



# Peace Movement Aotearoa

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## Act now! Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control disestablished

15 December 2011 (updates on page 2)

This action alert has information about the disestablishment of the position of Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control, and a section with contact details for relevant politicians if you would like to take action on it.

It appears that the National-led government has disestablished the position of Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control as the Ministerial list released on Monday does not have such a Minister on it. It further seems that the portfolio itself has gone, as there is a footnote linked to 'Minister of Foreign Affairs' which reads: "The Foreign Affairs portfolio incorporates the responsibilities formerly included in the Disarmament and Arms Control portfolio." - [http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Ministerial\\_List\\_12\\_December-2011.pdf](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Ministerial_List_12_December-2011.pdf)

The Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition (ANZCMC) has written a letter to Murray McCully that, among other things, expresses deep disappointment about this, see 'New Zealand scraps its disarmament minister' at <http://www.stopclusterbombs.org.nz/2011/12/13/new-zealand-scraps-disarmament-minister>

Aside from the general undesirability of the Ministerial position going, it also raises an interesting question about whether the NZ Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act 1987 should have been amended in advance of this move. Although the Act did not set up the Ministerial position, it does refer to the Minister as the Chairman [sic] of PACDAC - "18 Membership of Committee. (1) The Committee shall consist of 9 members, of whom - (a) one shall be the Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control, who shall be the Chairman". - <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1987/0086/latest/096be8ed8075a0e2.pdf>

There is of course a further question as to whether PACDAC can now operate legally in the absence of a Chairperson.

In addition, the Green Party also seems to have disestablished their disarmament and arms control portfolio, see <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA1112/S00098/greens-release-mp-portfolios-for-50th-parliament.htm>

Although Kennedy Graham has responded to a question from the ANZCMC by saying it is included in his new Global Affairs portfolio, his blog 'The Global Affairs Portfolio: Setting the Foreign Policy Agenda' makes no mention of disarmament, see <http://blog.greens.org.nz/2011/12/15/the-global-affairs-portfolio-setting-the-foreign-policy-agenda>

The only hope now is that the Labour Party will keep a shadow disarmament and arms control portfolio, otherwise it will be gone completely ...

## \* What you can do about this

If you would like to take action on this, please contact the government to urge them to re-establish the disarmament and arms control portfolio as a separate entity with its own Minister; the Labour Party to urge them to ensure they continue to have a disarmament and arms control portfolio; and the Green Party to urge them to re-establish a clear disarmament and arms control portfolio.

## \* Contact details

You can write to all of the politicians below at Freepost Parliament, Private Bag 18 888, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160 (no stamp required). Email addresses are:

- Government / National party: Prime Minister, John Key, email [j.key@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:j.key@ministers.govt.nz) and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Murray McCully, email [m.mccully@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:m.mccully@ministers.govt.nz)
- Labour Party: Leader, David Shearer, email [david.shearer@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:david.shearer@parliament.govt.nz) and Co-Leader, Grant Robertson, email [Grant.Robertson@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Grant.Robertson@parliament.govt.nz)
- Green Party: Co-Leaders Russell Norman, email [russel.norman@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:russel.norman@parliament.govt.nz) and Metiria Turei, email [metiria.turei@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:metiria.turei@parliament.govt.nz) Global Affairs spokesperson, Kennedy Graham, email [kennedy.graham@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:kennedy.graham@parliament.govt.nz)
- It may also be worthwhile contacting Peter Dunne email [p.dunne@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:p.dunne@ministers.govt.nz) about this as United Future's foreign policy includes "Retain New Zealand's nuclear-free status and international leadership on disarmament issues" - <http://www.unitedfuture.org.nz/?foreign-affairs-defence-and?trade> - and it is difficult to see how international leadership can be retained if there is no Minister for Disarmament - his email is [p.dunne@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:p.dunne@ministers.govt.nz)

It would be really helpful if you can send us a copy of any letter or message you send about this, and of any replies you receive, to assist with our work on it - by email [pma@xtra.co.nz](mailto:pma@xtra.co.nz) or by post to Peace Movement Aotearoa, PO Box 9314, Wellington 6141, thank you.

## **Update: Green Party re-establishes disarmament portfolio**

**16 December 2011:** Good news - the Green Party has decided to re-establish a separate disarmament portfolio. Kennedy Graham has just issued the following statement: "There has been concern expressed over the folding of disarmament into the Global Affairs portfolio which was created by the Green caucus earlier this week. In response, we have agreed to retain disarmament as a separate portfolio. The intention was not to downplay disarmament as a political priority. The aim was to develop some clarity between the full number of component issues within the total policy." (the full statement is available at <http://blog.greens.org.nz/2011/12/16/disarmament-as-a-separate-green-portfolio> )

So thank you to everyone who responded to our action alert and contacted the Green Party about this. It would be great if you could now get in touch with the Green Party Co-Leaders Russell Norman and Metiria Turei, as well as Kennedy Graham to congratulate them on this decision.

## **Update: Labour keeps separate disarmament portfolio**

**19 December 2011:** The Leader of the Opposition, David Shearer, announced the Labour Party portfolios today, including MP Maryann Street for the portfolio on disarmament and arms control.