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Women, peace and security

Addressing the gaps and strengthening implementation

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Gai Brodtmann, Chris Crewther, Deanne Gibbon, Susan Hutchinson, Katrina Lee-Koo, Anu Mundkur, Matthew Nash, Sofia Patel, Marise Payne, Linda Reynolds, Lisa Sharland, Laura J. Shepherd, Jacqui True and Jacqueline Westermann.

Introduction

Lisa Sharland and Jacqueline Westermann

This is the second year that ASPI has run a series on *The Strategist* to coincide with International Women's Day examining Australia's approach to women, peace and security (WPS). It's an important topic that's frequently overlooked at the expense of what are often deemed 'more pressing' security issues by the media and security commentators. But yet again, this year's series in and of itself showed why it's important that issues related to women's participation, leadership and perspectives are integral to Australia's national security. Importantly, the series includes an overwhelming number of female authors, who are usually underrepresented in security debates. It's essential that those perspectives are considered if Australia's approach to international security issues is to be most effective.



Australian Army pilot Captain Melissa Polkinghorne, who flies one of the Army's new Eurocopter Tiger armed reconnaissance helicopters at 1st Aviation Regiment, stands in front of one of the regiment's Tiger helicopters at Robertson Barracks, Darwin, on 1 April 2016. Photo courtesy Department of Defence.

In 2019, the Australian government is expected to issue Australia's second National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS. The articles in this Strategic Insights paper attempt to capture some of the debate regarding what progress has emerged from Australia's current NAP, the gaps that have been identified and the areas where implementation needs to be strengthened. This paper examines four themes that emerged from the series:

1. Defence's approach to WPS
2. The role of parliament and civil society
3. Lessons from abroad
4. Evolving approaches to WPS.

There has been notable progress over the last six years to ensure that Australia's approach to international security issues and operations has evolved to include the integration of gender perspectives and to increase the participation of women in defence and security institutions. Australian Minister for Defence Marise Payne underlines how crucial it has been and will be for Australia's military to include gender perspectives in its own activities, and especially in missions abroad. She identifies examples of Australia's actions in Afghanistan and Iraq to demonstrate how the Australian Defence Force (ADF) has been at the forefront of supporting women's participation in defence institutions. Deanne Gibbon draws on her operational experience to reflect on the considerable strides that Australia has made on WPS to become a go-to nation when it comes to WPS expertise, having recently established the ADF's operational gender adviser course.

Despite these gains and successes however, there's still a lot more important work that needs to be done to strengthen Australia's implementation of WPS. In a bipartisan piece, Gai Brodtmann and Linda Reynolds advocate for stronger parliamentarian action on advancing gender perspectives and making the WPS agenda 'business as usual'. They both press for the next NAP to focus more on results rather than actions. Similarly, Anu Mundkur and Laura Shepherd examine some of the gaps that currently exist in civil society's engagement as part of WPS governance, particularly as it relates to ensuring that their voices are considered as part of accountability mechanisms for the next NAP.

There are several lessons that Australia can learn from like-minded countries overseas regarding its approach to WPS and its formulation of the next NAP. Jacqui True examines the approach of international trendsetters such as Sweden and Canada that have feminist foreign policies. She identifies several areas where the Australian government could follow suit. Similarly, Jacqueline Westermann identifies how the Australian government should learn from best practices and experiences in other countries when reviewing and formulating the new NAP, drawing on the approach and experiences of Germany to advance the WPS agenda at home and abroad.

Yet the WPS agenda is also not a static concept. It continues to evolve. In this context, Matthew Nash makes the case for ensuring that female ADF veterans' voices are considered in discussions on women's perspectives of security. He notes that efforts to increase women's participation in the defence forces consequently entails a responsibility to ensure that their unique needs are addressed when they transition out of the defence forces. Katrina Lee-Koo shows how non-conflict-affected countries such as Australia often forget to align their WPS policies to their refugee and asylum policies. She notes that displacement and its consequences for the domestic environment are often overlooked themes in those countries' NAPs. Consequently, Katrina notes that the Department for Home Affairs needs to play a role in drawing up and implementing the next NAP to ensure that it represents whole-of-government policy. Susan Hutchinson and Chris Crewther argue that a nation's approach to WPS needs to consider policies on human trafficking, war crimes and modern slavery. Conversely, national approaches to those three issues need to consider the WPS agenda as well. And Sofia Patel encourages proponents of the WPS agenda to overcome a deeply-rooted distrust of policies focusing on preventing and countering violent extremism in order to integrate the two agendas.

Looking towards the future, Lisa Sharland concludes this year's series by pressing for a long-overdue acknowledgement of WPS as an essential factor in national and international security debates, identifying four key challenges that need to be addressed if Australia 'is to ensure that it continues to gain ground on WPS'.

ASPI would like to acknowledge and thank those contributors involved in this year's series, and we look forward to receiving submissions from more female contributors to *The Strategist* on this topic and other international security issues.

Defence's approach

Defence's commitment to women, peace and security

Marise Payne, 8 March 2018

Women and children suffer disproportionately in wars and during civil instability before and after conflicts. A conscious effort to create and enforce clear and specific protective and preventative measures is needed to secure them from harm.

But women are vastly under-represented in peace negotiations, the formulation of security initiatives, and in programs of peace and security enhancement, enforcement, compliance and verification. This fundamentally lessens the likelihood of the long-term success of peace and stability operations. Significant work is required to promote female participation in operations and peace negotiations, and to include in our planning and calculations a perspective that accounts for the needs of women and children.

We need only look as far as the mass kidnappings of girls from schools in Africa to be used as sex slaves and hostages by the Boko Haram terrorist group. We know the horror stories of mass rape during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, the Rwanda genocide and at the hands of Daesh in Iraq.

The 'forces of good' also have cause to hang their heads, as we recall known cases of UN and military forces, as well as of charitable aid organisations, exploiting women and children for sexual purposes. The genuine success of our peace, security and humanitarian intervention operations goes beyond simply dealing with the 'enemy holding the guns'. We must do more than that, and we must do better.

The value of women's participation was clear in the Northern Ireland peace process, particularly in the Good Friday Agreement. Much closer to home was the role of women's groups in Bougainville before, during and after the Lincoln and Burnham Accords, and in other peace negotiations since.

Clear-eyed peace and stability operations have as an objective the restoration of the whole of society's fabric, and that relies on formal and informal peace and restorative justice processes. Women, being half of the population, are central to that and have a strong focus on the survival of their families, their husbands, sons, fathers and brothers.

Studies of micro-finance and micro-credit consistently tell us that the small-community economic activity of women injects stability and assurance into the life of the broader society. Ensuring the formal involvement of women and their perspectives simply makes sense if we want viable and durable peace and security.

Australia's military approach to implementing the WPS agenda includes all four components: prevention, protection, perspective and participation.

In Afghanistan, an Australia senior gender adviser embedded at the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission headquarters currently leads a team of advisers from coalition partners to ensure that women have meaningful participation in their defence and security forces.

