

Defence Estate Audit

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary, Security and Estate, Celia Perkins to lead.
- First Assistant Secretary, Defence Estate Audit, Dan Fankhauser to support.

Key Messages

- The Government agreed to the Defence Strategic Review recommendation that an enterprise-wide audit be undertaken to baseline the Defence estate and infrastructure.
- Two external leads were appointed to oversee the conduct and delivery of the audit.
- The Estate Audit Report was completed in December 2023.

Talking Points

- The Defence Strategic Review recommended an enterprise-wide audit be undertaken to baseline Defence estate and infrastructure, including protective security and work health and safety.
- Led by two independent co-leads, Jan Mason and Jim Miller, the Defence Estate Audit Report made a number of recommendations informed by site visits, stakeholder consultations, review of policy and legislation and data analysis, to ensure Defence's estate is best structured to support the force posture, force generation and resourcing of Defence in response to Australia's strategic circumstances.
- To appreciate the size, complexity and diversity of the Defence estate, the independent co-leads visited a sample of 70 Defence establishments across each state and territory.
 - This included airfields, maritime structures, research laboratories, medical centres, training establishments, reserve and cadet depots, logistics units, exercise areas, explosive ordnance storage and surplus land holdings under active disposal.
- The independent co-leads participated in a number of external stakeholder engagements including with government officials, local government representatives, service providers and industry associations.
 - Stakeholder engagements occurred through a variety of means including roundtable discussions, one-on-one meetings, virtual forums and site visits.
 - Formal submissions were not sought noting public consultation was undertaken as part of the Defence Strategic Review.
- Targeted consultation was undertaken with relevant Australian Government departments, and all state and territory governments.

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If pressed: Does the Defence Estate Audit Report recommend base closures?

- A thorough assessment was undertaken to determine if the current estate holdings met Defence's contemporary needs, particularly in high-density urban areas.
- The Defence Estate Audit Report made a number of recommendations which may impact some sites.
- Any disposal of surplus land will be managed in accordance with the Commonwealth Property Disposal Policy.
- When selling property, Defence is required to ensure any purchaser is able to manage site environmental or heritage values.

If pressed: Will Defence sites be made available for affordable housing?

- The Audit considered alternate use options for sites that are underutilised or that present commercial opportunities to reinvest in Defence capability.
- The future use of surplus sites to support other initiatives, including affordable housing, would be subject to further consideration.

If pressed: Will the External Audit Report be made public?

- The External Audit Report is being considered with no decision yet made as to its public release.

Background

- A joint media release on 28 August 2023 confirmed the appointment of the independent co-leads and a provided a summary of the scope and purpose of the Audit.
- Defence generated a short-list of potential candidates with a range of relevant public and private sector skills and experience.
- The independent co-leads were appointed on 1 August 2023, having been selected for their relevant skills and insights from managing large infrastructure and property portfolios.
- Each independent co-lead was engaged via an outcome-based contract to deliver a final report to the Government by the end of 2023. The total contract value for each co-lead was \$297,000 (GST inclusive), comprised of a fixed-fee component payable on completion of defined milestones and a provision for reimbursable expenses. The contracts were published on AusTender on 14 September 2023.
- Both independent leads contracts were extended up to 30 June 2024, for up to an additional five days to support post-report activities, with services provided on a pro-rata daily rate.

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Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

2023-24 Supplementary Budget Estimates: 25 October 2023

- In QoN 105, **Defence Planning and Review Publications**, Senator Simon Birmingham (Liberal, South Australia) asked to be provided with details of when the Defence Estate Audit, along with other plans and strategies would be provided to Government.
TABLED

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 12 March 2024, a Member of Parliament requested Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack from the 14 February 2024 Additional Estimates hearing. **The decision to release these documents is pending.**
- On 14 February 2024, a journalist requested Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack from the 14 February 2024 Additional Estimates hearing. **The decision to release these documents is pending.**

Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 20 February 2024, at the Surface Fleet Review press conference, the Deputy Prime Minister stated the [importance of the Defence Estate Audit](#) report and the need to ensure the estate is fit for purpose and it meets our current strategic circumstances.
- On 17 February 2024, at a press conference the Prime Minister addressed a journalist's questions regarding [the potential sale of Defence estate](#) to fund military acquisitions. He stated that on occasion there is surplus land and that Defence is operating in accordance with the Defence Strategic Review roadmap.
- On 28 December 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Assistant Minister for Defence announced the [Government's receipt of the Defence Estate Audit report](#).

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 26 March 2024, APSI published an article by Raelene Lockhorst titled [Defence estate divestments: the state of play](#) discussing the funding pressures associated with maintaining the estate and the challenges of divesting Defence properties.
- On 25 March 2024, ADM published an article by Keira Joyce titled [Defence estate funding under the microscope](#) suggesting industry is keen to understand how the National Defence Strategy, Integrated Investment Program and Defence Estate Audit will impact Defence's current future estate related expenditure.
- On 17 February 2024, The Age published an article by Lisa Visentin titled [Dutton Slams 'fire sale' as Labor looks to cash in Defence property](#) which stated that the Opposition Leader and Coalition would not support the sale of Defence assets.

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- On 17 February 2024, the Sydney Morning Herald published an article by Matthew Knott titled [Defence Targets Land Sale](#) suggesting sites including Victoria Barracks Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane may be sold to raise funds for new military equipment and upgrades to bases.
- On 16 February 2024, ASPI published an article by Raelene Lockhorst titled [Beyond the barracks: unravelling the social and strategic ramification of force posture pivots](#) which questioned whether the Defence Estate Audit will signal an increased priority and adjustments in line with changing strategic priorities.

Division: Defence Estate Audit	
PDR No: SB24-000362	
Prepared by: Kelly Scott Acting Assistant Secretary Defence Estate Audit Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 3 April 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Waived.
Consultation: N/A	
Cleared by DSR: Ciril Karo Date: 5 April 2024 First Assistant Secretary Defence Strategic Review Implementation	
Cleared by Deputy Secretary: Celia Perkins Date: 12 April 2024 Deputy Secretary Security and Estate Group	

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United States

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry, Hugh Jeffrey, to lead.
- First Assistant Secretary International Policy, Bernard Philip, to support.

Key Messages

- Australia's Alliance with the United States is unprecedented in scale, scope and significance.
- Our partnership is underpinned by a shared vision for a secure and resilient Indo-Pacific and deep defence engagement including: operations and exercises; force posture; capability innovation; industry collaboration; intelligence; and science and technology.
- It affords us access to capability, technology and intelligence we could not acquire on our own and fundamentally strengthens, rather than detracts from, Australian sovereignty.
- In 2024 we are building on cooperation across all areas critical to our mutual security interests, following the high-tempo of engagements in 2023.

Talking Points

- Australia's inaugural National Defence Strategy underscores that the alliance with the United States remains fundamental to our national security.
 - Australia and the United States are deepening defence engagement to enhance and maintain the capability to make greater contributions to collective deterrence, as well as to regional and global stability.
 - With reduced strategic warning time, we need to work together at speed.

Australia's priorities for the alliance with the United States

- At the Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations on 29 July 2023 in Brisbane, Australia and the United States advanced key alliance priorities. This included consolidating Enhanced Force Posture by:
 - progressing upgrades at northern bases, including RAAF Bases Darwin and Tindal, and scoping new investments at RAAF Bases Curtin and Scherger;
 - increasing rotations of United States capabilities in Australia – including United States Navy Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft, and United States Army Watercraft (United States Army Watercraft participated in Exercises TALISMAN SABRE and GARUDA SHIELD 2023);

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Budget Estimates June 2024

Last updated: 22 April 2024

SB24-000363

United States

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Bernard Philip

- welcoming more frequent and longer nuclear-powered submarine visits to Australia – an important precursor to Submarine Rotational Force-West in 2027;
 - enabling the pre-positioning of United States Army stores and materiel following Exercise TALISMAN SABRE, a first step towards establishing an enduring Logistics Support Area in Australia (United States equipment is now being stored at Albury-Wodonga); and
 - declaring Enhanced Space Cooperation as a new Force Posture Initiative, enabling increased cooperation, resilience and deterrence in this critical operational domain.
- Other priorities endorsed at Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations 2023 include:
 - maximising the strategic and technological advantage of the alliance by combining strengths and pooling resources including through streamlining defence trade controls and information sharing;
 - furthering cooperation on Australia’s Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Enterprise by collaborating on a flexible Guided Weapons Production Capability in Australia, with an initial focus on the potential co-production of Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System missiles by 2025; and
 - deepening cooperation with partners, including Japan, India, the Republic of Korea, Indonesia, and the Philippines, noting the dividend for security and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Progress made on technology sharing with the United States

- Australia, alongside the United Kingdom and the United States, has committed to streamlining the flow of defence trade among and between the AUKUS partners.
- An export licence-free environment between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States will transform collaboration and enable unprecedented levels of scientific, technological and industrial cooperation and co-development.
- It sends a clear message we are entering a new era of industrial base collaboration with unprecedented levels of collaboration and ambition.
- It harnesses the strategic and technological potential of the AUKUS partnership by combining strengths and pooling resources across sovereign borders.
- It maximises the AUKUS partners’ collective deterrence, denial and response options by creating a seamless environment for innovation, cooperation and co-development.

If pressed: What is the Government’s view of potential United States election outcomes?

- The Australian Government will work with the elected United States Government of the day, as we have done for decades. The alliance enjoys strong bipartisan support.

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Budget Estimates June 2024
Last updated: 22 April 2024
Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Bernard Philip

Questions on Notice

2023-24 Supplementary Budget Estimates: 25 October 2023

- **QoN No. 125, Feedback from US lawmakers, policymakers, representatives of the White House or the US Department of Defence**, Senator James Paterson (Liberal, Victoria) asked what feedback and input has been received from United States lawmakers, policymakers, or representatives of the White House or United States Department of Defence (including any United States AUKUS organisations) on the absence of new money for Defence in the Budget. **PENDING**
- **QoN No. 126, US views on Labor dissent toward AUKUS**, Senator James Paterson (Liberal, Victoria) has asked internal Labor dissent toward AUKUS been raised by any United States lawmakers, policymakers, or representatives of the White House or United States Department of Defence (including any United States AUKUS organisations). **PENDING**

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 6 March 2024, an individual made a request seeking access to an organisation chart for all Defence personnel at the Australian Embassy in Washington D.C. from 1 May 2013 to 31 May 2023. **Defence is currently preparing a response.**
- On 5 March 2024, an individual made a request seeking a copy of Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack, including an index of back pocket briefs, for the 2023–24 Additional estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 23 February 2024, an individual made a request seeking access to documentation relating to an AusTender contract notice relating to an Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations hospitality purchase. **Defence is currently preparing a response.**
- On 30 October 2023 a media organisation requested Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack for the 2023-24 Supplementary Budget Estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**

Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 17 April 2024, the Deputy Prime minister [announced](#) the release of Australia's inaugural National Defence Strategy.
- On 27 March 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister [announced](#) the successful passage of the *Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act 2024* through the Australian Parliament.
- On 22 March 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister issued a joint AUKUS trilateral [statement](#) on the AUKUS partners announcement.
- On 22 March 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Industry issued a joint [media release](#) announcing Australia's Sovereign Submarine Build Partner and Sovereign Submarine Sustainment Partner.

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Budget Estimates June 2024
Last updated: 22 April 2024
Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Bernard Philip

Relevant Media Reporting

- On April 3 2024, The Australian Financial Review published an article by Michael Smith titled [Japan, US to seek Australia’s help in bolstering Indo-Pacific defence](#), highlighting the growing role of Japan in regional strategic policy.
- On 13 March 2024, ABC News published an article by Andrew Greene titled [Pentagon spark fresh AUKUS doubts on anniversary of Australia’s nuclear-powered submarine plans](#), highlighting the United States budget request release notes the order of just one Virginia-class boat in 2025 rather than two.
- On February 6 2024, The Sydney Morning Herald published an article by Peter Hartcher titled [The US is becoming an unreliable ally, even without Donald Trump](#), questioning America’s strategic policy in Asia and the Pacific.
- On January 5 2024, The Age published an article by Dr Emma Shortis titled [If Trump returns to the White House, should we rethink the US alliance?](#), questioning an alliance built upon shared democratic values under a Trump presidency.

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PDR No: SB24-000363	
Prepared by: Sally Timbs Assistant Secretary United States Alliance and International Force Posture Policy Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 10 April 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Bernard Philip First Assistant Secretary International Policy Division Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 15 April 2024
Cleared by Deputy Secretary: Hugh Jeffrey Date: 22 April 2024 Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry Policy	

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China and South China Sea

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry, Hugh Jeffrey to lead.
- Acting Vice Chief of the Defence Force, Major General Anthony Rawlins to support on South China Sea operational questions.
- Head of Military Strategic Commitments, Air Vice-Marshal Stephen Chappell to support on South China Sea operational questions.

Key Messages

- Defence continues to engage in dialogue with China; it is critical to exchange policy positions and discuss differences.
- Australia is clear-eyed that the relationship will remain challenging, but our approach to engaging China is anchored in our national interests.
- The ADF has maintained a robust program of international engagement with countries in and around the South China Sea for decades.
- The ADF will continue to exercise its rights under international law to freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea, and supports others in doing the same.
- Defence strongly condemns unprofessional and unsafe military conduct that can endanger the safety of ADF personnel and increase the risk of miscalculation.
- Australia continues to raise unsafe and unprofessional behaviour directly with China through the appropriate channels in Canberra and Beijing.

Talking Points

Current Defence Engagement with China

- It is in the interests of both Australia and China to stabilise the bilateral relationship.
- Australia continues to engage in defence dialogue with China. Defence hopes to convene our two established bilateral defence dialogues with China in 2024. Additionally
 - The Chief of Navy attended the 19th Western Pacific Naval Symposium annual conference in Qingdao (21 to 22 April 2024). The Chief of Navy also met with the Commander of the People's Liberation Army-Navy, Admiral Hu.
 - Defence was represented by a senior official at the 2023 Beijing Xiangshan Forum annual 1.5 track security dialogue on 29 to 31 October 2023.
 - Defence hosted a delegation from the People's Liberation Army in Canberra on 22 March 2023 for a Defence Coordination Dialogue.

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- The Deputy Prime Minister met General Li Shangfu, China's then Minister of National Defense, at the Shangri-La Dialogue on 4 June 2023.

If pressed: Will there be further engagement with the People's Liberation Army?

- Dialogue is key to stabilising the bilateral relationship.
 - Defence is not considering the resumption of joint military exercises at this time.

If pressed: Will there be a new maritime dialogue with China?

- Australia and China continue to seek to expand dialogue in key areas of importance to our respective interests.
- Agreement to any new dialogue follows consideration of the most practical and useful mechanisms, including recommencing existing dialogues.

History of Australia-China Defence Engagement

- Prior to talks in March 2023, regular defence dialogues last occurred in 2019.
 - At that time, Defence held two bilateral defence dialogues with China: the two-star Defence Coordination Dialogue and the four-star Defence Strategic Dialogue.
- Australia's defence relationship with China has, for many years, been focused on maintaining communication and building mutual understanding.

Developments in China's Presence and Military Capabilities

- Defence closely monitors military capability developments in the region, including those of China.
- China's military build-up is now the largest and most ambitious of any country since the end of the Second World War.
- China's assertion of sovereignty in the South China Sea threatens the global rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific in a way that adversely impacts Australia's national interests.
- Australia wants to see China exercise its power in a way that enhances stability, and reinforces the international rules-based order.

Taiwan

- Australia remains committed to our one-China policy, and our approach to Taiwan has not changed.

ADF Activities in the South China Sea

- The ADF has a long history of operating in the South China Sea as part of Australia's robust program of international engagement with countries in and around the region.
- Our position on the South China Sea is consistent and clear.
 - Defence continues to speak up for – and act in – Australia's national interest, to

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support a region which is open, secure and prosperous.

- The ADF undertakes routine port visits, maritime surveillance flights, cooperative activities with partners, and transits to and between Southeast and North Asia.
 - Our deployments are not directed at any particular country.
 - These activities are always conducted in accordance with international law.
- Defence has a substantial interest in the stability of the South China Sea and the norms and laws that govern it.
 - Our operations support these freedoms and underpin prosperity by ensuring waterways are open for trade.
- ADF vessels and aircraft exercise Australia's rights under international law to freedom of navigation and overflight, including in the South China Sea.

Unsafe encounters

- On 4 May 2024, during operations in support of United Nations sanctions enforcement in international waters, HMAS *Hobart's* embarked helicopter experienced unsafe and unprofessional conduct by a People's Liberation Army J-10 aircraft while airborne in the Yellow Sea.
 - A People's Liberation Army J-10 released flares across the flight path of the helicopter.
- On 14 November 2023, HMAS *Toowoomba* experienced unsafe and unprofessional conduct by a PLA warship in the East China Sea while conducting operations in support of United Nations sanctions enforcement.
 - Australian divers sustained minor injuries resulting from the PLA warship sonar emissions. No long-term health effects are expected.
- The Australian Government raised its serious concerns directly with China through the appropriate channels in Canberra and Beijing.
- As the Deputy Prime Minister stated in his media release on 18 November 2023:
 - The safety and wellbeing of ADF personnel continues to be of our utmost priority.
 - Australia expects all countries, including China, to operate their militaries in a professional and safe manner.

China Coast Guard's behaviour towards Philippine military resupply missions to the Second Thomas Shoal

- The 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award found the Second Thomas Shoal was within the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone and continental shelf. This is final and binding on all parties.
 - All activities in the oceans and seas must be consistent with United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

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- The Government is deeply concerned by unsafe and destabilising behaviour directed against Philippine vessels and crew (30 April 2024; 23 March 2024).
 - China’s behaviour endangers the peace and stability of the region, threatens lives and livelihoods and creates risks of miscalculation and escalation.
- Australia emphasises the importance of all states being able to exercise rights and freedoms, including freedom of navigation, consistent with international law.

Maritime Cooperative Activity with Japan, the United States and the Philippines

- As the Deputy Prime Minister stated, the “Maritime Cooperative Activity with Japan, the United States and the Philippines (7 April 2024) demonstrates our unwavering commitment to working together to maintain a peaceful, stable and prosperous region”.
- The Maritime Cooperative Activity was aimed at strengthening the interoperability of the participants’ defence and armed forces.
- Australia stands with all nations in safeguarding the international order – based on the rule of law – that is the foundation for a peaceful and stable Indo-Pacific.

Is China militarising the South China Sea?

- Defence regularly raises concerns with China about its militarisation of disputed features in the South China Sea, its actions that disrupt other countries’ resource exploration, and its unsafe and coercive use of coast guard vessels and so-called ‘maritime militias’.

Are Australia’s activities in the South China Sea contributing to tensions in the region?

- ADF vessels and aircraft have been operating in the South China Sea for decades.
- Our pattern of activities has been longstanding and consistent, and reflects Australia’s commitment to the rules and norms vital to the stability and prosperity of the region.

Background

- On 4 May 2024 HMAS *Hobart*’s embarked helicopter experienced an unsafe and unprofessional interaction with a People’s Liberation Army-Air Force J-10 jet aircraft, when it released flares across the flight path of the helicopter. HMAS *Hobart* was in international waters supporting Operation ARGOS, the ADF commitment to enforce sanctions on North Korea. The ADF helicopter landed safely onboard HMAS *Hobart* with no damage to the aircraft or injury to personnel. Formal representations were issued through diplomatic and defence channels in Canberra and Beijing on 6 May 2024.
- On 14 November 2023, HMAS *Toowoomba* and crew experienced unsafe and unprofessional conduct by a PLA – Navy vessel in an encounter in the East China Sea. A PLA – Navy vessel approached at closer range than requested, and operated its hull-mounted sonar causing harm to Australian divers in the water. Formal representations were issued through diplomatic channels in Canberra on 16 November 2023, and in Beijing on 17 November 2023. Defence has continued to raise the issue in discussions

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Budget Estimates June 2024

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China and South China Sea

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Major General Anthony Rawlins; Air Vice-Marshal Stephen Chappell
with China.

- On 7 April 2024, the ADF participated in a multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force, and the United States Navy in the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone in the South China Sea. The Royal Australian Navy Anzac Class frigate HMAS *Warramunga* and a Royal Australian Air Force P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft participated.
- The Prime Minister travelled to Shanghai and Beijing on 4 to 7 November 2023. He held meetings with President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang and Mr Zhao Leji, Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee. He also met President Xi Jinping on 17 November 2023 on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.
- On 30 April 2024, two PLA coast guard vessels rammed and used water cannons on Philippine Coast Guard vessel BRP *Bagacay* and a fisheries vessel in waters adjacent to Scarborough Shoal. Philippine crew reported minor structural damage to their vessel. It followed previous incidents on 23 March 2024, 5 March 2024, 11 December 2023, 10 November 2023, 22 October 2023, and 5 August 2023.
- On 29 December 2023, China appointed Admiral Dong Jun to Minister of National Defense, nearly three months after the formal removal of his predecessor.
- On 22 March 2023, Defence hosted a delegation from the PLA in Canberra for a Defence Coordination Dialogue. This was the first official dialogue between Defence and the PLA since 2019.
- The last Secretary/Chief of Defence Force-level Defence Strategic Dialogue was held in Sydney on 14 November 2019.

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

- No QoNs asked.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 5 March 2024 an individual made a request seeking a copy of Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack, including an index of back pocket briefs, for the 2023–24 Additional estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 30 January 2024, an individual made a request seeking all correspondence, briefing notes, and/or talking points sought by or prepared for the Minister for Defence between January 1 and January 20 2024 concerning the results of the 2024 Taiwanese presidential election. **No documents were found within the scope of the request.**
- On 30 October 2023 a media organisation requested Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack for the 2023-24 Supplementary Budget Estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**

Recent Ministerial Comments

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- On 6 May 2024, referring to the unsafe incident against the ADF, the Deputy Prime Minister was interviewed on [Channel Nine](#): “This was an incident which was both unsafe and unprofessional... We will not be deterred from engaging in lawful activity, and activities which are there to enforce UN sanctions...”
- On 7 May 2024, the Prime Minister discussed the incident involving HMAS *Hobart* in an interview on the [Today Show](#) and in a [press conference](#). The Prime Minister noted the incident was “unprofessional and unacceptable”, that the ADF was operating in international waters and skies to support United Nations sanctions against North Korea, and that Australia had made its position clear to China. The Prime Minister reiterated these comments on [8 May](#), [9 May](#), and [15 May](#).
- On 6 April 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister [announced](#) the Maritime Cooperative Activity with Japan, the Philippines and the United States in a ministerial statement.

Relevant Media Reporting

- From 6 May 2024, the incident involving HMAS *Hobart* was reported by numerous outlets, including Channel Nine, [The Australian](#), and [Financial Review](#).
- On 1 May 2024, [ABC](#) reported on harassment and damage by China’s coast guard to two Philippine vessels.
- On 17 January 2024, the ABC reported ‘[Australia, the US, Japan and the Philippines to host first naval exercises in South China Sea amid growing tensions](#),’ with the Deputy Prime Minister cited as emphasising regional stability, freedom of navigation and international law.
- On 13 October 2023, Reuters reported ‘[Australia to send senior official to China defence forum as ties stabilise](#),’ noting this would be Australia’s first attendance in four years.

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Prepared by: Karen Radford Assistant Secretary North and South Asia Branch Mob: s22 / Ph: s47E(d) Date: 17 May 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Bernard Philip First Assistant Secretary International Policy Division Mob: s22 / Ph: s47E(d) Date: 15 April 2024
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Brigadier Nicholas Foxall
Director General Military Strategic Commitments

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Budget Estimates June 2024
Last updated: 22 May 2024
Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; David Nockels.

Export Controls

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry, Hugh Jeffrey, to lead.
- First Assistant Secretary Defence Industry Policy Division, David Nockels, to support.

Key Messages

- Australia takes its export control obligations seriously as a member of the international export control regimes.
- Each export application is assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine whether it would be prejudicial to Australia's national interests.
- The (legislated) criteria require consideration of issues relating to foreign policy, Australia's international obligations, human rights, national security and regional security.
- If Defence assessed an overriding risk that the export may be used contrary to Australia's national interest, or to violate human rights, a permit would be refused.
- Defence does not comment on individual exports, due to legal, privacy and commercial-in-confidence obligations.

