

WILPF: Australia on the UN Security Council

An Evaluation of Outcomes for Australia and Women in Conflict

Harriet Smith, UQ

2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Australia's 2013/14 term on the UNSC is evaluated by examining the issues that were pressing for the Council at the time, and the issues Australia chose to focus on during its two terms as president. It demonstrates the flawed nature of the Security Council, especially the P5 veto power, which reflects outdated power constructs that are unhelpful and limiting in modern times. Australia was in danger of developing a dangerous over-reliance on military solutions and a militarized conception of security. Instead of engaging with a human security conception of these issues, such as the sidelined WPS agenda, Australia fell into line with the agenda of its allies within the P5. Australia only instigated side events on WPS, and did not take advantage of the variety of other Security Council channels to further the cause of assisting women in conflict. While Australia was well placed to take a stronger role in further WPS not only with its position on the Security Council, and made promises to advance the WPS agenda during its term, they failed to mainstream the WPS on the Council's agenda and across international peace operations. Australia could have advocated for further engagement with civil society and policy actors, and suggested actions in line with the agenda of WILPF. The realization of the WPS agenda cannot be achieved without fully implementing its approach to increase the number of women in peacekeeping missions, supporting programs for local women affected by conflict, and fully integrating a gender perspective. However, Australia did take some actions, albeit small ones, to link its commitment to disarmament with the WPS agenda. In this way, it was helpful in reiterating and contributing to the reframing of discussions about women in conflict in the Security Council, and moving rhetoric away from protection of women's bodies, to protection of their rights and recognizing their abilities. Nevertheless, the militarized approach taken by the Security Council, and the structure of the Council itself, is in desperate need of reform if it is to truly and holistically work for peace.

Table of Contents

<i>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</i>	<i>1</i>
1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Australia on the UNSC	4
2.1 <i>The 2012/13 UNSC Bid</i>	<i>4</i>
2.2 <i>Expectations for Australia on the UNSC</i>	<i>5</i>
3.0 Events and Presidency of Australia on the UNSC	7
3.1 <i>The September 2013 Presidency</i>	<i>7</i>
3.2 <i>The November 2014 Presidency</i>	<i>9</i>
4.0 Benefits to Australia	11
5.0 Benefits to Women in Conflict	13
5.1 <i>Australia and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda</i>	<i>14</i>
5.2 <i>Australia, WPS and the Prevention of Violence</i>	<i>17</i>
5.3 <i>Australia, WPS and Protection From Violence</i>	<i>18</i>
5.4 <i>Australia, WPS and Participation in Peace Building</i>	<i>19</i>
6.0 Looking to the Future	20
7.0 References	22

1.0 Introduction

The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) has a proud tradition of holding governments accountable for their actions. In light of the Turnbull government’s September 2015 announcement that Australia will be nominating for a seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the 2029/30 term, it is prudent to assess Australia’s previous 2013/14 term. While some attempts have been made to analyse Australia’s time on the Security Council, such as the Lowy Institute’s 2014 report, none have reflected upon it from a gender perspective.¹ Therefore, this report will amend that gap, and investigate Australia’s time on the Security Council. It will identify the benefits for Australia, and if there were any positive outcomes for women in conflict affected areas. It will analyse the events of September 2013 and November 2014, when Australia was President of the Security Council. It will conclude by examining the future of Australia’s influence over the work of the Security Council.

Australia’s relationship to the Security Council is a crucial one, and despite its problematic features, the Security Council is still the most dominant body within the United Nations.² The dominance of a military understanding of security in the Council is outdated, given modern political power structures, and is not conducive to the promotion of peace. Nevertheless, Australia’s inclination to support regional interests, institutional change, and human rights – demonstrated by its engagement with international institutions such as the UN

¹ Gowan, 2014

² Woker, 2012

and ASEAN – allows for higher international visibility and influence, and its time on the Security Council is therefore important to investigate.

