

# Just Peace: A Brief History



*Just Peace* is an honorary non profit organisation that was established in late 2001 in the aftermath of the attacks on the US on 11 September. The organisation was formed out of a concern at the drift towards war and the use of violence to solve what are essentially issues of injustice and inequality throughout the world.

*Just Peace's* principal aims are threefold:

- To raise awareness of the causes of conflict
- To promote alternatives to war
- To work for a socially-just and peaceful world.

Our basic philosophy is to build a broad movement within the wider community, working in co-operation with trade unions, social justice groups, the environmental movement, ethnic and indigenous communities, church organisations, political parties and progressive groups, as well as with other appropriate local community and grassroots groups.

In this regard, we believe we have been reasonably successful. Our current membership is about 140, with several hundred other people on our active contact list. Our members come from a variety of backgrounds covering a broad spectrum of political and religious views, as well as membership of various political parties, trade unions and other activist organisations.

We have worked hard to establish networks of contacts with other like-minded organisations and prominent individuals in Brisbane and interstate. Our aim is to continue to work towards broadening these contacts so that the movement for social change to create a fairer and more peaceful world involves more and more 'ordinary' people.

*Just Peace* is one of the originators and founding members of the Queensland Peace Network.



People marching on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2003 against the war in Iraq.

We have worked hard to ensure the success of this umbrella organisation, and have initiated and participated in many of the major events sponsored by the QPN. We were heavily involved in the organisation and conduct of the largest rally ever held in this State to protest against the illegal invasion on Iraq.

*Just Peace* has participated in all major events sponsored by the QPN and is an active part of the QPN management.

## **Just Peace Activities**

*Just Peace* is an active organisation. We have regular meetings and forums that are generally well-attended. We also undertake major projects, and produce and distribute printed material as part of our general aim of raising awareness of issues. We encourage the active participation of our members and supporters in the things we do.

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The brief summary below lists some of the activities which have been organised and conducted by *Just Peace*, as well as those done in conjunction and co-operation with other organisations:

- Major events:
  - Organising the rally and activities “*Our grief is not a cry for war*”, as part of a coalition for peace activity on the first anniversary of the 11 September events, with emphasis on the arts, poetry, music and various cultural activities
  - Public meeting in City Hall with a panel of high profile media personalities, “*Language of war and the media*”
  - International Day of Peace, “*Rhythm of Peace project*” with United Nations Association Australia)
  - Conduct of the “Peace Embassy” prior to invasion of Iraq
- Monthly forum meetings:
  - Ross Daniels from QUT, “*What we haven’t been told about the war on Iraq*”
  - Bill Sulzmann, US peace activist, “*Star Wars and militarisation of space*”
  - Pauline Rigby, “*Depleted uranium*”
  - Kath Kelly and Avigael Abarbanel, “*Palestine/Israel situation*” (with A.J.A.C.S and Greens)
  - Israeli Refusenik Rotem Dan Mor, and Phillipine attorney Neri Colemares, “*Israeli/Palestinian and Phillipines situation*” (with A.J.A.C.S)
  - Brian Hallett, “*Act of declaring war*”, (with B.L.H.P.L)
  - Doug Rokke, retired US Major served 1<sup>st</sup> Gulf War 1991, “*Effects of depleted uranium*” (with D.U.S.K)
  - Saif Abukesek, Palestinian co-ordinator for International Solidarity Movement, (Australians for Peace and Justice in Palestine)
  - Greg Poulgrain, historian and author, “*West Papua, Indonesia, and Australia*”, with video “*Land of the Morning Star*”
- Participation in the various Brisbane and regional progressive activities:
  - Brisbane social Forum
  - Festival of Ideas
  - Woodford Folk Festival

Two major projects that are currently underway this year are:

- Major peace education pilot project in participating Queensland schools - this has a threefold objective: i) to examine what peace is; ii) how to educate for peace; and iii) how to incorporate peace education into the curriculum in creative ways. The project will involve the development and delivery of peace-focused subject matter to both primary and secondary students, culminating in students showcasing their learning outcomes to the broader community at the Brisbane Powerhouse Museum in October 2004.
- Major public meeting in City Hall on the theme “Australia at the Crossroads – Time for Change” – this meeting will feature high-profile speakers talking about the direction this country is taking in the areas of defence and security, civil liberties, refugees and human rights, employment and the erosion of workers’ rights, social policy in the areas of health, welfare and education, the environment, and indigenous issues. The meeting will be held on 3 August in the lead up to the next Federal election.

Many other activities such as public meetings, rallies, forums, assemblies, conferences, marches, deputations to politicians, written submissions, letter drives, and the like have all been undertaken by *Just Peace* members.

Another major area of *Just Peace* activity is in the development, production and distribution of publications. These include:

- Bi-monthly newsletter titled, “The Peace Issue”.
- Leaflet titled “War on Terror or War on Workers”.
- Leaflet titled “Palestine-Israel”.
- Leaflet titled “Indonesia-Australia - Neighbours or Strangers”.

***Just Peace* is thankful for the generous support and encouragement it receives from a range of organisations and individuals. With your help, we can change the world.**