Talking Points

The Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act 2024

- Australia's strategic environment has deteriorated; we now face an Indo-Pacific defined by major power competition of unrivalled intensity and the rapid militarisation of emerging and disruptive technologies. That means we need to do two things better:
 - share information and technology with our partners so we can pool our resources more efficiently to deliver capability that is at the cutting edge; and
 - protect against the transfer of sensitive information and technology in ways that would be contrary to Australia's national interests.
- The *Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act 2024* responds to these requirements by ensuring the protection and safeguarding of Australian technology and information, as well as that of key partners; and it provides a national exemption for the United Kingdom and the United States from Australia's export control licencing requirements under the *Defence Trade Controls Act 2012*.
- Australia's export control framework is a permissive system designed to permit the responsible transfer of controlled goods and technology – these reforms do not change this underlying principle.

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How does the *Defence Trade Control Amendment Act 2024* amend Australia's export control framework?

- The *Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act 2024* will amend Australia's defence export control framework by creating three new criminal offences in the *Defence Trade Controls Act 2012* for the:
 - supply of certain Defence and Strategic Goods List technology to a non-exempt foreign person within Australia;
 - supply of certain Defence and Strategic Goods List goods and technology, that was previously exported or supplied from Australia; and
 - provision of Defence and Strategic Goods List services related to Part 1 (Munitions List) of the Defence and Strategic Goods List to foreign persons or entities outside of Australia.
- The *Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act 2024* also provides a national exemption to the United Kingdom and the United States.
- The *Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act 2024* strikes a balance between protecting our national security while supporting economic prosperity through international exports, by narrowing the scope of the new offences to those activities and technologies that could prejudice the security, defence and international relations of Australia.

[Handling Note: please refer to Brief 36 – Defence Trade Controls Act].

How are export applications assessed?

- Defence undertakes a rigorous assessment on a case-by-case basis of each export application against the relevant legislation.
 - The legislated criteria considers foreign policy, Australia's international obligations, human rights, national security and regional security.
 - Consideration is also given to the nature and utility of the goods or technology for export, the parties involved, end-user and end-use destination as well as contemporary information drawn from our diplomatic network, our partners and allies, our intelligence services and experience with exporters.
- Part of Defence's assessment of export applications includes determining if there is any risk the export may be used in ways that violate human rights or Australia's international obligations. If this risk is identified, Defence refuses the permit.

If pressed: Weapons to Israel.

- As the Government has made clear, Australia has not supplied weapons to Israel since the conflict began, and for at least the past five years.

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Budget Estimates June 2024
Last updated: 22 May 2024
Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; David Nockels.

If pressed: How can Defence advise that 322 export permits have been granted to Israel since 2017 while also claiming no weapons have been sent to Israel for the last five years?

- Australia's export control framework applies to a wide range of goods and technology, including items used for civilian and commercial purposes.
- Permit approvals should not be confused with weapons sales.

If pressed: has an export permit to Israel ever been revoked?

- No.

If pressed: What about the two export permits approved to Israel since 7 October 2023?

- Defence does not comment on individual exports due to legal, privacy and commercial-in-confidence obligations.

s33 and 47G

If pressed: What about Australia's export compliance measures offshore?

- Australia has a stringent export control framework, which is designed to ensure our military and dual-use items are used responsibly outside Australia.
 - Our approach is in step with international partners.
- Australia assesses the risk of misuse, including diversion to other entities, as part of its permit decision before the goods or technology leave Australia.
- Assessments are comprehensive and rigorous, drawing on contemporary information and specialist advice, as required.

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Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; David Nockels.

- If Australia identifies material risks of misuse or diversion, it will refuse permits.
- The *Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act 2024* will further strengthen our export control framework.

If pressed: What about the Defence Trade Controls Act 2012 Review?

- On 20 March 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister tabled both the report of the Independent Review of the *Defence Trade Controls Act 2012* and the Government Response in the Parliament.
- The Government agreed to seven recommendations and agreed-in-principle with the remaining three recommendations.
- Defence will continue to work closely with relevant stakeholders, including industry and academia to implement the review's recommendations.

Background

On 8 April 2024, the Defence Trade Controls Amendment Bill 2024 received Royal Assent, becoming the *Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act 2024*.

On 27 March 2024, the Defence Trade Controls Amendment Bill 2024 was passed by the Parliament.

s47E(d) and 47G

On 25 March 2024, Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) sought to move a motion asking the Senate to call on the Government to immediately end all trade of military equipment with the State of Israel. Senator Shoebridge raised defence industry agreements with s47G

The motion was unsuccessful.

The *Defence Trade Controls Act 2012* requires a review every five years to ensure Australia's export regime remains fit for purpose. In August 2023 the Government appointed Peter Tesch and Professor Graeme Samuel AC to co-lead the 2023 review.

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Supporting Information**Questions on Notice****2023-24 Additional Estimates: 14 February 2024**

- **QoN No. 21, Current export permits to Israel**, Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked for information on the number of defence export permits to Israel that are current or extant. **TABLED**
- **QoN No. 158, Defence exports program**, Senator Simon Birmingham (Liberal, South Australia) asked for information on Defence export permit applications to Israel and whether the Government has requested Defence stall or speed up the application process. **TABLED**
- **QoN No. 166, Defence/military exports to Israel**, Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked for information on the number of Defence export permits approved to Israel since 7 October 2023. **TABLED**
- **QoN No. 167, Defence/military exports to Israel**, Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked for information on the Deputy Prime Minister's personal approval of Defence export permits, including to Israel. **TABLED**
- **QoN No. 168, Defence/military exports approved by country**, Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked for information on the number of Defence export permits approved over the previous year. **TABLED**
- **QoN No. 169, Parts of weapons**, Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked about Defence's definition of 'weapons'. **PENDING**
- **QoN No. 170, Permits revoked**, Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked if the Minister had revoked any extant defence export permits to Israel. **TABLED**

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 26 March 2024, an individual made a request seeking access to a copy of a list of all defence export permits issued to Israel from 7 October 2023 to 26 March 2024. **Defence is preparing a response to this request.**
- On 5 March 2024 an individual made a request seeking a copy of Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack, including an index of back pocket briefs, for the 2023-24 Additional estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 30 October 2023 a media organisation requested Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack for the 2023-24 Supplementary Budget Estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 20 March 2024, an individual made a request seeking access to a copy of any document confirming the number of military/defence export permits issued to the United States from 16 November 2023 to 20 March 2024. **Defence is preparing a response to this request.**

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- On 5 March 2024, an individual made a request seeking a copy of Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack, including an index of back pocket briefs, for the 2023–24 Additional estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 19 February 2024, an individual made a request seeking access to a copy of any document confirming the number of defence export permits issued to the United States, the United Kingdom and Israel from 1 January 2023 to 6 October 2023 and 7 October 2023 to 19 February 2024. **The Department is preparing a response to this request.**

Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 8 April 2024, the Prime Minister [told](#) the ABC that Australia is not sending arms to Israel and has not done so for some period of years.
- On 24 March 2024, the Assistant Minister for Trade and Manufacturing [told](#) the Senate that Australia has not supplied weapons to Israel since the conflict began and for at least the past five years.
- On 9 February 2024, in an [interview](#) with ABC Radio, the Minister for Defence Industry said that Australia is not exporting weapons to Israel.
- On 1 February 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister [told](#) a press conference for the Australia–New Zealand Ministers Consultations that Australia has not exported weapons to Israel for many years and that Australia's assessment of export permit applications takes time.

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 10 April 2024, Declassified Australia published an article by Michelle Fahy titled [Secrets of the Weapons Trade](#), discussing export permit approvals data on Israel obtained via Freedom of Information, with claims the Australian Government is obscuring munitions exports to Israel.
- On 9 April 2024, SBS published an article by Rashida Yosufzai titled [The potential blind spot in Australia's military exports to Israel](#), discussing Australia's defence exports.
- On 9 April 2024, ABC News published an article by Andrew Greene titled [Details of defence deal with Israel kept under wraps to protect Australia's 'reputation'](#), discussing Defence's rejection of a Freedom of Information request to publicly release a copy of the deal with Israel on defence industry cooperation.
- On 28 February 2024, Michael West Media published an article by Monika Sarder titled [Truth or Lies? The facts on Australia's weapons exports to Israel ... and the risk](#), discussing Australia's defence exports and perceived lack of transparency.

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Budget Estimates June 2024
Last updated: 22 May 2024
Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; David Nockels.

- On 23 February 2024, ReliefWeb published an article by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs titled [Arms exports to Israel must stop immediately: UN experts](#), discussing UN experts' call on all states to immediately cease any transfer of weapons or ammunition to Israel that would be used in Gaza and is likely to violate international humanitarian law.

Division: Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group	
PDR No: SB24-000365	
Prepared by: Emily Hall Assistant Secretary Defence Export Controls Mob: s22 / Ph: s47E(d) Date: 20 May 2024	Cleared by Division Head: David Nockels First Assistant Secretary Defence Industry Policy Division Mob: s22 / Ph: s47E(d) Date: 17 April 2024
Consultation: Major General Jason Blain, Head Land Systems, Capability Acquisition Sustainment Group	
Consultation: Air Vice-Marshal Gerry van Leeuwen, Head Guided Weapons and Explosives Ordnance Systems Division, Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Group	
Cleared by Deputy Secretary: Hugh Jeffrey Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group Date: 22 April 2024	

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Defence Trade Controls Act

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry, Hugh Jeffrey, to lead.
- First Assistant Secretary Defence Industry Policy, David Nockels, to support.

Key Messages

- Defence is working closely with a range of stakeholders, including Australian industry and the academic and research sector, to implement the 2024 amendments to the *Defence Trade Controls Act 2012*.
- The amendments will come into effect in September 2024, and include three new offences and the exemption of the United Kingdom and the United States from Australia's export control permit requirements under the *Defence Trade Controls Act 2012*.
- Defence will support these changes through three main lines of effort: improving stakeholder education and awareness; uplifting our case management system; and expanding our workforce capability to ensure timely and efficient processing of export permits.

Talking Points

Implementing the Defence Trade Controls Amendment Bill 2024

[Handling Note: for more regarding the Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act 2024 and how it amends Australia's export control framework, refer to Brief 35 – Export Controls].

- To drive effective implementation, Defence is:
 - developing a suite of education and guidance materials to support stakeholder decision-making on permit requirements;
 - co-designing online learning modules and facilitating outreach activities around the country;
 - upgrading our case management system to provide a more intuitive and secure customer experience; and
 - recruiting additional staff to ensure timely processing of complex permit applications and the ability to provide bespoke technical advice to exporters, when required.

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Consultation

- Defence is consulting key stakeholders on implementation, and working with exporters to co-design the legislative framework, outreach and educational activities. Defence chairs:
 - Industry and Investment Working Group;
 - Higher Education and Research Sector Working Group; and
 - Defence Export Controls Working Group.
- The Working Groups include representatives from peak bodies in each sector and key individuals and organisations who engaged with the recent review of the *Defence Trade Controls Act 2012* and during the development of the *Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act 2024*.

Regulations

- The Government is consulting key stakeholders on the development of the regulations.
- On 1 May 2024, Defence released the proposed Defence Trade Legislation Amendment Regulations 2024, with consultation ending on 30 May 2024.
- The Defence Trade Legislation Amendment Regulations 2024 specifies and gives effect to many of the provisions set out in the *Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act 2024*.
- The proposed Defence Trade Legislation Amendment Regulations 2024 were designed in consultation with industry and the Higher Education and Research sector.
- The Defence Trade Legislation Amendment Regulations 2024 are available on Defence's website.
- The Defence Trade Legislation Amendment Regulations 2024 are expected to be finalised in July 2024. The provisions in the Defence Trade Legislation Amendment Regulations 2024 will commence in September 2024 in line with the *Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act 2024*.

If pressed: When will the new controls come into effect?

- Implementation of the *Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act 2024* provides a six month transition period. The criminal offences will come into effect in March 2025.
- This is intended to support industry and academia by providing adequate time to understand the legislation and apply for the appropriate permits.

Background

- On 8 April 2024, the Defence Trade Controls Amendment Bill 2024 received Royal Assent.

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- On 27 March 2024, the Defence Trade Controls Amendment Bill 2024 was passed by the Parliament.
- On 30 November 2023, the Senate referred the Defence Trade Controls Amendment Bill 2023 (Provisions) to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee for inquiry and report. The Committee tabled its final report on 15 March 2024, recommending the Senate pass the Defence Trade Controls Amendment Bill 2023. Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) released a dissenting report on behalf of the Greens, recommending the Senate reject the Bill due to:
 - a short period for public comments;
 - concerns about the uncertainty of what is and is not dual-use military equipment; and
 - concerns that individuals who make a wrong call could face jail time.

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

- No QoNs asked.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- No FOIs requested.

Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 27 March 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister [announced](#) that the Parliament passed the *Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act 2024 and Safeguarding Australia's Military Secrets Act 2024*.
- On 207 March 2024, The Government [tabled](#) the review and its response to the *Defence Trade Controls Act 2012*.

Relevant Media Reporting

- AUKUS Trilateral Media Releases following passage of the amendments:
 - [Australian Department of Defence](#);
 - [United Kingdom Ministry of Defence](#); and
 - [United States Department of State](#).

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Division: Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group	
PDR No: SB24-000517	
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Cleared by Deputy Secretary: Hugh Jeffrey Date: 1 May 2024 Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy and Industry Group	

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Budget Estimates June 2024

Last updated: 20 May 2024

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Bernard Philip; Air Vice-Marshal Stephen Chappell

Ukraine

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry, Hugh Jeffrey, to lead.
- First Assistant Secretary International Policy, Bernard Philip, to support.
- Head Military Strategic Commitments, Air Vice-Marshal Stephen Chappell, to support on Operation KUDU.

Key Messages

- Australia condemns Russia's unilateral, illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine.
- The Government remains committed to supporting Ukraine to resolve the conflict on its terms, and to imposing costs on Russia for its aggression.
- Australia's committed military assistance to Ukraine now totals approximately \$880 million, with overall assistance valued at more than \$1 billion.
- Under Operation KUDU, the ADF continues to make a strong contribution to multinational efforts to train Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel in the United Kingdom.
- Defence has refined its decision-making processes to enable a more proactive approach to identifying options to support Ukraine.
- Australia will continue to provide practical military assistance tailored to Ukraine's needs and complementing the efforts of our partners.

Talking Points

What is the current situation in Ukraine?

- Drawing on available open source information:
 - Ukraine's defence against Russia remains steadfast but under pressure, complicated by ongoing materiel and personnel shortages.
 - Ukrainian forces continue to defend against ongoing and localised Russian advances along the 'zero line' in Ukraine's east (that is, the frontlines in Kherson, Zaporizhia, Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts) and a recent offensive near Kharkiv.
 - Russia has also stepped up its air, missile and drone attacks on Ukrainian positions, cities and critical infrastructure.
 - Russian President Vladimir Putin appears unfazed by the prospect of a long and costly war.
 - The Russian economy has been reorientated to a war footing to support the Ukraine invasion, which will likely have longer-term negative impacts on Russia.

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Budget Estimates June 2024

SB24-000366

Last updated: 20 May 2024

Ukraine

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Bernard Philip; Air Vice-Marshal Stephen Chappell

- Russia continues to receive political or materiel support for its war of aggression, notably from Iran, North Korea and China.
- The war continues to see operational and technical adaptation and evolution, one example being the extensive use of drones.

How is the Government supporting Ukraine?

- Australia is committed to supporting Ukraine to end the conflict on its terms.

If pressed: Why did the Deputy Prime Minister visit Lviv rather than Kyiv?

- The Deputy Prime Minister visited Lviv on 27 April 2024 to meet the Prime Minister of Ukraine, Denys Shmyhal in his home town, and provide support to local Lviv defence industry.
 - He also met the Minister for Strategic Industries, Alexander Kamyshin.
 - And senior defence officials from Kyiv, who joined the program in Lviv, including the First Deputy Minister for Defence Lieutenant General Ivan Havryliuk.
 - The Deputy Prime Minister also visited the National Ground Forces Academy – which trains future military leaders – and a local defence industry site.

How is the Government supporting Ukraine?

- Australia is committed to supporting Ukraine to end the conflict on its terms.
 - Defence works closely with other government departments to support a coordinated response to Russia's invasion.
- The Deputy Prime Minister visited Ukraine on 27 April 2024 where he announced a further \$100 million worth of military assistance, including a \$50 million package with support from Australian defence industry. The package consists of;
 - around \$30 million towards uncrewed aerial vehicles (drones);
 - \$15 million towards other high priority equipment, such as combat helmets, rigid hull inflatable boats, boots, fire masks and generators;
 - Air-to-ground precision munitions; and
 - Delivery of short-range air defence systems.
- Defence support has taken two principal forms:
 - Materiel and financial support for Ukraine's Armed Forces, totalling around \$880 million, with overall Australian assistance for Ukraine valued at over \$1 billion.
 - : This includes equipment from ADF stocks and equipment purchased from the Australian defence industry.

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Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Bernard Philip; Air Vice-Marshal Stephen Chappell

- : It also includes a \$50 million commitment to the International Fund for Ukraine, administered by the United Kingdom, to procure priority military equipment.
- Under Operation KUDU, ADF personnel deployed to the United Kingdom continue to contribute to multi-national efforts to train Ukrainian personnel (under the United Kingdom’s Operation INTERFLEX).
 - : This mission has been extended into 2024 and now includes a Junior Leadership program.
 - : In April 2024, Australia’s E-7A Wedgetail concluded its 6-month deployment to Europe where it contributed the protection of a key military and humanitarian assistance hub for Ukraine.
- . Defence support for Ukraine is carefully balanced against other priorities, noting:
 - Defence’s primary focus is on Australia’s security in a more contested Indo-Pacific region; and
 - The focus on the ADF’s preparedness, modernisation and force generation as set out in the 2024 National Defence Strategy.

When will Australia deliver the \$100 million package of assistance to Ukraine?

- . For operational security reasons Defence does not comment on the delivery status of military equipment to Ukraine – until that delivery is finalised.
- . Defence is making all necessary arrangements to deliver on this commitment in the most expedient way possible.

Has support for Ukraine decreased under this Government?

- . Australia continues to provide useful and valued military assistance to Ukraine.
 - The strategic reality in the Indo-Pacific and the goals outlined in the 2024 National Defence Strategy demand careful balancing of priorities.

What further military assistance will Australia provide?

- . Australia continues to assess options for useful and practical support that aligns with Ukraine’s needs, and complements the efforts of our partners.
- . We are working with Ukraine very closely to make sure we are providing practical assistance that makes a difference.

How is Defence managing additional requests for support?

- . Defence has refined its decision-making processes to enable a more proactive approach to identifying options to support Ukraine. This has included establishing:
 - an internal consultation process, chaired at the senior executive level, to coordinate current and future Defence support for Ukraine; and

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Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Bernard Philip; Air Vice-Marshal Stephen Chappell

- a dedicated coordination unit within International Policy Division to provide a focal point for Defence on Ukraine, and to work with stakeholders on supporting the provision of credible, practical military assistance to Ukraine.

Will Australia prioritise gifting to Ukraine when it considers disposal of de-commissioned ADF assets, such as the M1A1 Abrams tanks and Tiger helicopters?

- Australia works closely with the Government of Ukraine to ensure we are providing practical assistance that is tailored to Ukraine's needs and complements the efforts of our partners.
- As disposal planning matures, the option to transfer particular platforms to Ukraine will be assessed and considered.
- Gifting to Ukraine is a prominent consideration in the disposal of other surplus equipment.

What is the 'Drone Capability Coalition' for Ukraine?

- On 21 March 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister announced Australia would join the Drone Capability Coalition, led by the United Kingdom and Latvia.
 - The Drone Capability Coalition is one of eight 'capability coalitions' established under the United States Department of Defense-chaired Ukraine Defense Contact Group to coordinate support on particular capabilities.
 - It coordinates capability support for Ukraine's uncrewed systems.

Did Ukraine receive artillery ammunition from the joint initiative with France?

- The French Minister of the Armed Forces, Sébastien Lecornu posted on social media in December 2023 that the 10,000 rounds of 155mm ammunition had been delivered to Ukraine.

Background

- Russia began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, eight years after the start of hostilities with Russia's capture of Crimea and attempted seizure of the Donets Basin ('Donbas') region of eastern Ukraine.
- Australia's objective, as is our partners', is two-fold: to support Ukraine and to impose costs on Russia for its aggression. In doing so, Australia demonstrates its commitment to upholding the rules-based international order.
- Defence works closely with partner agencies to support a coordinated response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Defence has been a vital part of whole-of-government processes to canvass and coordinate advice and options for Government in response to Russia's invasion, including support for the Ukraine Government and efforts to hold Russia accountable.

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- Defence has made a submission to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee into Australian support for Ukraine, which is due to report by August 2024.

Operation KUDU

- A rotational force of approximately 90 ADF personnel is training Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel in the United Kingdom throughout 2024 as part of a multi-national effort under the United Kingdom-led Operation INTERFLEX.
- Over 1,450 Ukrainian personnel have graduated from ADF-delivered training and more than 30,000 Ukrainians have been trained since June 2022.

E7-A deployment

- The aircraft concluded its six-month deployment to Europe and commenced its return to Australia in April 2024.
- The E-7A aircraft supported the multinational effort to provide early warning for potential threats from Russia outside of Ukraine.

Materiel contributions

- The Government has gifted a range of equipment from ADF stock, including:
 - 120 Bushmaster protected mobility vehicles;
 - six M777 155mm lightweight towed howitzers plus ammunition;
 - 56 M113AS4 armoured vehicles and 14 special operations vehicles;
 - 28 MAN 40M medium trucks and 14 trailers;
 - de-mining equipment to help remove explosive ordnance littering the battlefield;
 - anti-armour weapons and other weapons;
 - technology from Australian suppliers, including unmanned aerial systems, decoys and remote vehicles;
 - 105mm and 155mm artillery ammunition;
 - air-to-ground precision munitions; and
 - short-range air defence capabilities.

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

Questions in Writing: 17 April 2024

- QoN No. 3164**, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham asked the Minister for Defence a question on notice on 'conditions, requirements, directions or guidelines Australia has attached to the \$50 million contribution made to the International Fund for Ukraine'.
PENDING

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- **QoN No. 3206**, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham asked the Minister for Defence a question on notice regarding all Australian Government support to Ukraine since February 2022, including the date of announcement, detail of announcement, cost of commitment, and date of completion of delivery. **PENDING**

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade: 27 February 2024

- **QoN No. 1**, Mr Gavin Pearce MP (Liberal Party, Tasmania) asked questions regarding how the information collected by the airborne early warning and control platform, the E-7A Wedgetail aircraft, was processed and provided to the United States and other NATO partners. **TABLED**

2023-24 Additional Estimates: 14 February 2024

- **QoN No. 2**, Senator the Hon David Fawcett (Liberal Party, South Australia) asked for the identity of officials in Defence who were responsible for approving briefings to the Government regarding the disposal of the MRH-90 Taipan helicopters and addressing the question whether they could be donated to Ukraine. **TABLED**

Supplementary Budget Estimates: October 2023

- **QoN No. 93, 94, 96 and 97**, Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC (Liberal Party, Western Australia) asked questions covering Hawkeis, the E7-A deployment, the defence industry package, the Deputy Prime Minister's visits to Ukraine, Ukrainian Government requested support from Australia, and assistance in de-mining efforts in the context of letters written by Senator Reynolds and the Ukrainian Ambassador on 17 May 2023 and 22 May 2023. **TABLED**

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 26 April 2023, an individual made a request seeking access to agreements between the Australian and Ukrainian Governments to see if there was 'proof that an agreement exists...that guarantees the considerations of international humanitarian law.' **This request was refused under section 33 of the FOI Act. On 1 September 2023 the individual appealed to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, contesting the decision. As of 10 April 2024, a decision is pending.**
- On 30 October 2023 a media organisation requested Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack for the 2023-24 Supplementary Budget Estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 5 March 2024, an individual made a request seeking a copy of Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack, including an index of back pocket briefs, for the 2023-24 Additional estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**

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Cleared By:

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Position: Deputy Secretary

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Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 27 April 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister [announced](#) Australia will provide \$100 million in military assistance to Ukraine, including uncrewed aerial systems, short range air defence systems, air-to-ground precision munitions, and other high priority equipment.
- On 21 March 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister [announced](#) Australia will join the international 'drone coalition' led by the United Kingdom and Latvia.
- On 15 February 2024, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs [announced](#) Australia will provide a \$50 million grant to the International Fund for Ukraine administered by the United Kingdom.
- On 14 December 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister [announced](#) the extension and expansion of Australian training for Ukrainian recruits in the United Kingdom under Operation KUDU.

