

JUST PEACE QUEENSLAND INC

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1ST JULY 2005 - 30TH JUNE 2006 PRESENTED TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT AHIMSA HOUSE 24 HORAN STREET WEST END SUNDAY 20TH AUGUST 2006.

INTRODUCTION

In its 5th year of existence Just Peace has continued to maintain a high level of commitment to and involvement in antiwar / peace and social justice issues. The management committee, subgroups, the Editor of the "Peace Issue" and many members have worked very hard to uphold the ideas and to achieve the basic aims and objectives of Just Peace.

We sincerely believe that Just Peace had enhanced its credibility and its reputation as an effective and ethical antiwar / peace and social justice organisation within the overall movement and in the public domain as a result of its activities in the past year.

ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES

Membership

Member numbers have remained reasonably stable during the year with all categories totalling 161. There is an ever growing number of contacts who have indicated that they want to receive material from us.

It is important that strategies be put into place this year to convert supporters, contacts into active members and to develop and implement a recruitment drive aimed at capturing "new" and previously un-committed peace supporters / activists.

Finances

Due to the prudent management of funds and other member related duties by Treasurer Beth Gordon, the current financial position is reasonably sound.

If Just Peace is to survive and grow stronger in the future, the incoming Committee will need to investigate all available options to ensure ongoing financial stability.

Sub Committees / Groups

One of Just Peace's primary objectives is to become a community based peace and justice organisation; to date we have had limited success in getting the community based involvement we would hope to achieve.

It is pleasing to report that a Sub-Committee has now been established on the Sunshine Coast. Priority will be given this year to working with the new Sub-Committee to provide a platform for membership activity on the sunshine Coast.

A group of members have been active in the Ashgrove area in running information stalls in that area. Their actions are encouraged and appreciated.

The Publications Sub-Group was active during the year and produced pamphlets / leaflets on the ongoing Iranian debate.

Although the Education Sub-Group has not been actively involved on a specific project during the year, it will continue to identify and to develop projects and programmes which are consistent with Just Peace objectives.

We also acknowledge and commend the efforts of all members who have worked on information stalls, circulated and compiled contact lists, helped with the organisation and conduct of Public Meetings / Forums and who have performed other tasks throughout the year.

Affiliations – Networks

Whilst the Queensland Peace Network (QPN) has not been active during the year, Just Peace has worked to ensure that it is not disbanded. It is important that the framework remains in place so that the broad based Antiwar / Peace / Social Justice Network can be quickly mobilised in the future.

Just Peace has encouraged and supported the formation of the Queensland Nuclear Free Alliance. Co-convenor, Annette Brownlie, and Secretary, Frank Bruinstroop, have been heavily involved in identifying issues and formulating strategies to challenge and combat the all powerful “hawks” who will endeavour to dominate and determine the outcome of the next phase of the “nuclear” debate.

A number of your representatives are playing an important role in progressing the aims and objectives and activities of the International Day of Peace Alliance which was formed on 21st September 2005.

At the time of writing this report, the programmes for this year’s celebrations have not been finalised, however, the following events are confirmed:

- Mutli-Faith celebrations – Multi- Faith Centre, Griffith Uni 21 – 09 -06
- Concert dedicated to IDP City Hall Midday – 2pm 21 – 09 -06
- Youth Peace Parliament, Parliament House 22 -09-06 9am – 3pm
- Multicultural football (soccer) carnival 23/ 24 September 2006
- Multicultural events / entertainment Soka Gakkai Centre Waldheim St Annerley

Activities are being organised at the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast and other events are being considered.

During the year Just Peace has worked closely with other Antiwar / Peace / Social Justice organisations buy sponsoring / supporting a wide range of activities and events.

Communications

Editor, Adrian Pollock, has produced five high quality editions of “The Peace Issue” since the last AGM. We are sure that members will agree that the newsletter is informative, interesting and relevant to the antiwar / peace / social justice debate.

Our thanks is extended to Senator Claire Moore and her dedicated staff for the assistance given in printing the newsletter and other help given to Just Peace throughout the year. Considerable effort has been expended to improve and maintain the Just Peace Website. It is pleasing to note that members are accessing the sire, along with members of the public.

We acknowledge the assistance given and the contribution made to establishing and maintaining the site by Scott Hamilton and those members who have been involved since its inception.

A regular E-Flyer service has been introduced for the purpose of providing members with timely updates on current issues / events. WE thank co-ordinator Stephanie Campion and those who assist / contribute to the E-Flyer service.

As Co-Convenor / spokesperson Annette Brownlie has;

- Issued a number of press releases on matters relevant to Just Peace
- Initiated / responded in a number of radio interviews to issues / events in which Just Peace was / is involved,
- Has secured a regular spot on Planet Radio dedicated to peace issues,
- Attended a number of functions / events on behalf of Just Peace and in a private capacity and has established new contacts and further consolidated and extended existing relationships with valued antiwar / peace and social justice networks.

