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Anti-war feelings laid bare in a stark message to Howard

By Rachel Browne
February 9 2003
The Sun-Herald

In a twist on the traditional protest rally, 750 women shed their clothes to express their rage against the proposed war in Iraq.

The women congregated in a paddock at the small town of Federal outside Byron Bay yesterday, using their naked bodies to spell out "No war" in giant letters.

Singer and songwriter Grace Knight, who helped organise the Disrobe to Disarm protest, said she was overwhelmed by the support she had received.

"We only needed 67 women to turn up, but we got 750," she said.

"It was just one of the most electrifying things I have ever experienced. These 750 women are desperate to let the Prime Minister know that they do not agree with his decision to join the proposed war on Iraq."

Similar protests have taken place in Europe and the US, where about 30 women braved freezing

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temperatures in New York's Central Park to spell out "No Bush" in the snow.

Warm conditions on the NSW North Coast were kinder to Australian protesters.

"It just shows how strongly women feel about this," said Knight, former lead singer with the 1980s band the Eurogliders.

"These women came here today because they feel they are being lied to by our Government and they feel their dissent is not being heard."

While Knight said she and her fellow peaceniks were not all comfortable with the idea of posing nude, they were convinced by the importance of the cause.

"We want to let John Howard know that we are not happy and if it takes lying naked in a paddock to get the message across so be it," she said.

Knight became involved while writing material for her new album. So distracted by the threat of war that she couldn't concentrate on her music, she decided to get her female friends together so they could make their voices heard.

News of the rally spread by word of mouth and chain emails. The women were told to meet at a marshalling point at Federal before being taken to a secret location for the photograph.

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