

Greens split over Ukraine military aid as Sarah Hanson-Young breaks ranks



Matthew Knott, Updated October 13, 2026

A split has emerged in the Greens over providing military aid to Ukraine, with senator Sarah Hanson-Young breaking ranks to support arming the Ukrainian army to defend itself against Russian aggression.

New party leader David Shoebridge held a frank and at times tense meeting with leaders from the Ukrainian-Australian community on Friday to clarify the Greens' position after he shocked them by explicitly opposing military assistance to Ukraine [in an interview with this masthead](#).

Foreign Minister Penny Wong accused Shoebridge of "lining up with One Nation and President Putin" by opposing military aid to Ukraine in a fiery exchange in the Senate on Tuesday.

While Shoebridge insisted the party's position has been "clear from day one", parliamentary records show the Greens backed a Senate motion supporting military aid to Ukraine after Vladimir Putin launched his full-scale invasion in 2022.

Shoebridge has noted that the party's positions can be amended [at the will of its members](#), offering hope to Ukrainian supporters that the policy could be changed.

Greens leader Larissa Waters has stood down as leader of the party in search of a slower pace of life as she manages chronic kidney disease.

Hanson-Young, who lost the leadership contest to Shoebridge earlier this month, said she supported giving Ukraine military aid if necessary to protect its sovereignty.

"If that's the support that people need in order to defend themselves from the invasion of Russia, I think Australians need to support that," she told the ABC's 7.30.

“We always come from a position of wanting to de-escalate military violence ... we want to see humanitarian support, we want to see diplomatic support, but of course you can’t allow people to be left fending for themselves.”

“I’ve had a discussion with David about this, I think he would have put it differently if he was asked that question again,” she said.

Shoebridge told this masthead after winning the leadership: “The Greens have been clear from day one that we’re a party of peace and non-violence, and we don’t support military aid to the Ukraine.”

He said the party would support providing military aid to Ukraine if it were backed by a United Nations Security Council resolution, but critics have noted Russia would inevitably use its veto power to block any such move.

He was contacted on Tuesday following Hanson-Young’s comments.

The position came as a surprise to many Greens members and supporters, as well as Ukrainian-Australian leaders, who were taken aback by the firm opposition to military aid.

Then Greens whip Janet Rice spoke in support of [a March 2022 Senate motion](#) noting that Australia “continues to provide humanitarian assistance to help meet the urgent needs of the Ukrainian people along with military assistance to support Ukraine in defending itself against Russia’s unjust actions”.

“We affirm our support for the right of the people of Ukraine to sovereignty and territorial integrity, and we support the measures that are outlined in this Senate motion,” Rice told the Senate.

The Greens did not say they opposed providing military support in their comments to [a 2024 Senate report on Australian support for Ukraine](#).

Coalition defence spokesman James Paterson said there was “nothing progressive about outsourcing our defence and foreign policy to Vladimir Putin”.

“David Shoebridge needs to stop ‘greensplaining’ to Ukrainians about what they need to defend themselves against Russia,” he said.



13/10/2026

“He should listen to them, and his own colleague Sarah Hanson-Young, and back military aid which they have clearly and repeatedly said they desperately need.”

Ukrainian President [Volodymyr Zelensky has thanked Australia](#) for providing over \$1.6 billion in military assistance since Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022, including the transfer of tanks, infantry fighting vehicles and ammunition.

The Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations said, following their meeting with Shoebridge, that they had “a frank and constructive exchange about the Greens’ policy, its impact on the Ukrainian community, and how Australia can best support Ukraine in its fight against Russia’s full-scale invasion”.

“We urge Senator Shoebridge and the Greens to reconsider their opposition to military aid and ensure Ukraine receives all the practical support it needs to survive and win its fight for freedom,” the federation said in a social media post.

Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke said Australia had no interest in buying diesel from Russia after US President Donald Trump agreed to buy more 800,000 tonnes of Russian diesel by November in a deal slammed by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as a “gift to Putin”.