



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

International Headquarters Geneva Switzerland

Australian Section (founded 1915)

South Australian Branch

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5 November 2009

Hon Jane Lomax-Smith MP
Minister for Education
GPO Box 778
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Dear Minister

We write concerning the approval given by you and your Departmental officers to Aberfoyle Park High School's partnership with Raytheon Australian and in particular to the acceptance by the school of funding from Raytheon amounting to \$450,000 + GST over three years. We understand that this money has been accepted by the school in order to "co-develop a Maths and Science curriculum", and to provide 250 new laptops. We understand that Raytheon has had a direct hand in the design of the school's curriculum in these areas.

We are writing now to add the voice of our organisation to profound community concerns about the morality, wisdom and educational appropriateness of a school's being allowed to associate itself in this way with an entity such as Raytheon.

Over decades, many people in this country have worked hard to develop government schools and to protect them from the incursions of zealots determined to use our schools as vehicles for their own vested interests. Due to the work of many dedicated teachers and parents, government schools have developed in Australia over a long period of time, as places of genuine learning. The work to build and defend government schools has, in large measure, been aimed at ensuring that they are not allowed to become propaganda tools for (for example) business and commercial interests, the armed forces or for large corporations. Furthermore, we expect that government schools will be adequately funded from the public purse and not seek funding from business corporations.

It is with grave concern therefore that our organisation has learned of the alarming and outrageous policy direction adopted by your government which has allowed a South Australian government school to associate itself with a corporation such as Raytheon Australia. Raytheon is an arms manufacturing corporation predominantly designing and manufacturing weapons and weapons systems.

Schools have a moral responsibility to align themselves with non-destructive influences in our society, and not to align themselves with those that benefit financially from violence, war, weaponry and destruction. Our community needs leaders, including Ministers of Education, School Boards and Governing Councils, who are prepared to act with moral integrity.

It is deeply regrettable that the fears of parents concerned about the future prospects of employment for their children should be used and exploited to bring a corporation such as Raytheon into the educational sphere.

The messages that Aberfoyle Park High School's partnership with Raytheon are sending to students at APHS and to students in our state more broadly call into question the capacity for leadership and educational acumen of those who have been party to this decision. Acceptance of the offer from Raytheon can only be construed as supporting their products and acting as an inducement to young people to work for the "Defence" industry.

We are among the many South Australians who are not persuaded that South Australia should be seeking economic and job security 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. Nor do we wish to see our schools becoming associated with corporations such as Raytheon.

We therefore urge you to reconsider your support of this offer from Raytheon. We thank you for your kind attention, and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Cathy Picone and Ruth Russell

CC. Correna Haythorpe, President, Australian Education Union (SA Branch)

Mark Parnell, MLC

David Winderlich, MLC