



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**Austcare Launches Cluster Munitions Campaign**

One of Australia's leading authorities on landmines will launch a pre-election campaign designed to eradicate another devastating weapon from the world's arsenals.

Since 1989, Austcare has worked with other leading mine action agencies and local communities to successfully conduct projects in Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, Lebanon, Mozambique and on the Thai-Burma border.

Now, the Australian-based international aid organisation is calling for a ban on cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians around the world.

Cluster munitions are weapons that open in mid-air and release dozens, and often hundreds, of bomblets over wide areas. They are hard to control, can cover an area the size of three football fields and don't distinguish between combatants and civilians.

While cluster attacks are devastating, an even greater danger to civilian populations comes from the unexploded bomblets that can remain on the ground for years. They often sit partially buried or hang almost invisibly at head height in trees until disturbed. Clusters contaminate land and in doing so hinder the recovery from conflict and development of affected communities.

Unexploded bomblets are currently on the ground in more than 20 countries and the use of these weapons must be stopped before the world faces another crisis on the scale of traditional landmine contamination.

Currently, Australia does not maintain stockpiles of cluster munitions. However, the Federal Government has not yet ruled out acquiring them in the future. Austcare has made a Submission to the Senate Inquiry on this issue. Therefore, in the lead-up to the Federal election Austcare is urging every Australian to join a campaign to keep it that way by lobbying their local MP, Senator and candidates from all parties.

We are also calling on the Australian Government to maintain its support for the creation of an international treaty to ban cluster munitions.

(ENDS)

**11:00am Tuesday 7 August: 69-71 Parramatta Road Camperdown, Sydney**

**Vision and stills of unexploded cluster munitions fields and survivors of accidental detonations will be released at the Austcare Media Conference:**

**Austcare CEO Michael Smith AO (Major General Ret'd) and Deputy CEO, Archie Law, who has extensive first hand field experience, available for interview.**  
<http://www.austcare.org.au/aboutus/our-people.aspx>.

**Phone interviews can be arranged upon request.**

***Austcare statements on Cluster Munitions:***

<http://www.austcare.org.au/media/29805/austclusmunpos-20jul2007.pdf> and  
<http://www.austcare.org.au/media/27467/clustermunitionssenatesubmission.pdf>

**For further information contact:**

**Daniel Barty**  
**Campaign & Media Officer**  
**(02) 9565 9104 or 0430 464 954**  
**[dbarty@austcare.org.au](mailto:dbarty@austcare.org.au)**