2.0 Australia on the UNSC

2.1 The 2012/13 UNSC Bid

Australia first indicated its intention to nominate for the UNSC in 2008, under the Labor government of Kevin Rudd.³ Aiming for a seat in the category of “Western European and Others”, it was competing against Finland and Luxembourg.⁴ There were mixed reactions to the announcement that Australia would be seeking a fifth term on the UNSC. Some detractors saw the campaign as drawing attention away from other foreign policy interests, such as Tony Abbot’s alternative foreign policies, which at the time focused on Africa.⁵ While expensive in a time of government resource scarcity, many highlighted that the success of the campaign would bring greater benefits than detriment.⁶

The potential for Australia to foster its influence over UN decisions and to further international visibility was portrayed by the Labor government to be beneficial to Australia’s domestic and regional goals. The price point of the campaign, at around \$35 million, was described by the opposition Liberal party at the time as “extravagant and distracting from core foreign policy interests”.⁷ In reality this cost, spread over five years, is just small fraction of Australia’s

³ Conley Tyler and Pahlow, 2014

⁴ Coleridge, 2012

⁵ Park, 2012

⁶ Woker, 2012

⁷ Coleridge, 2012; Conley Tyler and Pahlow, 2014

annual military spending of \$20 billion.⁸ When considering that the UNSC is the most influential body of the UN, Australia can surely afford this investment in peace.

The success of Australia's bid was also met with mixed reactions and was called "astonishing" by some.⁹ However, others felt the win was a complement to Australia, and recognized its "capacity to make serious and constructive contributions to the work of the Council".¹⁰ These optimistic beliefs were mirrored in the Australian public, and the Lowy Institute's 2013 poll showed that 64% of Australians believed that a UNSC seat would give Australia more global influence.¹¹ This potential for influence placed an expectation on Australia, as a middle power concerned with upholding global norms, to do 'heavy lifting' within the UNSC.¹² This expectation peaked with Australia's two presidencies, in September 2013 and November 2014.

2.2 Expectations for Australia on the UNSC

Various groups, such as political parties and academic collectives, had different interests and expectations for Australia's time on the UNSC. Some domestic commentators noted that notions of cosmopolitan idealism heavily influenced Rudd's launching of the campaign, as this was before the global financial crisis created domestic political instability. Despite the popularity of Ambassador Gary Quinlan amongst his international UN colleagues, which they attested to, other diplomats formed the impression that the once confident

⁸ Coleridge, 2012

⁹ Langmore, 2013

¹⁰ Robillard, 2013

¹¹ Nadin, 2014

¹² Conley Tyler and Pahlow, 2014

Australian diplomatic team was now “floundering” due to Labor infighting.¹³ This cast doubts on the ability of Australia to act on its “high ideals” that the subsequent leader of the Labor Party, Julia Gillard, insisted Australia still stood for.¹⁴ The upholding of these ideals gave various groups hope that Australia would lead the Council towards progress on issues they considered crucial.

Feminist scholars and academic groups, including WILPF, also held expectations for Australia’s performance. Specifically, one such expectation was for the furthering of progress on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Under UNSC Resolution 1325, WPS purports that women should be active participants in all peace processes. Furthermore, WPS advocates for the elimination of violence against women, acknowledges the gendered consequences of violent conflict, and promotes the protection of women’s rights. Many were hopeful that Australia would use its time, and especially one of its presidencies, to further WPS. While this seemed likely for a time, Australia passed this over in favor of focusing on small arms and light weapons for its first presidency in September 2013, and on counter terrorism in November 2014. Nevertheless, groups such as the Women, Peace and Security Academic Collective (WPSAC) continued to advocate for the inclusion of the WPS agenda into the Council’s considerations.¹⁵

Generally, it can be said that any state will have great difficulty in meeting the expectations placed upon it by a successful UNSC bid. The support of 144 countries for Australia’s bid implied the expectation that it would continue its

¹³ Gowan, 2014

¹⁴ AAP, 2012

¹⁵ Shepherd and True, WPSAC, 2013

traditional commitment to the goals and norms of the UN, and would make a serious and constructive contribution to the work of the Council.¹⁶ The extent to which it has achieved this can be evaluated by examining the issues that were pressing for the Council at the time, and the issues Australia chose to focus on during its two terms as president.

