

Up and Out: The Infinite Trajectory of Australia's Defence Spending



Since 2010 public funding to Defence in Australia has increased drastically dramatically – the swelling defence budget, accelerated arms exports, and the largest marketing budget of any Government department.

Defenceⁱ total annual budget estimate increased by **50%**; from \$30.5 billion in 2010 to \$45.5 billion in 2020ⁱⁱ.

The Defence Portfolio has jumped to a planned total investment of \$575 billion by 2030ⁱⁱⁱ. Despite the high economic and social costs of 2020-2021, the Australian Government's commitment to increased spending on the tools of war has not waivered - arms, military expansion and defence marketing.

Who pays?

\$14.4 billion is the estimated cost of military acquisitions (buying and maintaining military equipment) for 2020-2021.

The acquisition of 450 new, replacement infantry fighting vehicles is costing the Australian tax payer between **\$40-60 million per vehicle**. Just one of the 450 infantry fighting vehicles could cover funding for over 9,000 students a year.

Equipment is expensive to run and the bill is paid for by Australian Tax payers.

The MRH-90 Helicopter cost Defence **\$30,000 per hour of flight time**. Planned to be flown 9,670 hours in a year, running the helicopter costs \$290 million annual. The ADF currently has 46 of the MRH-90 helicopters.

What is Militarisation?

Militarisation is understood as the expansion of military culture, symbolism and attitudes into civilian space. It is reinforced through wide reaching and powerful media campaigns that serve to promote the military and the defence industry expansion. Defence has the **highest advertising budget of any single government** department – in 2017-2018 it peaked at \$76.4 million – all paid for by tax payers. Marketing and advertising is an effective means of promoting Defence and normalising **militarisation in Australia**.

WILPF are calling for greater oversight of public spending, greater investment in building and sustaining peace and a halt to the rapid expansion of the Department of Defence and the Defence Industry in Australia.

Why does this matter?

High spending on Defence and Arms is at the cost of alternative spending options such as health, infrastructure, education, the care industry and social security.

One new Infantry Fighting Vehicle could fund:

250 new hospital beds

The annual salary of over 400 doctors

Over 9500 university students for a year

Are we safer now?

No. Militarisation is not making Australia more secure or peaceful. Militarisation supports power through attempts at dominance and aggression, over diplomacy and negotiation. Women's experiences of the world aren't included in the traditional notion of 'security' – the greatest danger to women is in their own home. Defence spending does not meet the security needs of women or reflect their reality.

What does a gender lens tell us about militarisation?

- **Women are disproportionately impacted by** conflict and military aggression
- **Women in Australia are much more likely to be living in poverty**, at risk of homelessness or of domestic violence. Public spending on Defence and cuts to public services such as housing, health care and social security impact everyone, but especially poor women.
- **Militarisation reinforces 'militarised masculinities'** in which male superiority is validated through power and aggression and the glorification of strength as violence and physical domination over others portrayed as weaker – including women
- **Women have always played a key role in peace negotiations** – why stop now?

About WILPF Australia

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom - Australia (WILPF) is a feminist, non-aligned, anti-war and peace-building member-based organisation. WILPF brings women together to oppose conflict, violence and global militarisation, and provides a unique space for peace activists across Australia and globally to work together for a sustainable peace.

WILPF envisions a world free from violence and armed conflict, in which human rights are protected; and the diversity of women and men are equally empowered at the local, national and international levels. Further details about WILPF Australia's work and information on how to join as a member is available at: wilpf.org.au and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Australia Militarisation in Australia: Normalisation and Mythology. May 2021.

ⁱ 'Defence and the Department of Defence refers to the overarching organisation, including the Australian Defence Force (ADF), Australian Signals Directorate (ASD), and civilian elements of the 'defence' enterprise; which encompasses the whole endeavour of national 'defence', i.e. paramilitary elements such as intelligence agencies, armed elements of the Australian Border Force, and other dual-use capabilities, which also provide national defence without being managed by the Defence Department.

ⁱⁱ Defence total annual budget estimate increased nominally by 50% between 2010-20, from \$30.5 billion in 2010 to \$45.5 billion in 2020