

ACTION ALERT AA16-02: FEDERAL ELECTION 2016

QPLC offers some questions that might be put to candidates in the current Federal Election campaign on issues relating to peace.

Refugee Policies

Given the well-documented evidence of trauma caused by current policies of offshore detention of asylum seekers, are you willing to work with politicians from all sides to revise Australia's policies, in cooperation with UNHCR and regional countries, to achieve an orderly and fair processing system consistent with Australia's obligations under international law?

Do you support increasing the number of refugees accepted under the Humanitarian Program?

Nuclear Weapons

Are you committed to the abolition of nuclear weapons, and will you encourage the Government to take a more active role in work for this end at the United Nations? Will you encourage the Government to become a signatory to the Humanitarian Pledge (2015) already supported by 127 nations to prohibit nuclear weapons?

Capital Punishment

Do you support moves for a global moratorium on the use of death penalty as a step towards its abolition? Will you work with colleagues in the Parliament to press (e.g. through intergovernmental fora) for such a policy to be adopted by all countries in our region, and beyond?

War Powers

Do you support a greater role for Parliament in decisions about Australia becoming involved in wars, and in the use of Australia military and police forces in peacekeeping missions?

Overseas Aid

Do you support restoring levels of funding for overseas development assistance as part of reaching a target of 0.7% of Gross National Income, as recommended by the United Nations?

Development

Will you work actively within Parliament to ensure that Australia follows through on its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

Women and Peace

Do you support the National Action Plan to implement UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security? Will you raise publicly your concern to involve women more fully in peace negotiations in areas of conflict such as Syria and Iraq?

Foreign Policy

Are you willing to question current policies that tie Australia's foreign and defence policies closely to the United States (especially through the use of facilities such as Pine Gap) and limit our capacity for more independent policies?

Defence

Do you support the significant increases in defence spending announced in recent times? In what ways will this contribute to better relationships in our region and beyond? Are you familiar with the trends in the global arms trade that indicate a greater potential for armed conflict?

Anzac

What lessons have you learned from the centenary of Anzac? Are you willing to accept evidence of its negative impact on the lives of participants and those at home? What steps can you take as a Member of Parliament to ensure that such wars do not occur in the future?

United Nations

Following Australia's valued contribution as a member of the Security Council, in what ways can Australia have an increasing role for Australia within the United Nations (e.g. in our bid for a seat on the Human Rights Council)?

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

Do you support increasing the human and financial resources available to DFAT to enhance our country's diplomatic capacity to prevent conflicts and build peaceful relations among nations?

People to People Links

In what ways are you helping build links among the people of our region, to enhance mutual respect and understanding?

Human Rights

Do you agree that the Australian Human Rights Commission should be strengthened with additional resources to increase its ability to contribute fully to implementing international human right standards within Australia? Do you see a role for the Commission in promoting religious freedom?

South China Sea

Given the rising tensions in the region, will you encourage the Australian Government to take an active role in mediating among the countries with conflicting claims on islands in the region?

West Papua

Are you aware of moves within the Pacific region to give West Papuans the opportunity to express their views on self-determination? Given Australia's opposition to such moves, are you willing to learn more from those involved in supporting such moves and keep an open mind about ways to achieve self-determination?

Sri Lanka

Are you willing to be part of a Parliamentary group encouraging further democratic processes in Sri Lanka as it rebuilds about the tragic civil war?

Trade Deals

Are you supportive of recent trade deals such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership? Do you recognize their limitations, especially as they have not been applicable to all countries, and may have undermined efforts for international agreements? Are you willing to encourage full examination by the Parliament of the impact of these agreements on international trade?

Violence

Do you support programs that seek to challenge violent behaviours at all levels of society? What practical support will you give to implementing such approaches?

Do you support strengthening then gun laws to ensure that new-style rapid-fire shotguns are banned from sale?

Restorative Practices

Are you willing to support policies within Australia that encourage the use of alternatives to imprisonment and punishment for offences, so as to create more opportunities for restoring cohesion within communities and reducing alienation of individuals.

QPLC welcomes feedback on the use of such questions, and others that have been found effective.