3.0 Events and Presidency of Australia on the UNSC

During Australia's two-year term on the UNSC, the security environment was an influential factor on Australia's actions. This is in line with the Council's focus on a military conceptualization of security, rather than reformulating its approach to encompass human security perspectives. During this term, the Council's agenda reflected the conflict and disaster situations of the time, including the escalation of the crisis in Syria, conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and in the Central African Republic (CAR).¹⁷ As well as responding to these pressing crises, Australia used its two terms as President of the Council to highlight two chosen areas of focus – small arms and light weapons, and combating terrorism and violent extremism.

3.1 The September 2013 Presidency

In 2013, Australia and the Security Council faced many challenges, such as responding to the Syrian crisis. The Council's response to the attacks in Damascus using chemical weapons was one of the more united reactions, and Australia was a key player in the progress of humanitarian work. Specifically, a presidential text condemning the use of chemical weapons was unanimously

¹⁶ Conley Tyler and Pahlow, 2014

¹⁷ Gowan, 2014

adopted as UNSC Resolution 2118 in 2013¹⁸. Following this, Australia and Luxembourg created the Presidential Statement on the need for humanitarian action in Syria in October 2013, and the adoption of Resolutions 2139, 2165 and 2191 in 2014.¹⁹

During the September 2013 presidency, Ambassadors Gary Quinlan and Foreign Minister Julie Bishop worked to promote Australia's project on restricting the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons.²⁰ This topic was chosen over a focus on Women, Peace and Security, as it was a security threat that the Council had only addressed briefly and irregularly in the past.²¹ While WPS would have been preferred, under pressure from groups such as WPSAC, Australia sought to draw attention to the role women play in conflict prevention. During the September 2013 presidency, they hosted a non-compulsory side event on "Women's Participation in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding" and co-hosted a Council meeting on "Implementing the UN Security Council's Women, Peace and Security Agenda".²² While this went a small way towards drawing attention to the essential roles played by women in conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding, it did not have the widespread positive effect that comprehensive focus on WPS could have achieved.

Instead, on September 26th, 2013, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop chaired a meeting on small arms and light weapons, the first to be held on the topic in five years. The Secretary-General pointed to the evolving nature of the threat, and

¹⁸ UNSC S/2013/701

¹⁹ DFAT, 2015; UNSC S/2013/701

²⁰ DFAT, 2015

²¹ Gowan, 2014

²² DFAT, 2015

urged all states to sign and ratify the March 2013 Arms Trade Treaty.²³ Council members unanimously recognized the detrimental impact small arms and light weapons have on international peace and security, the impact on humanitarian assistance, and how women and children were largely the victims of the violence cause by these weapons.²⁴ Resolution 2117 was adopted, and was exclusively dedicated to the issue of “the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation, and misuse of small arms and light weapons”.²⁵ UNSC 2117 was also was unprecedented in highlighting the responsibilities of the parties to a conflict to ensure the protection of civilians from these weapons.

3.2 The November 2014 Presidency

In 2014, the situation in the Ukraine illustrated the restrictive nature of the Security Council in situations that directly affect the Permanent Five (P5) members. While the crisis “posed a direct threat to the collective security system established by the Charter”, it was one that the deadlocked Security Council could not effectively address due to the use of the veto power by Russia.²⁶ This draws attention to the flawed nature of the Security Council, especially the P5 veto power, which reflects outdated power constructs that are unhelpful and limiting in modern times. However, in July 2014, the downing of flight MH17 in the Ukraine saw Australia author and lead negotiations on UNSC Resolution 2166 condemning the incident, and overcoming the deadlock.²⁷ It is the only Council resolution adopted since the outbreak of the conflict, and enabled international investigators to access the crash site, and allowed the victims to be repatriated.

²³ UNSC S/2013/701

²⁴ UNSC S/2013/701

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ DFAT, 2015

²⁷ Ibid.

Australia's November 2014 presidency saw Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop chair both a briefing on post-conflict peace building in peacekeeping operations, and an open debate on counter-terrorism.²⁸ The briefing, which focused on the role of policing, emphasized the need for reform. It further "reiterated the calls to Member States to consider implementation of the policy aimed at lifting the proportion of women police officers in United Nations missions to 20 per cent".²⁹ The open debate on combating terrorism and violent extremism was the focus of Australia's second presidency, in light of the spread of ISIL, Boko Haram, and other Al-Qaida affiliates. The Council adopted a Presidential Statement, outlining practical steps for the implementation of resolutions relevant to this, specifically UNSC Resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014).

