



Dear Prime Minister Albanese,

As Australian lawyers, we believe that international law can play a powerful role in nuclear disarmament and the creation of new norms, leading to increased peace and security for all.

Under your leadership, Australia has the opportunity now to uphold our long and proud commitment to championing international law by joining the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). With two nuclear-armed powers involved in heated conflicts overseas, and the risk of nuclear escalation growing, now is a vital time to take necessary steps for nuclear disarmament.

Noting the growing international consensus on this matter, we urge your government to honour the ALP's policy commitment to sign the TPNW, without further delay.

In the insightful words of former ALP Deputy Leader Tom Uren, "*The struggle for nuclear disarmament is the most important struggle in the human race.*"

The TPNW embodies Uren's vision of a future where the international community embraces a total ban on nuclear weapons. The TPNW entered into force in 2021, and now has 93 signatories and 70 state parties. Australia's signature would add heft to this global movement, and reflect the wishes of the overwhelming majority of Australians who support eliminating the scourge of nuclear weapons.

Joining the treaty also makes good on Australia's obligation under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) that binds parties to pursue good faith negotiations relating to a treaty on 'general and complete disarmament and to negotiate effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race and to nuclear disarmament.' While progress has been made on effective measures concerning non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, little has been achieved in disarmament. The TPNW is the first multilateral effective measure under Article VI to enter into force since the NPT in 1968.

Moreover, the complementarity between the TPNW and NPT creates a robust legal framework for a nuclear-free world. The drafters of the TPNW designed it to reinforce and build on the NPT. It complements the NPT by adding prohibitions and obligations, akin to how the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention complements the 1925 Geneva Protocol. The TPNW enhances the NPT through a comprehensive prohibition on nuclear weapons that applies to all parties. It also establishes frameworks for the verified, time-bound elimination of nuclear-weapon programmes and for addressing harms caused by nuclear weapons.

As legal professionals dedicated to creating a safer, more peaceful world for future generations, we call on your Government to stand up against the threat of nuclear devastation by joining the growing number of nations putting their signatures to the TPNW.

This treaty is not just a symbolic gesture but a tangible step towards global disarmament. By acting now, Australia can demonstrate its commitment to international peace and security and



set a powerful example for other nations. Your Government's potential to make history via the TPNW is substantial and ought not be squandered. We urge you to seize this opportunity to ensure a future free from the threat of nuclear warfare.

The time for action is now.

Signed,

Robert Tickner AO	Former Australian Minister and Humanitarian Campaigner
Katie Robertson	Human Rights Lawyer and Director of Stateless Legal Clinic
Melissa Parke	Australian Lawyer and Former Australian Minister
Monique Cormier	Lecturer, University of New England School of Law
Michael Cornish	Vice President at Conservation Council South Australia
Melissa Goode	General Counsel, Australian Conservation Foundation
Claire O'Connor SC	Barrister, South Australian Bar
Ms Irene Baghoomians	Senior Lecturer, University of Sydney
Professor Dianne Otto	Professor of Human Rights Law, Melbourne Law School
Dr Emily Crawford	Professor, University of Sydney Law School
Corinne Grant	Human Rights Lawyer, Comedian, and Television Presenter
Holly Cullen	University of Western Australia Law School
Jeswynn Yogaratnam	Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Northern Territory
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Dr Stacey Henderson	Senior Research Fellow in Law, Flinders University
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