This includes developing recruitment and career progression plans and providing a gender perspective on all planning and activities in the mission. It's a fact of life in Afghanistan that men cannot enter a woman's home if her husband isn't present. If women aren't serving in Afghan military and security forces, then Afghanistan's government can't ensure the security of the population and neither can it safely carry out counter-terrorism operations.

Engaging women in peace and reconciliation efforts is well understood by the leadership in Afghanistan, and President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and I discussed the progress being made during our meeting in Kabul in February. The First Lady of Afghanistan, Mrs Rula Ghani, is empowering Afghan women—urban and rural—including through her leadership of an annual symposium on women and peace. Afghanistan has used international support in its efforts to restore the fabric of society after the brutalisation of the Taliban.

An example is the dramatic increase in female school enrolments, from around one million in 2001, none of whom were girls, to over nine million today, of whom around 40% are girls. This is a truly remarkable achievement, and one that Australia is proud to have supported through our aid program. To sustain female participation in the Afghan security forces, Australia has supported female-centric facilities at the Afghan National Army Officer Academy, and female-specific facilities for the Afghan Air Force in Kabul.

In Iraq, Australia provided the first gender adviser to the counter-Daesh coalition in October 2017 to help return female participation in its security forces to pre-2003 norms of around 8%, or 100,000 women. Increasing female participation will increase operational effectiveness and build trust with civil communities.

The ravages of Daesh control of Iraqi territory have been devastating for women. Daesh murdered men and boys they saw as threats, and sold women and girls to fund their campaign and to exert control over communities. The security environment in many Iraqi provinces remains challenging. Families, many now headed by women, face a return to homes without basic services, the risk of bombs hidden by Daesh, communal tensions and reprisal attacks. Any durable restoration of social cohesion and peace must take into account the perspectives of women, especially those who now head their households, and must actively foster the participation of women in formal and informal peace processes.

The recruitment of female police officers has already made a difference. In Diyala province, the Daughters of Iraq supplement security forces at both government buildings and check points. This program gives women who've lost family members to violence the opportunity to make a living while increasing security. These female security officers are trained alongside female soldiers and learn search techniques to find contraband and to detect improvised bombs. This increases female participation in community self-protection security programs while contributing to peace and security measures.

Closer to home, the Women in Pacific Defence Forces Seminar was held late last year as part of a program to integrate a gender perspective into the region's peace and security efforts, and to strengthen female military participation in conflict prevention and resolution. The seminar included defence force officers and senior non-commissioned officers from Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Chile, New Zealand and Australia, and was a direct outcome of the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting, of which Australia is an active member.

Indonesia and Australia co-chair the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting—Plus experts' working group on peacekeeping operations. At its most recent conference in Canberra in October 2017, I emphasised that women are critical to improving the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping missions, and the experts group continues to draw up practical ways to include women in peace operations decision-making, conflict prevention and resolution.

I am committed to ensuring that the Defence portion of Australia's National WPS Action Plan generates practical, realistic and attainable objectives for the ADF. This will ensure our contributions to humanitarian operations, regional stability and security operations, and combat operations demonstrate world's best practice for the protection of women and children; the prevention of harm; the inclusion of women's perspectives on operational, peace, and security plans and activities; and the participation of women in peace processes, negotiations and agreements.

In this way, fragile and tentative steps towards stability and recovery will have a durable and dependable impact on whole societies.

For print readers, the original piece with live links is at <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/defences-commitment-wps-agenda/>

Navigating the operational gender agenda

Deanne Gibbon, 23 March 2018

One of the key challenges when working in the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) field in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) is the common misunderstanding about UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and related resolutions.

WPS is quite separate to the services' internal diversity and inclusion programs, and human resource activities intended to increase women's representation in the ADF. However, there's a nexus in that it's difficult to increase women's presence on ADF operations unless there are enough trained ADF women available to deploy.

Within a military context and when viewed through an operational lens, the UNSCRs provide guidance as to how militaries, security forces, humanitarian agencies, peacekeepers and enforcers, policy builders and other key stakeholders factor in, interact with and engage local populations in an area of operations. In simple terms, this is how the population interacts with and influences the operation and how the operation interacts with and influences the local population.

For military forces, the key premise of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions is that failing to consider the needs, voices and circumstances of half of a population when planning, executing and measuring an operation's effectiveness will have unintended, negative effects on that population over the short, medium and long terms.

Moreover, those negative effects will extend far beyond the life of an operation. Further, considering the needs of the entire population has proven to increase operational effectiveness and reduce risks to operating forces.

While responsibility for implementing UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions on military operations rests with commanders, the commanders will often be supported by trained gender advisors (GENADs), who may be placed at the operational or tactical level, or both. The GENAD is usually part of a commander's special advisor staff, although this can vary.

In recent years, the ADF has played a strong regional and international leadership role in incorporating a gender perspective into military operations. That includes multilateral planning activities such as multinational force standing operating procedures for the Asia-Pacific region. This leadership was made possible by the Chief of the Defence Forces' (CDF) commitment that the ADF would apply dedicated resources to meet our national and international obligations and to ensure that UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions are factored into all ADF operations from the strategic to tactical levels. This strategic commitment is reflected in Defence's WPS implementation plan.

The CDF's commitment resulted in the establishment of two key colonel-equivalent positions. One is the Director of the National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security (DNAP WPS), which addresses WPS implementation at the strategic level. The second is the Senior Gender Advisor at Joint Operational Command (JOC), which focuses on operational implementation.

The positions work together to advance UNSCR 1325's objectives. The DNAP WPS' primary role is international and national senior stakeholder coordination and engagement, and the JOC GENAD's role is to ensure that gender is considered at all stages in ADF and multinational operations and exercises.

The Army, Navy and RAAF also have dedicated positions at the lieutenant colonel-equivalent level to advance WPS within their own services by delivering service-specific doctrine, coordinating internal training and coordinating the assignment of trained GENADs for operations and exercises.

To date, more than 30 GENADs have deployed on operations and exercises.

The ADF's first rotations of senior GENAD positions were the colonel-equivalent gender advisor for NATO's Resolute Support mission and one of the first military GENAD positions in South Sudan.

The ADF also recently delivered the region's first operational gender advisor course, which focused on training US, ADF and DFAT personnel to fulfil GENAD roles on Exercise Talisman Sabre 2017 (EXTS17). The ADF Operational Gender Advisor course was piloted in June 2017 after an extensive training needs analysis, design and development process.

The course was developed to ensure that sufficient numbers of ADF personnel are trained to incorporate gender considerations into the Joint Military Appreciation Process, and into the execution of operations, which is key to implementing a gender perspective on operations. The ADF course was also designed to meet the growing demand and need for trained GENADs on multinational, bilateral and Australian-led operations and exercises.

Student evaluations of the pilot course were overwhelmingly positive. The greatest test of the training, however, occurred during EXTS17. Newly graduated students were required to fulfil the GENAD role within a complex, high-tempo operational scenario and performed very well.

To meet the high demand for this training, HQJOC delivered a second pilot course in October 2017. The ADF's Peace Operations Training Centre will deliver the course from late 2018.