Also in 2014, Australia renewed the mandate for the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. This was significant, especially because it focused on protecting the advancements made in women's rights in recent years.³⁰ Furthermore, it proactively responded to escalating conflicts on the African continent, and Australia was one of the first on the Council to call for a peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic, which was established in 2014. It also strongly pushed for the protection of civilians to be the focus of the renewed mandate in South Sudan. However, in response to the occupation of Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Australia lobbied for a combat

²⁸ UNSC S/2014/929

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ DFAT, 2015

element to the peacekeeping mission – which again points to a dangerous over-reliance on military solutions and a militarized conception of security.

4.0 Benefits to Australia

The outcomes for Australia from its time on the Security Council can be evaluated through both positive and critical lenses. DFAT presents Australia’s work on the Council as having made a “positive and distinctive contribution to the Council’s work in maintaining peace and security” while also enhancing “its reputation as a country which can use its influence and relationship to make a difference”.³¹ This portrayal may be an optimistic one, but nevertheless, Australia has made a contribution that is not insignificant. The decisive action on the downing of MH17 in the Ukraine was a matter of public interest for the population of Australia, and its advancement of counterterrorism actions was timely. The praise Australia received for its time on the Council by other UN Member States, Security Council members, NGOs and civil society organizations was earned, especially in regards to its focus on the protection of civilians – and its inherently gendered nature.

From a political strategy perspective, Australia’s time on the Security Council furthered relationships and prospects with its strategic partners. This has allowed for the furthering of partnerships around regional security challenges³². The term appears to have bolstered Australia’s international reputation, and showcased Australian values on the global stage. According to DFAT, Australia is now better positioned to engage with Security Council matters

³¹ DFAT, 2015

³² Ibid.

than it previously was, and also with humanitarian responses, protection of civilians, and UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding³³. Consequently, Australia has retained its focus on collective peace and security, and reiterated its commitment to the principles and norms that the United Nations stands for.

Nevertheless, a critical approach must be taken when evaluating the outcomes for Australia. It cannot be said that Australia took a leading role on pushing for Security Council reform, or changing the militarized culture of the Council. An example of this is that Australia chose to engage with a militarised security conception of the issues it selected to focus on – namely small arms and light weapons, and counterterrorism. Instead of engaging with a human security conception of these issues, such as the sidelined WPS agenda, Australia fell into line with the agenda of its allies within the P5. Nevertheless, some have argued that Australia has lived up to the significant expectation placed upon it as well as any state can.³⁴ Moreover, with a seat on the Council – crucial for legitimizing international military operations – Australia was well placed to represent its interests and values in overseas operations. However, despite Australia making progress on its own agenda and largely fulfilling its responsibilities during its time on the Council, the benefits to international peace and security could have been increased if a more balanced and brave approach was taken.

In acknowledging that Australia did benefit from its time on the Security Council, albeit with some problematic elements of its engagement, the potential benefits to other groups can be critically examined. In keeping with the interests

³³ DFAT, 2015.

³⁴ Robilliard, 2013; Coney Tyler and Pahlow, 2014

of WILPF, the following section will investigate if there were benefits to women in conflict areas from Australia's time on the Security Council.

5.0 Benefits to Women in Conflict

The benefits of Australia's term on the Security Council to women in conflict affected areas has been highlighted by the subsequent government reports on this time. The evaluation of Australia's actions released by DFAT stated, "Australia used its term effectively to highlight the essential role that women play in conflict prevention, peace negotiations and in building sustainable peace in societies affected by conflict".³⁵ They pointed to the renewing of the mandate for the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, in March of 2014, as an example of how Australia "focused on safeguarding important gains made on the promotion and protection of women's rights over the last few years".³⁶ Furthermore, they significantly noted how during the September 2013 presidency, Australia hosted a side-event on 'Women's Participation in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding' and co-hosted a Council meeting on 'Implementing the UN Security Council's Women, Peace and Security Agenda'.³⁷ It is important to investigate what concrete outcomes these actions had for women in conflict areas, if any, and whether Australia could have been more effective in focusing on bettering the lives of women in conflict zones.