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 27 April 2024, ABC News published an article by Matthew Doran titled '[Australia to provide \\$100 million in funding and supplies to Ukraine](#)'. It reported on the Deputy Prime Minister's travel to Ukraine, including on the details of the new \$100 million package of military assistance.
- On 13 March 2024, ABC News published an article by Steve Cannane titled '[Australia's slipping support for Ukraine in spotlight](#)'.
- On 30 January 2024, the Australian Financial Review published an article by Aaron Patrick titled '[Ukraine to Australia: 'We don't want your flying trash](#)', opining that Australia failed to pre-empt Ukraine's requests for military equipment, including MRH-90 Taipan helicopters and F/A-18 Hawkeis.

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Budget Estimates June 2024

Last updated: 20 May 2024

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Bernard Philip; Air Vice-Marshal Stephen Chappell

Division: Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group	
PDR No: SB24-000366	
Prepared by: David Lewis Assistant Secretary Global Partners Branch Mob: s22 / Ph: s47E(d) Date: 17 April 2024	Cleared by Division Head: David Lewis Acting First Assistant Secretary International Policy Division Mob: s22 / Ph: s47E(d) Date: 17 April 2024
Consultation: Emma McCarthy Assistant Secretary Financial Compliance Date: 17 April 2024	
Consultation: Brigadier Nicholas Foxall Director General Military Strategic Commitments Date: 17 April 2024	
Cleared by Deputy Secretary: Hugh Jeffrey Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group Date: 19 April 2024	

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International Armed Conflict Decision Making Inquiry

Handling Note: Deputy Secretary Governance, John Reid PSM, to lead.

Key Messages

- Under Australia's constitutional arrangements, the decision to commit the ADF to international armed conflict rests with the Executive.
- These arrangements remain appropriate and enable the elected Government to respond rapidly to evolving matters of national importance in the interests of the safety and security of Australia.
- The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade confirmed the Executive's prerogative to commit the ADF to international armed conflict in its report on the 'Inquiry into international armed conflict decision making' in March 2023.
- The Government's response to the Committee's final report was tabled in the House of Representatives on 8 August 2023 and in the Senate on 9 August 2023.
- The Government has agreed, agreed in principle, or broadly agreed to all seven of the recommendations made in the Report. Defence is working with the Government to implement the recommendations.
- Defence has worked with Government departments and agencies to define the scope and structure of the Committee, as well as its appropriate powers and functions.

Talking Points

Establishing the new committee

- The Government is committed to increased – and appropriate – oversight of Defence
- The Government agreed to the report's recommendation to establish a new Parliamentary Joint Committee on Defence.
- The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Defence will be established through legislation and modelled on the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. The *Defence Amendment (Parliamentary Joint Committee on Defence) Bill 2024* establishing the Committee was introduced on 30 May 2024.
- The Bill establishes appropriate safeguards to balance the Government's commitment to greater public accountability and transparency for Defence, and the necessary protection of information provided to the Committee to ensure Australia's national security, and that of our international partners.
- The Bill sets out the Committee's functions, which include:

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- considering publicly released documents dealing with Australian defence strategies, planning and contingencies, such as the biennial National Defence Strategy;
 - scrutinising Australia’s defence capability development, acquisitions and sustainment, including the Integrated Investment Program;
 - examining and being appraised of any war or warlike operations and ongoing conflicts, in the event of a decision by the Executive to enter into armed conflict, and;
 - monitoring the involvement of Australian defence agencies in significant non-conflict operations domestically and internationally.
- The Bill also sets out a range of criminal offences intended to prevent the disclosure or publication of certain sensitive information without specific authorisation from the Minister for Defence.

Structure of the Committee

- The structure of the Committee is reflective of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security’s membership, as set out in the Intelligence Services Act 2001.
- The Prime Minister, in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition, will appoint up to 13 members to the Committee, drawn from the Government and non-Government in both Houses of Parliament.

The decision to deploy the Australian Defence Force

- Defending Australia, its people, and its interests is the Government’s highest priority and most important responsibility. Defence is fully committed to the fulfilment of this responsibility.
- It is also essential that Australia’s allies and partners feel assured that our commitments of support can be relied on in a timely and effective manner.
- The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Inquiry reaffirmed it is appropriate that decisions about the deployment of the ADF into international armed conflict remain with the Executive.
- In practice, this power is exercised collectively by the National Security Committee of Cabinet.
- The Government must have the ability to respond swiftly to threats to national security, based on the available information. Existing arrangements enable the Government to react decisively to contingencies when they arise.
- If Parliament’s approval was required for every deployment, it could undermine the ability to pre-position the ADF overseas to appropriately and quickly respond to contingencies and avoid unnecessary escalations in conflict situations.

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- There must be an appropriate balance between enabling the Government to respond to challenges to our national interests and security, and ensuring the Parliament has effective oversight of those decisions.
- The measures included in the Government's response to Committee's Report strikes this balance.

Codifying practices on international armed conflict decision making.

- As outlined in the Government response, a Statement that codifies the practices on international armed conflict decision making will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website, alongside the Cabinet Handbook. This work is underway.
- The Government's response has agreed that, if Australia is to engage in major military operations as a party to an armed conflict, a Ministerial Statement will be made in both Houses of Parliament to inform a timely debate.

If pressed: Legal authority for deployment of the ADF into international armed conflict.

- The Executive decision making power flows from section 61 of the Constitution and is in practice exercised collectively by the National Security Committee of Cabinet.
- Questions regarding legal advice on constitutional or international law issues should be directed to the Attorney-General's Department.

If pressed: Disclosure of legal advice.

- It is long-standing policy that the Government does not disclose legal advice, reflecting the importance of the Government receiving frank and fearless advice.
- It would be for the Government of the day to determine the appropriateness of disclosures with respect to questions of international law and legal advice.
- The Government has agreed to table written statements in the Parliament, setting out the objectives of major military operations, the orders made and their legal basis.

If pressed: Would the Governor-General be consulted?

- Deploying the ADF into major armed conflicts is a decision for the elected Government and not the Governor-General.

If pressed: What funding has been allocated to establish the Joint Committee on Defence?

- \$17.5 million has been allocated to establish the new Joint Committee on Defence, which will enhance oversight of Defence's role in responding to Australia's challenging strategic environment.

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- This includes the cost to establish the Committee and ongoing costs over the next ten years for salaries, ICT setup, security clearances, administration costs and travel.
- The cost of this measure will be met from within the existing resourcing of the Department of Defence.

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

2023-24 Supplementary Budget Estimates: 25 October 2023

- **QoN No. 120, Statutory Parliamentary Joint Committee on Defence**, Senator the Hon David Fawcett (Liberal, South Australia), asked a question about the Statutory Parliamentary Joint Committee on Defence. **TABLED.**

2023-24 Budget Estimates: 30 and 31 May 2023

- **QoN No. 77, ADF in military operations overseas**, Senator Lidia Thorpe (Independent, Victoria) asked a question about the ADF in military operations overseas. **TABLED.**

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 12 March 2024, an individual made a request seeking a copy of Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack, including an index of back pocket briefs, for the 2023-24 Additional Estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 30 October 2023, a media organisation requested Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack for the 2023-24 Supplementary Budget Estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**

Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 9 August 2023, [the Government's response](#) to the Inquiry into international armed conflict decision making was [tabled](#) in the Senate by the Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy.
- On 8 August 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister published a [media release](#) on the Government's response to the inquiry into international armed conflict decision making.
- On 8 August 2023, the Government's response was [tabled](#) in the House of Representatives by the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations.

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Relevant Media Reporting

- On 29 May 2024 Greg Sheridan indicated that the ‘new joint defence committee for AUKUS bipartisanship is a ‘marginal development’’ on Peta Credlin’s show on [Sky News](#).
- On 29 May 2024 Sky News broadcast a panel in which the Hon Andrew Hastie MP (Liberal, Western Australia) mentioned the establishment of a [Parliamentary Committee for Defence](#), and the inclusion of non-Government members.
- On 25 March 2024 the Australian Defence Magazine published an article by Max Blenkin titled [Government to create a Joint Statutory Committee on Defence](#), which cites the Hon Andrew Hastie MP (Liberal, Western Australia).
- On 20 March 2024, the Canberra Times published an [article](#) by Miriam Webber about the need to establish a joint parliamentary committee to oversee Defence agencies.
- On 19 March 2024, Andrew Wallace MP (Liberal National, Queensland), Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, noted the Shadow Minister for Defence’s position on creating a defence committee in [the ABC News Afternoon Briefing](#).

Division: Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication	
PDR No: SB24-000367	
Prepared by: Melissa King Assistant Secretary Ministerial, Parliamentary and Cabinet Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 23 April 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Rowena Bain First Assistant Secretary Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 3 May 2024
Cleared by: John Reid Deputy Secretary Governance Group Date: 4 May 2024	

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Pacific Engagement

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry, Hugh Jeffrey to lead.
- First Assistant Secretary Pacific, Susan Bodell to support on Contractor Engagement.

Key Messages

- As called for in the Defence Strategic Review (and 2024 National Defence Strategy), Defence is deepening its partnerships in the Pacific by deepening connections with the militaries of the Pacific, investing in their capability, and bolstering our ability to work together.
- Together with our Pacific partners, Defence aims to foster a region where sovereignty is respected and where collective, Pacific-led security responses are the norm.
- Defence is prioritising investment in the long-standing Defence Cooperation Program, including through the Pacific Maritime Security Program and Indo-Pacific Infrastructure Program.

Talking Points

- As highlighted in the Defence Strategic Review and the 2024 National Defence Strategy, Australia is deepening its diplomatic and defence partnerships in the Indo-Pacific.
- Defence is delivering on this imperative in the Pacific by:
 - building partnerships through the long-standing and highly-regarded Defence Cooperation Program, which marked its 50th anniversary in 2023.
 - : Defence is enhancing its training, education and exercise activities with Pacific security forces, building our collective ability to deliver security outcomes for our region.
 - : In July and August 2023 Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Tonga participated in Exercise TALISMAN SABRE for the first time.
 - : Australia is developing the capacity to undertake humanitarian assistance and disaster response activities in support of civilian agencies, including through the establishment of a Pacific Response Group.
 - : Australia also continues to service the enduring annual bilateral exercise series with military partners (Olgeta Warrior in Papua New Guinea, POVAL Series in Tonga and CORAL Series in Fiji).

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Senate Estimates June 2024
 Last updated: 23 April 2024
 Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Susan Bodell

SB24-000368
 Pacific Engagement

- : The budget for the Defence Cooperation Program is \$248.261 million in 2023-24, as stated on page 96 and 97 of the 2023-24 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements.
- investing more in the Pacific Maritime Security Program by offering additional support for through-life maintenance and sustainment of the Australian-gifted Guardian-class Patrol Boats and expanding maritime training (\$5.9 billion over the life of the program);
- : Australia has delivered 19 Guardian-class Patrol Boats to Pacific partners.
- delivering and maintaining security-related infrastructure for our partners across the region through the Indo-Pacific Infrastructure Program;
- strengthening connections between security-centric regional architecture and the Pacific Islands Forum, ensuring outcomes from the South Pacific Defence Ministers' and the Joint Heads of Pacific Security meetings are briefed to the Pacific Islands Forum;
- advancing initiatives that enable effective Pacific-led responses to Pacific security challenges, such as the Pacific Response Group; and
- partnering with Solomon Islands to develop the Hells Point Explosive Ordnance Disposal Facility in Honiara, the home and training ground for explosive ordnance disposal experts from the Royal Solomon Islands' Police Force.
- : A blast protected High Mobility Engineering Excavator was formally gifted to the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force in June 2023 for use at Hells Point. The excavator is now operational as part of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force explosive ordnance disposal capability.
- Defence has also established a dedicated Pacific Division to provide policy direction and program delivery that deepens defence engagement and collaboration with partners across the Pacific.

Recruitment of Pacific islanders into the Australian Defence Force

- Defence has prioritised improving recruitment and retention outcomes for our ADF personnel, in line with the Government's response to the Defence Strategic Review.
- Current Defence policy states that Australian citizenship is a requirement for entry to, and service in, the ADF.
 - Under certain circumstances, permanent residents may be appointed or enlisted on a provisional basis subject to required security clearances.
- As part of broader initiatives to improve recruiting of ADF personnel, Defence is looking at all options to grow the Defence Force.
 - s47C [REDACTED]

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Senate Estimates June 2024
Last updated: 23 April 2024
Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Susan Bodell

SB24-000368
Pacific Engagement

- *Direct any further questions on ADF recruitment to the Head of Military Personnel, Major General Stothart.*

Contractor Engagement

- From 1 December 2023, the Pacific Division commenced one 'above the line' 12-month contract with KPMG as Strategic Industry Partner providing a range of services including program management, procurement, finance and project support. The contract has a total value of \$7.8 million.
- Since December 2023, Pacific Division has completed 12 contractor conversions, with nine positions previously filled with contractors and now filled by APS staff.
- The Pacific Division also currently maintains around 163 purchase orders for 'below the line' contracts with various service providers.
 - These contracts provide a range of services, including but not limited to legal services, probity advice, construction, capability system delivery, maintenance services, design services and project management.

Pacific Response Group through South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting

- At the 10th anniversary of the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting in New Caledonia from 4-6 December 2023, Ministers from Australia, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Chile agreed to progress planning towards the establishment of a Pacific Response Group.
- The initiative will refine the way Pacific defence forces come together to deliver rapid and effective humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to other Pacific island countries or each other at times of need upon request.
- The concept is an investment in a 'community of action' within a crisis prone region and builds on what already exists.
- The Chief of the Defence Force will work with his Pacific counterparts to develop a detailed concept of operations in advance of the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting in 2024.

If pressed: Does the Pacific Response Group militarise the Pacific?

- The Pacific Response Group would only act at the request of an affected state and nest within a civilian-led response, improving the effectiveness and predictability of deployments.
 - It would be up to each member state to determine the nature of its contribution at any particular point in time.

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Indo-Pacific Infrastructure

- The Indo-Pacific Infrastructure Program is delivering security related infrastructure in cooperation with partner nations. It contributes to a region that is economically stable, strategically secure, capable and politically sovereign.
- The Program includes 28 active projects and activities across the Indo-Pacific within six different sub-programs (major works, minor works, maritime infrastructure, policing infrastructure, Defence's regional estate, and maintenance and sustainment).
- As at 31 March 2024, Indo-Pacific infrastructure projects contributed an estimated \$82 million to Australian companies over 2023–24 through the procurement of goods and services, and an estimated \$105 million to Indo-Pacific small and medium enterprises.
- Since 1 July 2018, Defence's infrastructure projects in the Indo-Pacific have contributed an estimated \$528 million to Australian companies through the procurement of goods and services, and an estimated \$237 million to Indo-Pacific small and medium enterprises.
- The Defence-funded redevelopment in Vanuatu of the Cook and Tiroas Barracks is nearing completion, the:
 - Tiroas Barracks handover was held on 4 March 2024.
 - Cook Barracks handover is scheduled for 2024.
- Defence is partnering with the Solomon Islands to enhance border outposts in Western and Eastern Provinces. The new facilities and infrastructure will support Solomon Islands' Guardian-class Patrol Boats, bringing together police, customs and immigration officials to reinforce the security of Solomon Islands' borders and bolster its natural disaster response capability.

Government Commitments

Fiji – Sale of 14 Protected Mobility Vehicles (Bushmasters)

- On 18 October 2023, the Prime Minister and his Fijian counterpart, the Hon Sitiveni Rabuka, announced Australia would sell 14 Protected Mobility Vehicles to Fiji at a reduced price. This is in addition to the sale of 10 Protected Mobility Vehicles to Fiji in 2017.
- The Protected Mobility Vehicles will enable Fiji, through the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, to continue to contribute to peacekeeping missions around the world.
- Fiji is scheduled to receive the additional 14 Protected Mobility Vehicles before the end of June 2024.

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Australia-Pacific Defence School

- The ADF has partnered with forces in Fiji and Timor-Leste to deliver United Nations Peace Operations training to around 50 Pacific military personnel in total since March 2023 under the banner of the Australia-Pacific Defence School.
- Defence is continuing to scope options for the design of the Australia-Pacific Defence School and to work with the members of the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting to establish a regional training framework for the militaries of the Pacific.

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

- No QoNs asked.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 5 March 2024, an individual made a request seeking a copy of Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack, including an index of back pocket briefs, for the 2023-24 Additional estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 10 January 2024, a media organisation made a request seeking access to documents relating to decisions on the recruitment of Pacific islanders into the ADF. **The decision to release documents is pending.**

Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 4 April 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister delivered [remarks](#) to The Sydney Institute and addressed the Government's investments in enabling Pacific-led responses to Pacific security challenges.

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 5 April 2024, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute published a [report](#) addressing recruiting Pacific Islanders into the Australian Defence Force.
- On 5 January 2024, the acting Minister for Defence made [comments](#) during an ABC Radio National interview relating to direct recruitment from the Pacific into the ADF.
- On 6 December 2023, multiple Australian news sources [reported](#) on the Pacific Response Group, which Australia had proposed through the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting.
- On 18 October 2023, The Mandarin published an [article](#) by Dominic Giannini and Kat Wong regarding the sale of the Protected Mobility Vehicles to Fiji as driving an upgrade to Australia-Fiji ties.

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Division: Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group	
PDR No: SB24-000368	
Prepared by: Lisa Clutterham Assistant Secretary Pacific Regional and Governance Branch Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 11 April 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Susan Bodell First Assistant Secretary Pacific Division Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 15 April 2024
Cleared by DFG: Lise Owens Acting Assistant Secretary Finance Specialist Groups Date: 24 April 2024	
Cleared by Deputy Secretary: Hugh Jeffrey Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group Date: 19 April 2024	

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Hamas-Israel Conflict

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry, Hugh Jeffrey, to lead.
- Head of Military Strategic Commitments, Air Vice-Marshal Stephen Chappell, to support on current ADF operations.
- First Assistant Secretary Defence Industry Policy, David Nockels, to support on Defence export control processes.
- Questions on the broader Middle East, Zomi Frankcom, or the status of the Occupied Palestinian Territories should be directed to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Key Messages

- Australia maintains a modest defence relationship with Israel.
- Australia has supplied 140 ADF aerial delivery parachutes for use in humanitarian assistance airdrops into Gaza by Jordan and the United Arab Emirates.
- An ADF member who was wounded in Lebanon on 30 March 2024 while deployed on Operation PALADIN sustained non-life threatening injuries and was released for recovery.
- Through our contribution to peacekeeping operations, Australia has been a longstanding contributor to the security and stability of the Middle East.

Talking Points

Australia's defence relationship with Israel

- Australia maintains modest defence engagement with Israel through:
 - A resident Defence Attaché in Tel Aviv – a position established in 2018, with the first Defence Attaché commencing in February 2019; and
 - The annual Australia-Israel Strategic Dialogue at the Band-1/1-Star level.

ADF member injured on Operation PALADIN

- On 30 March 2024, an ADF member was wounded in Lebanon while deployed on Operation PALADIN (Defence Force's support to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO)).

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- The member was undertaking a routine United Nations patrol to monitor activity near the Israeli/Lebanon border, and was accompanied by three United Nations military observers and an interpreter.
- The member sustained non-life threatening injuries as the result of a blast.
 - They were transported to a health centre at a nearby military base for treatment and has since been released to recover.

If pressed: Who was responsible for the blast?

- We are not in a position to confirm additional details.
- Defence is in close contact with United Nations and is continuing to engage on this incident through diplomatic channels.

Operation PALADIN

- A small contingent of ADF personnel (12) are deployed to Lebanon under Operation PALADIN, which is Australia's contribution to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation.
- The Australian contingent are employed in a variety of roles to supervise, observe, and report on the various cease-fire arrangements, truces, and peace treaties that have been negotiated between Israel and neighbouring Arab nations.

If pressed: Will Australia extend its defence industry Memorandum of Understanding with Israel?

- Defence will review the Memorandum of Understanding ahead of its expiry, as is standard practice.

If pressed: Has Australia provided humanitarian assistance to Gaza?

- Since 7 October 2023, the Government has committed more than \$52 million towards humanitarian assistance for civilians affected by the conflict.
- Australia has also supported efforts by Jordan and the United Arab Emirates to assist with the delivery of vital humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza.
 - Australia supplied 140 ADF aerial delivery parachutes for use in humanitarian assistance airdrops by Jordan and the United Arab Emirates.

If pressed: Has the Deputy Prime Minister been in contact with his Israeli counterpart since the death of Australian Zomi Frankcom?

- The Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs spoke to their Israeli counterparts on the 2 and 3 April 2024, respectively.

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- . On 5 April 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, jointly wrote to the Israeli Ministers of Defence (Yoav Gallant) and Foreign Affairs (Israel Katz).
 - They demanded a thorough investigation and full accountability and advised of the intention to appoint a Special Adviser on Israel’s investigation on the incident.
- . On 8 April 2024, the Minister for Foreign Affairs announced the appointment of Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin AC (retired) as Special Adviser to the Australian Government on Israel’s response to the incident.
 - Further questions on this appointment should be referred to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

If pressed: Is Australia providing military support to Israel? Has Israel asked Australia for military support?

- . Australia has not supplied weapons to Israel since the conflict began – nor for at least the last five years.
- . Australia has not received a request for military support from Israel.

If pressed: Has Israel made any enquiries about potential military support?

- . No.

If pressed: Defence exports to Israel (First Assistant Secretary Defence Industry Policy to lead)

- . Australia has a stringent export control framework which is designed to ensure our military and dual-use items are used responsibly outside Australia.
- . The framework applies to a wide range of goods and technology, including items used for civilian and commercial purposes.

If pressed: Is Israel’s military response legal?

- . Israel has the right to defend itself, but the way it does so matters.
- . Israel must respect international humanitarian law and protect civilian lives.
- . Questions on international law should be referred to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Attorney-General’s Department.

If pressed: Australian citizens serving with the Israel Defence Force

Handling note: Specific questions should be referred to the Attorney-General’s Department. Questions relating to the Safeguarding Australia’s Military Secrets Act 2024 should be referred to Defence Security and Estate.

Iran’s drone and missile attacks on Israel

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- Australia condemns Iran's attacks on Israel (13 April 2024).
 - This escalation is a grave threat to the security of Israel and the entire region.
 - Australia continues to work with partners who have influence in the region to prevent the conflict from spreading.
- On 12 April 2024, the Minister for Foreign Affairs called her Iranian counterpart, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian to urge Iran to use its regional influence to promote stability, and not contribute to escalation.
 - Questions relating to the Minister for Foreign Affairs' engagement with Iran should be referred to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Background

- An Australian member on Operation PALADIN was injured as a result of a blast effect in southern Lebanon, near the Israel/Lebanon border. The cause of the blast remains under investigation.
 - The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon has announced it is investigating the origin of the explosion.
- From 16 to 19 January 2024, the Minister for Foreign Affairs visited the Middle East to support international diplomatic efforts towards a durable peace in the region.

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

Senate Parliamentary Question on Notice: 15 December 2023

- **QoN No. 2963, ADF and IDF**, Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked a question concerning whether there were any ADF personnel on secondment or embedded, or in other ways involved with the Israeli Defense Force. **TABLED**

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 11 April 2024, an individual requested a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding on cyber security between Australia and Israel signed in 2017. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 4 April 2024, a media organisation requested all correspondence, memos, briefings and reports from the Australian Defence Export Office that relate to Elbit Systems. **The decision to release documents is pending.**

Prepared By:

Name: David Lewis

Position: Assistant Secretary, Global Partners

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

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- On 26 March 2024, an individual requested information on how many defence export licences have been granted from Australia to Israel from 7 October 2023. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 5 March 2024, an individual made a request seeking a copy of Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack, including an index of back pocket briefs, for the 2023–24 Additional estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 19 February 2024, an individual requested the number of Defence export permits to the United States, United Kingdom and Israel. **These documents were released to the applicant on 18 April 2024.**

Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 9 April 2024, in a speech to the ANU National Security College the Minister for Foreign Affairs said the [recognition](#) of a Palestinian state is “the only hope to break the endless cycle of violence” in the Middle East and a two-state solution would help ensure long-term security for Israel and further undermine Hamas.
- On 8 April 2024, the Minister for Foreign Affairs [announced](#) the appointment of Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin AC (Retired) as the special adviser to the Australian Government on Israel's response to the Israel Defense Force strikes that killed Zomi Frankcom and six of her World Central Kitchen colleagues.
- On 25 January 2024, at the National Press Club, the Prime Minister [reiterated](#) his support for a two-state solution, arguing this would be in the best interest of Israel and Palestine in order to live in peace.
- On 23 January 2024, the Minister for Foreign Affairs [announced](#) Australia has imposed further counter-terrorism financing sanctions on 12 persons and three entities linked to Hamas.
- On 15 January 2024, the Minister for Foreign Affairs [announced](#) her travel to the Middle East, stating she would use this opportunity to advocate for a pathway out of the current conflict.