Thanks to strong leadership by the Chief of Joint Operations, the CDF and the service chiefs, and to the efforts of those working in this important area, Australia is now positioned as a source of expertise in WPS. Other nations are looking to capitalise on the work done by the ADF.

'Next steps' include developing joint and service-specific doctrine, guides and tools to continue the ADF's work and to contribute to the next iteration of Australia's national action plan.

For print readers, the original piece with live links is at <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/wps-2018-navigating-operational-gender-agenda/>

Role of parliament and civil society

The view from Capital Hill

Gai Brodtmann and Linda Reynolds, 15 March 2018

Both of us entered politics to shape public policy and improve the lives of our community, our nation and, where possible, our world.

So, when [research](#) shows that peace lasts longer and conflict zones become more stable when the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) framework is implemented, we sit up, take notice and respond as leaders.

Since linking up a number of years ago to establish the bipartisan Parliamentary Friends of Defence, we've shared an interest in briefing our colleagues on the national security issues of the day, and highlighting the importance of inclusion to our defence capability and capacity.

Last year we hosted a roundtable discussion on the National Action Plan with a panel of experts. The discussion attracted considerable interest, even in the challenging, very busy final weeks of the parliamentary sitting period.

The event was such a success we will hold another roundtable in the first half of this year so that we can keep attention on the plan and explore any possible legislative gaps that need addressing in the next iteration. We'll also move motions to highlight the benefits of a gendered perspective to our national security and seek to embed the plan's principles in the platforms and policies of our parties.

National Action Plan updates are provided to Parliament, but only once every two years. If we're to realise cultural change, we have to create a sense of urgency about the plan and its broader agenda, so we'll request updates on an annual or twice-yearly basis.

And given the plan is critical to our national security and peace efforts, and as much about our defence capability and capacity as it is about gender, we'll suggest that the Minister for Defence, Minister for Foreign Affairs *and* the Minister for Women jointly update the Parliament—with all three shadow ministers responding in the spirit of bipartisanship.

The Defence annual report, which is also tabled in Parliament, is reviewed each year by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Defence Sub-Committee. The latest [report](#) provides a broad overview of Defence's commitment to the WPS agenda and an outline of some, but not all, of its actions. We will tease out the detail in the report review and discuss the option of a more fulsome account in future reports.

We'll also recommend that all future parliamentary visits to operations include briefings on the plan—and where possible, tours of the programs. At the moment it seems any discussion is treated as an optional extra, usually reserved for female parliamentarians and usually only on request. Consideration should also be given to including a National Action Plan stream in the Parliamentary Exchange Program.

We appreciate that the National Action Plan 2012–2018 was the first of its kind in Australia, and that when it was introduced it was still early days for the WPS process. Naturally, the focus was on establishing the architecture and mechanisms for getting the agenda up and running, taken seriously and embedded across government.

Six years on, attention now needs to focus on the intent of the plan—to foster a business-as-usual gendered perspective.

The existing plan provides a comprehensive list of what it bills as outcomes—strategies, dialogues, training sessions, working groups, roundtables, exhibitions, courses and networks—all important and necessary. But these aren't outcomes. They're outputs.

What did all these actions achieve? What attitudinal and behavioural change did they realise? What benefit did they deliver to women, girls and boys?

For the WPS agenda to become business as usual, the next plan needs to include a clear statement of mission, a set of meaningful and measurable outcomes, and rigorous quantitative *and* qualitative data to have a clear picture of what has changed, particularly in defence capability and capacity.

As a start, we suggest a change of name for the next plan, so priority is less on action and more on tangible results.

In the lead up to 2019, we'll work together and with our executives and colleagues to incorporate these suggestions into the next national action plan.

As friends and co-chairs of the Parliamentary Friends of Defence, we'll also continue to advocate for a gendered perspective in conflict zones, peace transition and resolution, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief.

For print readers, the original piece with live links is at <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/wps-2018-view-capital-hill/>

Civil society participation in WPS governance in Australia

Anu Mundkur and Laura J. Shepherd, 16 March 2018

In Australia, civil society organisations (CSOs) and individuals are deeply engaged in advocacy, lobbying and activism in women, peace and security (WPS) governance. For example, the campaign for the [Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012–2018](#) (NAP) was led by the Australian section of the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and UNIFEM Australia (now UN Women Australia) working with other locally based CSOs.

The advocacy work that laid the foundation for the NAP dates back to 2004 when WILPF received funding from the Commonwealth Office for Women to develop an Australian website promoting UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which highlighted the disproportionate effects of armed conflict on women and girls.

But despite their vital role in pushing for the national adoption of the WPS agenda, CSOs have no clear role in the NAP.

This [contrasts sharply with practice elsewhere](#):

[W]hereas in some NAPs, civil society is a cosignatory (such as in the Netherlands) or an implementing agency (such as in the Pacific Regional Action Plan), the Australian NAP does not explicitly mention civil society as responsible for any implementing actions.

Instead, CSOs are vaguely encouraged to develop shadow reports on progress. This restricted ‘watchdog’ function, however, comes without the power and resources required to effectively play this role.

So CSOs were left to create their own engagement with the NAP. This has taken two forms. First, the Annual Civil Society Dialogues and the Annual Civil Society Report Cards (funded by the Australian Civil-Military Centre) provide opportunities to talk about WPS and to present an implementation progress assessment.

Second, civil society has successfully lobbied to be represented on the inter-departmental working group that governs NAP. Even so, this representation doesn’t necessarily translate into meaningful opportunities to influence decisions and actions.

Women and women’s CSOs should have the right to participate in WPS governance because they have expertise that will help to meet the NAP’s goals and objectives. In Australia, there’s increasing evidence that expertise legitimises and secures the participation of civil society in peace and security governance.

WPS engagement in Australia is primarily driven by the CSOs in the [Australian Civil Society Coalition on Women Peace and Security](#). The coalition ‘brings together activists, feminists, practitioners, humanitarian actors and those with first-hand experience working in the frontline on issues relating to women, peace and security. Coalition members have wide ranging expertise in gender and peace.’

The coalition has organised a series of [community engagement roundtables](#) ‘to provide opportunity for the diverse women living in Australia and our region to express their views on what peace and security means in practice’. The intention is to anchor the next phase of Australian WPS policymaking in the voices, experiences and expertise of civil society.

That is a clear manifestation of the principle that civil society ownership of the WPS agenda means that civil society should participate in WPS governance. The coalition’s recent report, [*Listening to women’s voices and making the connections to the women, peace and security agenda*](#) highlights four key elements for developing a robust WPS framework and 12 critical issues the next NAP should address.

One of those is improving accountability. Poorly articulated mechanisms limit the extent to which government stakeholders in Australia can be held accountable to NAP commitments. In the case of Australia’s NAP, poor accountability is compounded by an [anaemic monitoring and evaluation framework](#) that relies on descriptions of actions taken rather than on outcomes.

Furthermore, allowing CSOs to participate could lead to higher levels of accountability. As mentioned previously, CSOs are currently only ‘encouraged to develop shadow progress reports’. Where this process fits within the overall framework of the NAP’s monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework isn’t identified. Neither is there any direction provided on what this shadow reporting process should involve, how the government will respond, or how those evaluations will be funded.