³⁵ DFAT, 2015

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

5.1 Australia and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

During Australia's time on the Security Council, the actions they took towards the Women, Peace and Security agenda were reflective of their overall approach towards the issue – namely a commitment that was not taken as far as it could have been. This began with their bid for a Security Council seat, where WPS was highlighted as an issue that Australia would focus heavily on.³⁸ Combined with Australia's positive WPS track record, including the implementation of a National Action Plan on WPS in 2012, this was a core part of its successful bid.³⁹ Australia followed this with an initially promising interest in focusing on WPS during its first presidency in September 2013, which was passed over in favour of small arms and light weapons. The 2013 Foreign Minister Bob Carr stated that a “key priority for Australia on the council – particularly during our presidency in September – will be to highlight the important leadership role women can play in ensuring long lasting peace in fragile post-conflict societies”.⁴⁰ While WPS was not chosen as the main focus, Australia did commit itself to acknowledging and addressing the participation of women in peace in some ways.

Specifically, Australia addressed this through its side events on WPS in September 2013 – which differed from its initial focus on the protection of women from sexual violence in conflict in early 2013. Regardless of this, some academics have expressed disappointment that Australia only instigated side events on WPS, and did not take advantage of the variety of other Security

³⁸ Shepherd and True, 2014a; Dunn, 2014

³⁹ Dunn, 2014; Australian Government Candidature Brochure, n.d.

⁴⁰ Harris Rimmer and Charlesworth, 2013

Council channels to further the cause, such as presidential statements and open debates.⁴¹ Furthermore, Australia could have highlighted the impact that sexual violence had on the motivations for fleeing Syrian refugees.⁴² Australia was well placed to take a stronger role in further WPS not only with its position on the Security Council, but as it correspondingly held a seat on the Executive Board of UN Women, which gave Australia an unprecedented opportunity to further its stated commitments.⁴³ This is investigated thoroughly in Laura Shepherd and Jacqui True's 2014 paper on the ways in which Australia should respond to the challenge of leadership presented by securing a UNSC seat, especially in relation to the WPS agenda.

Shepherd and True's paper outlines the core challenges Australia faced during its time on the Security Council regarding WPS. They conclude that while Australia made promises to advance the WPS agenda during its term, and they were given significant opportunities to do so, they failed to mainstream the WPS on the Council's agenda and across international peace operations.⁴⁴ They advocated for engagement with civil society and policy actors, and suggested actions that would draw upon these connections, in line with the agenda of WILPF.

The authors also acknowledged the political challenges, both nationally and internationally, that Australia would face when advocating for the full implementation of the WPS agenda – as Ambassador Gary Quinlin stated,

⁴¹ Harris Rimmer and Charlesworth, 2013; Shepherd and True, 2014a

⁴² Harris Rimmer and Charlesworth, 2013

⁴³ Shepherd and True, 2014a

⁴⁴ Shepherd and True, 2014b

“political will is essential for the delivery of any aspect of the WPS agenda”.⁴⁵ True to this, conservative dynamics during Australia’s term often constrained the WPS agenda to discussion of the abuse of women’s human rights, sexual violence in conflict, and women’s participation in peace processes. The integration of WPS on a domestic level has been largely through token mentions in government policies, with the National Action Plan on WPS having glaring gaps, especially in regards to immigration and Indigenous affairs.⁴⁶ Only through collaboration with civil society can WPS be implemented effectively and accountably on both domestic and regional levels.⁴⁷

Unfortunately, this has yet to be effectively undertaken by the Australian government, and at an international level, and during its time on the UNSC, Australia should have more decisively called upon the UNSC “to evaluate the impact of its own actions and the mainstreaming of gender equality within and across UN missions”.⁴⁸ The realization of the WPS agenda cannot be achieved without fully implementing its approach to increase the number of women in peacekeeping missions, supporting programs for local women affected by conflict, and fully integrating a gender perspective.⁴⁹ While Australia was consistent in its support of this, the efforts that were made bordered on being tokenistic mentions, but nevertheless Australia made some significant contributions to upholding and furthering the core pillars of WPS.