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 1 February 2024, the ABC published an article by Andrew Greene titled [Australia 'going slow' on processing military export requests from Israel over Gaza war concerns](#), that a Defence industry insider had told the ABC the government appeared to be deliberately 'going slow' on approving Israeli military equipment requests.
- On 23 January 2024, The National Tribune published an article titled [Sanctions in response to terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas](#), that the Minister for Foreign

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Affairs announced further counter-terrorism financing sanctions on 12 persons and three entities linked to Hamas, Hizballah, and Palestinian Islamic jihad.

- On 20 January 2024, The Saturday Paper published an article by Jonathan Pearlman titled [Penny Wong urges two-state solution during Middle East visit](#), that the Minister for Foreign Affairs would travel to the Middle East, urging for a two-state solution.
- On 15 January 2024, The Guardian published an article by Daniel Hurst titled [Albanese says Australia will not participate in ICJ case against Israel and instead focus on 'political solution'](#), that the Prime Minister had ruled out Australia's participation in a case brought against Israel in the International Court of Justice.

Division: Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group	
PDR No: SB24-000381	
Prepared by: David Lewis Assistant Secretary Global Partners Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 15 April 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Sally Timbs Acting First Assistant Secretary International Policy Division Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 24 April 2024
Cleared by Deputy Secretary: Hugh Jeffrey Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group Date: 22 April 2024	

Prepared By:
 Name: David Lewis
 Position: Assistant Secretary, Global Partners
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Cleared By:
 Name: Hugh Jeffrey
 Position: Deputy Secretary
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry
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Budget Estimates June 2024

Last updated: 2 May 2024

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Major General Anthony Rawlins; Celia Perkins

Climate Change

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry, Hugh Jeffrey, to lead on climate risk and international engagement.
- Acting Vice Chief of the Defence Force, Major General Anthony Rawlins, to lead on disaster response and Defence's submission to the Senate Select Inquiry on Australia's Disaster Resilience.
- Deputy Secretary Security and Estate Group, Celia Perkins, to lead on emissions reduction and Net Zero.

Key Messages

- Consistent with the trends identified by the Defence Strategic Review, the 2024 National Defence Strategy recognises that climate change poses an unprecedented challenge that compounds the risks to regional stability and prosperity arising from strategic competition.
- In order to undertake Defence's core mission to defend Australia and its national interests, Defence and Australia must be resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- Climate change is now an official part of Australia's defence engagement with our United States and United Kingdom partners through the senior officials' working groups on climate security risk.
- At the Australia–United Kingdom Ministerial Consultations 2024, Ministers committed to developing a defence Joint Climate Action Plan ahead of next year's meeting, with a focus on climate adaptation, resilience and emissions reduction initiatives.
- Defence is alert to the high priority attached to climate change by regional countries, and is working with allies and partners to address greater demands for disaster relief and resilience planning.

Talking Points

- In Australia, the acceleration of major climate events risks overwhelming the Government's capacity to respond effectively. This acceleration detracts from Defence's primary objective of defending Australia and its interests.
- Defence supports the Government in implementing its climate agenda, including by reducing emissions, accelerating our transition to clean energy, adapting to a changing environment, and building resilience against more frequent and severe weather events.

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Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

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Budget Estimates June 2024

Last updated: 2 May 2024

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffery; Major General Anthony Rawlins; Celia Perkins

- . The 2024 National Defence Strategy recognises the increasing frequency of climate events will place higher demands on the ADF for humanitarian assistance and disaster response, placing greater stress on ADF capability, capacity and infrastructure.
- . The Government has agreed in-principle to in the Defence Strategic Review that Defence should be the force of last resort for domestic aid to the civil community – except in extreme circumstances.
- . The 2024 National Defence Strategy recognises the importance of the Pacific to Australia’s security and prosperity, and states that the Government will continue to invest in its security relationships with the Pacific, including to mitigate the effects of climate change.
 - Defence will continue to provide regional Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief while managing the risks of concurrency pressures.
- . During a natural disaster, states or territories can request Commonwealth assistance, including Defence assistance, through the National Emergency Management Agency. Such requests are known as Defence Assistance to the Civil Community.

What is Defence doing to address and mitigate climate change?

- . Defence’s role, consistent with Government policy, is to:
 - ensure Defence is resilient to climate change, including our people, capability and estate;
 - be prepared to respond to disasters and security threats compounded by climate change; and
 - reduce our emissions to meet legislated targets, while enhancing and maintaining capability.
- . Defence has developed a Net Zero Strategy that guides action to respond to climate change, including reducing emissions.
 - Defence will accelerate its transition to clean energy, as directed by the Government’s response to the Defence Strategic Review, with a plan to be presented to the Government by 2025.
- . Defence has initiatives under way, including investing in energy efficiency measures, installing solar energy capacity, and testing alternative fuel sources with lower emissions profiles.
- . For example, following the Sustainability Initiatives Forum, held in February 2024, Defence is investing around \$30 million this financial year in energy efficiency measures across the estate focusing on:
 - LED lighting
 - heat pump hot water systems

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Budget Estimates June 2024

Last updated: 2 May 2024

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Major General Anthony Rawlins; Celia Perkins

- heating, cooling and ventilation and plant room (pumps and motors) energy efficiency, and
 - electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Defence continues to deliver solar energy generation and battery storage systems at Defence sites across Australia through the \$64 million Defence Renewable Energy and Energy Security Program. This is a 10-year facilities and infrastructure program which aims to contribute to Defence capability through delivery of efficient, secure and sustainable renewable energy across the Defence estate.
 - The 10-year program includes a range of activities to support Defence’s clean energy transition, including:
 - : pilot projects to test emerging technologies in the Defence context, and
 - : enhancing Defence’s processes to deliver renewables across the estate, including through policy changes, feasibility studies and providing expert technical support.
 - Defence is actively working with our international allies and partners in responding to climate change.
 - At the Australia–United States Ministerial Consultations held on 29 July 2023, principals committed to deepening cooperation to address the climate crisis through the implementation of the Australia–United States Climate, Critical Minerals and Clean Energy Transformation Compact.
 - : For Defence, this includes strengthening coordination on climate security initiatives such as enhanced information sharing, collaboration on climate risk assessments, and the integration of climate considerations into existing military exercises and planning.
 - At the Australia–United Kingdom Ministerial Consultations held on 22 March 2024, Ministers committed to developing a defence Joint Climate Action Plan by next year’s forum, with a focus on climate adaptation, resilience and emissions reduction initiatives.
 - The 2024 National Defence Strategy notes that Government will continue to strengthen cooperation with Southeast Asian partners, to address common challenges such as climate change.

How does Defence support the region in addressing climate change?

- Defence works with Pacific partners to enhance their resilience, including through infrastructure development that is environmentally sustainable, climate resilient and supports Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief activity.
 - Working with the Republic of Fiji, Defence planned and redeveloped the Blackrock Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Camp, which was reopened in March 2022.

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Budget Estimates June 2024

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- : Environmentally sustainable design features were incorporated into all aspects of the redevelopment to minimise energy usage and improve buildings' thermal performance. Eighty-eight tons of construction waste was recycled on this project.
- . Defence supports our region through extreme weather and natural disaster relief.
 - Defence's Pacific Support Vessel, Australian Defence Vessel Reliant, provides additional capability to respond to the priorities of Pacific countries, building regional resilience and facilitating humanitarian assistance and disaster management relief.

What is Defence's role in disaster relief?

- . State and territory governments have – and will continue to maintain – primary responsibility for providing emergency response services in their respective jurisdictions.
- . The Commonwealth is able to support state and territory-led crisis response efforts with ADF capabilities when requested by states and territories.
 - In March 2024, the ADF provided evacuation and supply delivery support to remote Northern Territory communities following Cyclone Megan.
- . While there will always be a role for the ADF in disaster response in extreme circumstances, or when specialist equipment is required, Defence is not structured to act as a domestic disaster recovery agency and concurrently defend Australia and its national interests.
- . The Government is exploring options to enhance the Commonwealth's crisis responses and recovery capabilities to support state and territory led response and recovery efforts as an alternative to the ADF.
 - Further questions on alternative Commonwealth crisis response and recovery capabilities should be directed to the Department of Home Affairs.

If pressed: How has the Office of National Intelligence's assessment on climate change informed Defence Climate Policy?

- . Defence supported the assessment by providing input and background information to the Office of National Intelligence on Defence-specific issues.
- . The assessment has shaped Defence thinking on climate adaptation and resilience, including Defence's energy, emissions and international engagement policy.

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Budget Estimates June 2024

Last updated: 2 May 2024

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Major General Anthony Rawlins; Celia Perkins

If pressed: Is Defence aware of a report that analyses the impacts of climate change on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands?

- The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts (the Commonwealth agency responsible for administering the Cocos (Keeling) Islands) has engaged Defence. That Department, with the Western Australian Government, is developing a report.

Background

Timeline of Significant Events

- On 22 March 2024, the second Senior Officials Working Group on Climate Security Risk was held with United States counterparts.
- On 30 November 2023, the Minister for Climate Change and Energy tabled the Government's second Annual Climate Change Statement in Parliament.
- On 14 September 2023, the inaugural Senior Officials Working Group on Climate Risk was held virtually with United Kingdom counterparts.

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

- No QoNs asked.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 25 August 2023, an individual sought information on Defence's involvement in drafting the Office of National Intelligence's National Assessment on the security implications of climate change. On 8 November 2023, the individual was notified of the decision to not release any documents. On 9 February 2024, the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner informed Defence the individual had sought an external review of the decision. **This decision is pending.**
- On 30 October 2023 a media organisation requested Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack for the 2023-24 Supplementary Budget Estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 5 March 2024 an individual made a request seeking a copy of Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack, including an index of back pocket briefs, for the 2023-24 Additional estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**

Recent Ministerial Comments

- No recent comments.

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Division: Strategic Policy

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Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

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Budget Estimates June 2024
Last updated: 2 May 2024
Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Major General Anthony Rawlins; Celia Perkins

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 2 May 2024, ABC News published an article by Jake Evans titled [Climate risks ignored in National Defence Strategy, former defence chief says](#) reporting Admiral Chris Barrie’s (ret’d) claims that the federal government either does not understand or is hiding from the public the risks posed by climate change to national security.
- On 8 April 2024, The Strategist published an article by Afeeya Akhand titled [Australia and UK defence commit to joint action on climate](#) that discussed the Australia-United Kingdom Ministerial Consultation Joint Climate Action Plan, and ways it could be used to deepen the United Kingdom’s engagement in the Pacific.

Division: Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group	
PDR No: SB24-000370	
Prepared by: Ashley Townshend Assistant Secretary National Security and Resilience Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 19 April 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Alison West Acting First Assistant Secretary Strategic Policy Division Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 12 April 2024
Consultation: Felix Bowman-Derrick Date: 10 April 2024 Assistant Secretary Environment and Engineering	
Consultation: Brigadier Nicholas Foxall Date: 10 April 2024 Director General Military Strategic Commitments	
Cleared by DSR/NDS: s47E(d) Date: 11 April 2024	
Cleared by Deputy Secretary: Hugh Jeffrey Date: 22 April 2024 Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group	

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 Position: Assistant Secretary National Security and Resilience
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 Name: Hugh Jeffrey
 Position: Deputy Secretary
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Deputy Commander 7th Brigade

Handling Note:

- Chief of the Defence Force, General Angus Campbell AO DSC to lead.
- First Assistant Secretary Pacific, Susan Bodell, to support on the appointment and the Australia–Fiji bilateral relationship.
- Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Simon Stuart AO DSC, to support on Army, 7th Brigade and personnel.

Key Messages

- Australia takes the allegations made in media reporting seriously.
- Defence encourages those who are making allegations in the media to engage with the appropriate authorities to have the matters investigated.
- Defence recognises there were shortcomings in the process of appointing Colonel Penioni (Ben) Naliva to the position of Deputy Commander of the Australian Army's 7th Brigade and has taken action to address this.
- Defence has reviewed the appointment and the Chief of the Defence Force has made the decision that Colonel Naliva will not remain in that position.
- Colonel Naliva has accepted an alternative posting to the Australian Defence College where he will contribute to Pacific-related research projects.

The Appointment Review

- Defence recognises there were shortcomings with the process of the appointment of Republic of Fiji Military Forces Colonel Naliva.
 - This includes the appointing officer not having a full view of all the information.
- Defence has reviewed the appointment of Colonel Naliva to the position of Deputy Commander of the Australian Army's 7th Brigade.
 - Following that review, the Chief of the Defence Force decided that Colonel Naliva would not remain in that position.
 - Colonel Naliva has accepted an alternative posting to the Australian Defence College where he will contribute to Pacific-related research projects.
- The ADF is providing support to Colonel Naliva and his family.
 - It is important to note these allegations have only been made in the media, and Colonel Naliva has not had the opportunity to defend himself through proper legal processes.

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Budget Estimates June 2024

Last updated: 24 May 2024

SB24-000371

Deputy Commander 7th Brigade

Key witnesses: General Angus Campbell; Susan Bodell; Lieutenant General Simon Stuart

Defence Action

- Defence has strengthened the process for appointing international seconded officers to the ADF and will now include additional checks.
 - This includes requiring character assurances from the originating defence force, enhancing internal due diligence processes, and securing the candidate's personal commitment that their previous conduct and background does not bring disrepute to their appointment.

Defence awareness of the allegations against Colonel Naliva

- As the Chief of the Defence Force stated at Additional Estimates hearings on 14 February 2024, he had not been made aware of the allegations. Pre-appointment processes undertaken by Defence had not functioned as effectively as they should.

Pre-appointment checks

- The Government of Fiji provided assurances that Colonel Naliva passed all required security checks in Fiji. They confirmed Colonel Naliva had not been investigated for, convicted of or charged with any crimes under Fijian law in relation to these allegations.
- Colonel Naliva acknowledged the conditions of his secondment in Australia under the auspices of the Defence Cooperation Program. All foreign embedded personnel are required to hold an Australian security clearance at the appropriate level prior to accessing Australian classified information.

If pressed: Has Defence reviewed all positions under the Defence Cooperation Program Seconded Officers Program?

- This is an ongoing process. Defence will take the time necessary to ensure this work is done correctly and thoroughly.

If pressed: What is Colonel Naliva's new role and where will he be based?

- Colonel Naliva has been offered a role contributing to Pacific-related research projects at the Australian Defence College.
- He will be under the command of the Australian Defence College's commanding officer.
- He will not be in command of any ADF personnel.

If pressed: Will Fiji provide a replacement Deputy Commander for 7th Brigade?

- Defence is committed to the embedded officer program and will work to find a suitable replacement at an appropriate time.
- The Deputy Commander's duties are currently being performed by the Chief of Staff 7th Brigade. Options for filling this role will be considered in due course.

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Budget Estimates June 2024

Last updated: 24 May 2024

SB24-000371

Deputy Commander 7th Brigade

Key witnesses: General Angus Campbell; Susan Bodell; Lieutenant General Simon Stuart

If pressed: Is Colonel Naliva's salary paid by Australia?

- . The Republic of Fiji Military Forces continues to pay Colonel Naliva's base salary.
- . Defence supplements the salary of any seconded officer to accommodate for the cost of living in Australia.
 - This is standard practice for seconded officers under the Defence Cooperation Program.

If pressed: What prevented disclosure of salary information in response to questions asked at Additional Estimates hearings on 14 February 2024?

- . Defence conducted additional due diligence on our responsibilities to the individual in relation to privacy sensitivities and the potential for damage to foreign relations stemming from disclosing this information.
- . With this additional work completed, Defence can now provide more information regarding Colonel Naliva's salary.

If pressed: If Colonel Naliva is not suitable to serve in 7th Brigade, why should he remain with Defence?

- . Colonel Naliva has not been charged with or convicted of any crimes. However, Defence has judged that the nature of the allegations against him must be resolved before he can assume or continue a command function in the ADF.
 - This is the same standard we would apply to any command role.
- . The Australian Defence College provides opportunity for Colonel Naliva to utilise his experience in the region to contribute to Pacific-related research topics.

If pressed: Are personnel at the Australian Defence College held to a different standard than those embedded in the ADF?

- . The same standards, values and behaviours apply to all personnel in the ADF.

Defence's response to allegations of wrongdoing

- . Defence takes all allegations of wrongdoing seriously.
- . Anyone with allegations of wrongdoing should raise them with the appropriate authorities to have the matters investigated.
- . The Fijian government has publically committed to ensuring that all individuals feel safe and supported in voicing their concerns and that their allegations would be taken seriously and investigated.

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Budget Estimates June 2024

SB24-000371

Last updated: 24 May 2024

Deputy Commander 7th Brigade

Key witnesses: General Angus Campbell; Susan Bodell; Lieutenant General Simon Stuart

If pressed: Will the allegations against Colonel Naliva be investigated in Australia?

- This is not a matter for Defence. The responsibility to investigate these allegations lies with the appropriate authority with jurisdiction over where the complaint is lodged.

If pressed: Was Colonel Naliva's appointment to the ADF in breach of Australia's international human rights obligations, including under the Convention Against Torture?

- No. The ADF is committed to adhering to its obligations under international law.

If pressed: Has Colonel Naliva been held to a different standard than his ADF counterparts?

- All seconded international military officers are subject to Australian laws and are required to adhere to the same Defence values and behaviours expected of ADF officers.
 - Colonel Naliva has acknowledged the conditions of his secondment in Australia under the auspices of the Defence Cooperation Program.

Background

- In October 2022, Australia and Fiji mutually agreed to pursue command-level secondments into the ADF under the Vuale Partnership.
- In November 2022, Colonel Naliva was nominated by the Republic of Fiji Military Forces to attend the Defence Strategic Studies Course in 2023 and, commencing in 2024, be embedded in the ADF as a senior officer.
- In April 2023, Australia formally offered two command-level secondments to the Fijian military, including the position of Deputy Commander of the Australian Army's 7th Brigade.
- Colonel Naliva has not been convicted or charged with any crimes under Fijian law in relation to these allegations.
- Colonel Naliva completed the Defence and Strategic Studies Course at the Australian War College in 2023. He also graduated from the Royal Military College Duntroon in 1997.
- Colonel Naliva did not exercise legal authority over ADF members.
- Defence has reviewed the appointment of Colonel Naliva. As part of this review, the Chief of Army issued a letter to Colonel Naliva requesting he show cause as to why he should remain in the position of Deputy Commander of 7th Brigade.
- Colonel Naliva responded within the 14-day timeframe. This response was considered by the Chief of Army and the Chief of the Defence Force.
- Upon consideration, the Chief of the Defence Force has made the decision to remove Colonel Naliva from the Deputy Commander 7th Brigade position.

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Budget Estimates June 2024

Last updated: 24 May 2024

SB24-000371

Deputy Commander 7th Brigade

Key witnesses: General Angus Campbell; Susan Bodell; Lieutenant General Simon Stuart

- Colonel Naliva has been offered an alternative posting to the Australian Defence College from no later than 19 April to 31 December 2024.
- Defence has communicated to the Republic of Fiji Military Forces that Colonel Naliva's posting with the ADF will end on 31 December 2024.

Supplementary information

Questions on Notice

2023-24 Additional Estimates: 14 February 2024

- QoN No. 1, Selection criteria for embedding personnel**, Senator Jacqui Lambie (Jacqui Lambie Network, Tasmania) asked for any documentation relating to the selection criteria from the Fijian government to the Australian government in relation to the appointment of Colonel Naliva. **TABLED**
- QoN No. 3, Allowances provided to COL Naliva**, Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked for a cost breakdown of how much Colonel Naliva is being paid by the Department of Defence. **TABLED**
- QoN No. 11, Quantum of payment due to COL Naliva**, Senator Jordan Steele-John (Greens, Western Australia) asked what is the quantum amount of payment to Colonel Naliva from the Australian government and what is he expected to receive. **TABLED**
- QoN No. 13, Colonel Naliva – protection measures**, Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked what protection measures have been put in place for children, women and others given the nature of the allegations against him. **TABLED**

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 5 March 2024, an individual made a request seeking a copy of Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack, including an index of back pocket briefs, for the 2023–24 Additional estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 12 February 2024, an individual made a request seeking access to documents relating to the appointment of Colonel Naliva. **Defence is currently reviewing the request.**

Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 30 January 2024, the Assistant Minister for Defence responded to questions in an [interview](#) on ABC RN Drive regarding the appointment of Colonel Naliva.

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Budget Estimates June 2024

Last updated: 24 May 2024

SB24-000371

Deputy Commander 7th Brigade

Key witnesses: General Angus Campbell; Susan Bodell; Lieutenant General Simon Stuart

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 16 April 2024, The Australian published an article by Ben Packham and Stephen Rice titled [Fiji colonel's deal under wraps](#). It reports the Albanese government is refusing to reveal how much alleged Fijian military torturer is being paid.
- On 15 April 2024, The Australian published an article by Stephen Rice titled [Fiji torture accused axed from Aussie army commander post](#).
- On 15 February 2024, the Australian published an article by Ben Packham titled ['No vetting' before Fiji ADF role](#).
- On 15 February 2024, The Canberra Times published an article by Dominic Giannini titled [Defence chief unaware of commanders torture allegation](#).
- On 12 February 2024, The Australian published an article by Daniel Hurst titled [AFP should investigate accused Fijian torturer commanding Australian troops: international lawyer](#).
- On 9 February 2024, The Australian published an article by Stephen Rice titled [Fiji military chief's fate in our hands](#). It highlighted 'the ball is in Australia's court' in respect to Colonel Naliva's appointment.
- On 30 January 2024, The Australian published an article by Stephen Rice titled [Crisis talks over torture accused soldier Colonel Penioni \(Ben\) Naliva](#). It reported Defence principally relied on the assurances of the Fijian Government for the appointment of Colonel Naliva.
- On 29 January 2024, The Australian published an article by Stephen Rice titled [Accused Fijian torturer Colonel Penioni \(Ben\) Naliva to command ADF troops](#). It reported on the appointment of 'accused torturer' Colonel Naliva as Deputy Commander 7th Brigade.

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Division: Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group	
PDR No: SB24-000371	
Prepared by: John Anakotta Acting Assistant Secretary Pacific and Timor-Leste Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 10 April 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Susan Bodell First Assistant Secretary Pacific Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 22 April 2024
Consultation: Brigadier Garth Gould Chief of Staff Army Headquarters Date: 22 April 2024	
Consultation: Air Commodore Patrick Keane Director General Military Legal Service Defence Legal Date: 22 April 2024	
Consultation: s47E(d) Office of the Chief of the Defence Force Date: 22 April 2024	
Consultation: s47E(d) International Policy Division Date: 22 April 2024	
Cleared by Deputy Secretary: Hugh Jeffrey Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy and Industry Group Date: 23 April 2024	

Prepared By:
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Cleared By:
 Name: Hugh Jeffrey
 Position: Deputy Secretary
 Group: Strategy, Policy and Industry
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External Workforce - Contractors and Consultants

Handling Note: Chief Finance Officer, Steven Groves, to lead.

Key Messages

- Defence is committed to supporting the Government's plan to strengthen the APS by increasing the proportion of work undertaken by public servants and progressing initiatives to implement the Australian Public Service Commission Strategic Commissioning Framework.
- Defence is targeting a reduction of 2,000 'Above the Line' contractors on a net basis by December 2024.
- Defence made progress towards this target with a net reduction of 948 contractors since March 2023.
- As Defence implements the 2024 Integrated Investment Program, the demands on the external workforce will change by location, work type and in aggregate.
- Defence will continue to engage technical specialists through the external workforce to respond flexibly to changing circumstances, including surge requirements.

Talking Points

What steps has Defence taken to progress the Government's commitment to improving the public service and reducing contractor expenditure?

- Defence contributed \$145 million in 2022-23 to the whole-of-government savings measure to reduce expenditure on external labour, advertising, travel and legal expenses.
- The 2023-24 budget included \$632 million of savings for Defence against this measure over the forward estimates, including \$154 million in 2023-24. Defence is achieving these savings by converting contracted roles into APS positions.
- Defence is managing its overall workforce in line with the Government's existing policy guidance, while also responding to increasing work demands.
- To facilitate the conversion from contracted positions to APS staff, Defence was provided an additional 660 Average Staffing Level in 2023-24, 1,850 in 2024-25 and 2,000 in 2025-26 (ongoing).
- Defence has established the Contractor Taskforce and developed an External Workforce Reform Strategy 2024-26 to support the organisation in delivering on the Government's commitment.

