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## **Media Release: New Zealand joins nuclear ban treaty; Australia remains opposed**

New Zealand ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons today, becoming the [14th state party](#) to the landmark agreement which was adopted at the United Nations last July.

New Zealand has long championed nuclear disarmament and was a driving force behind the successful negotiation of the treaty, whereas Australia strongly opposed the process, arguing that nuclear weapons are legitimate.

Australia's foreign affairs and defence ministries claim that US nuclear weapons keep Australia safe and secure. They endorse the potential use of such weapons on Australia's behalf in extreme circumstances.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the Melbourne-born group that won the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for its role in achieving the treaty, praised New Zealand for its outstanding leadership.

"New Zealand has taken a firm stand against the worst weapons of mass destruction, declaring them illegal and unacceptable for all. Australia should adopt the same position," said ICAN's Australian director, Gem Romuld.

The treaty currently lacks the backing of nuclear-armed states, but signatories and civil society groups expect that it will create significant pressure and momentum for disarmament over time.

"Australia has joined treaties banning chemical weapons, biological weapons, landmines and cluster munitions. Joining the new global ban on nuclear weapons is an obvious step," said Romuld.

While the Australian government remains opposed to the treaty, three-quarters of federal Labor parliamentarians have signed an [ICAN pledge](#) to work for Australia's signature and ratification.

### *Further comment:*

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