⁴⁵ United Nations Information Centre 2013, in Shepherd and True, 2014b

⁴⁶ Shepherd and True, 2014b

⁴⁷ Lee-Koo, 2014

⁴⁸ Davies and True, 2013

⁴⁹ Dharmapuri, 2013

5.2 Australia, WPS and the Prevention of Violence

The WPS agenda has several pillars – prevention of violence, protection from violence, and participation in peace processes at all levels. In June 2013, UNSC Resolution 2106 was passed, and the prevention of violence was addressed, an action outcome that Australia can be proud of helping facilitate. The resolution called for the deployment of Women Protection Advisors and Gender Advisors, and for all troop and police contributing countries to include sexual and gender based violence training.⁵⁰ The resolution references the “groundbreaking language on gender-based violence” in the 2013 Arms Trade Treaty – a link that was made in the Australian statement to the Final UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).⁵¹ Australia asserted that “The AK-47 is a classic example of a weapon that has proliferated as a result of the illicit and irresponsible arms trade – a weapons that has become an enabler for war crimes, criminality and gender based violence”.⁵² In the September 2013 Council meeting on small arms and light weapons, chaired by Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, it was reiterated “women and children bore the brunt of the violence caused by such weapons”.⁵³ Therefore, Australia did take some actions, albeit small ones, to link its commitment to disarmament with the WPS agenda, especially the pillar of the prevention of violence.

The effect of the 2013 Arms Trade Treaty is that states which ratify the treaty must regulate their the arms trade, and the treaty is enforceable under international law. Regarding concrete outcomes for women in conflict areas, the

⁵⁰ Shepherd and True, 2014b

⁵¹ DFAT, 2013

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ S/2013/701

treaty is the first legally binding agreement to connect gender-based violence with the arms trade. The ratification of the treaty by states will mean a significant reduction in the risk that arms will be used to commit human rights violations.⁵⁴ Along with the important commentary on the impact of the Arms Trade Treaty for women in conflict areas that has been made in other WILPF papers, WILPF ran the “Make it Binding” campaign during the development of the ATT.⁵⁵ The work of organizations such as WILPF, and the contribution Australia made to reiterate the links between the ATT and gender-based violence, will hopefully continue to stop the flow of weapons, and contribute to lasting peace and reduced violence.

5.3 Australia, WPS and Protection From Violence

As WPS focuses on women as agents of change, and not as passive victims of violence, the pillar of ‘protection from violence’ applies less to protecting women’s bodies, and more to protecting women’s rights.⁵⁶ While Australia has spoken out regarding the violation of women’s rights in conflicts such as Somalia and Liberia, it was perhaps more effective in drawing attention to the protection of women’s rights by highlighting their contributions to post-conflict peace building in the side-event on “Women’s Participation in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding” during the September 2013 presidency.⁵⁷ This was given further weight by Australia’s own domestic adoption of a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in 2012.

⁵⁴ Dahle, 2014

⁵⁵ Chinkin, 2013; WILPF, 2013

⁵⁶ Shepherd and True, 2014b

⁵⁷ UNSC S/2013/701; DFAT, 2015

Unfortunately, the impact of this side-event would have been further reaching if it had been compulsory, and if it had been run through a stronger, more visible mechanism of the UNSC such as a presidential statement. Nevertheless, the event did promote a positive view of women as agents of change in peace processes, as leaders in peace negotiations, and as having security concerns in post conflict environments, especially regarding participation in peace processes.⁵⁸ In this way, it was helpful in reiterating and contributing to the reframing of discussions about women in conflict in the Security Council, and moving rhetoric away from protection of women's bodies, to protection of their rights and recognizing their abilities.