Representations

The Co-Convenors took part in a three way teleconference with KEVIN Rudd the Opposition Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs. Questions were raised on Labor's position on a number of issues;

- Defence Force deployment
- Afghanistan / Iraq conflicts
- So called "Pacific Solution"
- West Papuan asylum seekers
- Veteran's health & legal obligations as a result of the use of depleted uranium armed weapons in Afghanistan / Iraq
- US military bases on Australian soil
- Australia / US Alliance

An open letter to the Leadership of Australia was forwarded by way of a press release directed to Prime Minister Howard, Foreign Affairs Minister Downer, Leader of the Opposition Kim Beazley, Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and International Security, KEVIN Rudd of four paragraphs: quote

"We urge the leadership of Australia to openly call for an immediate ceasefire amongst all parties engaged in the current conflict in Lebanon, Palestine and Israel. As an organisation dedicated to the resolution of conflict by peaceful means, we are dismayed by the intensity of the destruction of Lebanon and Gaza by Israel and the wanton killing of civilians by Israel, Hezbollah and Hamas. Australian leaders have a unique relationship with the leaders of the United States who in turn have the ability to end the current war."

To date Mr Rudd is the only one who has responded to our considered and urgent appeal for action by the leadership group.

EVENTS / ACTIVITIES

The management Committee has organised, participated in or supported a wide range of events / activities during the year. They were;

- International Day of Peace Commemorations on 21 September 2005 and on that day took part in the inaugural meeting of the International Day of Peace Alliance

- Earth Charter Youth Leaders Conference
- Amnesty International Schools Conference
- Public Forum, Anti-terror laws undermining basic human rights.
- Co-hosted with film maker David Bradbury showings of Blowin' in the Wind. Frank Bruinstroop and other members conducted information stalls over the seven days of the showings.
- In coalition with Rally for Peace and nuclear Disarmament and the National Tertiary Education Union and as part of a National Tour organised by Global Justice Tours, Public Book launch featuring American author Scott Ritter – “Iraq Confidential”
- Sean Leahey’s book launch “Powerpoint Pete Queensland from Joh to Woe”
- Address by Chris Henderson, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom on Hiroshima Peace conference 60th Anniversary of the first atomic bombing.
- Woodford Folk Festival, Green Tent presentations sponsored by Just Peace. Peace Education by Brian Hoeppe, Where Have all the Peace Songs Gone presented by Robbie Dunn and Imagine a World Beyond War presented by Annette Brownlie and Tony Robertson.
- As part of a National tour organised by Global Justice Tours, Just Peace and Avid Reader Bookshop hosted a public book launch by Arab Journalist Zaki Chehab called “Iraq Ablaze”.
- Just Peace representatives travelled to Fingal NSW to the opening of a photographic exhibition “Children of the Gulf War” and a showing of “Blowin’ in the Wind”. Congratulations and thanks to organiser Jan Petroff.
- Supported and attended a Public Forum organised by Stop the War featuring American mother of one of the young soldiers killed in Iraq and peace activist Cindy Sheehan.
- Took part in Strategy Planning Workshop conducted by Qld Nuclear Free alliance
- Public meeting titled “Is Iran Next?” with keynote speaker Dr Ross Daniels.
- Public Forum in conjunction with the Qld Nuclear Free Alliance and in co-operation with Students of Sustainability National Conference – “Nuclear Matters; Mining, Energy and War”.
- Public Forum hosted by Just Rights Queensland, Qld launch of New Matilda’s Bill of Rights.
- Attended Nambour meeting to assist with the establishment of the Just Peace Sunshine Coast Sub-Committee.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Management Committee would not have been able to operate effectively without the continued support and assistance of the following;

- Senator Claire Moore and Staff
- Senator Andrew Bartlett and Staff
- Councillor Catherine Birmingham and Staff
- Simon Finn MP for Yeerongpilly and Staff
- Jim Fouras MP for Ashgrove and Staff
- Grace Grace, General Secretary Qld Council of Unions and Staff
- Gary Fenlon MP for Greenslopes and Staff
- Just Peace members who attended meetings, provided feedback, participated in events and helped in any way throughout the year
- Kindred organisations and individuals who have encouraged and supported Just Peace activities during the year.

THE YEAR AHEAD

The incoming Committee and the management as a whole are confronted with major challenges in the year /s ahead. When identifying priorities for action in the coming year, the following issues will receive attention;

Operations

- Membership recruitment
- Establishment of new Sub-Committees / Sub-Groups and consolidation of existing Sub-Committees / Sub-Groups
- Increase activities within local communities
- Investigate available funding options
- Encourage and improve the level of membership participation

Areas of conflict

- Middle East, Israel / Lebanon, Israel / Palestine, Iran / Syria
- North Korea
- West Papua / Asia Pacific
- Other areas as targeted by US Neocons / Coalition of the Willing

Government policies

- Militarisation / Transformation of Defence Force to Attack Force
- Massive expenditures on military hardware
- Joint Australian / US Military Bases on Australian soil
- Australian / American Alliance – Foreign Policy
- Anti Human Rights / Social Justice legislation – Australian Bill of Rights

CONCLUSION

We thank other members of the Management Committee for their work throughout the year as well as those members who have contributed energy during the year. We also appreciate the encouragement and support given by the membership overall.

The magnitude and complexity of the task /s we face as members of an antiwar / peace / social justice organisation will cause us personal and collective disappointment and frustration in times ahead.

Notwithstanding that we believe that to do nothing is not an option for the committed and dedicated members in Just Peace.

Yours in Peace and Friendship

Annette Brownlie
President (Co-Convenor)

Norm Bullen
Vice President (Co-Convenor)