

Friday 6 August 2021

Hiroshima Day flag-raising reaffirms City's commitment to Nuclear Free Zone

City of Newcastle reaffirmed its long-held commitment to declaring the city a Nuclear Free Zone, raising the Hunter Peace Group and International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) flags in Civic Park in recognition of Hiroshima Day.

Observed each year on 6 August, 2021 marks the 76th anniversary of the devastating bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by US forces.

In support of ongoing efforts to raise awareness about the campaign to abolish nuclear weapons, the flags were flown alongside the Australian and Aboriginal flags to mark the historic anniversary.

It followed a Lord Mayoral Minute supported by City of Newcastle councillors in June, acknowledging the City's long-standing history with local, national and international peace movements, dating back to 29 June 1982 when the City first declared Newcastle a Nuclear Free Zone under Lord Mayor Joy Cummings AM, and resolving to establish with Hunter Peace Group a dedicated Newcastle Peace Park at Tighes Hill Reserve, adjacent to Islington Park.

Peace parks exist in many cities across the country, including Adelaide, Hobart and Canberra, and more locally at Cessnock and Tanilba Bay.

Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said the City of Newcastle was proud to support these efforts as a progressive city.

"The City of Newcastle has a long and proud history of activism against nuclear weapons, particularly as a city with a large working port," Cr Nelmes said.

"Former Newcastle Lord Mayor Joy Cummings was a passionate advocate for the peace movement, inspiring strong community support and joining with Hunter Peace Group, trade unionists and activists to hold demonstrations on the importance of nuclear disarmament and protecting Newcastle as a Nuclear Free City and port.

"I am honoured to uphold that mission today on behalf of the City, in which there is no place for nuclear weapons in modern society."

Hunter Peace Group Secretary Lynda Forbes said the group was pleased to continue this important work with the City of Newcastle.

"While ever there is nuclear testing being conducted across the globe, Hunter Peace Group believes it is important to continue to commemorate the anniversaries of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to draw public attention to the threat that nuclear weapons pose to communities throughout the world," Ms Forbes said.

"Despite City of Newcastle supporting the United Nations' Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2019, and advocating to the Federal Government in 2020, Australia is yet to sign and ratify the treaty, which came into force in January this year.

"I'd like to thank Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes, the City of Newcastle and the broader community for their continued advocacy and support for Hunter Peace Group and ICAN."