5.4 Australia, WPS and Participation in Peace Building

The side-event on women's participation in peace building was evidently the main the source of progress in the third pillar of WPS. Since this event, Australia has reaffirmed its commitments to women's participation in post-conflict peacebuilding, especially through the promotion of UNSC Resolution 2122 on women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and through supporting women's organisations and institution building. In March 2014, Philippa King, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Australia, reiterated that the "importance of women's participation in peacebuilding cannot be underestimated".⁵⁹ She called for the effective use of the resolution, and pointed to the involvement of women's organizations as a crucial part of this, as they bridge divides between formal mechanisms and local communities. She also drew attention to the need for the presence of more

⁵⁸ Shepherd and True, 2014b; DFAT, 2015

⁵⁹ King, 2014

women in law and in justice systems, and how institution building is the “centre pillar of sustainable peace”.⁶⁰ This is reflective of the dominant liberal state-building norms which Australia upholds, and which the UN advocated, although this may not always be a guarantor of peace.

Nevertheless, Australia’s focus on the rule of law, institution building, and the strengthening of governance, is consistent with its approach to conflicts, and including women at all levels in this approach is crucial to its success. Australia learned this through its own regional peacebuilding operations in the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.⁶¹ King concludes by pointing to the ongoing need for police composition to have more female officers. Australia should continue to support these ideals, but it must lead with a strong domestic example of gender equality in its own forces, and in its UN policing mission contributions. In this way, serious benefits can be brought to women on the ground in conflict areas.

6.0 Looking to the Future

The topics considered in this report have important implications for the future of Australia’s engagement with the Security Council. It is evident that Australia performed reasonably well during its time on the Security Council, and brought benefits both domestically and to women in conflict areas. However, there could have been more meaningful engagement with WPS in many areas, which could have resulted in more concrete benefits for women. In the future, Australia should heed the words of WPS academics, which call for “implementing gender-mainstreaming... to integrate WPS perspectives in

⁶⁰ King, 2014

⁶¹ Ibid.

international and national security policy and missions not just through the inclusion of WPS in formal policy statements, UNSC Resolutions, mission mandate and Australian government policies".⁶² This remains to be seen both domestically and internationally.

It is evident that the mainstreaming of WPS will require further coordinated approaches, which engage meaningfully with civil society and government plans, both in Australia and overseas, as per the National Action Plan on WPS.⁶³ Australia must hold the UNSC accountable to its promises on WPS, and make it a crucial part of all security issues that the Council addresses. It can be said to have only partially achieved this during its 2013/2014 term. Australia needs to keep the UN focused on key institutional mechanisms and tools for engaging with WPS in peace operations and in security policies.⁶⁴ This includes ensuring there are Gender and Women Protection Advisors in missions – along with other experts – and domestic and international WPS indicators to monitor aspects including women's participation in national security, sexual violence levels and prosecution, and the implementation and progress of National Action Plans on WPS.⁶⁵

The Security Council is still the most important body within the UN, and the role domestic countries play on it is significant for their international standing. Nevertheless, the militarized approach taken by the Security Council, and the structure of the Council itself, is in desperate need of reform if it is to

⁶² Shepherd and True, 2014

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Shepherd and True, 2014

⁶⁵ Shepherd and True, 2014.

truly and holistically work for peace. The outdated veto power system is unrepresentative of emerging global power structures, and Australia should seek to push for Security Council reform in the future. The focus on a military conception of security should be realigned to fit with the human rights outlook of the UN, and should be framed in terms of human security in order to more successfully foster peace.

Overall, it can be concluded that Australia performed relatively well during its time on the UNSC, although it was not a performance that stretched the limits of progress. It furthered the reach of Australia's values on the world stage, and promoted Australia as a liberal and rights-focused medium power. It generally met the expectations it was tasked with, and successfully engaged to an extent with the WPS agenda to bring benefits to women in conflict. Nevertheless, there are several areas where Australia can and should have taken a stronger stance to further its influence for the good of international peace and security. In the future, Australia should strive for a deeper and more meaningful engagement with the WPS agenda. It is clear that the role of the Security Council should be less militarized and reform is necessary.

7.0 References

AAP. 2012. "Julia Gillard Schmoozes Leaders in Pursuit of UN Seat", *The Australian*, 26 September 2012.

Australian Government Candidature Brochure. n.d. "Australia: Making a Difference for the Small and Medium Countries of the World." Accessed 24 November 2015. Available at: http://www.unaa.org.au/pdfs/unsc_candidature_brochure.pdf.