For Australia’s next NAP, CSOs are looking to significantly improve accountability through four distinct but interrelated measures. The first is to include CSO annual reports in the NAP’s overall reporting mechanism. The second would require that CSOs receive dedicated resources to support their reporting. The third is to table the annual report cards in Parliament. And the fourth is to require a formal response from the Australian government to the recommendations made in the report cards.

The lessons learned from Australia’s experience could usefully inform practice in other places, and enable improvements in civil society participation in the governance and implementation of WPS initiatives in Australia.

More broadly, taking seriously—and making possible, including through funding and direct consultation—women's civil society participation in WPS governance is essential to ensure the agenda's continued resonance, legitimacy and efficacy in world politics.

For print readers, the original piece with live links is at <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/wps-2018-civil-society-participation-wps-governance-australia/>

Lessons from abroad

Feminist foreign policy in Australia

Jacqui True, 9 March 2018

Sweden was the first country in the world to boldly stake out a feminist foreign policy in 2015, claiming that the pursuit of gender equality is '[not only a goal in itself](#)' but also a means of achieving other goals—such as peace, security and sustainable development'. The country's foreign minister Margot Wallstrom, argues that '[a feminist approach is a self-evident](#) and necessary part of a modern view of today's global challenges'.

Justin Trudeau's government in Canada followed suit in 2017, announcing that it was also embracing a feminist foreign policy, particularly focused on providing international assistance to women's rights organisations and [sending more women soldiers on international peacekeeping operations](#).

Australia has also pursued a gender strategy since 2016, making gender equality and women's empowerment part of its core foreign policy objectives. However the [2017 Foreign Policy White Paper](#) was widely seen as [a missed opportunity to advance a more feminist foreign policy](#).

Effective foreign policy must always begin at home. This year we have already seen some major opportunities and constraints for promoting feminist principles in Australian foreign policy. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's reference to the #Me Too challenge to conventional gender power relations as he announced the [sex ban on ministerial relationships with staffers](#) has implications for international politics as well.

With our prime minister apparently attuned to these developments—which affect domestic and international politics equally—2018 may be an opportune time to push further for commitments to gender equality and women's rights in Australian foreign policy.

But the announcement in January that Australia plans to become [one of the top ten arms exporters in the world](#) within a decade could be a setback for the full implementation of WPS given the disproportionate impact of arms on civilians and their use to perpetrate sexual and gender-based violence.

While the Turnbull government says it will primarily focus on boosting exports to the US, UK, Canada and New Zealand, it will also target markets in Asia and the Middle East.

Currently 29% of all weapons produced in the world go to the Middle East (to Saudi Arabia and UAE), where they are then known to be distributed to conflict parties perpetrating human rights abuses against civilians, for example [in Yemen](#).

Of course, Sweden is also an arms exporter, the 11th largest in the world and the third largest per capita. This while purporting to have a feminist foreign policy with human rights at its centre. To address that apparent contradiction, Sweden passed a law in 2017 to limit exports to non-democratic countries.

Similarly, Australia's commitment to grow its [defence budget to 2% of GDP by 2020–21](#) has implications not only for Australia's foreign aid and development budgets ([defence spending](#) is already 10 times that of aid spending). The push to increase defence and military expenditure also has implications for women's security, particularly in countries engaged in peace processes that Australia is currently supporting.

In our Australian Research Council Linkage Project ‘[Toward Inclusive Peace: Analysing Gender-Sensitive Peace Agreements 2000–2016](#)’, my colleagues and I found that an increase of just 1% in a country’s military expenditure as a percentage of GDP makes it less likely that peace agreements will have provisions to ensure gender equality and women’s rights after conflict.

What this means is that resources used to build up the military (purchased from Australia, the US, the UK, Sweden, Canada, etc.) may lead to reductions in other expenditures such as in education, health services and industry investment. These directly support post-conflict recovery.

I suggest four actions that the government should adopt to ensure such trade does not aid and abet human rights violations.

First, Australia should seriously consider following Sweden’s lead and pass a domestic law to prohibit arms exports to countries where they could be used to harm civilians. Such an approach would ensure that Australia upholds the UN Arms Trade Treaty, especially the clauses that prohibit the export of weapons used to perpetrate human rights abuses, including gender-based violence, which [Australia as a UN Security Council member in 2013 strongly advocated](#).

Second, Australia should make its foreign aid conditional on governments ending impunity for sexual and gender-based violence and adopting transitional justice mechanisms for victims. In the short term this may affect Australia’s economic investments. But Australia’s seat on the UN Human Rights Council involves leading on the protection of human rights and pushing back on egregious incursions to women’s rights around the world.

Third, Australia should prioritise support for women’s [peacebuilding in Myanmar](#), where [Australia is a major bilateral donor to the peace process](#), and in Iraq and Syria. If we are ready to fund military deployments and military training, we should be ready to support women’s peacebuilding.

Finally, Australia should adopt a government-wide, gender-based approach to preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism, recognising the connection between violent extremist acts and acts of gender-based violence, and [involving women’s leadership and participations in communities within Australia and our region](#).

A feminist foreign policy may be the smart option for Australia, grasping the growing sentiment among citizens of both great and small powers that respect for their human rights is not negotiable.

For print readers, the original piece with live links is at <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/wps-2018-feminist-foreign-policy-australia/>

Common challenges for NAP development—Germany and Australia

Jacqueline Westermann, 6 April 2018

In 2015, the UN Security Council published its global study on Resolution 1325, assessing [the implementation of the women, peace and security \(WPS\) agenda](#) over the past 15 years. The report recognised the importance of countries sharing lessons and best practices in the development and implementation of national action plans (NAPs) to ‘enhance transparency and facilitate exchange of learning’.

There’s over a decade of experience for countries to draw on in the development of NAPs. Following Denmark’s lead as the first country to launch its NAP in 2005, at least [73 UN member states have now launched NAPs](#). The Australian government developed its first NAP in 2012 and is due to formulate its second NAP by 2019.

There’s an opportunity for Australia to draw on the lessons of other countries in developing its next NAP. Germany provides a particularly interesting case study. Germany [shares many of the same values and security interests](#) as Australia when it comes to the role of international organisations and the rule of law. And as the security and defence relationship between the two countries continues to grow, WPS could provide an area for further strategic engagement.

Germany renewed its NAP last year. The revised NAP focuses on five thematic ‘focal points’:

- Integrating a gender perspective into the prevention of violence
- Including more female leadership at all levels of conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict design
- Including women’s and girls’ perspectives in development, peace and security policies
- Countering sexual and gender-based violence and strengthening international criminal jurisdiction to punish such violence when it occurs
- Strengthening the women, peace and security agenda and promoting it at the national, regional and international level. This is a largely new focal area.

To ensure that Australia’s next NAP will be a better product that delivers more efficiently, a sharper focus on three areas might be helpful:

First, the timeframe. The implementation of Australia’s first NAP began in 2012. By mid-2019, it’ll have been in place for six-and-a-half years. Comparatively, Germany’s first NAP was in place for three years, and the current one will be renewed in 2020, also after three years.

