

Marrickville Peace Group  
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### **About Marrickville Peace Group**

The Group first came into being in late 2002, during a period in which the Australian public was being told by its leaders that Iraq presented an imminent threat to the safety of every Western nation.

We came together in dismay at the prospect of Australia engaging in armed conflict. We remain of the opinion that war serves no useful purpose whatsoever for any of the parties involved.

Our view is that going to war is such a dreadful undertaking that it should only happen as an absolutely last resort. Without question, it is a matter of such gravity that it should be debated at every level before any decision is taken.

We found it outrageous that the decision to join in the invasion of Iraq was made without any parliamentary debate. It was very clear to us that this was a matter with ramifications for Australia reaching far into the future.

### **Submission regarding Defence Amendment (Parliamentary Approval of Overseas Service) Bill 2008 [No. 2]**

Events have shown that the public was deceived about the threat that Iraq presented and we remain of the view that there was no valid reason for the attack that Australia joined. The consequences of that decision have been to the nation's detriment.

The events surrounding the invasion of Iraq are vivid illustration of the foolishness of taking a decision about engaging in warfare without proper consultation and debate.

The Marrickville Peace Group is firmly in favour of the Defence Amendment (Parliamentary Approval of Overseas Service) Bill 2008 [No. 2], proposed by Senator Scott Ludlam and presently under consideration by the Committee.

We agree that Australia's armed forces should not be sent overseas to engage in warlike action without the approval of both Houses of Parliament. It is an utterly sensible proposition, from every angle.

- In a Democracy, there should always be proper debate before any serious decision is taken.
- This principle should apply most strongly in situations involving the use of armed force, when the lives of young men and women will be at risk.
- The people's representatives should carefully consider the reasons for and against any decision to commit Australian troops to action overseas, for causes proposed by the Executive, so as to ensure that the people understand and support that commitment beforehand.
- The Bill does not take away powers that might be needed in an emergency.
- The Bill protects the nation from the consequences of a rash or precipitate decision such as the one we saw in the invasion of Iraq.

We believe that the present is a most appropriate time for legislative moves to reduce the risk of war. The election of President Obama in the United States and his recent Nobel Peace Prize are expressions of a strong desire for peace everywhere.

If the Bill is enacted, Australia will have taken a positive step towards a more peaceful world.

Marrickville Peace Group.  
15 October 2009.