

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté
Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad
Internationale Frauenliga für Frieden und Freiheit

Consultative Status with United Nations ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO

Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO and UNICEF

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SA Branch



11th November 2008

The Hon Mike Rann, MP
Premier of SA and Minister for Social Inclusion
200 Victoria Square
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Dear Mr Rann,

I write on Remembrance Day on behalf of the South Australian Branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Our members were relieved and delighted to learn of the cancellation of the Asia Pacific Defence and Security Exhibition (APDSE) originally due to open in the Convention Centre today. Incidentally, we understand from several reputable journalists in SA that the APDSE was cancelled, not for the spurious reason given by your Treasurer, Mr Foley, but because of a lack of “business”.

We very much regretted the blunder on the part of the APDSE proponents, the UK arms manufacturer, concerning their poor choice of opening date. We believe that to schedule the opening of such an event on Remembrance Day was an insult to the memory of all those who have lost their lives in war, and whom we honour on this day. It is truly hard to believe that the arms manufacturers could have been so negligent and disrespectful as to schedule the opening of their arms exhibition to coincide with such an important day of remembrance. It was insensitive in the extreme.

As the SA Government was one of the backers of APDSE, we are writing now to convey to you our deep dismay that it should have been a Labor Government that encouraged

weapons manufacturers to come to Adelaide to display their wares, and which continues to encourage us in South Australia to become what you call the "Defence State".

Your government's websites boast that the SA Government "is committed to the defence industry, [to making] South Australia *the* Defence State". And further: "South Australia is indisputably Australia's Defence State. It is the high-technology centre of the nation's defence industry, home to regional headquarters and operations of some of the world's top defence companies"

We are alarmed that, as part of your government's push to turn SA into "the Defence State", your budget has allocated over \$300 million of taxpayers' money to the establishment of Techport, in order to attract increasing numbers of military manufacturing enterprises to Adelaide.

We are not persuaded that we should seek economic and job security in our state through the manufacture of military hardware, weaponry and weapons systems. This is not a "defence industry". This is an "industry" that brings death and suffering to millions of people in conflict zones around the world; an "industry" that causes maiming, grief, mental anguish and environmental loss.

Like many others in South Australia, we do not want "defence" industries in our state that result in death and suffering. We do not wish to continue to allow our taxpayers' dollars to continue to be diverted by your government in an effort to turn us into "*the* Defence State".

With respect, we therefore urge you and your Cabinet colleagues to reconsider the course upon which you have set our state. It is a misguided course. We believe that our government should be encouraging industries and jobs that are ethical and sustainable, and which "do no harm".

I thank you for your kind attention. We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Cathy Picone
Coordinator (SA branch)