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What is the size of Defence's external workforce?

- The most recent External Workforce Census in March 2024 reported 36,038 full-time equivalent engaged as part of the external workforce. Overall, the total external workforce increased by 114 full-time equivalent (0.3 per cent) compared to the September 2023 Census. The results reflect a stable workforce since the prior Census after significant reductions in the prior six months.
- 29,073 full-time equivalent, or 80.7 per cent, were engaged through outsourced service providers.
 - This was an increase of 217 from 28,856 full-time equivalent (80.3 per cent of the total) since the September 2023 census. A majority of these contracts are outcomes based, causing some minor variation in results depending on specific workloads during the Census.
- 6,681 full-time equivalent, or 18.5 per cent, were engaged as contractors. This reflected:
 - a decrease of 40 contractors since September 2023; and
 - the reclassification of 21 full-time equivalent resources from contractors to outsourced service providers.
- 285 full-time equivalent, or one per cent, were engaged as consultants.
 - This was a reduction from 326 full-time equivalent since September 2023.
- The results of the Defence External Workforce Census in March 2024 showed a reduction of contractors by 40 full-time equivalent since September 2023 and a total of 948 full-time equivalent (11 per cent) since March 2023. This represents achievement of almost 50 per cent of the agreed contractor reduction target of 2,000 by December 2024. Additional work is planned to ensure Defence delivers on the committed reductions.
- In March 2023 Defence reported 8,532 contractor full-time equivalent. Defence has since made a reduction of 948 full-time equivalent and reclassified 894 full-time equivalent from contractors to outsourced service providers where they are more accurately reflected. Overall this has resulted in a reduction from March 2023 of 1,842 full-time equivalent contractors. Defence only considers the reduction of 948 full-time equivalent as progress towards the contractor reduction target of 2,000 full-time equivalent.

Why does Defence use contractors and not employ more APS personnel?

- In some areas Defence has taken a decision to outsource delivery of these functions because the private sector has specific expertise or skills to deliver functions which it is not deemed possible or good value to maintain these functions internally. This includes such functions as base services, the construction of facilities or the use of Defence Industry to construct and sustain military assets. Overall:

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- 12,250 (34 per cent) of our contracted workforce are providing Platform or Fleet Sustainment and maintenance;
 - 4,750 (13.2 per cent) are supporting IT; and
 - 3,715 (10.3 per cent) are providing property services.
- Defence remains committed to ensuring it achieves the best value for the Australian taxpayer when it does use the external market. The majority of Defence’s external workforce (29,073 full-time equivalent or 80.7 per cent) are outsourced service providers. Overall:
 - 74.6% of our external workforce is now contracted on a solely or partially outcomes basis (53.1 per cent outcome based and 21.5 per cent combined contract);
 - Defence’s use of the External Workforce is expected to change over the coming years in response to the Defence Strategic Review, the 2024 National Defence Strategy and the workforce policies set by Government.
 - Defence’s use of External Workforce will be considered as part of Defence’s Strategic Workforce Plan, which will include future workforce requirements across APS, ADF and the External Workforce to support the 2024 National Defence Strategy and the rebuilt 2024 Intergrated Inestment Program.

How much did Defence spend on its external workforce in 2022-23?

- In 2022-23 Defence spent \$11.5 billion on outsourced service providers, \$2.6 billion on contractors and \$162 million on consultants (all figures GST exclusive).
- Defence spent approximately \$2.1 billion on APS employee expenses in 2022-23.

Background

- The External Workforce Census provides an estimate of the full-time equivalent of outsourced service providers, contractors and consultants engaged by Defence. The Census measures outcomes at a point in time and in a regular and repeatable manner.

Past External Workforce Census results

Full-time equivalent by Category	March 2024 (percentage change)	September 2023 (percentage change)	March 2023
Contractors	6,681 (down one per cent)	6,742 (down 21 per cent)	8,523
Outsourced service providers	29,073 (up one per cent)	28,856 (up one per cent)	28,446
Consultants	285 (down 13 per cent)	326 (down 10 per cent)	361
Total	36,038 (up 0.3 per cent)	35,924 (down four per cent)	37,330

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External Workforce Expenditure over Time

Consultants	March YTD 2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
Expenditure of contracts (GST exclusive) (\$m)	128	162	154	116	104
As a percentage of Defence expenditure (GST exclusive)	0.37	0.34	0.33	0.28	0.26
Contractors	March YTD 2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
Expenditure of contracts (GST exclusive) (\$b)	1.774	2.572	2.487	1.873	1.520
As a percentage of Defence expenditure (GST exclusive)	5.08	5.33	5.38	4.50	3.90
Outsourced Service Providers	March YTD 2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
Expenditure of contracts service providers (GST exclusive) (\$b)	8.419	11.513	13.072	10.955	10.410
As a percentage of Defence expenditure (GST exclusive)	24.12	23.88	28.28	26.10	26.40

‘Big Four’

- In March 2024, 818 full-time equivalent from the Big Four were delivering services to Defence (down from 1,012 full-time equivalent in September 2023).

Company	Consultant (FTE)		Contractor (FTE)		Outsourced Service Providers (FTE)		Total	
	Sep 2023	Mar 2024	Sep 2023	Mar 2024	Sep 2023	Mar 2024	Sep 2023	Mar 2024
KPMG	1	1	435	326	196	144	632	470
Deloitte	23	10	109	96	84	65	216	171
PwC	4	-	36	33	14	3	54	36
EY	13	41	76	50	22	51	110	141
Total*	41	51	655	505	316	262	1,012	818

*Totals may not add due to rounding.

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- The Big Four provide many services to Defence. Services predominantly relate to project management (403 full-time equivalent or 49 per cent) and information technology (138 full-time equivalent or 17 per cent).
- In 2022-23 Defence spent \$633 million (GST inclusive) on the Big Four accounting firms, comprised of:
 - KPMG (\$307 million);
 - PricewaterhouseCoopers (\$128 million);
 - Deloitte (\$105 million); and
 - Ernst & Young (\$93 million).
- For the Big Four, expenditure was categorised as contractors (66 per cent), outsourced service providers (26 per cent) and consultants (eight per cent).

Major Service Providers

- In March 2024, 4,249 full-time equivalent from the major service providers were delivering services to Defence (up from 4,222 full-time equivalent in September 2023). The major service providers resources included:
 - 2,774 contractors (up from 2,704 full-time equivalent);
 - 1,437 outsourced service provider resources (down from 1,480 full-time equivalent);
 - 38 consultants (equal to the prior Census);
 - 710 external workforce from KEY (Major Service Provider) full-time equivalent (down from 801 full-time equivalent);
 - 985 external workforce from Team Nova (Major Service Provider) full-time equivalent (up from 975 full-time equivalent);
 - 691 external workforce from Jacobs (Major Service Provider) full-time equivalent (down from 715 full-time equivalent); and
 - 1,862 external workforce from Team Downer (Major Service Provider) full-time equivalent (up from 1,731 full-time equivalent).
- Primary activities were in the fields of:
 - property (1,219 full-time equivalent or 29 per cent);
 - sustainment (906 full-time equivalent, 21 per cent); and
 - project management (788 full-time equivalent, 19 per cent).

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Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

2023-24 Additional Estimates: 23 February 2024

- **QoN No. 36, Consultants**, Senator Jacqui Lambie (Jacqui Lambie Network, Tasmania) asked to be provided with details of consultants from October 2023 to February 2024.
TABLED
- **QoN No. 58, Savings from External Labour and Savings from Advertising, Travel and Legal Expenses**, Senator Jane Hume (Liberal, Victoria) asked to be provided with details of how Defence implemented savings initiatives from the 2022-23 October Budget.
TABLED

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 16 April 2024, the ABC published an article by Linton Besser titled [Senator David Pocock is on a mission to hold Canberra to account - and he won't stop with the Department of Defence](#), discussing the relationship between Defence and KPMG.
- On 20 November 2023, the Canberra Times published an article by Miriam Webber titled [Health, Defence two biggest consultancy spenders in 2022-23](#), discussing the overall reduction in consultancy contracts across the APS, including within Defence.
- On 26 September 2023, The Australian published an article titled [Defence reliant on growing contractor army](#). Journalist Ben Packham reported Defence’s outsourced workforce has risen to a record number of 37,330 under the Albanese government and the number of outsourced workers engaged by the department rose by 7 per cent up to March 2023.
- On 7 August 2023, the ABC published an article titled [KPMG consultants overcharging Defence while raking in billions](#). Journalist Angus Grigg reported whistleblowers say Defence was charged for work never done and jobs not needed, and the use of consultants in government is wasting money and damaging accountability.

Division: Budgets & Financial Services	
PDR No: SB24-000372	
Prepared by: Rob Coffey AS Contractor Taskforce Mob: s22 [redacted] Ph: s47E(d) [redacted] Date: 17 April 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Sam Volker FAS Budgets & Financial Services Mob: s22 [redacted] Ph: s47E(d) [redacted] Date: 18 April 2024

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Budget Estimates June 2024
Last updated: 28 May 2024
Key witnesses: Steven Groves

External Workforce - Contractors and Consultants

SB24-000372

Cleared by Deputy Secretary:

Steven Groves
Chief Finance Officer
Defence Finance Group

Date: 23 April 2024

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ADF Recruitment and Retention

Handling Note:

- Chief of Personnel, Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC, to lead.
- Deputy Secretary Defence People, Justine Greig PSM, to support.

Key Messages

- Defence is finalising a new Workforce Plan in line with the Government's direction outlined in the 2024 National Defence Strategy.
- To deliver on the 2024 National Defence Strategy, the Workforce Plan will focus on: the future needs of an integrated ADF, APS and external workforce; ADF recruitment and retention; organisation culture; wellbeing and support to ADF families; expanding mental health and suicide prevention programs; and education, training and skilling.
- Defence is working to improve recruitment and retention through reforms that increase the opportunities for potentially suitable applicants, streamlining the recruiting system and processes to enable faster recruiting, and expanding retention initiatives to increase the pool of applicants.
- As at 1 May 2024, Defence's permanent ADF workforce is 7.1 per cent (4,451) below its required strength. Separation rates are falling (9.7 per cent, compared to 11.4 per cent 12 months ago); however, inflow rates remain below the required level.

Talking Points

Workforce Figures and Growth

- As at 1 May 2024 the permanent ADF workforce headcount was 57,036.
 - In addition, there are 681 participants in the Gap Year program and a further 1,315 reserve personnel undertaking full time service.
 - The total number of permanent and full time (Service Category 6 and 7, Service Option G and Service Option C) service personnel is currently 59,032.
- Outflow from the permanent ADF has reduced to 9.7 per cent from 11.4 per cent 12 months ago – it is now at the long-term average rate of 9.7 per cent. This declining separation rate allows the ADF to retain experienced personnel – but it cannot compensate for the inflow shortfall.

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- Inflow into the permanent ADF is currently insufficient to maintain strength. Defence's year-to-date permanent ADF recruitment target is 6,493 (5,777 ab initio and 716 other inflow). As at 1 May 2024, the total (all avenues) inflow level was 66 per cent of the year-to-date requirement. This equates to 2182 missed targets.

Recruiting Initiatives

- Defence requires inflow in the order of 10,000 per year (all avenues into the permanent workforce, as well as Gap Year), every year until 2030 to meet its capability requirements.
- Defence's initiatives to increase recruiting outcomes in the short-term include:
 - service review of:
 - : entry fitness standards, noting Navy's removal of its pre-entry fitness assessment for general entry candidates; and
 - : the duration of initial minimum periods of service.
 - exploring the recruitment of non-Australian citizens;
 - examining alternate methods to assess educational eligibility beyond provision of secondary school certification;
 - increasing the number of events and engagements Defence has with the Australian community, including base and ship open days;
 - actioning recruit candidates when ready, rather than delay until their proposed enlistment aligns with initial employment training;
 - communicating across a variety of media channels how Defence employment can address the contemporary needs of young Australians;
 - reforming the Defence Health Manual to ensure medical classifications for entry more closely align with the requirements of employment roles (for instance, what is required of a commando is different to a cyber warfare analyst); and
 - as at 1 February 2024, Defence reviewed a number of health policies that accounted for 14 conditions that restricted entry (based on diagnosis only versus functional assessment). These accounted for approximately 70 per cent of personnel not enlisted on health grounds.

Retention Initiatives

- Defence's retention initiatives are being accessed by our ADF personnel, meaning more ADF personnel are remaining in service. Retention initiatives include:
 - Introduction of a \$50,000 continuation bonus for eligible ADF members at the end of their initial service period – a Government investment of approximately \$395 million.

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Key witnesses: Lieutenant General Natasha Fox; Justine Greig

- : In addition to financial remuneration, Defence is initiating conversations with members about their personal and career goals before that member has the opportunity to accept or decline the bonus offer.
- : As at 1 May 2024, 2496 ADF members have accepted the bonus offer (78.2 per cent) with 696 members declining (21.8 per cent). Of those members who have accepted, 895 (37 per cent) of personnel indicated they were undecided about remaining in the ADF and 161 (6 per cent) intended to transition, but have remained in the ADF for a further three years due to the bonus.
- Reviews into ADF housing and remuneration have been conducted, such as:
 - : the Defence Housing Support Review, conducted between August 2023 and January 2024. Defence is working with key stakeholders and external agencies to respond to the Review's recommendations; and
 - : an ADF Remuneration Package Review, conducted between June 2023 and February 2024, assessing the current salary structure framework. Defence is considering options for a future ADF salary framework.
- Greater access to personal and professional development by expanding the Defence Assisted Study Scheme and Studybank scheme. From 1 July 2023, Defence increased sponsorship to allow more applicants to study, and increased reimbursement rates to reduce out of pocket expenses for successful applicants. Further improvements were made in October 2023, including increasing the qualifications and areas of study that can be applied for, and simplifying application processes.
 - : As at 1 May 2024, Defence has received 3,384 Defence Assisted Study Scheme and Studybank applications for academic year 2024. This represents approximately 116 per cent of the total Defence Assisted Study Scheme and Studybank applications received for academic year 2022 and already 86 per cent of the total Defence Assisted Study Scheme and Studybank applications received for academic year 2023.
- An ADF Leave Framework was implemented on 1 July 2023. The ADF Leave Framework:
 - : allows ADF members to take recreation leave in half day increments and access personal leave for additional compassionate circumstances;
 - : increases ADF member recreation leave from 20 days to 25 days;
 - : reduces long service leave minimum periods from 15 days to 7 days;
 - : doubles parental leave from 14 days to 28 days.

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Key witnesses: Lieutenant General Natasha Fox; Justine Greig

- : allows greater access to ADF personnel for compassionate circumstances, including family domestic violence and when a pregnancy ends other than by birth.
- : adds an additional five days of basic recreation leave (effective from 1 July 2023) and flexibility in how members use their leave.
- : introduces further changes to recreation leave later this year, such as the ability to purchase leave, take leave at half pay and transfer leave between dual serving couples.
- A new allowance framework called the ‘Military Factor Framework’ (Phase One implemented from 25 May 2023). This increased the majority of existing ADF salary-related allowances, simplified allowances into a 12 Tier allowance framework, introduced new allowances and amended the qualifying period for allowances to enable better access. Allowances available under the Military Factor Framework recognise and compensate members that are employed in unique circumstances.
- A new categorisation framework and a change to categorisation terminologies (effective from 1 July 2023) to be more inclusive and flexible, allowing Defence to better recognise contemporary family structures.
 - : The reclassification of family members and other persons from ‘dependant’ to Recognised Other Persons or Non-Resident Family means that ADF personnel may have had their benefits adjusted.
 - : Recognised Other Persons are those people who for various reasons may be required to reside with ADF personnel and are not their partner or child (under 21).
 - : Non-Resident Family denotes recognised family that do not live with ADF personnel. This can include a partner or a child under 21 from a previous relationship.
- The New Location Framework (effective from 1 July 2023), provides targeted benefits to ADF personnel undertaking Alternate Located Work agreements, and provides members who are transitioning from the Permanent Forces with access to housing and other benefits in their transition location.
- To support any potential impacts from the program initiatives, the Permanent Trained Force annual salary rates were increased by \$2,000 (pro-rated for Reserves and Trainee personnel) on 25 May 2023.

If pressed: Who is eligible for the ADF Continuation Bonus?

- . Eligibility criteria for the bonus includes:
 - being a permanent ADF member;
 - nearing completion of the initial service obligation imposed on entry to the ADF;
 - having completed, or will complete, a minimum four years of service; and

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- agreeing to recommit to three years of full-time effective service.
- As at 1 May 2024, approximately 78.2 per cent of eligible personnel have accepted the offer of the Continuation Bonus. Acceptance rates are affected as new eligibility dates come into effect.

If pressed: Why are junior ranks being targeted for the ADF Continuation Bonus? What about the existing non-commissioned officers (Corporal and Sergeant equivalents)?

- The ADF Continuation Bonus is a two-year pilot designed to encourage people at junior ranks who are approaching the completion of their initial service obligation to commit to serve for a further period. Subject to a successful evaluation of the two-year pilot, the program may continue, with regular reviews to ensure it remains both relevant and targeted at the points of highest separation.
- The bonus is designed to extend service for three additional years. Some junior non-commissioned officers will be eligible for the bonus. For those yet to reach the rank, it is designed to extend their service to a point where they may become eligible for promotion.

If pressed: What other retention bonuses are paid to ADF members?

- Defence currently offers various bonus schemes in addition to the ADF Continuation Bonus. These include the Navy's Submarine Capability Assurance Payment; Army's Capability Retention Scheme; and Air Force's Military Skills Instructor Bonus.
- Defence bonuses and capability payments are designed to extend the service of members in key occupations, including but not limited to: cyber, intelligence, communications, submariner and aviation.
- In 2022-23, Defence invested \$180 million in retention bonuses through payments to approximately 5,000 ADF members. Of these, around 90 per cent are for other rank personnel (Warrant Officer Class One to Private equivalent).
- In the period 1 July 2023 to 1 May 2024, approximately 2,716 bonuses (including the ADF Continuation Bonus) have been paid to ADF personnel, an investment of approximately \$96 million.
- Excluding the Continuation Bonus, Defence invested approximately \$21 million in ADF bonuses through payments to approximately 917 ADF personnel during the period 1 July 2023 to 1 May 2024. Of these, approximately 60 per cent targeted personnel between the ranks of Private and Warrant Officer Class One.
- A list of current retention bonuses offered to ADF personnel is at Attachment A.

If pressed about Defence Force Recruiting Campaigns:

- A new 'ADF Careers' brand campaign is being developed and is expected to launch in the second half of 2024. The campaign will focus on the five warfighting domains of maritime, land, air, space and cyber.

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Background

- In 2022, the former Government announced a plan to increase Defence's total permanent workforce, encompassing ADF and civilian personnel, to over 101,000 by 2040 – including almost 80,000 permanent ADF personnel. This announcement represents workforce growth of 18,500.
- Approximately \$38 billion was funded and allocated to support workforce growth of 12,500 – comprised of 10,449 ADF Average Funded Strength and 2,051 APS Average Staffing Level. The remaining 6,000 in workforce growth is currently unfunded.

ADF Recruiting Contract

- Defence Force Recruiting is a collaborative partnership between Defence and Adecco Australia, a specialist commercial recruiting company. Defence Force Recruiting undertakes marketing, recruitment and the enlistment/appointment of all ab-initio candidates into the ADF with a customer-facing name of 'ADF Careers'.
- Adecco Australia commenced transition into the delivery of recruiting services from 1 November 2022 and assumed complete responsibility of services on 1 July 2023.
- The new arrangement is working towards delivering 100 per cent of ADF recruitment in 100 days from application to letter of offer, supported by candidate-centric behaviours (noting the 100-day recruiting timeline is not contractually mandated until June 2025).

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

2023-24 Additional Estimates: 14 February 2024

- **QoN No. 6, Progression of application to commencement in ADF**, Senator Jacqui Lambie (Jacqui Lambie Network, Tasmania) asked about the progression of application to commencement in the ADF. **TABLED.**
- **QoN No. 26, PAES AFS allocation in relation to Adecco**, Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked about budget allocation to Adecco. **TABLED**
- **QoN No. 27, AFS recruitment target**, Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked about projected recruitment of ADF personnel. **TABLED.**
- **QoN No. 107, Recruitment and separation**, Senator the Hon James Paterson (Liberal, Victoria) requested updated figures on recruitment and separations. **PENDING.**

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 30 October 2023, a media organisation requested Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack for the 2023-24 Supplementary Budget Estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**

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- On 5 March 2024 an individual made a request seeking a copy of Defence’s finalised estimates briefing pack, including an index of back pocket briefs, for the 2023-24 Additional estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**

Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 17 April 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister released the [2024 National Defence Strategy](#).

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 14 April 2024, multiple Australian newspapers published an article by Ellen Ransley titled [Challenges incoming Defence Force chief Vice Admiral David Johnston must face](#), which discussed recruitment challenges.

Division: Workforce and People Strategy	
PDR No: SB24-000373	
Prepared by: Commodore Virginia Hayward Director General Workforce Strategy Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 23 April 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Ms Leisa Craig First Assistant Secretary Workforce and People Strategy Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 15 April 2024
Consultation: Mr Cyril Karo Date: 9 April 2024 First Assistant Secretary Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) DSR Implementation Taskforce	
Cleared by Deputy Secretary (or equivalent Band 3/3*): Date: 24 May 2024 Ms Justine Greig PSM Deputy Secretary Defence People Group Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC Chief of Personnel Defence People Group	

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IGADF Afghanistan Inquiry

Handling Note:

- Chief of the Defence Force, General Angus Campbell, AO, DSC to lead on command accountability.
- Chief Defence Counsel, Adrian D'Amico, to lead on compensation and proposed Veterans Protection Act questions.
- Head Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force, Rear Admiral Brett Wolski, to lead on Afghanistan Inquiry Reform Program and Protected Identity Status questions.

Key Messages

- Defence has learned from the findings of the IGADF Afghanistan Inquiry and embedded sustainable, enduring reform across the organisation to address the past and avoid recurrence.
- Reform has been undertaken through the Afghanistan Inquiry Reform Program, and incorporates assurance and benefits realisation measures to ensure reform is effective and enduring.
- The Reform Program goes beyond addressing the Afghanistan Inquiry recommendations, and Defence has examined the broader root causes of the matters identified in the Afghanistan Inquiry report to ensure effective and enduring reform.
- At this time, Defence has implemented actions that close 139 of the 143 Inquiry recommendations.
- Defence has implemented these reforms in a methodical and transparent manner, subject to relevant security, legal and privacy requirements.
- Support services are available to individuals who are involved in, or affected by, the Afghanistan Inquiry, whether they are current or former serving ADF members or their families.

Talking Points

Afghanistan Inquiry Reform Program

- Released on 30 July 2021, the Afghanistan Inquiry Reform Plan set out Defence's strategy for responding to the Afghanistan Inquiry.

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- Work delivered through the Afghanistan Inquiry Reform Program is not limited to, and goes beyond, addressing Afghanistan Inquiry recommendations. This has enabled Defence to respond to the broader root causes of the matters identified in the Afghanistan Inquiry report.
- In line with the Deputy Prime Minister's direction, Defence addressed all Inquiry recommendations (that could be addressed) by 1 November 2023.
- 139 of 143 recommendations are now closed.
- The remaining four recommendations relate to individuals' honours and awards remain on hold pending the outcome of the Office of the Special Investigator investigations and any resultant legal activity.
- Within the broader Afghanistan Inquiry Reform Program, 71 of 72 reform activities are closed with one remaining on hold pending the outcome of the Office of the Special Investigator investigations and any resultant legal activity.
- The Afghanistan Inquiry Reform Program was approved for closure by the Defence Committee in February 2024. Defence has prepared a Closure Report, intended for public release.

Afghanistan Inquiry Implementation Oversight Panel Final Report

- The Afghanistan Inquiry Implementation Oversight Panel provided its final report to the Deputy Prime Minister on 8 November 2023, prior to conclusion of its tenure on 9 November 2023. The panel was given access to the identity-protected version of the Brereton Report in order to conduct their work.
- The Final Report of the Afghanistan Inquiry Implementation Oversight Panel canvases sensitive matters, and the Deputy Prime Minister was advised its premature release could potentially prejudice criminal proceedings relating to war crimes. Further consultations with the Office of the Special Investigator (OSI) were required before public release.
- The Deputy Prime Minister approved the release of the Final Report on 14 May 2024 following advice that the OSI consultations had been concluded and that OSI were comfortable with its release.

