

ACTION ALERT AA 23-1: RESPONSE TO WAR PROPAGANDA AND AUKUS

As Quakers we seek a world without war. We seek a sustainable and just community. We have a vision of an Australia that upholds human rights and builds peace internationally, with particular focus on our region. In our approach to government, we will promote the importance of dialogue, of listening and of seeking that of God in every person. We aim to work for justice and to take away the occasion for war.

March 2023

In response to the recent Age and Sydney Morning Herald articles that suggested the Australia will be at war with China within three years, Friends may wish to participate in actions against AUKUS, including:

- The Australian Anti-AUKUS Coalition (AAAC) was formed after the 2021 announcement and has groups in most states/territories <https://antiaukuscoalition.org/>. Many rallies are listed on their website.
- AAAC is hosting a national zoom public meeting on Sunday 26 March, 6:30pm AEDT, *We're on the path to war. How can we stop it?* Information and registration is at <https://antiaukuscoalition.org/zoom-26-march-2023/>
- The Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) will shortly have a page dedicated to AUKUS related events. There are IPAN contacts in states/territories <https://ipan.org.au/contact/>
- The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons Australia (ICAN) website lists various ways to be involved <https://icanw.org.au/action/>
- The Women's International League for Peace & Freedom has branches in most states/territories <https://www.wilpf.org.au/contact/>

Background

Recent media headlines and articles warned Australians that within three years Australia will be at war with China. A war that we are not prepared for and which will have devastating consequences to the Australian economy, society and our 'way of life'.

In September 2021, the political leaders of Australia, the UK and the USA announced a new trilateral security pact, AUKUS. On 13 March 2023, the three countries announced some details of the partnership to build and sustain Australia's 'undersea capability'. It's important to keep in mind that nuclear-powered submarines are only one part of the AUKUS pact.

The timing of the public propaganda and the announcement was unlikely coincidental. That's how any form of fear-based propaganda works. People are reminded, often in accentuated language, of a problem (real or potential), linked where possible to a past experience, topped with a strong dose of fear of 'the other' or the 'destruction of our way of life'.

All sides of an argument can, and often do, use blatant or subtle propaganda.

QPLC encourages Friends to access information from a wide diversity of sources. For example, the 14 March 2023 AUKUS Joint Leaders Statement from the US Embassy and Consulates in Australia includes a useful fact sheet

(<https://au.usembassy.gov/aukus-joint-leaders-statement/>), while the Pacific Island Times (<https://www.pacificislandtimes.com/>) is published in Guam by the Pacific Independent News Service.