Shorter time-frames can allow for the setting of more specific goals and aims; faster adjustments to changes in conflicts and the general WPS agenda; and better learning curves from assessment to new implementation.

Second, in the NAP’s *reviewing and assessment phase* there’s a need to include sufficient resource commitments from the government, especially to facilitate civil-society involvement during the NAP implementation process.

Learning from a lack of communication between civil society and the federal government, Germany has now established a consultative group with members from civil society and the inter-ministerial working groups on WPS and the NAP. Having previously held only one annual meeting with civil society, Germany’s current NAP calls for the consultative group to meet at least twice a year.

Meeting more frequently, the group has access to technical and operational details to discuss monitoring, strategic and thematic issues, as well as more easily facilitating implementation. This is important because Australian government representatives stated that meeting the outcomes specified in report from the [Australia’s WPS Coalition’s fifth civil society dialogue](#) are vital to the next NAP’s formulation.

Third, Germany’s experience suggests that when deciding on the *content of the next NAP*, Australia needs to consider global developments in its review. For example, Germany’s experience with migrants and refugees at home and abroad has shaped its approach to its second NAP. It now includes specific measures to uphold ‘the protection and reintegration of women and girls who are fleeing their homes’.

This includes measures that refer to domestic implementation measures related to ‘protection in refugee housing throughout Germany’. Therefore, while most of Germany’s NAP remains externally focused on specific regions worldwide (mainly post-conflict and conflict-affected areas), it has also considered the application of WPS within its domestic security sphere.

Similar steps could be taken by the Australian government to consider more broadly domestic aspects of Australia’s next NAP. For example, the WPS Coalition’s report mentioned above argues that a variety of women’s security perspectives need to be included.

For example, indigenous women and women in displaced communities often have different concerns regarding their own security. Australia would benefit from analysing how other countries engage diverse women’s voices to ensure that its next NAP is responsive to domestic security concerns and inequality.

As the Australian government and civil society groups review Australia's current NAP, there are many lessons that can and should be taken into account from other countries. After all, as the global study acknowledges, NAPs will be strengthened through the sharing of best practices and lessons learned from other countries' experiences. Germany's experience provides a particularly useful case study. Australia should learn from it and other countries' experiences to advance the WPS agenda at home and abroad.

For print readers, the original piece with live links is at <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/wps-2018-common-challenges-nap-development-germany-australia/>

Evolving approaches to WPS

A 'new deal' for Australian female veterans

Matthew Nash, 12 April 2018

In previous discussions on this topic, both the Minister of Defence and her fellow parliamentarians have suggested that Australia's next National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) should place greater emphasis on improving opportunities and removing barriers for women.

In my view, that requires greater emphasis on robust 'outcomes', not just collecting data on 'outputs'. It should demand the development of new thinking, the provision of new resources and the will to implement new policy if existing culture or tradition is to be challenged.

Australia's first NAP was centred largely on issues external to Australian society—that is, outcomes to formalise policy and resource support for women in insecure or conflict situations. However, discussions on drafting the next NAP have raised questions about addressing women's perceptions and notions of security internal to Australia. That discussion should include perspectives from female Australian Defence Force (ADF) veterans, as well as the support provided to them.

Australia's first NAP on WPS supported gains across key areas, including participation. Although limited in scope, it provided direction and ensured that the WPS agenda has become integral to Australia's future thinking about what women bring to all areas of Defence's operational capability. A headline objective of Strategy 2 of the first NAP in 2012 was increasing the participation of women in all aspects of Defence by removing all gender-based employment restrictions.

Defence is enjoying the benefits of this decision as women excel in areas that weren't only legally closed, but seen by many as physically and mentally unsuited to females. This increase in professional opportunities has given a new generation of women unfettered opportunities to support key NAP strategies in Australia's security environment.

On average, an ADF member serves for approximately 10 years. By 2022, most ADF members will have served at least once in direct combat or other high-intensity operational combat roles. Many of them will have served in such environments several times.

A generation of female combat veterans will also make up a larger part of this group than ever before. Successful efforts to increase the participation of women in combat roles, and the benefits to the peace and security environment that these women bring, demands accountability in how we care for these same female veterans.

Women's perspectives of war and the way Australian society perceives their service is complex. Traditional views of maternal duties, a societal bias towards females being non-violent caregivers, and ingrained expectations of women in the veteran community as widows and carers leave female veterans isolated rather than included.

Women's experiences of conflict, like men's, are individual and personal. But just like male warriors, it should be assumed that a common and uniquely female perspective of combat and service will generate different needs in the post-combat and post-service period. A new gender-based perspective needs to be considered when redeveloping veterans' services and the way we collectively commemorate military service in Australian society.

In 1917 Australian society developed the first of many ‘contracts’ with Australian warriors, with repatriation and then veterans’ policies established. These services were created for the requirements of men, and were provided and approved in large part by men. An ‘outcome’ of the next NAP should include analysis and development of a veterans’ ‘new deal’, one that takes into account that Australia’s warriors are not a gender-specific group.

Although all veteran groups, both government and private, strive to be inclusive, it has been up to a limited number of under-resourced groups like the [Women Veterans Network Australia](#) to identify a specific female perspective. A new perspective on veterans’ services and support is needed. Identifying and implementing these services is essential to providing the ‘full circle’ implementation of successful outcomes of women’s full participation in Australia’s security and aid missions.

This challenge isn’t just one for Defence given that it’s based on a social contract between the nation and the warrior. For 100 years, the ‘combat veteran’ has been defined as a male. The NAP should take this opportunity to expand its focus and seek whole-of-nation ‘input’ and allocate responsibilities for ‘outcomes’ related to redefining veteran services in Australia.

The participation of women in combat has been a significant social change. It requires a similar change in our view of veterans, and of the services and support provided by society as a whole.

The redrafting of the NAP provides a unique opportunity for leadership in the development of a national outcome focussing on the reality of female veterans. The Australian government has rightly committed to increasing women’s participation in the ADF as part of its efforts to strengthen WPS. It’s now time to ensure that those efforts are complemented by a gender-responsive approach to our female veterans.

For print readers, the original piece with live links is at <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/wps-2018-new-deal-australian-female-veterans/>

Connecting displacement and the WPS agenda

Katrina Lee-Koo, 21 March 2018

According to the UNHCR, women and girls make up around 50% of the 65.6 million displaced people worldwide. They experience unique vulnerabilities when displaced by conflict, including increased risk of gender-based violence, trafficking and child marriage. They may also have compelling insights into conflict that could harness largely untapped capacities for peacebuilding. Protecting women and girls from such harms, and including them in peacebuilding efforts, are the foundations of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda.

Yet very few Western states seek to align their domestic refugee and asylum policies with their WPS policymaking. In fact, there’s a general blind spot in WPS policymaking when it comes to ensuring the rights of displaced women worldwide.

Why is that? Some argue that the Security Council resolutions that constitute the WPS agenda address the experiences of women in conflict-affected zones, rather than the experiences of conflict-affected women who may have been displaced from their country of origin. Once women become stateless, the WPS responsibilities of UN member states to these women becomes opaque.

