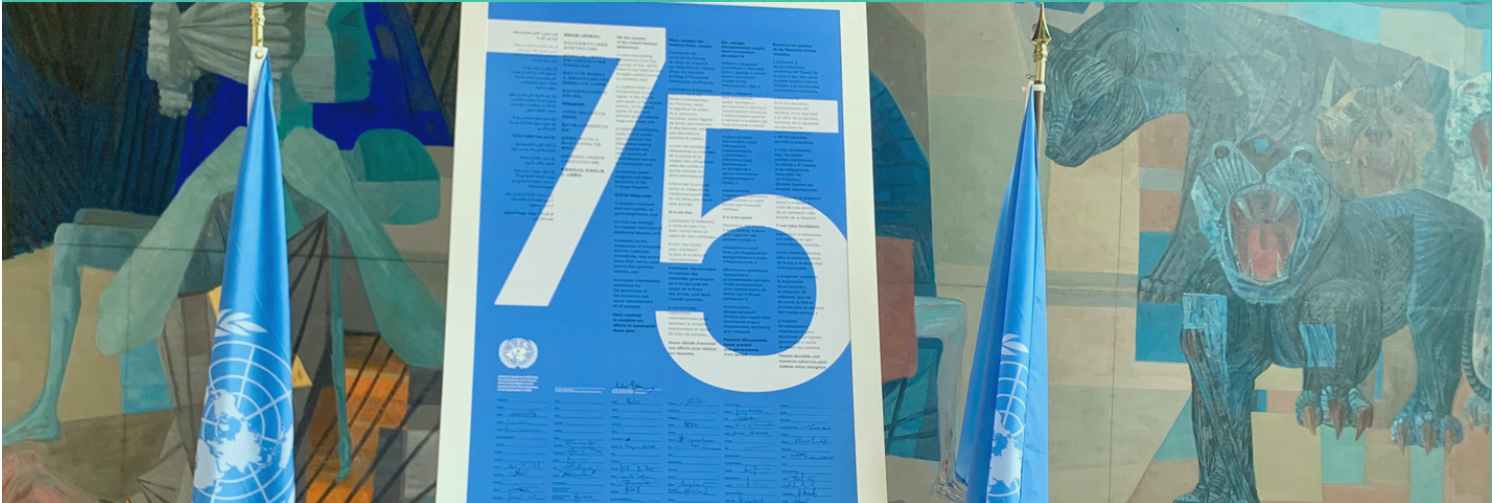


OCTOBER 2020: ISSUE #5

# AUSTRALIA AT THE UN



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## Message from Ambassador The Hon Mitch Fifield

UN75 festivities continued this month with the official UN Day commemoration, recognising 75 years since the entry into force of the UN Charter.

The drafting of the UN Charter remains a remarkable achievement.

While the world is dramatically different to the one the Charter's drafters inhabited, the document continues to represent our highest aspirations to establish an international order based on rules, not might.

To mark UN Day, I had the pleasure of joining Australia's UN Youth Representative, Lucy Stronach, and former Deputy Permanent Representative at the Belize Mission to the UN, Dr Janine Felson, for a roundtable discussion organised by the UN Association of Australia (UNAA).

Our discussion reflected on the UN's 75-year history, explored the continued importance of the UN system in confronting global challenges – such as a pandemic – and examined the reforms needed to ensure the UN is fit-for-purpose and ready to meet the challenges of the future.

Thank you to the UNAA for organising the discussion and for their long-standing advocacy in support of the UN system.

This month we also marked Mental Health Week, an opportunity to raise community awareness and understanding of mental illness, reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with people living with mental illness, and promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

During Mental Health Week, the Australian Mission joined colleagues from across Australia's diplomatic network by wearing something 'blue' in an acknowledgement that everyone has blue days, and that we're all in this together.

Members of the Mission also gathered for a socially-distanced morning tea to mark 'Wear it Blue' day and discuss individual strategies for coping with stress and anxiety.

With the UN General Assembly Committee season in full swing, the Australian Mission would like to thank Member States and the UN Secretariat for their continued efforts in adapting meetings and negotiations to a part virtual and in-person format. The pandemic presents many challenges to conducting business as usual at the UN, but we continue to see a willingness and determination to prosecute important committee work.

## 20 years of Women, Peace and Security

**It has been 20 years since the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 – Women, Peace, and Security (WPS).**

The Resolution called for a more peaceful and inclusive world, and one that actively addresses the root causes of gender inequality – including harmful norms and inequitable structures – and was the first in a package of resolutions on WPS that recognise the differentiated impact of conflict on women and girls, and seek to strengthen women's participation, protection and rights in all stages of conflict.

Marking the 20th anniversary this month, Member States demonstrated strong support for the WPS agenda at the annual UN Security Council debate.

For Australia, the WPS agenda remains as relevant now as it was 20 years ago. Our national statement highlighted actions Australia has taken to implement the WPS agenda, including:

- Efforts to promote and protect women's and girls' rights;
- Support for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, including the provision of sexual and reproductive health services;
- Meeting Uniformed Gender Parity targets;
- Funding the Elsie Initiative to increase the meaningful participation of uniformed women in peacekeeping operations;
- Renewing our support for the Global Facility and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund to advance women's participation, academic partnerships, and women-led grassroots organisations pivoting towards COVID-19; and
- Supporting the PeaceFem App through the Towards Inclusive Peace project: an innovative digital tool to share strategies on gender-sensitive peace processes with practitioner.



While progress has been made on promoting women's and girls' rights and addressing gender inequality and conflict, COVID-19 risks eroding these gains and setting back important progress on the WPS agenda.

As we mark this significant anniversary, Australia remains committed to the full implementation of the WPS agenda and to achieving women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peacebuilding, crisis response and prevention at all levels, in order to realise the promise of a more peaceful and inclusive world.