Command Accountability

- In response to recommendations from the Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force Afghanistan Inquiry, the Chief of the Defence Force considered the command accountability of current and former ADF members who held command positions during the periods in which the Inspector-General found credible information of incidents of alleged unlawful conduct.

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Division: Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force

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- The Chief of the Defence Force has provided the Deputy Prime Minister with the relevant material for consideration.
- The Chief of the Defence Force wrote to the individuals involved in this process, providing an update.
 - These letters and associated information is the subject of a Public Interest Immunity claim as disclosure would or could unreasonably harm the privacy of individuals and the integrity of the ongoing decision-making process.
 - These letters have previously been sought through Freedom of Information processes. The decision to refuse access was reviewed by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and a decision on the matter was handed down on 10 May 2024, with the Tribunal upholding Defence's decision.
- The Deputy Prime Minister is now considering command accountability. Should he consider that an honour or award should be cancelled, he will make a recommendation to the Governor-General for his determination.

If pressed: What is delaying decisions on command accountability?

- The Chief of the Defence Force has considered the command accountability of current and former serving ADF members who held command positions during periods the Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force found credible information of alleged unlawful conduct.
- Relevant material has been provided for consideration.

If pressed: Will senior Defence leadership be held accountable for alleged unlawful behaviour that occurred in Afghanistan?

- s47C and 47E(d) [REDACTED] This is a matter for the Office of the Special Investigator.
- Separate to criminal responsibility, command accountability action may be considered where it is found that a commander is morally responsible for the actions of their subordinates, regardless of the commander's involvement in the specific acts.
- The Chief of the Defence Force has considered accountability, and has provided his advice to the Deputy Prime Minister.
- With respect to the Afghanistan Inquiry, the Inspector-General found alleged criminal behaviour was 'conceived, committed, continued and concealed' at the patrol commander level.
- The Inquiry also found, above patrol commander level, commanders did not know and were not recklessly indifferent to whether their subordinates were allegedly

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Budget Estimates June 2024

SB24-000374

Last updated: 29 May 2024

IGADF Afghanistan Inquiry

Key witnesses: General Angus Campbell; Adrian D'Amico; Rear Admiral Brett Wolski.

committing war crimes and did not fail to take reasonable steps to discover the behaviour.

- Nonetheless, the Inquiry found commanders bear moral responsibility and accountability for what happened under their command, and recommended the review of honours and awards.

Compensation

- The Government has agreed to a pathway to establish a compensation scheme within Defence, under regulation.

R v David McBride

- Former Australian Army legal officer David McBride entered guilty pleas to three charges on 17 November 2023 in the ACT Supreme Court. The charges related to the theft of Commonwealth property and unauthorised communication of information.
- On 14 May 2024, Justice Mossop of the ACT Supreme Court sentenced Mr McBride to 5 years and 8 months' imprisonment, with a non-parole period of 2 years and 3 months.
- This was a matter determined by the ACT Supreme Court. The judgement by Justice Mossop of the ACT Supreme Court is publicly available on ACT Court website. We understand that Mr McBride is considering whether to appeal the sentence. This is a matter for Mr McBride and, ultimately, the courts.

If pressed: Why was David McBride prosecuted before alleged perpetrators of war crimes?

- Prosecution decisions are a matter for the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions.

Criminal Investigations

- The Office of the Special Investigator and Australian Federal Police are working together to investigate allegations of criminal offences under Australian law arising from or related to breaches of the law of armed conflict by ADF members in Afghanistan between 2005 and 2016.
- The Office of the Special Investigator and the Australian Federal Police can investigate matters beyond those addressed by the Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force's Afghanistan Inquiry, but within the Office of the Special Investigator's mandate. Matters subject to investigation are a decision for the Office of the Special Investigator in conjunction with the Australian Federal Police.
- The work undertaken by the Office of the Special Investigator and the Australian Federal Police is independent of Defence.

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Budget Estimates June 2024

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- Defence supports the work of the Office of the Special Investigator through the provision of records in response to requests for information and subject matter expert advice to ensure accuracy in the interpretation of Defence-related information.
- Handling note: further questions should be referred to the Office of the Special Investigator or the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions within the Attorney-General's portfolio.*

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

2023-24 Supplementary Budget Estimates: 24 October 2023

- QoN No. 58, ABC alleged war crimes of Heston Russell**, Senator Malcolm Roberts (Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party, Queensland) asked if Defence clarified to the ABC that former November Platoon member Heston Russell was not in Afghanistan at the time the ABC alleged war crimes had occurred, and if Defence accepts defamation is a law. **TABLED**
- QoN No. 59, Protocol for cancellation of individual honours and awards**, Senator Malcolm Roberts (Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party, Queensland) asked a series of questions about procedural fairness in relation to Defence honours and awards as well as the functions of the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal. **TABLED**
- QoN No. 68, Policy and process for awarding a Distinguished Service Cross**, Senator Jacqui Lambie (The Jacqui Lambie Network, Tasmania) and Senator Malcolm Roberts (Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party, Queensland) asked a series of questions about the policy and process for awarding a Distinguished Service Cross, inclusive of DH&A Board members. **TABLED**
- QoN No. 74, Activity by Commander of Joint Task Force 633 14 January 2011 and 17 January 2011**, Senator Jacqui Lambie (The Jacqui Lambie Network, Tasmania) asked about then Major General Angus Campbell's visits to Afghanistan as Commander Joint Task Force 633 in 2011. **TABLED**

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Budget Estimates June 2024

Last updated: 29 May 2024

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Key witnesses: General Angus Campbell; Adrian D'Amico; Rear Admiral Brett Wolski.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- In May 2024, an individual made a request seeking the Whole-Of-Government talking points drafted in response to Senator Lambie's communication with the International Criminal Court. This request was transferred from the Office of the Special Investigator. **A decision is pending.**

Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 7 March 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Personnel appeared at the 12th Hearing Block for the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. The Deputy Prime Minister responded to questions from Counsel Assisting relating to the release of the Final Report of the Afghanistan Inquiry Implementation Oversight Panel.
- On 17 April 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister appeared at the National Press Club. The Deputy Prime Minister responded to questioning related to command accountability, and the potential timeline of a decision being made.

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 14 May 2024, [Al Jazeera](#) journalist, Lyndal Rowlands, reported on David McBride's sentencing, as well as a statement attributable to the Office of the Special Investigator, regarding the charges laid against Oliver Schulz.
- On 16 May 2024, [ABC News](#) Defence Correspondent Andrew Greene reported that serving and former Defence Chiefs, including the current Governor-General, are facing fresh calls from the veteran community to take accountability for the actions that occurred under their command, following the release of the Afghanistan Inquiry Implementation Oversight Panel's Final Report.

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Budget Estimates June 2024

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IGADF Afghanistan Inquiry

Key witnesses: General Angus Campbell; Adrian D’Amico; Rear Admiral Brett Wolski.

Division: Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force	
PDR No: SB24-000374	
Prepared by: Rear Admiral Brett Wolski Head Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 16 April 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Rear Admiral Brett Wolski Head Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 16 April 2024
Consultation: Adrian D’Amico Chief Counsel,	
Cleared by Associate Secretary: Matt Yannopoulos PSM Associate Secretary Associate Secretary Group Date: 23 April 2024	

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Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary Defence People, Ms Justine Greig PSM, to lead.
- Surgeon General of the ADF, Rear Admiral Sonya Bennett AM, to support on matters regarding mental health and suicide in the ADF.
- First Assistant Secretary People Services and Wellbeing, Ms Cassie Haynes to support on matters regarding mental health and wellbeing.
- Head of Royal Commission Defence and Veteran Suicide Taskforce, Air Vice-Marshal Barbara Courtney AM, to support on matters regarding Defence's engagement with the Royal Commission.

Key Messages

- Throughout the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (the Royal Commission) Defence has listened and reflected on the lived experiences of those who have had the courage to share their story.
- Defence acknowledges the failings that have let our people down and reinforced our commitment to driving change across the organisation.
- Defence is committed to doing better; to strengthening our approach to supporting the wellbeing of ADF personnel.
- Defence continues to support the Royal Commission as it finalises its inquiry.
- Defence thanks ADF members and their families who have told their stories to the Royal Commission. Their lived experience helps us determine how we can improve support to members and their families in the future.
- Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs have implemented the recommendations of the Interim Report of the Royal Commission that are their joint responsibilities (Recommendations 9 to 13).

Talking Points

Defence's support to the Royal Commission

- Defence has a dedicated Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Taskforce (the Taskforce) with experienced staff. They provide a broad range of supports across legal, information management, policy, governance and coordination, communications, wellbeing, planning, and Group and Service liaison functions.

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- Defence has provided over 192,000 documents (3.2 million pages), facilitated 27 base visits and provided over 130 official Defence witnesses, and have provided over 4,100 written responses to questions.
- Defence continues to engage with the Royal Commission to provide information and documents in a timely manner, in accordance with the Royal Commission's requests

If pressed: Does Defence support the Royal Commission's proposal to create an enduring entity to monitor the implementation of their recommendations?

- A decision on a new entity is a policy decision for Government.
- Defence contributed to the whole-of-government response to the Royal Commission's consultation paper regarding the proposed new entity.
- Once the finalised report is received, the Government will consider and respond appropriately. It would be inappropriate for officials to speculate.
- Defence understands the Royal Commission will provide a report regarding this new entity to the Governor-General in June 2024.

If pressed: Is Defence prepared/committed to implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission?

- Defence will work to implement the recommendations agreed by Government.
- Once the finalised report is received, the Government will consider and respond appropriately. It would be inappropriate for officials to speculate.
- When appearing before the Royal Commission the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Personnel expressed the Government's commitment to "implementing the thrust" of the Royal Commission's recommendations. The Secretary and Chief of the Defence Force also affirmed Defence's commitment to continual improvement and organisational change to best protect the wellbeing of ADF members.

What support services are being offered to Defence personnel?

- Support services are widely available through local Garrison Health Centres, the All Hours ADF support line, the Defence Family Helpline, the Employee Assistance Program (for Reserves and APS employees) and ADF Chaplaincy services.

Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Interim Report

Defence's response to recommendations 9 to 13 of the Royal Commission's Interim Report

- Defence, in partnership with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, has implemented joint recommendations 9 to 13 which cover a range of initiatives to help improve access to information for current and former serving ADF members and their families.

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Budget Estimates June 2024

SB24-000375

Last updated: 28 May 2024

Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

Key witnesses: Ms Justine Greig PSM; Rear Admiral Sonya Bennett AM; Ms Cassie Haynes; Air Vice-Marshal Barbara Courtney AM

- The Government’s response to Recommendations 9 to 13 was informed by a co-design process conducted with members of the Defence and veteran community.
 - These initiatives are aligned across Defence and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs so applicants have a consistent experience when accessing information.
 - An Information Access Unit was established in each department as a single point of contact for applicants requesting information. The Defence Information Access Unit received 49,785 requests for information in its first 12 months.
 - Both departments’ websites were simplified to make content easier to find and include guidelines on how to seek records and to explain how redactions may be applied to the records.
- The Minister for Defence Personnel has provided an update to the Royal Commission.
 - Defence is finalising the first audit of the implemented recommendations to measure the effectiveness of the changes and identify any improvements that may be required.
 - Both departments continue to embed trauma-informed practice principles and training.
 - Recommendations 1-8 of the Interim Report were directed to the Department of Veteran’s Affairs and the Attorney-General’s Department.

Background

Financial Implications for Defence

- The Royal Commission Taskforce is funded from within existing Defence resources.

ADF Suicide Rates

- The Defence Suicide Database, which records the deaths of current serving members, has recorded 170 full-time serving ADF members who are suspected or confirmed to have died by suicide, including nine women, between 1 January 2000 and 10 May 2024.
 - The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report, *Serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force members who have served since 1985: suicide monitoring 1997 to 2021*, shows that in comparison to the Australian population, the age-adjusted rate of suicide from 1997–2021 was:
 - 49 per cent lower for full-time serving males;
 - 45 per cent lower for Reservist males;
 - 26 per cent higher for ex-serving males; and
 - 107 per cent (two times more likely) higher for ex-serving females.
- : Due to the small number of suicide deaths among females in permanent and Reserve service, suicide rates are not reported for these subgroups.

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- Of the sub-populations studied in this report, the male involuntary medical separation cohort has the highest rate of death by suicide. Compared with the Australian male population, suicide rates between 2003 and 2021 for ex-serving males were:
 - similar to those who separated for voluntary reasons with no statistically significant difference found.
 - 54 per cent higher for those who separated for other involuntary reasons.
 - 178 per cent higher (or 2.78 times) for those who separated for involuntary medical reasons.
 - similar to those who separated for contractual or administrative reasons, with no statistically significant difference found.
- Between 2003 and 2021 the suicide rates for ex-serving females by reason for separation were statistically similar for voluntary separation, involuntary medical separation and other involuntary separation.

Details of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

- On 8 July 2021 the Governor-General established the Royal Commission. Mr Nick Kaldas (Chair), the Hon James Douglas and Dr Peggy Brown were appointed as Commissioners.
- Following a request from the Royal Commissioners, the Government agreed to a three-month extension, with the final report due on 9 September 2024.
- The Royal Commission held 12 public hearing blocks across Australia including all capital cities. A ceremonial closing hearing is scheduled for August 2024.
- The hearings focused on topics including accountability, culture, stigma, deployments, welfare, support to families, medical care, recruitment and discharge.
- The Royal Commission published an interim report on 11 August 2022 which the Government responded to on 26 September 2022.

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

- **House of Representatives Question in Writing 538**, The Member for New England, the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP (National Party, New South Wales), asked for details of Defence's actions in relation to concerns about the department expressed by the Chair of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. **TABLED**

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- **House of Representatives Question in Writing 537**, The Member for New England, the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP (National Party, New South Wales), asked for details of Defence's actions in relation to comments by the Chair of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide about Defence's commitment to organisational change. **TABLED**
- **House of Representatives Question in Writing 536**, The Member for New England, the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP (National Party, New South Wales), asked for details of Defence's actions in relation to comments by the Chair of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide about Defence's approach to investigating and reporting in-service deaths by suicide. **TABLED**

2023-24 Additional Estimates: February 2024

- **QoN No.126**, Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash (Liberal Party of Australia, Western Australia), asked for details on an AusTender contract notice that related to costs associated with the Defence support to Hearing Block 12 in Sydney. **TABLED**
- **Senate Parliamentary QoN No. 2380**, on 29 August 2023, Senator Jacqui Lambie (Jacqui Lambie Network, Tasmania), asked for Defence staffing information and costs relating to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. **TABLED**
- **Senate Parliamentary QoN No. 623**, on 23 September 2022, Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash (Liberal Party of Australia, Western Australia), asked for details on an AusTender contract notice that related to costs associated with the Defence support to Hearing Block 5 in Townsville. **TABLED**

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 30 October 2023 a media organisation requested Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack for the 2023-24 Supplementary Budget Estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 5 March 2024 an individual made a request seeking a copy of Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack, including an index of back pocket briefs, for the 2023-24 Additional estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 31 May 2023, an individual made a request seeking access to the Department's May Senate Estimates briefing pack. **Documents were released on 7 August 2023.**
- On 15 October 2022, a media organisation sought access for 'All briefing documents provided by Air Vice-Marshal Barbara Courtney AM, Head Royal Commission Defence and Veteran Suicide Taskforce to Minister of Defence and/or Minister of Veterans' Affairs, regarding defence and veteran suicides'. **Documents were released on 2 December 2022.**

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Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 7 March 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Personnel appeared before the [Royal Commission \(pg35\)](#). The Deputy Prime Minister stated that the Government was “committed to implementing the thrust” of the Royal Commission’s recommendations.

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 29 March 2024, The Daily Telegraph published an article by Duncan Evans and Charles Miranda titled [Defence boss calls for mental health reform](#), which discussed the Chief of the Defence Force’s testimony to the Royal Commission during Hearing Block 12.
- On 28 March 2024, News Corp mastheads published an article by Duncan Evans titled [Royal Commission Into Defence and Veteran Suicides comes to an end as commissioner blasts ‘failures’](#), which discussed the closing remarks by Commissioner Kaldas and other witness testimony from Hearing Block 12.
- On 7 March 2024, The Age published an article by Caitlin Fitzsimmons titled [Serving Defence personnel face higher suicide risks](#), new research claims, discussing preliminary research by the Royal Commission which was presenting to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Personnel during their appearance before the Royal Commission that day.

Division: Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Taskforce	
PDR No: SB24-000375	
Prepared by: Air Vice-Marshal Barbara Courtney Head of Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Taskforce Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 16 April 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Air Vice-Marshal Barbara Courtney Head of Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Taskforce Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 16 April 2024
Consultation: Brigadier Caitlin Langford Director General Mental Health and Wellbeing Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 19 April 2024	

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Budget Estimates June 2024

SB24-000375

Last updated: 28 May 2024

Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

Key witnesses: Ms Justine Greig PSM; Rear Admiral Sonya Bennett AM; Ms Cassie Haynes; Air Vice-Marshal Barbara Courtney AM

Cleared by Deputy Secretary and 3 Star:

Ms Justine Greig PSM
Deputy Secretary Defence People
Defence People Group

Date: 24 May 2024

Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC
Chief of Personnel
Defence People Group

Date: 24 May 2024

Prepared By:

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Cleared By:

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Group: Defence People Group
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Foreign Manufactured Devices

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary Security and Estate, Celia Perkins, to lead.
- First Assistant Secretary Defence Security, Peter West, to support.

Key Messages

- On 14 April 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister directed Defence to undertake a security audit of its supply chains to ensure Defence does not use devices, products, or contractors of concern, and that its current procurement policies and practices are fit for purpose.
- As part of the audit, Defence ceased operating all DJI drones by 5 May 2023, removed all Closed Circuit Television devices of concern by 30 June 2023, and developed a draft Supply Chain Security Principal and Control for inclusion in the Defence Security Principles Framework.
- The draft Supply Chain Security Principal and Control Policy has been validated in Phase 2 of the security audit against a number of supply chains, including foreign manufactured solar panels, inverters and related systems on the Defence Estate.
- Defence is working with the Department of Home Affairs (as the lead for the whole-of-government Protective Security Policy Framework) to ensure a consistent approach to the management of supply chain risks.

Talking Points

Policy and Audit

- On 14 April 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister directed Defence to undertake a security audit of its supply chains. In Phase 1 of the Audit, which concluded in October 2023, Defence developed a new Supply Chain Security Principle and Control Policy for inclusion in the Defence Security Policy Framework that provides a framework for managing supply chain security risks when procuring, storing, transporting, upgrading, maintaining, disposing or deploying capabilities.
- In Phase 2 of the Audit, Defence is piloting the draft Supply Chain Security Principle and Control Policy and related procedures to assess its suitability and to understand the cost and impact of the policy on supply chains that support and enable Defence capability.
- Defence is engaging closely with internal and external stakeholders and other government agencies to ensure consistent and mutually reinforcing supply chain security measures are implemented across Government and with international partners.

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DJI drones

- The ADF has used a variety of commercial off-the-shelf drone products, including some manufactured by DJI, to train for piloting Multi-Rotor Uncrewed Aerial Systems and to collect public affairs imagery.
- The ADF operated several hundred DJI Phantom Multi-Rotor Uncrewed Aerial Systems to provide Defence members and employees with basic operations experience and to increase their understanding of Uncrewed Aerial Systems.
- On 9 August 2017, Defence suspended the use of DJI products pending a formal assessment of the cyber risks presented by these systems. This suspension was lifted after additional protocols and safeguards were applied, including keeping devices disconnected from the internet.
- Defence ceased operation of all DJI drones per the 5 May 2023 Secretary and Chief of Defence Force direction.

CCTV Audit

- On 9 February 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister directed Defence to undertake an assessment and remove Closed Circuit Television devices of concern. Defence conducted a physical audit of the Defence estate to identify and register all Closed Circuit Television devices. This audit was completed on 4 April 2023.
- The audit found an additional 435 devices in 59 Closed Circuit Television systems. None were connected to Defence networks.
- On 30 June 2023, Defence completed the removal of all Closed Circuit Television devices produced by manufacturers of concern from the Defence estate.
- Defence has reviewed its processes to ensure all future Closed Circuit Television devices will be captured into the Garrison Estate Management System.
- To prevent future use of Closed Circuit Television devices of concern, the Defence Chief Security Officer has issued a directive banning their use without Chief Security Officer approval.

Solar Systems

- Security risks associated with the acquisition, implementation and operation of solar panels in Defence are managed in accordance with the Defence Security Policy Framework.
- Solar security management strategies include:
 - supply chain assessment, which includes consideration of suppliers, manufacturers and any known foreign ownership security issues associated with that entity;
 - threat identification and monitoring activities that use systems and tools to identify and assess supply chain risks and monitor vulnerabilities;

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- physical separation, which relates to assessment of any security risk associated with the solar infrastructure and other infrastructure or services in that location;
- remote or virtual management requirements including secure information transmission and digital information storage settings; and
- connectivity separation, which relates to 'air gap' relationship between the solar infrastructure and Defence Information systems.

If pressed: How many solar systems are on the Defence Estate?

- Defence electronic estate records are managed through the Garrison Estate Management System. A review of Garrison Estate Management System records identified 223 solar systems and/or related components on the Defence estate.
- Not all records in the Garrison Estate Management System specify the manufacturer of solar assets on the Defence estate.
- As at 6 February 2024, a sample audit of 41 solar systems from the 223 identified on the Garrison Estate Management System, identified only two solar inverters from manufacturers referenced by Senator Patterson in July 2023.
- As a result of a sample audit and existing security measures, the security risk from existing solar systems is considered low and Defence is not planning a full physical inspection of all solar assets on the Defence estate at this time.
- Defence will continue to update Garrison Estate Management System information on solar systems as part of normal operations and maintenance.

If pressed: What security measure are in place for the new Defence Solar Farm in Darwin?

- In 2024, Defence commissioned two solar farms in the Northern Territory, a;
 - 3.2 megawatt solar farm has been installed at RAAF Base Darwin; and
 - 10 megawatt solar farm has been installed at Robertson Barracks.
- Inverters used on the solar farms are manufactured by SMA Solar Technology AG, headquartered in Niestetal, Germany.
- An 'air-gap' exists between the solar farm operations and maintenance system, and the Base communication networks.
- The operations and maintenance system operates on local servers.
- The solar farms are owned and operated by Assure Energy Asset Pty Ltd, which is owned by Capella Capital which is itself part of Lendlease Corporation (ASX listed – majority Australian owned).

If pressed: What is Defence doing in regards to renewable energy?

- More than 18 megawatts of solar energy generating capacity has been installed and is operating on the Defence Estate.
- The Defence Renewable Energy and Energy Security Program is a ten year funded program to invest in renewable energy on the estate.

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Budget Estimates June 2024

Last updated: 24 May 2024

Key witnesses: Celia Perkins; Peter West.

SB24-000376

Foreign Manufactured Devices

- The Defence Renewable Energy and Energy Security Program is enhancing Defence's approach to renewable energy including cyber security and resilience requirements.

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

2023-24 Budget Estimates: 31 May 2023

- **QoN No. 33, Estate device removal**, Senator James Paterson (Liberal, Victoria) asked about a whole-of-government policy for these devices to be removed. **TABLED**
- **QoN No. 37, DJI Drones**, Senator James Paterson (Liberal, Victoria) asked about the number of DJI drones used by Defence. **TABLED**
- **QoN No. 38, DJI Drones advice to executive**, Senator James Paterson (Liberal, Victoria) asked about engagement following the United States decision to remove DJI drones from use. **TABLED**

Senate Parliamentary QoN: 30 March 2023

- **QoN No. 1743, Technology manufactured or sold by DJI**, Senator James Paterson (Liberal, Victoria) asked whether or not the Department uses any technology manufactured or sold by DJI. **TABLED**

Senate Parliamentary QoN : 27 February 2023

- **QoN No. 1466, Hikvision and Dahua Devices**, Senator James Paterson (Liberal, Victoria) asked to be provided with the number of HIKVISION and Dahua devices in use by Defence. **TABLED**

Senate Parliamentary QoN: 29 November 2022

- **QoN No. 1089, Hikvision and/or Dahua manufactured devices**, Senator James Paterson (Liberal, Victoria) asked to be provided with the number of HIKVISION and Dahua devices in use by Defence. **TABLED**

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- No FOIs requested.