This is primarily because the WPS resolutions don’t require UN members who aren’t party to a conflict (such as Australia) to protect displaced women as a WPS concern.

Actions in the WPS resolutions relating to displaced women only apply to conflict parties and UN agencies. UN Security Council resolutions (UNSCR) 1325 (2000) and 1889 (2009) call upon *parties to armed conflict* to respect refugee camps and settlements. UNSCR 1325 also calls upon *parties to armed conflict* to ‘fully respect international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, especially civilians’. The focus on conflict zones and actors seems to push displaced women to the margins for other member states like Australia.

However, five of the eight resolutions do speak of displacement in their preambles. In those preambles, the unique vulnerabilities of displaced women are acknowledged. Specifically, the preamble of [UNSCR 2122 \(2013\)](#) notes that ‘unequal citizenship rights, gender-biased application of asylum laws, and obstacles to registering and accessing identity documents’ underpin conflict-affected women’s vulnerabilities.

In addition, the preambles acknowledge the negative impact that women’s displacement has on peace and security. These consistent preambulatory references to displaced women clearly identifies them as a core focus of the WPS agenda.

So where does this leave UN member states like Australia in thinking through their WPS obligations to women displaced by conflict?

The actions identified in Australia’s current [National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security](#) (NAP) are, at best, tokenistic. The Department of Immigration and Border Protection isn’t an implementing agency and the NAP’s implementation plan has only one relevant action—to ‘ensure Australia’s humanitarian assistance and recovery programs in conflict and post-conflict situations respect applicable international human rights and refugee law in regards to women and girls ...’. That action is assigned to AusAID (now a part of DFAT).

Moreover, this action has no corresponding reporting measure. Consequently, there’s no monitoring under Australia’s current NAP of its engagement with conflict-affected displaced women. Nor is its domestic asylum or immigration policy required to align with the NAP. This is best evident in the current Rohingya crisis [where DFAT acknowledges the unique experiences of women](#) in responding to the crisis but this response doesn’t connect with asylum policy.

This presents an opportunity. The newly established Department of Home Affairs has a broad remit across domestic and foreign policy in a range of WPS-relevant areas. These include asylum policy, [violent extremism](#), counterterrorism, and disaster management and recovery. The department clearly has a part to play in the design and implementation of the next Australian NAP.

Globally, we’re seeing such integration between asylum and WPS policies in a number of countries:

- The [first Irish NAP \(2011\)](#) includes strong language on the links between displacement and WPS: ‘Ireland’s first NAP advances understanding of the obligations of UNSCR 1325 ... to include reference to migrant women and girls, including asylum seekers, affected by conflict’.
- The [second French NAP \(2015\)](#) commits the country to ‘increase consideration of issues linked to gender and violence against women in asylum procedures’.
- [Canada’s 2017 NAP](#) includes its immigration agency as a supporting NAP partner with its own implementation plan.

These approaches might provide some inspiration for how the Department of Home Affairs might be involved in the second NAP. First, they offer a more generous reading of the UNSCRs by considering the circumstances of conflict-affected women wherever they reside.

Second, they commit to provisions such as prioritising and supporting conflict-affected women through asylum assessment systems, facilitating their settlement and integration, and addressing their unique vulnerabilities after settlement.

Third, they endeavour to align NAPs with both domestic policy (such as asylum and countering violent extremism policies) and other international instruments—in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which has strong WPS reporting that can be leveraged in NAPs.

In creating a system for conflict-affected women that treats them with respect throughout their journey from their homeland to resettlement, these states also create coherence between their domestic and foreign policy. As Australia begins to design its next NAP, this should provide food for thought.

For print readers, the original piece with live links is at <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/wps-2018-connecting-displacement-wps-agenda/>

Modern slavery and WPS

Susan Hutchinson and Chris Crewther, 31 March 2018

The Da'esh terror group's genocide of the Yazidi people in Iraq was recognised in a [House of Representatives motion](#) in late February. The motion condemned the extermination campaign, including the use of sexual violence, and called for those responsible to be made accountable.

This was the last of three motions calling for the investigation and prosecution of individuals who perpetrated sexual violence for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide while fighting with the terror group, also known as Islamic State, in Syria and Iraq.

It is hoped that parliamentarians consider and link these motions to the ongoing work on a modern slavery act, which the Australian government has already committed to pass this year. That follows the Foreign Affairs and Aid Sub-Committee's inquiry into modern slavery legislation last year.

The need to protect people from sexual violence in armed conflict, and to end the impunity of those responsible, is the driving force behind more than half of the United Nations Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). But, in 2016, the Security Council also passed [Resolution 2331](#) on human trafficking in areas affected by armed conflict.

The resolution called on all member states to investigate and prosecute those responsible, recognising that such crimes 'can be part of the strategic objectives and ideology of, and used as a tactic by, certain terrorist groups'. The Security Council went on to note that trafficking contributes to the 'funding and sustainment' of organisations like Da'esh, but also Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and the Lord's Resistance Army.

While media reporting has highlighted how Da'esh used the promise of sex slaves as a recruitment incentive, what is less known is the financial value of the sex slave market to ongoing military operations. Da'esh published a [price list of 'spoils of war'](#), including Yazidi women and children as sex slaves, sold in dedicated markets. It has also been reported that Yazidi virgins had been [auctioned via social media networks for over \\$12,000 each](#).

It is estimated that nearly 200 Australians travelled to Syria and Iraq to fight with Da'esh, and many of those foreign fighters are believed to have been involved in sexual violence as part of the genocide of the Yazidis. [Journalists recorded testimony](#) of Yazidi women who identified an Australian man who bought them at a slave market in Raqqa, held them in captivity, and both physically and sexually abused them.

[While no attempt was made to charge the individual identified by those victims](#), Khaled Sharrouf, he has since been reportedly killed in a drone strike. Australia's Attorney-General and foreign minister have stated that Australians allegedly responsible for sexual violence while fighting with Da'esh will be investigated and prosecuted.

[Despite the challenges](#), the Commonwealth Directorate of Public Prosecutions is mandated to, and does, pursue prosecutions for the crimes of slavery and sexual servitude. These crimes and human trafficking are criminalised under [Divisions 270 and 271](#) of the Commonwealth Criminal Code. Slavery and sexual servitude can also be war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Australia has recently updated its war crimes legislation to ensure that it covers members of organisations like Da'esh, but the last time an Australian court heard a war crimes case was 1951. Slavery legislation may be a more effective way to bring justice to the survivors of these crimes. Both the war crimes and the slavery legislation have universal jurisdiction, so the location of the crime and the nationality of the victim are no legal barrier to prosecution.

Thousands of Yazidis were sold into sexual slavery by Da'esh in Syria and Iraq. Hundreds of Yazidis have now been resettled in Australia as part of the government's humanitarian program. Many of them want to tell their stories and are seeking justice for the crimes perpetrated against them.

