



PRIME MINISTER
The Hon Anthony Albanese MP

The Hon Gareth Evans AC KC
Asia-Pacific Leadership Network

Dear Gareth and fellow leaders of the Asia-Pacific Leadership Network

Thank you for your letter on ways Australia can engage our regional partners on nuclear confidence building and preventive diplomacy.

As you say, I have been passionate about nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation since I was a student. I am proud of the role that Labor Governments and Australian diplomacy has played in this area, not least the work done by many of you personally. As long as nuclear weapons exist, there is an onus on all Governments to work on reducing the risks of their use, and to reinforce non-proliferation.

As you are aware, the Government has been active on these issues multilaterally and through practical steps and dialogue focussed on our region. I spoke about the dangers of nuclear weapons use and of nuclear proliferation in my keynote speech to the Shangri-La Dialogue. Foreign Minister Wong also used her statement to the UN General Assembly in September to underscore the priority Australia accords to practical measures to reduce the risk of miscalculation and to prevent conflict in our region.

There are other practical measures we have taken. Earlier this year, Australia co-hosted the ASEAN Regional Forum Nuclear Risk Reduction Workshop with the Philippines. We are exploring ways to take this work forward in the region, including in ASEAN-led forums, and would welcome APLN's input.

You would be aware as well of our appointment, in July, of Vanessa Wood as Australia's Ambassador for Arms Control and Counter-Proliferation. I would encourage the APLN to engage with Ambassador Wood on your ideas for taking forward our agenda. I know that several of you are in active contact with my office and with the office of the Foreign Minister and I encourage you to maintain that dialogue.

I close by assuring you of the government's commitment to working with partners, and with important networks like APLN, to support the peace and stability of our region. Thank you again for your work and for the time you devote to these crucial issues.

Yours sincerely



ANTHONY ALBANESE