Recent Ministerial Comments

- No recent comments.

Relevant Media Reporting

- Australian and international media has reported on the cyber security risks of solar power systems, including in an article titled '[Research says solar panels a cyber risk](#),' in The Australian on 7 August 2023, in which journalist Sarah Ison reported that cyber

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Name: Mr Simon Buckley
Position: Assistant Secretary Security Policy and Services
Division: Defence Security
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

Cleared By:

Name: Ms Celia Perkins
Position: Deputy Secretary
Group: Security and Estate

Phone: s47E(d) s22

experts recommended that cyber security impact assessments be completed for all solar inverters sold in Australia.

Division: Defence Security Division	
PDR No: SB24-000376	
Prepared by: Simon Buckley Assistant Secretary Security Policy and Services Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 24 May 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Peter West First Assistant Secretary Defence Security Division Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 15 April 2024
Consultation: Brigadier Phillip Moses Date: 11 April 2024 Phase 2 Supply Chain Security Taskforce Lead Joint Logistics Command	
Consultation: Mrs Marie Jackson, Acting First Assistant Secretary Date: 11 April 2024 Service Delivery Division Security and Estate Group	
Consultation: Ms Carmel Boyd, Acting Assistant Secretary Date: 11 April 2024 Australian Industry Capability Delivery Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group	
Consultation: Mr Felix Bowman-Derrick, Assistant Secretary Date 12 April 2024 Environment and Engineering Security and Estate Group	
Cleared by Deputy Secretary: Date: 19 April 2024	

Prepared By:
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Budget Estimates June 2024
Last updated: 24 May 2024
Key witnesses: Celia Perkins; Peter West.

SB24-000376
Foreign Manufactured Devices

Ms Celia Perkins
Deputy Secretary
Security and Estate Group

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Division: Defence Security
Phone: [REDACTED] / [REDACTED]

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Safeguarding Australia's Military Secrets Act

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary, Security and Estate Group, Celia Perkins, to lead.
- First Assistant Secretary, Defence Security, Peter West, to support.

Key Messages

- The *Safeguarding Australia's Military Secrets Act 2024* (the Act) commenced on Monday, 6 May 2024 after receiving Royal Assent on Monday, 8 April 2024.
- Those currently undertaking foreign work or training (as defined in the Act) have until Monday, 5 August 2024 to apply to Defence for a Foreign Work Authorisation to continue their work or training without committing an offence under the Act.
- The Defence Safeguarding Australia's Military Secrets website has been open for Foreign Work Authorisation applications since Monday, 6 May 2024. The website also includes resources to assist individuals assess whether they are required to apply for a Foreign Work Authorisation.
- The Act includes provisions to narrow the scope of foreign work restricted individuals through legislative instruments.
- Defence has been engaging widely with stakeholders and persons impacted by the Act, through in person briefings, communications products, and on-line information.

Talking Points

- The Act was developed in response to the recommendations of a 2022 review into policies and procedures to prevent former Defence staff providing military training to foreign powers initiated by the Deputy Prime Minister.
- The Act requires certain former ADF and APS members, as well as Australian citizens and permanent residents, to apply for a Foreign Work Authorisation before providing certain types of training to, or performing work for, a military organisation or government body of a relevant foreign country.
- This includes undertaking such work or training via another entity, such as a company or organisation, or as a contractor for a relevant foreign military or government body.
- The Act includes provisions to narrow the scope of foreign work restricted individuals through two legislative instruments. The Minister for Defence may:
 - Exclude a foreign country from being relevant to the offence.

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Cleared By:

Name: Peter West
Position: First Assistant Secretary, Defence Security
Group: Security and Estate
Phone: s47E(d) /s22

- Determine a class of Defence personnel to which this offence would not apply.
 - : The class would be determined by the type of work the staff member performed and the period that has elapsed since they performed that work.
- The offence also does not apply if:
 - The work is performed as part of the individual's employment by the Commonwealth.
 - The work performed by an individual is authorised by a written agreement to which the Commonwealth is a party i.e. a Defence contract.
 - The individual is authorised by the Attorney-General to perform work with an armed force of a foreign country under s119.8 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995*.
 - The work solely involved providing humanitarian aid or performing an official duty for the United Nations or the International Committee of the Red Cross.

How will individuals determine if they are exempt from the Safeguarding Australia's Military Secrets Act 2024?

- The legislative instruments, covering approved foreign countries and types of excluded work, are available on the public register of instruments and the Safeguarding Australia's Military Secrets website.

Has Defence consulted during the development of the Act?

- Defence consulted with a range of Defence, government, and industry stakeholders as well as external interest groups during the development of the Act.
- The Act seeks to balance the interests of affected stakeholders with the requirement for robust security protections for Australian and allied Defence information.

What has Defence done to communicate these changes to the veteran population?

- Defence has communicated the changes by:
 - publishing articles in service newspapers;
 - posting notices on ForceNet and Defence Protected Network Spotlight;
 - providing briefings to Commonwealth departments, states and territories as well as the Ex-Service Organisational Round Table;
 - producing flyers to be distributed throughout ex-service organisation communication channels; and
 - conducting base visits and briefings to Command Courses.

How will the Act affect former Defence members' employment opportunities?

- Defence is not seeking to prevent former ADF or APS personnel from working overseas. The focus is to prevent individuals from unwittingly or deliberately engaging in activities that would harm Australia's national security.

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Position: Assistant Secretary Security Policy and Services

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Name: Peter West

Position: First Assistant Secretary, Defence Security

Group: Security and Estate

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- Defence does not currently track the employment of former Defence personnel, but understands a significant portion of former Defence personnel that work overseas are in roles working for a Five-Eyes country or a foreign entity engaged under an Australian Government contract. These individuals would be exempt from the Act.
- It is expected the broader benefits from AUKUS export control reforms, of which the Act is part, will create new employment opportunities for former Defence personnel, exempt from the foreign work authorisation process.
- Defence recognises the potential impact on employment for individuals requiring authorisation under the Act and will seek to process foreign work authorisation requests as quickly as possible.
- Defence will monitor the impact of the Act and make recommendations to Government on any adjustments to the legislative instruments as required.

How does Defence protect against the Foreign Intelligence Service threat?

- Defence has layered security policies and procedures to protect its personnel, information, capabilities and assets from foreign intelligence services’ collection.
- Defence works with national security agencies to provide information on this threat to Defence personnel, and encourages both current and former Defence members to report any contacts of concern.

Background

- In late 2022, at the direction of the Deputy Prime Minister, Defence conducted an Inquiry into the adequacy of Defence policies and procedures for preventing former ADF personnel from undertaking employment in support of foreign powers with interests inconsistent with those of Australia.
- The Inquiry made ten recommendations. Nine recommendations, relating to internal Defence reform, were implemented in 2023. The tenth recommended strengthened legislative provisions to prevent former Defence personnel from undertaking employment in support of foreign militaries of concern, which resulted in the *Safeguarding Australia’s Military Secrets Act*.

Timeline

6 May 2024	Commencement date of <i>Safeguarding Australia’s Military Secrets Act 2024</i> .
8 April 2024	Royal Assent for <i>Safeguarding Australia’s Military Secrets Act 2024</i> .
27 March 2024	<i>Safeguarding Australia’s Military Secrets Act 2024</i> passed both houses of Parliament.

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25 March 2024	Senate debate Defence Amendment (Safeguarding Australia’s Military Secrets) Bill 2022-2023-2024.
14 March 2024	Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security tabled its report – Review of the Defence Amendments (Safeguarding Australia’s Military Secrets) Bill 2023: Advisory Report on the Defence Amendment (Safeguarding Australia’s Military Secrets) Bill 2023
22 February 2024	Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security Public Hearings review of Defence Amendment (Safeguarding Australia’s Military Secrets) Bill
16 November 2023	Public submissions close for the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security review of the Bill.
30 September 2023	Implementation of the inquiry recommendations are formally closed.
14 September 2023	The Deputy Prime Minister introduced the Defence Amendment (Safeguarding Australia’s Military Secrets) Bill to Parliament.
14 December 2022	Defence provided its inquiry report to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
19 October 2022	The Deputy Prime Minister directed Defence to investigate claims former ADF personnel may have been approached to provide military training to foreign agencies.

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

Senate Parliamentary QoN: 11 April 2023

- **QoN No. 1897**, Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked for information regarding personnel training other countries. **TABLED**

2022-23 October Budget Estimates: 9 November 2022

- **QoN No. 4, Defence awareness of ex-ADF personnel training**, Senator James Paterson (Liberal, Victoria) asked when Defence became aware of issues with ex-ADF personnel training. **TABLED**

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 18 August 2023, an individual made a requested access to the report commissioned by the Deputy Prime Minister in November 2022 into the adequacy of policies and procedures concerning the employment of former ADF personnel. **The decision to release documents is pending.**

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- On 24 February 2023, an individual made a request seeking access to a copy of the report commissioned by the Deputy Prime Minister in November 2022 into the adequacy of its policies and procedures concerning the employment of former ADF personnel. **Access to the documentation was denied.**
- On 15 February 2023, an individual made a request seeking access to all documents pertaining to the request for information or assistance made by the United States to Australia on 23 June 2016 in relation to former United States marine, Mr Daniel Edmund Duggan, to which Australia responded on 14 March 2018. **Access to the documentation was denied under Section 7(2A)(a)(vi) of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, as documents requested were considered exempt intelligence agency documents.**

Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 27 March 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister [announced](#) that the *Safeguarding Australia’s Military Secrets Act 2024* had passed.

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 15 March 2024, [Australian Security Magazine](#) reported on the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security Advisory Report on the Defence Amendment (Safeguarding Australia’s Military Secrets) Bill 2023.
- On 29 February 2024, writing in [The Mandarin](#), Binoy Kampmark reported on the severity of penalties under Defence Amendment (Safeguarding Australia’s Military Secrets) Bill 2023.

Division: Defence Security Division	
PDR No: SB24-000377	
Prepared by: Simon Buckley Assistant Secretary Security Policy and Services Mob: s22 /s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 15 April 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Peter West First Assistant Secretary Defence Security Division Mob: s22 /s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 16 April 2024

Prepared By:
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Cleared By:
Name: Peter West
Position: First Assistant Secretary, Defence Security
Group: Security and Estate
Phone: s47E(d) /s22

Consultation:

s47E(d)

Defence Export Controls

Consultation:

Air Commodore Kaarin Kooij
Director General
Joint Transition Authority
Defence People Group

Consultation:

Commodore Eric Young
Chief of Staff – Navy Headquarters
Navy

Consultation:

Brigadier Garth Gould
Chief of Staff- Army Headquarters
Army

Consultation:

s47E(d)

Air Force

Consultation:

s47E(d)

Office of the General Counsel
Defence Legal Division

Consultation:

Liane Pettitt
Acting First Assistant Secretary
Ministerial, Engagement and Communications
Department of Veterans Affairs

Consultation:

Kylie Wright
Assistant Secretary Defence Industry
Defence Strategy, Policy and Industry

Prepared By:

Name: Simon Buckley
Position: Assistant Secretary Security Policy and Services
Davison: Defence Security
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Cleared By:

Name: Peter West
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Budget Estimates June 2024
Last updated: 15 April 2024
Key witnesses: Celia Perkins, Peter West.

SB24-000377
Safeguarding Australia's Military Secrets Act

Consultation:

AIRCDRE Karen Ashworth
Chief of Staff – ADF Headquarters
ADF Headquarters

Cleared by Deputy Secretary:

Celia Perkins
Deputy Secretary
Security and Estate Group

Date: 19 April 2024

Prepared By:

Name: Simon Buckley
Position: Assistant Secretary Security Policy and Services
Davison: Defence Security
Phone: [redacted] / [redacted]

Cleared By:

Name: Peter West
Position: First Assistant Secretary, Defence Security
Group: Security and Estate
Phone: [redacted] /s22 [redacted]

myClearance

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary Security and Estate, Celia Perkins, to lead.
- First Assistant Secretary Defence Security, Peter West, to support.

Key Messages

- The Australian Government Security Vetting Agency is the whole-of-government security clearance provider, and conducts security vetting on behalf of more than 1,100 agencies across the Commonwealth, state and territory governments and industry.
- MyClearance is a digital vetting capability designed to provide a more secure, automated and streamlined vetting process able to meet increasing security clearance demand from across government, Defence and defence industry.
- MyClearance is processing a record number of clearances, having processed 64,501 clearances between 1 July 2023 and 2 April 2024
- The Australian Government Security Vetting Agency is focused on optimising the myClearance system to meet future vetting demand and ensuring vetting benchmarks are consistently met at all clearance levels.
- The Australian National Audit Office is undertaking an audit into Defence's procurement and implementation of the myClearance system.

Talking Points

- A significant milestone was reached in February 2024 with the achievement of Final Operating Capability. Defence now has a secure, modern vetting capability to support the personnel security needs for Defence, government and industry partners.
- The myClearance system has transformed the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency's day-to-day operations. As well as achieving record clearance processing levels, the system has significantly increased capacity to respond to changes in demand for security vetting.
- Ongoing continuous improvement is enabling the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency to quickly adapt to complexities in the national security domain.

Clearances progressed under the new system

- Between 28 November 2022 and 2 April 2024, the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency finalised 100,531 clearances in myClearance.
- Between 1 July 2023 and 2 April 2024, the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency has finalised 64,501 clearances in myClearance.

Prepared By:

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Position: Deputy Secretary
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Budget Estimates June 2024
Last updated: 22 May 2024
Key witnesses: Celia Perkins, Peter West

Impact of myClearance issues on vetting timelines?

- Current clearance timeframes as at 2 April 2024:

Clearance level	Key Performance Indicator	Median 2023-24	Days over/under Benchmark
Baseline	20 days	15 days	-5
Negative Vetting Level 1	70 days	74 days	+4
Negative Vetting Level 2	100 days	105 days	+5
Positive Vetting	180 days	159 days	-21

Cost of myClearance

- The budget for the myClearance project was \$307.3 million. This included:
 - \$123.9 million for acquisition;
 - \$14.7 million in contingency; and
 - \$168.6 million for sustainment.

If pressed: Is myClearance supporting the Australian Signals Directorate REDSPICE program?

- The Australian Government Security Vetting Agency has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Australian Signals Directorate to track and prioritise processing of REDSPICE clearances.
- The Australian Government Security Vetting Agency is currently meeting benchmark timeframe targets across all REDSPICE clearance levels.

Background

- The Australian Government Security Vetting Agency's vetting system and work processes were no longer fit-for-purpose and required modernisation to meet both growth in demand and the increasingly complex security threat environment.
- The Vetting Transformation Project delivered a new core vetting system, transforming how the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency delivers security vetting services through a contemporary vetting process. Enabled by a modern digital, integrated and scalable Information and Communications Technology system called myClearance.

Prepared By:

Name: Ms Mardi Jarvis
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Cleared By:

Name: Ms Celia Perkins
Position: Deputy Secretary
Group: Security and Estate
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Budget Estimates June 2024
Last updated: 22 May 2024
Key witnesses: Celia Perkins, Peter West

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

2023-24 Additional Estimates: 14 February 2024

- **QoN No. 102, Security clearances**, Senator Jane Hume (Liberal, Victoria) asked about staff who have undertaken security clearance processes, or renewed security clearances, since 1 July 2023. **TABLED**

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- From 1 May 2023 to 7 May 2024, 14 individuals made requests seeking information contained in their Personnel Security File. **Of these, two requests had information released in full, three requests had information partially released, five requests were denied access to information due to an in progress procedural fairness process, two requests had zero in-scope documents, one request was denied in the absence of identification, and one request for documents originating with an intelligence agency was denied.**
- On 5 March 2024, an individual made a request seeking a copy of Defence's finalised briefing pack, including an index of back pocket briefs, for the 2023-24 Additional Estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 12 January 2024, the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency received a request from an individual for a record of their conversation with Vetting Customer Services. **No documents were found in scope of the request.**
- On 11 December 2023, the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency received a request from a media organisation seeking security clearance statistical data. **No documents were found in scope of the request.**
- On 30 October 2023, a media organisation requested Defence's finalised briefing pack for the 2023-24 Supplementary Budget Estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 27 October 2023, The Australian Government Security Vetting Agency received a request from a media organisation seeking access to the 'Assessment of the Remediation Plan for the myClearance system' report. **This document was partially released.**
- On 22 May 2023, the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency received a request from an individual for information that is publically available on the Protective Security Policy Framework.

Recent Ministerial Comments

- No recent comments.

Prepared By:

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Position: Assistant Secretary Vetting
Division: Defence Security
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Cleared By:

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Budget Estimates June 2024
Last updated: 22 May 2024
Key witnesses: Celia Perkins, Peter West

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 24 August 2023, Defence Connect published an article by Robert Dougherty titled [Defence industry in 'holding pattern' on security clearance backlog](#), reporting on the progress of mandatory security clearances being approved for sensitive Defence contracts.

Division: Defence Security Division	
PDR No: SB24-000378	
Prepared by: Mardi Jarvis Assistant Secretary Vetting Defence Security Division Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 10 April 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Kate Dann Acting First Assistant Secretary Defence Security Division Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 11 April 2024
Cleared by Deputy Secretary: Celia Perkins Deputy Secretary Security and Estate Group Date: 7 May 2024	

Prepared By:
Name: Ms Mardi Jarvis
Position: Assistant Secretary Vetting
Division: Defence Security
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Cleared By:
Name: Ms Celia Perkins
Position: Deputy Secretary
Group: Security and Estate
Phone: s47E(d) /s22

Defence Industry Development Strategy

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary, Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group, Chris Deeble to lead.
- Chief Counsel - Commercial and First Assistant Secretary Australian Industry Capability, Francesca Rush to support.

Key Messages

- On 29 February 2024, the Minister for Defence Industry released the Defence Industry Development Strategy.
- The Defence Industry Development Strategy establishes the framework and principles for the direction of defence industry policy for what will be an important decade in Australia's national security.
- Australia's strategic circumstances require the targeted development of the sovereign defence industrial base in areas of strategic priority.
- A sovereign defence industrial base is vital for developing higher levels of military preparedness and self-reliance. It also accelerates innovation and capability delivery.

Talking Points

Purpose of the Strategy

- The Defence Industry Development Strategy delivers initiatives to develop the sovereign defence industrial base to meet our national security needs, including:
 - a refined list of seven Sovereign Defence Industrial Priorities, supported by more detailed information on areas of priority;
 - reforming procurement to simplify the way we engage with industry, increase our risk appetite, deliver capability at speed, establish strategic partners for key capabilities, and strengthen the link between innovation, capability and exports;
 - changing how Defence will identify, communicate, and support Sovereign Defence Industrial Priorities;
 - enhancing our innovation system, including pulling innovation through to capability;
 - increasing the security posture of defence industry;
 - working with industry and across all levels of Government to identify and develop the workforce required to deliver and support Defence's capability priorities;

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Position: Assistant Secretary Defence Industry
Domestic Policy

Division: Australian Industry Capability

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

Cleared By:

Name: Chris Deeble

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Capability Acquisition and
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- changing the way Defence engages/communicates with industry to provide the information industry needs to make informed business decisions;
- increasing Defence’s understanding of the capability and capacity of the industrial base to inform capability delivery; and
- streamlining the grants available to industry, including grants support to uplift and maintain security for Australian small and medium enterprises.

Australia’s Sovereign Defence Industrial Base

- The Defence Industry Development Strategy describes ‘Australian defence industry’ as businesses with an Australian-based industrial capability and an Australian Business Number, providing products or services used in, or which can be used in, the Defence supply chain and/or an international defence force supply chain.
- This is Australia’s sovereign defence industrial base. Only in limited circumstances is Australian ownership critical to sovereignty.

Industrial Capability

- The Defence Industry Development Strategy also describes an industrial capability as a product (which may be a platform, infrastructure, system, equipment, assembly, part or consumable) or service. An industrial capability has the following characteristics:
 - Business acumen – the knowledge, systems and administration to run an effective business, including security and supply chain resilience.
 - Intellectual property – ownership of, or sufficient access to, detailed product knowledge and information, including the ability to innovate or develop improved and/or new products and services.
 - Workforce – the right mix of suitably qualified and experienced personnel.
 - Capital – the necessary assets, space, facilities, inputs and cash flow.
- An industrial capability may be delivered by a single business, a network of businesses, or a partnership between a business and the Government.

Business with an Australian Business Number

- An Australian Business Number is a key identifier used to support tracking and analysis of industry data.
 - This includes the work undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Limited circumstances where ‘Australian ownership is critical to sovereignty’

- Our strategic environment necessitates a holistic view that moves beyond the narrow lens of solely using Australian-owned businesses when seeking to define our sovereign defence industrial capability requirements.

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- Robust mitigation frameworks including Australia's foreign investment framework help to ensure the resistance of the sovereign defence industrial base to foreign involvement risks.

s47E(d) and 47G

Provision of products or services into the supply chain

- The Government will be proactive in promoting the integration of Australian defence industry into global supply chains. This grows the resilience of our sovereign defence industrial base and secures long-term growth through a diversified customer.

Sovereign Defence Industrial Priorities

- The Sovereign Defence Industrial Base needs to provide the industrial capability required to deploy the ADF if, when and how the Government directs.
- The Sovereign Defence Industrial Priorities identify the priority areas needed for our national security.
- The decision on what must be done by Australian defence industry is based on the needs of Defence capability, including the timeframes required by Defence. For example:
 - In some circumstances this means a piece of equipment/service must be produced, delivered and supported by Australian defence industry.
 - In other circumstances this means that the equipment may be sourced from a trusted overseas supplier, with some in-service support undertaken by Australian defence industry
- There are already areas where Australian defence industry support the Sovereign Defence Industrial Priorities, where Defence will work to strengthen the resilience of supply chains and increase capacity.
 - For example, the maintenance, repair and overhaul of ADF aircraft.
- Where Defence has agreements in place, such as contracts or grants, based on the Sovereign Industrial Capability Priorities they will remain in place.

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Position: Assistant Secretary Defence Industry
Domestic Policy

Division: Australian Industry Capability

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Cleared By:

Name: Chris Deeble

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Capability Acquisition and
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Link to the Integrated Investment Program

- The 2024 Integrated Investment Program sets out the specific capabilities the Government will invest in to give effect to the 2024 National Defence Strategy. It provides a generational uplift in Defence's capabilities and shifts the ADF to an integrated, focused force.
- The Sovereign Defence Industrial Priorities have been embedded within and informed the design of the 2024 Integrated Investment Program.
- By ensuring consistent and sustainable demand for the Sovereign Defence Industrial Priorities, the 2024 Integrated Investment Program will support industry's ability to deliver the Sovereign Defence Industrial Priorities and broader industry and workforce resilience in line with National Defence.

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Defence Industry Development Grant Program

- A single Defence Industry Development Grant Program will replace the existing grants programs.
 - Applications for existing programs, submitted before the closing date of the grant program, will be processed.

Background

- One of the Government's 2022 election commitments was to implement a new Defence Industry Development Strategy.
- The 24 April 2023, Defence Strategic Review media release announced the Government's implementation of several key recommendations from the Defence Strategic Review. It noted that, in order to build a defence industry needed to support the ADF, the Government will release a Defence Industry Development Strategy.
- The Minister for Defence Industry launched the Defence Industry Development Strategy on 29 February 2024.

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 Position: Assistant Secretary Defence Industry
 Domestic Policy
 Division: Australian Industry Capability
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- On 21 June 2023, the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee resolved to inquire into the performance of Defence to support the capability and capacity of Australia's defence industry. The committee received 45 submissions.
- On 28 February 2024, the committee resolved to extend the reporting date to the final sitting day in 2024 (28 November 2024).
- The Minister for Defence Industry launched the Defence Industry Development Strategy on 29 February 2024.
- On 17 April 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister released the 2024 National Defence Strategy and the 2024 Integrated Investment Program.