One such survivor was 15 years old when she was [captured by Da'esh while she was fleeing to Mount Sinjar](#). Nihad's sister was sold to a Da'esh fighter:

She was then raped and beaten repeatedly. When the fighter died in combat, she was sold to a man she referred to as a monster, who kept her and other Yazidi girls as slaves. Nihad was further raped and beaten and then fell pregnant. Nihad gave birth to her son in July 2015. When she managed to escape, she was unable to take her young baby with her and the baby was forced to remain with the father, a member of ISIL. She's never seen the baby again.

UNSCR 2331 states 'that trafficking in persons undermines the rule of law and contributes to other forms of transnational organized crime, which can exacerbate conflict and foster insecurity and instability and undermine development'. It also encourages member states to align their planning frameworks on WPS with those on human trafficking and modern slavery to ensure they're mutually reinforcing.

Australia is now in the process of developing both a modern slavery act and a new national action plan on WPS. The final report of the Foreign Affairs and Aid Sub-Committee's inquiry into establishing a modern slavery act, [Hidden in plain sight](#), calls on the government to appoint [an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner](#), whose role would complement that of the Ambassador for People Smuggling and Human Trafficking. Perhaps this new commissioner could also play a role in connecting the issues surrounding modern slavery to the WPS agenda.

Now is the time to align those two bodies of work and to prosecute those responsible for sexual violence.

For print readers, the original piece with live links is at <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/wps-2018-modern-slavery-wps/>

Towards aligning and integrating the P/CVE and WPS agendas

Sofia Patel, 28 March 2018

Women's empowerment and equality are vital to achieving international and national security and stability. [Empirical research has demonstrated](#) that women's advancement is key to reducing political violence. It's therefore [crucial that women occupy a seat at the negotiating table](#) when designing and implementing programs or policies concerning security and development, including those related to counterterrorism and preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE).

There has been international recognition through [various UN Security Council resolutions](#) of the diverse roles that women play relative to political violence (including in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, perpetrating violence, peace-building and reconstruction).

Still, [very little progress](#) has been made towards recognising P/CVE as an integral component of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda. This is predominantly [due to long-term concerns](#) about the operational and conceptual challenges to integrating P/CVE within WPS.

There are three clear barriers towards integration. Firstly, the conceptual discussions and operational implementation of P/CVE needs to be separated from those about counterterrorism, which are perceived to be rooted in hard security practices such as military and intelligence operations.

Secondly, as Chantal de Jonge Oudraat astutely points out in [A man's world?](#), good practices for aligning WPS and P/CVE are made more difficult due to engrained gender roles within the two fields. Women predominantly lead in WPS. In contrast, P/CVE has traditionally been understood as an extension of security and intelligence operations, where men generally lead.

Academics and practitioners internationally have corroborated this view. For example, the LSE's 'Key Issues Report on P/CVE and WPS' and the [Global Counterterrorism Forum](#)'s 'Good Practices on Women and CVE' papers highlight the inadequate levels of gender training among P/CVE practitioners. They also point to an insufficient understanding of how to situate gender equality sustainably at the heart of P/CVE.

Finally, there exists a fundamental distrust between WPS and P/CVE practitioners to carry out their respective priorities to appropriate standards. For example, WPS practitioners are concerned about the danger of P/CVE policy and practice ‘[instrumentalising women’s rights and gender equality for intelligence purposes](#)’. While it’s fair to say that promoting gender equality traditionally hasn’t been [integral to the international community’s response to extremism](#), it’s also necessary to recognise that this isn’t always the case.

P/CVE is still a relatively underdeveloped field, with no single definition, objectives or goal. The WPS agenda must take this into consideration and not unilaterally write off P/CVE agendas due to perceptions about the hard-security focus that most governments initially favoured.

As P/CVE research has developed, far more nuanced policy and practice have been developed. An outcome of this is that there’s much more diversity in interpreting the extent of law enforcement involvement in P/CVE. Especially in prevention, there appears to be an attempt to move away from hard security and intelligence-led approaches towards non-coercive measures rooted in social policy.

P/CVE initiatives can take many forms, but a common thread emphasises the importance of dialogue and education, especially through coordinating government and non-government actors. So P/CVE policy and programs don’t necessarily tackle violent extremism directly. Rather they focus on building resilience, and promoting the values of citizenship and human rights. These objectives don’t differ extraordinarily from those advocated by WPS proponents.

There are a number of grassroots programs internationally that are doing excellent work to engage women in a broad range of P/CVE programs that also address the WPS agenda’s core priorities. These initiatives bridge the gap between P/CVE and WPS.

Examples of best practice and lessons learned in P/CVE initiatives internationally appear in recent papers from [The Berghof Foundation](#) and [The GSDRC](#). Reading those programs’ aims and objectives makes it clear that there are links between WPS and P/CVE agendas that could be harnessed, allowing for a deeper and more holistic understanding of women’s roles in political violence.

For example, a pilot initiative in Lebanon called Empowering Women Countering Extremism trained and empowered young professionals (men and women) in the area of women’s involvement in CVE online and offline. The goal was to equip individuals with the necessary tools to understand and protect human rights values by promoting ‘[peaceful coexistence, interfaith dialogue and reconciliation](#)’.

Research has demonstrated that [women’s rights directly affect national and international security](#) and stability. For example, in Bangladesh, poverty is one of the main drivers of radicalisation towards violent extremism. As such, the [government has integrated gender perspectives into their long-term CVE strategy](#), which aims to lift women and girls out of poverty by promoting education, business opportunities and employment initiatives.

The barriers to aligning the WPS and P/CVE agendas should be slowly and cautiously dismantled. As Australia prepares to develop its second national action plan, it’s important to pay attention to the work that is being done by women internationally in the P/CVE space to examine where there are mutual priorities and challenges.

If [gender equality is a basic requirement to achieving peace and security](#), then we cannot ignore terrorism and violent extremism, which are key gendered drivers of insecurity and instability. There are clear opportunities for collaboration between WPS and P/CVE in knowledge sharing and skills development.

By continuing to pursue parallel agendas, [as pointed out by Katrina Lee-Koo and Jacqui True](#), the WPS and P/CVE agendas miss these important opportunities. That stunts meaningful progress and sustainable development on both sides.

For print readers, the original piece with live links is at <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/wps-2018-towards-aligning-integrating-p-cve-wps-agendas/>

Dispelling myths and identifying future action

Lisa Sharland, 13 April 2018

Since International Women's Day this year, ASPI has been [running a series of pieces](#) about a range of national and domestic security issues as they relate to women's participation, engagement, leadership and perspectives on what is commonly known as the 'women, peace and security (WPS) agenda'.

Many of these pieces focused on some of the [steps taken](#) to implement Australia's current National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS, as well as identifying potential reforms relating to the [range of issues covered](#), [civil society consultation mechanisms](#) and [parliamentary engagement mechanisms](#) that need to form part of Australia's next NAP.

There's a lot Australia [can learn from other countries](#) as it starts to revise the NAP. And Australia has lessons it can share with other countries. But there are several key challenges that need to be addressed if Australia is to ensure that it [continues to gain ground on WPS](#) and resist some international efforts to roll back progress on women's equality and progress on peace and security.