Australia's national statement is available at:

[unmy.mission.gov.au/unmy/Lateststatements](https://unmy.mission.gov.au/unmy/Lateststatements)

## Australian nominated to lead the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty Organisation

**Australia has a long and active commitment to establishing a ban on nuclear weapons tests.**

In September, Australia nominated Dr Robert Floyd as Australia's candidate for Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive-Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty (CTBTO).

The CTBTO plays a critical role in achieving an end to nuclear weapons testing worldwide, and a global ban on all nuclear explosions.

A scientist and diplomat, Dr Floyd is currently the Director-General of the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office (ASNO), which implements the CTBT, as well as Australia's NPT safeguards and physical security commitments, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and 25 Bilateral Nuclear Cooperation Agreements.

To find out more about Dr Floyd's candidacy, we asked a few questions about his background, experience and why he wants to lead the CTBTO.

### **Why is Australia running a candidate for the position of Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO)?**

Australia has long been associated with the CTBT.

Having advocated at a high political level since the 1980s for a global ban on nuclear weapons tests, it was Australia that brought the CTBT text into the UN General Assembly for endorsement in 1996, triggering the treaty's opening for signature.

I think many UN Missions in New York would be aware of Australia's advocacy for the CTBT, including our co-leading on the annual UNGA CTBT Resolution and co-chairing of the Friends of the CTBT Ministerial process.

One core reason for the candidacy is that despite the history and impact of nuclear testing in the Indo-Pacific, there has never yet been a CTBTO Executive Secretary from this entire region.



The CTBTO has a strong history of geographic rotation of the Executive Secretary position. The first Executive Secretary served two terms and was from the Western Europe Group, then two terms from the Eastern Europe Group and now two terms from the Africa Group. It would be helpful for the organisation to be led by someone with a perspective that comes from the Indo-Pacific region.

Another reason is that we see that it is good for the health of an organisation to have new leadership that brings fresh perspectives and ideas.

This kind of positive change brings about a renewal and refresh in an organisation. The CTBTO is critically important for international peace and security and having a strong, invigorated organization is in the interest of all State Signatories.

### **What experience would you bring to the role of Executive Secretary?**

I offer strong diplomatic, technical and managerial leadership to promote the Treaty, engage all states with its unique benefits, lead and effectively manage the CTBTO and effectively harness the skills of the people behind it.

As the current Director-General of the Australian Safeguards and Non-proliferation Office (ASNO), I lead the organisation charged with Australia's implementation and compliance with the CTBT and a host of other international nuclear treaties and conventions. I am a scientist by training and have been able to link this scientific background with policy and diplomacy in my work with ASNO.



I have always put a strong focus on communication and inclusive management, and am pleased to have been invited to lead other activities such as the Asia-Pacific Safeguards Network, IAEA Standing Advisory Group on Safeguards Implementation (SAGSI) and Working Groups in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV).

I have made diversity and inclusion a focus of my international advocacy and a central plank of recruitment practices in ASNO and would continue to do so if elected to the position of CTBTO Executive Secretary.

### **If elected, what would your priorities be as Executive Secretary?**

I would passionately advocate for advancing the CTBT. Some of my priorities would be to:

- promote further signatures and ratifications, particularly of the remaining Annex 2 states, stressing the CTBT's importance for global security and disarmament;
- build on the PrepCom's remarkable progress and enhance partnership with member states;
- enhance technical capacity so that all member states benefit from the Treaty; and
- ensure that the CTBTO retains and attracts great staff, supporting diversity in all its dimensions.

### **When is the election?**

The election is to be held during the CTBT PrepCom meeting in Vienna on 25-27 November.

I am aiming to meet with all ambassadors in Vienna and Geneva (virtually) that are accredited to the CTBTO, regardless of whether they will be voting or not.

For Missions in New York with responsibility for the CTBTO, if you wish to discuss my candidacy, please reach out to the Australian Mission in New York and we will schedule a video call.

I am keen to understand the priorities of all State Signatories and, if elected, to lead the organisation for all States.

Further information on Dr Robert Floyd's candidacy is available at:

[dfat.gov.au/ctbto\\_candidate](https://dfat.gov.au/ctbto_candidate)



## **CEDAW ELECTION MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER**

Elections for 11 new members of CEDAW will be held at the 21st Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in New York on Monday 9 November.

Australia's candidate is Natasha Stott Despoja – a lifelong gender equality advocate.

Natasha served as Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls from 2013 to 2016, and is currently Chair of world-leading organisation, Our Watch, focusing on the prevention of violence against women and their children.

Further information on Ms Stott Despoja's candidacy is available at:

[pmc.gov.au/CEDAW-candidate](https://pmc.gov.au/CEDAW-candidate)



## Women, Police and Peace: A virtual exhibition from the AFP

**Around the world, women play a critical role in negotiating, building and sustaining lasting peace.**

To mark the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) and to celebrate 60 years of United Nations Policing, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) has launched a virtual exhibition celebrating the critical role of AFP women in policing, peacekeeping & peacebuilding operations.

Beginning with the recruitment of the first female 'Peace Officers' in 1942, the **'Women, Police & Peace'** exhibition showcases some of the milestones, firsts and achievements of the many remarkable members of the AFP.

Over the last 75 years, AFP officers have been deployed across a number of UN Missions, including the UN Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) and the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS).



AFP officers continue to serve internationally, playing a frontline role in efforts to combat COVID-19.

The exhibition is by no means an exhaustive history, but instead provides a snapshot of the myriad Australian women who have contributed to advancing peace and security.

You can view the exhibition at:

[www.afp.gov.au/womenpolicepeace](https://www.afp.gov.au/womenpolicepeace)

