

## Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Consultative Status with United Nations ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO

Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO, and UNICEF



### Australian Section

PO Box 934  
DICKSON ACT 2602  
9 September 2019

The Hon Scott Morrison  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is the oldest women's peace organization in the world. Since 1915 we have been working to prevent or bring about an end to war and violence in all its forms. Given this position, our concern is not only with international levels of violence but with what happens within our own country.

For 6 years, until 2018, we have participated in the preparation of an Annual Report Card and conduct of a Policy Dialogue with relevant Federal government departments on Australia's National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security.

A significant aspect that has emerged from these reports and consultations are the concerns that women in Australia have for the safety and security of themselves, their families and their communities. These concerns are rising, not just at the increasing levels of international tensions, particularly in our region, but at the domestic level where armed violence seems to be increasingly seen as the solution to problems, whether they be personal, family violence or at the broader public level.

A contributing factor to this rising concern over safety and security is the fear of an increasing availability and use of firearms. We are concerned that the level of lobbying by some are putting pressure on the Australian Government to weaken the current gun laws, particularly the availability of semi-automatic weapons.

Despite recent incidents, we in Australia have since 1996 managed to avoid the distressing events that have occurred in other countries with multiple deaths from firearms, particularly where semi-automatic weapons have been readily available. Even so, we understand that a number of recent events in Australia have involved illegal firearms.

We therefore request that national gun control laws in Australia be as strong as is possible, not just maintained at the present level, but further strengthened. In particular, we would ask that you and your government work to maintain strict control over the laws governing the import of all firearms; and that you continue to encourage each State and Territory to uphold the legal requirements on firearms ownership.

Yours sincerely

Christine Henderson  
President

PO Box 934, Dickson ACT 2602

1915 – 2019

WILPF is a non-government organisation committed to disarmament, the peaceful resolution of conflict, economic and social justice, and environmental sustainability. On 28 April 1915, more than 1200 women met in The Hague to advocate an end to war.

WILPF celebrates 104 years of peace and human rights building.