First, WPS isn't just relevant to the [external aspects](#) of Australia's security, but also requires consideration of what's happening within Australia's borders. This has been a key finding from [civil society report cards](#) on the NAP, which have frequently highlighted the importance of consulting women on their own perceptions of security, as well as developing 'a domestic program built around addressing inequality'. Yet for now, domestic security considerations aren't a key consideration in the NAP.

Australia isn't alone in this externally focused approach. Many Western and European countries that don't suffer from internal conflict or post-conflict challenges historically do the same. Yet security issues such as violent extremism, terrorism and migration have started to fundamentally shift thinking about this approach.

For Australia, this means that there's a role not only for DFAT, Defence and AFP in foreign policy, deployments or offshore activities, but also for agencies that have a domestic focus, [such as Home Affairs](#). Those agencies need to step up and engage substantively in committing to WPS.

Second, there's a need for sustainable funding and accountability across government to implement the agenda. The UN experience has shown that despite the international political commitment to WPS, battles continue to be fought in the budgetary committee about [funding key posts](#) in the field in delivering the agenda.

There has been some progress in Australia. Take the example of DFAT's [Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy](#), which commits the department to ensuring that 80% of aid investment must address gender issues. While the success of this as a benchmark is yet to be measured, it's a step in the right direction.

Parliament plays a particularly key role in making sure that there's accountability across government in delivering on WPS commitments. [Recommendations](#) put forward by Gai Brodtmann and Linda Reynolds identify a bipartisan approach to ensuring that WPS receives more priority at the highest levels of government thinking on security, and warrants particular attention.

Third, WPS needs to be included as a core part of international security discussions when formulating [foreign](#) and defence policy. WPS is [often forgotten](#) during a crisis, or given less priority in discussions around so-called 'hard security' issues. It has historically been a 'nice to have' item that's sidelined—left to be discussed by a group of women with an interest in it rather than being considered as a key part of the agenda.

WPS isn't simply a 'soft' security issue, a 'women's issue' or a 'UN issue'. In the context of a military operation, failure to consider gender perspectives can have dire consequences for overall outcomes and mission success. Gender perspectives need to be considered at the outset of any policy analyses, international engagement programs, mission planning and intelligence assessments.

Defence's commitment to [operationalising the agenda](#) has seen it make considerable strides in addressing some of these deficits, yet there's still more work to be done to ensure that WPS is a routine consideration, rather than an exception.

Finally, there's a need to have a diversity of voices at the table. Women aren't homogeneous, and neither are their views or perspectives on security issues. Indigenous groups, [refugees](#) and [veterans](#) are just some of the groups that have previously been overlooked. We have to be careful that the way we frame the women, peace and security agenda isn't framed by [traditional masculine notions of security](#). That requires that women be represented and take part in the discussion.

The WPS 2018 series—like most analyses on WPS—contained an overwhelming number of female contributors, reversing the usual underrepresentation of women in security debates. This therefore provides a good opportunity to encourage any female analysts, academics, practitioners or experts out there to [contact our editorial team](#) to contribute to *The Strategist*.

More women and greater diversity in those contributing to the debate will only serve to strengthen the nature of our discussions around international security, including Australia's approach to WPS.

For print readers, the original piece with live links is at <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/wps-2018-dispelling-myths-identifying-future-action/>

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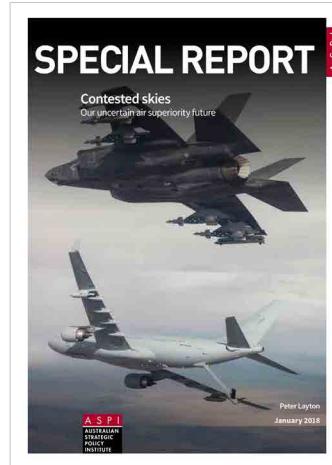
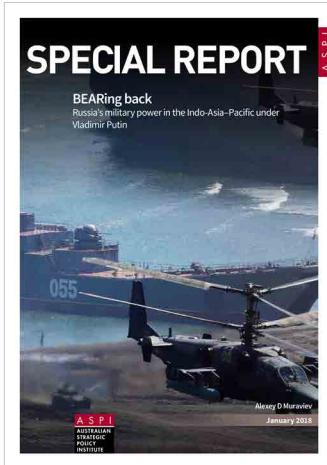
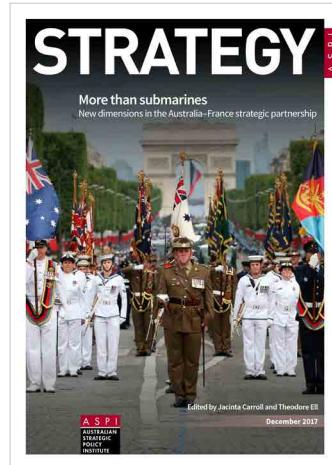
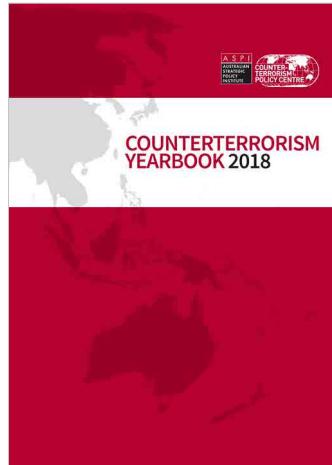
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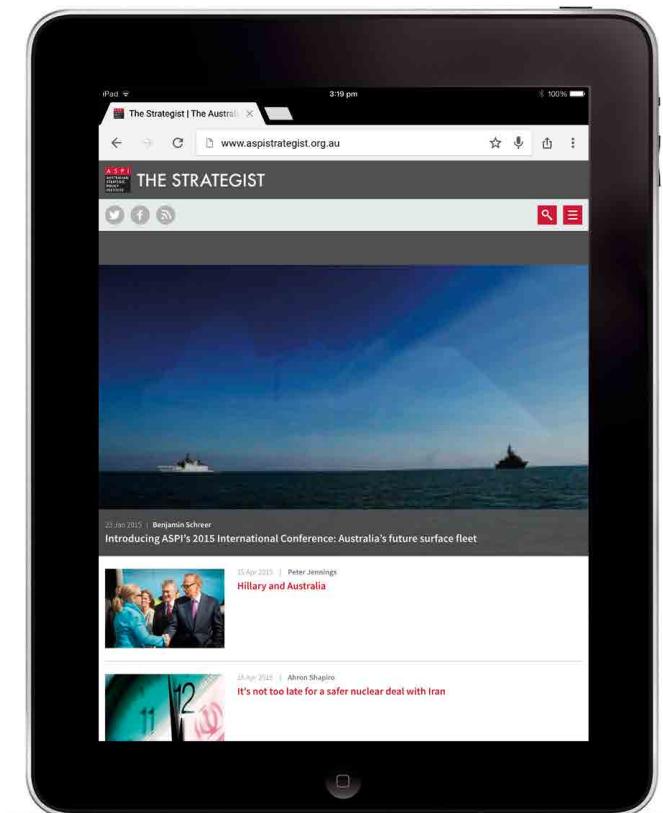


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Women, peace and security

Addressing the gaps and strengthening implementation