- Chinkin, Christine. 2013. "Gender and the Arms Trade Treaty – A Legal Overview" WILPF. Accessed on 25 November 2015. Available at: <http://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Gender-and-the-Arms-Trade-Treaty-a-legal-overview.pdf>
- Coleridge, Benedict. 2012. "Benefits of Australia's UN Security Council Bid." *Eureka Street* 22 (4): 14 – 6
- Conley Tyler, Melissa, and Eleanor Pahlow. 2014. "Australia on the UN Security Council 2013–14: A Voice for Small and Medium Countries?" *The Round Table* 103 (1): 95 – 108
- Dahle, Alice. 2014. "Gender-Based Violence and the Arms Trade Treaty" Amnesty International. Accessed on 25 November 2015. Available at: <http://blog.amnestyusa.org/women/gender-based-violence-and-the-arms-trade-treaty/>
- Davies, Sara, and Jacquie True. 2013. "Australia's Presidency and the United Nations Security Council: Sustaining Political Will to Confine Sexual Violence to the Pages of History." Protection Gateway, July 19. <http://protectiongateway.com/tag/australia-united-nations-security-council/>.
- DFAT (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade). 2013. "Final Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty." Accessed July 25, 2013. <http://australia-unsc.gov.au/2013/03/final-conference-on-the-arms-trade-treaty/>.
- DFAT (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade). 2015. *Australia's Term on the United Nations Security Council 2013-14*. Canberra: AGPS
- Dharmapuri, S. 2013. "Not Just a Numbers Game: Increasing Women's Participation in UN Peacekeeping." Providing for Peacekeeping Paper No. 4, *International Peace Institute*: New York.
- Dunn, Michelle Elizabeth. 2014. "Localising the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security: A Matter of Justice". *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 68 (3): 285-99.
- Gowan, Richard. 2014. "Australia in the Security Council" The Lowy Institute. Available at: <http://www.loyyinstitute.org/people/42760/publications>
- Harris Rimmer, Susan and Hilary Charlesworth. 2013. "Women, peace and security: the theme of Australia's Security Council presidency" *The Conversation*. Accessed on 24 November 2015. Available at: <http://theconversation.com/women-peace-and-security-the-theme-of-australias-security-council-presidency-17490>
- King, Phillippa. 2014. "Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Statement to the United Nations" *Australian Government UNSC 2013-14*. Accessed on 25 November 2015. Available at: <http://unny.mission.gov.au/2014/03/post-conflict-peacebuilding/>
- Langmore, J. 2013. "Australia's Campaign for Security Council Membership", *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 48: 101–11

- Laura J. Shepherd and Jacqui True. 2014a. "Australia on the United Nations Security Council: Progressing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 68(3): 253-256
- Laura J. Shepherd and Jacqui True. 2014b. "The Women, Peace and Security agenda and Australian leadership in the world: from rhetoric to commitment?", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 68(3): 257-284
- Lee-Koo, Katrina. 2014. "Implementing Australia's National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1324" *Australian Journal of International Affairs*. 68(3): 300 – 313
- Park, Andy. 2012. "Why Does Australia Want a UNSC Seat?" *SBS News*. Accessed on 18 November 2015. Available at <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2012/10/18/why-does-australia-want-uns-c-seat>
- Robilliard, P. 2013. "Australia and the Security Council, opportunities and challenges", Speech to the Australian Institute of International Affairs Victoria, Melbourne, 28 February, <http://www.youtube.com/user/aiiavision/>, accessed 10 November 2015.
- United Nations Security Council (UNSC) *Letter from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2013/701*, (26 November 2013)
- United Nations Security Council (UNSC), *Letter from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2014/929*, (19 December 2014)
- WILPF (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom). 2013. "We Made it Binding! The First ATT Includes Preventing Gender-Based Violence" WILPF. Accessed on 25 November 2015. Available at: <http://wilpf.org/att-2013/>
- Woker, Daniel. 2012. "In Defense of Australia's UN Security Council Bid" The Lowy Institute. Available at: <http://www.loyyinterpreter.org/post/2012/09/06/In-defence-of-Australias-UNSC-bid.aspx>