

# Support grows for more military aid to Ukraine

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EXCLUSIVE

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Nearly one in four Australians believes the government should do more to help Ukraine, with support for greater assistance rising by 7 percentage points since the middle of 2023 as the war nears its third year.

An SEC Newgate Mood of the Nation survey polled attitudes towards the conflict between February 1 and 5, finding that 82 per cent of respondents agreed that Russia should cease its invasion and exit Ukraine.

Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, with the action igniting the largest land conflict in Europe since World War II and unleashing a major global economic shock marked by supply chain disruptions and spiralling inflation.

The Newgate survey showed that 62 per cent of Australians understood the war was a “significant contributor” to

global inflation and more than half agreed that ending the conflict would assist in bringing inflation back under control.

The online poll of 1588 people indicated that 24 per cent of Australians believed the government should provide more support to Ukraine, rebounding to October 2022 levels, while 58 per cent believed that existing levels of support were appropriate.

However, 18 per cent of respondents said the government was providing too much assistance – a large increase on the 11 per cent who shared the same sentiment in October 2022.

Still, the results show a large increase in support for greater assistance to Ukraine since the June 2023 survey, which indicated that only 17 per cent of Australians held this view, and the November 2022 result, when only 18 per cent of respondents backed greater assistance.

Kateryna Argyrou, the co-chair of the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations, told The Australian: “Our community is heartened to know an increasing number of Australians want the Albanese

government to do more to support Ukraine.

“It’s clear that Australians are appalled by Russia’s actions and know what’s on the line in Ukraine, so they want the government to stay the course,” she said.

“We are grateful for all the government has done to date. But Ukraine still needs support to bring an end to the human suffering and win this fight.

“The ADF has many unused, unneeded, or retired capabilities which would be incredibly valuable to Ukrainians fighting on the front line.

“Australian support packages for Ukraine have become smaller and less frequent over the last two years. Australia was once the leading non-NATO contributor to Ukraine, but now ranks sixth after Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria and South Korea.

“Australians have noticed, and want the government to do more.”

The appeal for the provision of more defence capabilities comes after the government formally declined a written request from Ukraine for Australia to donate its retired

fleet of MRH-90 Taipan helicopters to assist the war effort – because the aircraft had already been disassembled and buried.

In September, the government announced the Taipans would not return to flying operations after one plunged into the ocean off the Whitsunday Islands on July 28, killing four Australians during the Talisman Sabre joint military exercises with the US.

Following the announcement, Defence worked Airbus Australia Pacific and NATO Helicopter Industries to harvest key spares from the fleet for the use of other NH90 operators. This work, which involves disassembly of the aircraft, commenced in October 2023.

The Newgate survey also showed majority support for increasing sanctions against Russia and providing Australia’s retired and unneeded military equipment to Ukraine.

Asked whether respondents agreed with the proposition that “things will only get worse if aggressive countries are allowed to expand their borders by force”, 76 per cent of respondents said they did.