

Margot Pearson (WILPF)

Margot joined the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in the 1980s in Canberra. She is now Treasurer of WILPF (NSW Branch) and currently Branch Delegate to WILPF's National Board in Australia.

WILPF, both nationally and internationally, is dedicated to the goal of finding peaceful means of preventing or ending armed conflict. It also works to increase the participation of women in peace processes through the advancement of gender equality and the reduction of violence.

Recent work by the Australian section dedicated to this goal have included its contributions to the second annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security (September 2014, Canberra) and the Annual Report Card on the Australian Government's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

In April 2014, Margot was one of a number of Australian WILPF members who participated in a regional meeting of WILPF sections in the Asia-Pacific region in Auckland, New Zealand. Along with members from WILPF's NZ section, women from Japan, French Polynesia, Fiji and Hawaii also participated in this regional meeting.

As part of WILPF's Centenary this year, members have been involved in curating the 'Women's Power to Stop War' Exhibition (21 February to 29 May 2015, Canberra) and organising the National Conference (to be held on 29 May 2015, Canberra).

According to WILPF, the most crucial human rights issues in this country today are:

- Punitive treatment of and policies on asylum seekers;
- No advancement in gender equality;
- Deteriorating conditions in Aboriginal communities;
- Continuing high levels of violence against women.

On militarism and disarmament, WILPF identifies the following issues as being the most pressing in Australia today:

- Increase in the defence budget;
- Continuing emphasis on military responses to conflict rather than negotiation, conflict resolution and peace-building;
- Increase in the number of US military bases and activity in Australia that inhibit our country's capacity to make strategic choices compatible with our sovereignty and integrity as an independent nation;
- Engagement in another Iraq war without parliamentary debate or public consultation.

Apart from her ongoing commitment to peace activism, Margot continues to be involved post retirement in research into higher education and to publishing in this field.