross, have produced many Flyers, Fact Sheets, and Information Pieces, to advertise and promote Just Peace activities, and its affiliations.

A review is being conducted to explore ways that our systems, and methods, of communication with members can be improved, so that they remain relevant to member's needs.

Major Events/Activities 2013-2014 Financial Year

- Public Forum, “Preparing for Peace” lessons from the Iraq War, keynote speaker Vincent Emanuele from Iraq Veterans Against War;
- Dinner with Victoria Leon, indigenous peace activist from Guam, spoke about the adverse impact the US military occupation has on her people;
- Hiroshima Day rally held at Speakers Corner in front of Qld Parliament;
- Ross Gwyther address to 100 people at U3A seminar, about Australian engagement in foreign superpower wars;
- United Nations International Day of Peace, Brisbane Peace Lecture, delivered by retired High Court Judge, Michael Kirby;
- Just Peace and APAN hosted Dr Mustapha Bagouti, leader of the Palestinian National Initiative, he spoke on the Westbank situation;
- Just Peace AGM hosted keynote speaker Dr Alison Broinowski from the “Campaign for an Iraq War Inquiry”;
- Just Peace 4 Palestine, monthly stalls in the Queen St Mall,;
- Planning and organising the Canberra Peace Convergence April 2014;
- Attendance and participation in Ipan meeting, Seminar, and other related Peace and Social Justice events in period Easter/Anzac Day;
- Public Forum, with keynote speaker, Vivienne Porsholz, from Sydney based, “Jews Against The Occupation”, and screening of “The Gatekeepers”;
- Public Forum, to mark the 11th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, keynote speaker Brisbane barrister James O'Neill, reported on the illegality of Australian participation;
- Just Peace was involved in the organisation, and conduct, of the traditional Palm Sunday rally which was addressed by Senator

Claire Moore, Sam Watson, Rachel Noble, and Brisbane barrister Stephen Keim.

The events/activities listed represent only a brief overview of the matters dealt with during the year ending 30th June 2014. There were many meetings, E-Mails, letters, phone calls, and other activities related to our operations which are not included.

Thanks to Vicki and Michael for organising, co-ordinating, and managing stalls and displays during the year.

Public Liability Insurance

Section 70 of the Associations Incorporation Act 1981, requires the Management Committee to consider at least annually whether there is a need to take out Public Liability Insurance.

The Act also requires the Management Committee to report to members at the Annual General Meeting, the reasons for its decision.

This matter is the subject of a separate report to this meeting.

Acknowledgements

The Management Committee could not be effective without the encouragement, support, and assistance of individuals and other kindred organisations.

We therefore give public recognition, and express our appreciation to the following;

- Senator Claire Moore and her team;
- Ron Monaghan, General Secretary QCU, and his team;
- Peter Simpson, Secretary ETU, and his team;
- Union of Australian Women;
- Union Choir;
- Rally for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament;
- All organisations, groups, and individuals, who have given financial assistance, and who have encouraged and supported our events/activities;
- Members, and supporters, who have given generous financial support, their time, and their moral and physical support throughout the year.

The Year Ahead

As indicated in last year's report we believe that the intensity, scope, and complexity of issues confronting Just Peace, and kindred organisations, will escalate to a more extreme and damaging level, locally, nationally, and internationally, in the year ahead.

To meet the extreme challenges ahead, and to remain relevant, and effective, we must continue to review, and strengthen basic organisational, and operational, elements of Just Peace such as;

- Establish more active Sub-Committees/Groups
- Broaden and strengthen affiliations/networks with organisations/groups, with similar common interests
- Identify/initiate/activate community based activities
- Recruitment of new members, and to encourage greater participation of members in events/activities/campaigns

When identifying major campaigns and activities for 2015, it is disappointing to report that most have been on our agenda in one form or another for many years.

- Palestinian/Israeli Conflict (Apan)
- Removal US Military Bases/Training Facilities (Ipan)
- Reduction domestic/global military budgets/spending (Gdams)
- Campaign against the production/use of Nuclear Weapons, and exclusion of Nuclear Submarines from Australian Ports (Ipan)
- Campaign against the use and storage of Cluster Munitions
- Campaign against the extension of Uranium Mining Qld/nationally
- Campaign for Iraq War Inquiry (Ciw)
- War in Iraq/Syria, Ukraine, and emerging hot spots
- Independence for West Papua
- Glorification of the Anzac Centenary 1914-1918 (Ipan)
- Talisman Sabre Exercises Shoalwater Bay (Ipan)

As predicted in last years report, the Abbott and Newman Governments have introduced discriminatory, and draconian, legislation that will erode, and in some cases eliminate the basic human and civil rights of all Australians.

The so-called “sovereign borders” regime as applied to Asylum Seekers, arriving by boat, and further foreshadowed legislation that will allow Australia to disregard the 1951 UN Convention on the treatment of Asylum Seekers will further damage our diminished International reputation.

The major areas of Government Policy that impact on those areas previously outlined are;

- Foreign Affairs, Relationships with Asia Pacific Neighbours (Ipan-Apan)
- Defence Spending, Aggressive Militarism, US Alliance (Ipan/Gdams)
- Environment/Climate Change
- Protection of Human Rights/Civil Liberties
- Treatment of Refugees/Asylum Seekers

Conclusion

As indicated in the report the issues that Just Peace seeks to address, increase in volume, and in complexity every year, and the past year is no exception. Without the hard work and co-operation of our Committee, Beth, Michael, Vicki, Ross, Margid, Margot, and Willy, we could not have handled the heavy workload effectively. To you all we extend our best wishes, and sincere thanks.

We believe that your Management Committee continues to maintain a level of activity that ensures Just Peace remains a relevant, credible, constructive, and effective organisation.

With your encouragement, support, and active participation we believe Just Peace can make a difference for the better, in the year ahead.

Yours in Peace

(Annette Brownlie) (Norm Bullen)
President (Co-Convenor) Vice President (Co-Convenor)
Just Peace Queensland Inc Just Peace Queensland Inc