Questions on Notice

2023-24 Additional Estimates: 14 February 2024

- QoN No. 506, Defence Industry Development Strategy**, Senator the Hon David Fawcett (Liberal, South Australia) asked when Defence delivered the Defence Industry Development Strategy to the Deputy Prime Minister. **TABLED**

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 5 March 2024, an individual made a request seeking a copy of Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack, including an index of back pocket briefs, for the 2023-24 Additional estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**
- On 30 October 2023 a media organisation requested Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack for the 2023-24 Supplementary Budget Estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**

Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 4 April 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister delivered a [speech](#) to the Sydney Institute, stating that the Defence Industry Development Strategy 'articulates for the first time the defence industrial base Australia needs in order to meet the changing circumstances outlined in the DSR'.
- On 1 March 2024, the Minister for Defence Industry delivered an [address](#) to the Illawarra Shoalhaven defence Industry development conference, stating that the Defence Industry Development Strategy represents a fundamental change from the defence industry policies of the past and is a 'focused approach to sustain the defence industry we have and grow the industrial base we need, much faster than we have before.'
- On 29 February 2024, the Minister for Defence Industry launched the [Defence Industry Development Strategy](#), stating that 'this strategy will underpin essential reforms that

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Cleared By:

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 Group: Capability Acquisition and
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 Phone: s47E(d) s22

will ensure that critical capabilities are provided to the men and women of the ADF as soon as possible, while also supporting an industry vital to our national security’.

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 19 March 2024, The Australian published an article by Greg Sheridan, titled ‘Don’t fret, Beijing: AUKUS allies their own worst enemies’, that includes comment on the Defence Industry Development Strategy.
On 29 February 2024, Defence Connect published an opinion piece by the Minister for Defence Industry titled ‘Setting Australia’s “quiet achiever” Defence Industry up for long-term success’, in which the Minister outlines Australia’s changing strategic environment.
On 29 February 2024, InnovationAus published an article by Brandon How titled, ‘Govt focuses defence industry plan by halving priorities’.
On 28 February 2024, the Australian Financial Review published an article by Andrew Tillett titled ‘Weapons plan to keep local ship, drone and ammo makers in business’, discussing how Defence will shield military contractors from boom-bust spending cycles to ensure key industries can be preserved domestically.

Table with 2 columns: Prepared by (Dr Kathryn Cameron) and Cleared by Division Head (Francesca Rush). Includes PDR No: SB24-000379, Date: 15 April 2024, and Cleared by DSR: Mr Cyril Karo, Date: 22 April 2024.

Prepared By: Name: Dr Kathryn Cameron, Position: Assistant Secretary Defence Industry Domestic Policy, Division: Australian Industry Capability, Phone: s47E(d) & s22

Cleared By: Name: Chris Deeble, Position: Deputy Secretary, Group: Capability Acquisition and Sustainment, Phone: s47E(d) s22

Cleared by Deputy Secretary:

Chris Deeble
Deputy Secretary
Capability Acquisition and Sustainment
Group

Date: 23 April 2024

Prepared By:

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Cleared By:

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Current ADF Operations

Handling Note:

- Head of Military Strategic Commitments, Air Vice-Marshal Stephen Chappell to lead.
- Acting Vice Chief of the Defence Force, Major General Anthony Rawlins, to support.

Key Messages

- Defence's operations contribute to ensuring Australia is willing and able to shape our environment, deter actions against our interests, and, when required, respond with military force.
- As of 30 April 2024, around 1,434 ADF personnel were deployed on 23 named operations across Australia, the immediate region, and the globe.
- The total cost of named operations between 1 July 2023 and 30 April 2024 was \$195,457,423.

Talking Points

Operations MANITOU and PROSPERITY GUARDIAN

- Operation MANITOU is the overarching ADF operation to support international efforts promoting maritime security, stability and prosperity in the Middle East and East Africa regions. Under this Operation, Defence provides personnel to the Combined Maritime Forces deployment, which includes a Canadian-led combined task force and Operation PROSPERITY GUARDIAN.
- On 21 December 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister announced Australia would triple its contribution to the Combined Maritime Forces.
 - As of February 2024, Defence's commitment to Operation MANITOU is up to 16 ADF personnel.

s33(a)(ii), 33(a)(iii) and 47E(d)

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PDR No: SB24-000380
Current ADF Operations**Operation HYDRANTH**

s33(a)(ii), 33(a)(iii) and 47E(d)

Operation BEECH

- Defence initiated Operation BEECH to support departures of Australians, their families, and approved foreign nationals from Israel following a request on 13 October 2023 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Deputy Prime Minister. Defence assisted the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade-led departure of Australian citizens and approved foreign nationals from Tel Aviv, Israel.
- Since 7 October 2023, the ADF has conducted five military-assisted departures from Tel Aviv, Israel, to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates under Operation BEECH.
 - Defence transported approximately 394 Australians and approved foreign nationals from Israel on Defence aircraft between 15-19 October 2023.
 - Two flights took place on 15 October 2023 and on 16, 18 and 19 October 2023 a single flight occurred each day.
- Over the period 20 to 21 October 2023, the ADF also assisted 97 persons to return to Australia from Dubai on Defence aircraft after the Government facilitated their travel to Dubai.
- The ADF remains postured to provide additional support if required.

Operation KUDU

- Operation KUDU provides ADF support to Ukraine. The operation includes training Ukrainian soldiers in the United Kingdom and the deployment of a Royal Australian Air Force E-7A Wedgetail aircraft to Germany for approximately six months to help protect a vital gateway of international humanitarian and military assistance to Ukraine.
 - The E-7A deployment concluded operational activities on 31 March 2024 and returned to Australia on 12 April 2024.

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Current ADF Operations


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Operation MAZURKA (Sinai)

- Established in 1981, Operation MAZURKA is the ADF contribution to the Multinational Force and Observers, an international peacekeeping force based in the Sinai Peninsula overseeing the terms of the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty.

s33(a)(ii), 33(a)(iii) and 47E(d)



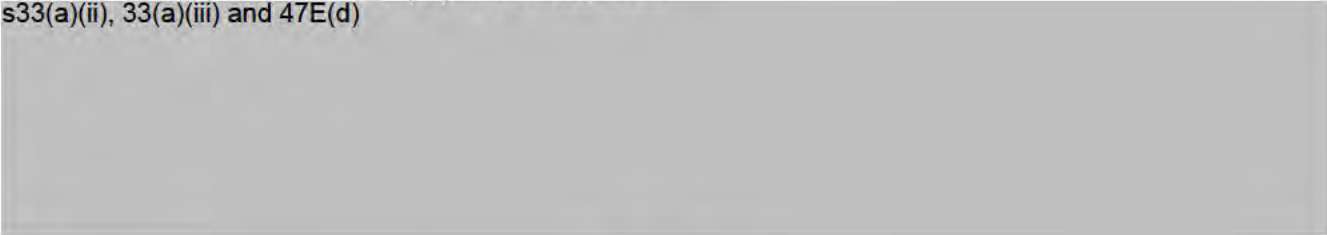
Operation ORENDA (Mali)

- ADF support to the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali under Operation ORENDA ceased on 31 December 2023.

Operation PALADIN

- Operation PALADIN is the ADF contribution to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation in Israel, Syria and Lebanon.

s33(a)(ii), 33(a)(iii) and 47E(d)



Prepared By:

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s33(a)(ii), 33(a)(iii) and 47E(d)

Operation RENDER SAFE

- Operation RENDER SAFE is the ADF-led operation supporting Pacific nations for ongoing removal of explosive remnants of war.

s33(a)(ii), 33(a)(iii) and 47E(d)

Operation RESOLUTE

- Operation RESOLUTE is the ADF contribution to the whole-of-government effort to protect Australia's borders and offshore maritime interests.
- The ADF contributes forces under Operation RESOLUTE to Maritime Border Command, a multi-agency taskforce within the Australian Border Force, which utilises assets to conduct civil maritime security operations.
- Maritime Border Command protects Australia's maritime domain from security threats, including illegal maritime arrivals, prohibited imports and exports, maritime terrorism, illegal exploitation of natural resources, compromises to biosecurity, illegal activities in protected areas, marine pollution, and piracy, robbery and violence at sea.

s47E(d)

- ADF personnel may be allocated to Operation RESOLUTE at sea, in the air, or on the land.
- The following ADF elements may be allocated to Operation RESOLUTE:
 - Defence aircraft, which can provide aerial surveillance of Australia's north-west and northern approaches.
 - Navy patrol boats, which operate daily throughout Australia's maritime areas.
 - Army Regional Force Surveillance Unit patrols, which conduct land based security operations.
 - A transit security element made up of Navy and Army personnel, who embark in the patrol boats.
 - Large hull vessels, on an as required basis.

s33(a)(ii), 33(a)(iii) and 47E(d)

- Defence provides surge resources in response to Maritime Border Command operational requirements.

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Current ADF Operations


Operation ARGOS

- Operation ARGOS is Australia's contribution to enforce United Nations Security Council sanctions against North Korea. These sanctions limit North Korea's imports of refined petroleum and crude oil, and its exports of coal, which can be facilitated by illegal ship-to-ship transfers.

Handling note: Head of Military Strategic Commitments should respond to questions relating to HMAS Hobart's embarked helicopter's unsafe and unprofessional interaction with the People's Liberation Army – Air Force while undertaking Operation ARGOS.

Background

s33(a)(ii), 33(a)(iii) and 47E(d)



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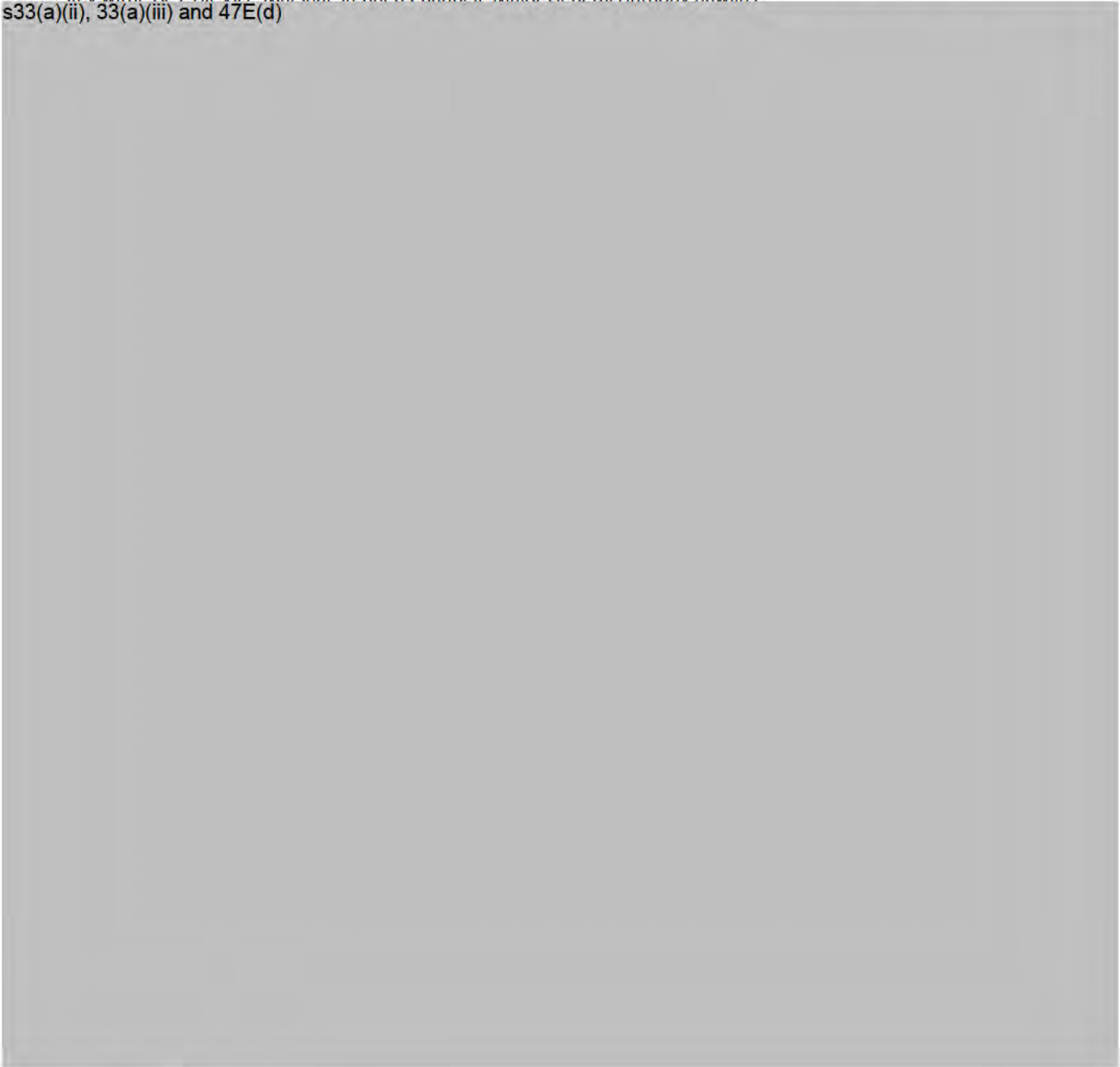
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s33(a)(ii), 33(a)(iii) and 47E(d)



Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

2023-24 Additional Estimates: 14 February 2024

QoN 10, Legal advice – deployment of ADF assets or personnel overseas, Senator Jordon Steele-John (Greens Western Australia) asked a question concerning the legal advice received by Defence in relation to decisions to contribute additional personnel to the Combined Maritime Forces in the Red Sea. **TABLED**

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Additional Estimates February 2024

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Key witnesses: Air Vice-Marshal Stephen Chappell; Major General Anthony Rawlins

PDR No: SB24-000380

Current ADF Operations

Parliamentary Question on Notice - Senate: 15 December 2023

- **QoN No. 2963**, Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked a question concerning whether there were any ADF personnel on secondment or embedded, or in other ways involved with the Israeli Defense Force.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- No FOIs requested.

Recent Ministerial Comments**Operation ARGOS:**

- On 7 May 2024, the Prime Minister was [interviewed on national media](#) and commented on the unsafe and unprofessional PLA interaction with HMAS *Hobart's* embarked helicopter.
- On 6 May 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister was [interviewed on Channel Nine](#) to discuss the unsafe and unprofessional PLA interaction with HMAS *Hobart's* embarked helicopter.

Operation BEECH:

- On 25 October 2023, the Acting Prime Minister was [interviewed on the Today Show](#) to discuss the deployment of ADF personnel and aircraft as part of Operation Beech.
- On 16 October 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Government Services released a joint statement announcing [Defence support for assisted-departures for Australians](#).

Operation HYDRANTH:

- On 29 February 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister announced [increased support for strike action against Houthi rebels](#).
- On 25 February 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister published a [Joint Statement from Australia, Bahrain, Denmark, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States on additional strikes against the Houthis in Yemen](#).
- On 4 February 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister published a [Joint Statement from Australia, Bahrain, Denmark, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States on additional strikes against the Houthis in Yemen](#).
- On 23 January 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister published a [Joint Statement from Australia, Bahrain, Canada, The Netherlands, United Kingdom and United States](#), **stating that** an additional round of strikes against eight Houthi targets in Yemen had been conducted.

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Operation KUDU:

- On 27 April 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister announced [Australia continues to stand with Ukraine](#), and thanked the Polish government for its support of the deployment of an E-7A Wedgetail.
- On 14 December 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs released a joint statement announcing [Australia expands training support to Ukrainian Forces](#) throughout 2024.
- On 10 July 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister released a joint media statement announcing the deployment of an E-7A Wedgetail from [Australia to help protect a vital gateway of assistance to Ukraine](#).

Operation LILIA:

- On 16 April 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Defence Industry and Minister for International Development and the Pacific released a joint statement announcing [Australia supports the 2024 Solomon Islands Joint Elections](#).

Relevant Media Reporting**Operation ARGOS:**

- On 24 May 2024, during a [National Press Club Australia](#) address, Anna Henderson (SBS World News) asked Deputy Commander US Indo Pacific Lie LTGEN Stephen Sklenka, about China's motivations for the HMAS *Hobart* interaction and Australia's decision not to publicly release video footage of the incident.
- On 16 May 2024, Defence Connect published an article claiming [Defence clams up over Seahawk, Chinese jet incident](#) and that Defence has entered a 'cone of silence' regarding the publication of any further details on this incident.
- On 15 May 2024, Sky News published Senate Question Time commentary by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on engagement with Chinese officials Wang Yi and Minister Liu Kun regarding the unsafe and unprofessional conduct of PLA-AF. [Sky News Extra - Senate \(watch from 07:07\)](#).
- On 13 May 2024, The West Australian published [North Korea condemns UK, Australia and NZ for surveillance](#) detailing a Democratic People's Republic of Korea statement that denounced 'increased surveillance' by US allies, including Australia, under the guise of UN sanctions.
- On 8 May 2024, the ABC published [Anthony Albanese has not spoken with Xi Jinping after Chinese military confrontation in international waters](#) reporting China's Foreign Ministry said the helicopter "deliberately flew within close range of China's airspace in a provocative move".

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- On 7 May 2024, The Sydney Morning Herald published [Navy near miss with Chinese Fighter Jet](#) reporting the Deputy Prime Minister condemned unprofessional and unsafe conduct of a Chinese jet that dropped flares.
- On 19 November 2023, The West Australian published [Sailors hurt in China ship clash](#) reporting a Chinese warship injured Australian Navy divers with sonar blast during a mission off Japan.

Operation ASLAN:

- On 26 April 2024, the Herald Sun published [Australian troops around the world reflect on significance of our day](#) highlighting a personal reflection of an Australian Navy member who was deployed as part of Operation ASLAN.

Operation BEECH:

- On 26 October 2023, the Townsville Bulletin published [Diggers deployed From NQ](#) reporting the ADF deployed more personnel from Townsville and Brisbane to the Middle East in response to the deepening crisis in Gaza.
- On 16 October 2023, The Advertiser published [Warning as fears spread to Lebanon](#) reporting the Foreign Minister confirms mercy flights for Australians stranded in Israel, with a mix of charter and military Air Force flights.
- On 15 October 2023, The West Australian published [More charter and RAAF flights in bid to rescue Australians from Israel](#) reporting the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade confirms several new charter and Air Force flights for Australians wishing to leave Israel.

Operation GATEWAY:

- On 23 August 2023, the Malay Mail published [Regional Security: Malaysia, Australia reaffirm commitment to Five Power Defence Arrangements](#), which noted Operation GATEWAY's contribution to regional security.

Operation KUDU:

- On 23 April 2024, The Australian published [Ukraine's "will" an eye opener to Australia's Defence Force](#) reporting the Chief of Army's visit to ADF troops based in the United Kingdom helping to train Ukrainian soldiers. The article highlighted his comments about the Ukrainians' "very strong, very focussed morale".
- On 3 April 2024, The Townsville Bulletin published [Aussie spy plane RAAF E-7A Wedgetail critical in Ukraine war](#) reporting the E7-A's return after a successful six-month long deployment.
- On 2 April 2024, The Australian published [World of Warcraft: Australians in England teach Ukrainians how to defeat Russia](#) outlining the ADF's role under Operation KUDU interviewing Major Michael Jack from the 7th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment.

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Current ADF Operations

Key witnesses: Air Vice-Marshal Stephen Chappell; Major General Anthony Rawlins

- On 9 January 2024, The Canberra Times published [More Australians to help in Ukraine military training](#) reporting rotation of 90 ADF personnel departing Australia for the United Kingdom.
- On 23 September 2023, Mena FN published [During training in UK, Ukrainian soldiers prepare for operations in dense forests](#) reporting Australia's training support to Ukraine.
- On 11 July 2023, Al-Jazeera published [Australia to deploy surveillance aircraft to assist Ukraine](#) reporting on the deployment of an E-7A Wedgetail aircraft to provide protection to a vital humanitarian and military supply line to Ukraine. The aircraft will operate from Germany for a duration of six months.

Operation RENDER SAFE:

- On 31 January 2024, The Mandarin published [Australia's defence diplomacy in the Pacific Islands as a tool of statecraft](#) outlining University of Adelaide research on the effectiveness of Australia's defence diplomacy in the Pacific Islands region.
- On 11 December 2023, Defence Connect published [ADF deploys EOD specialists to Nauru](#) to work with the Nauru authorities to remove a WW2 500lb bomb.
- On 30 August 2023, The Daily Mail published [Australian experts help clear unexploded bombs on Nauru](#) reporting defence and police forces from Australia, New Zealand, the United States, the Solomon Islands, France and South Korea have joined the initiative to help train and improve safety and awareness about unexploded ordnance.

Operation RESOLUTE:

- On 20 February 2024, The South Gippsland Sentinel Times republished a Defence News story [Army signaller puts his training to the test](#) about Signaller William Horvath's deployment on Operation RESOLUTE.
- On 21 December 2023, NT News published [Eye spy for the Indo Pacific in 2024](#) reporting the Royal Australian Air Force will receive an MQ-4C Triton uncrewed aircraft to support maritime intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, including Operation RESOLUTE.
- On 2 December 2023, the ABC published [Force of the north](#) about the NORFORCE support to Operation RESOLUTE and their role in protecting Australia's northern coastline.
- On 7 November 2023, the National Tribune reprinted the Defence News story [Remaining vigilant in the top end](#) about soldiers attached to Joint Task Force 639 patrolling some of Australia's most inaccessible shorelines.
- On 28 September 2023, Sri Lankan outlet Daily FT published [Sri Lanka and Australia mark 10 years of Operation Sovereign Borders](#) reporting the operation's success had been shaped by cultivating deep relationships with regional partners.

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Operation SOLANIA:

- On 5 April 2024, the Ipswich Tribune published [Amberley air crew cast net for illegal fishers](#) reporting ADF personnel have been assisting their Pacific partners to detect illegal fishing activity in the waters of Vanuatu.
- On 20 March 2024, the Asia Pacific Defence Reporter published [ADF helps deter illegal fishing collaboration with Vanuatu](#) reporting the ADF completed support to the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency’s Operation Rai Balang for 2024.
- On 30 August 2023, the Asia Pacific Defence Reporter published [Defence supports Pacific partners to combat illegal fishing](#) reporting the ADF had conducted 17 missions and patrolled 686,000 square kilometres to combat illegal fishing in the Pacific.

Division:	Military Strategic Commitments		
PDR No:	SB24-000380		
Prepared by: Air Vice-Marshall Stephen Chappell Head Military Strategic Commitments Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 28 May 2024	Cleared by: Major General Anthony Rawlins, DSC, AM Acting Vice Chief of the Defence Force Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 28 May 2024		
Consultation: Commodore Aaron Nye, RAN Chief of Staff Headquarters Joint Operations Command	Date: 10 May 2024 Ph: s47E(d)		
Cleared by DFG: Steven Groves Chief Financial Officer	Date: 22 May 2024		
Cleared by 3 Star: Major General Anthony Rawlins, DSC, AM Acting Vice Chief of the Defence Force	Date: 28 May 2024		

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Cleared By:
Name: Major General Anthony Rawlins
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Red Sea

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry, Hugh Jeffrey, to lead on Australia's policy considerations for actions in the Red Sea.
- Acting Vice Chief of the Defence Force, Major General Anthony Rawlins, to lead on ADF Operations HYDRANTH and MANITOU.
- First Assistant Secretary International Policy, Bernard Philip, to support on Australia's policy considerations for actions in the Red Sea.
- Head of Military Strategic Commitments, Air Vice-Marshal Stephen Chappell, to support on ADF operations.

Key Messages

- Australia joined the international community in condemning the illegal and unjustifiable Houthi attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea and in the Gulf of Aden.
- Australia is supporting the defensive strikes led by the United States and the United Kingdom against Houthi targets in Yemen through Operation HYDRANTH.
- Australia is also contributing up to 16 personnel to the Combined Maritime Forces.

Talking Points

Australia's commitment to the Red Sea

- Australia joins the international community in unreservedly condemning Houthi attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.
 - These attacks constitute a threat to the safety of seafarers of all nations, navigational rights and freedoms, international trade and maritime security.
- While our focus is – and must remain – on the Indo-Pacific, we continue to support the global rules-based order, including in the Middle East and surrounding region.
- Australia has provided public support and Defence personnel to efforts to uphold the rules-based order and ensure maritime security in these critical waterways.

Australia's contribution to Operation PROSPERITY GUARDIAN

- On 21 December 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister announced Australia would be tripling its contribution to the Combined Maritime Forces.

s33(a)(ii), 33(a)(iii) and 47E(d)

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Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d) s22

- Up to 16 ADF personnel are embedded with Combined Maritime Forces and subordinate Combined Task Force headquarters, under ADF Operation MANITOU.

- . Australia has conducted maritime security operations in the Middle East since 1990.

s33(a)(ii), 33(a)(iii) and 47E(d)



Australia’s contribution to Operation HYDRANTH

- . Since 11 January 2024, Australia has supported United States and United Kingdom strikes against the Houthis’ continued attacks in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.
- . On 29 February 2024, the Government announced the formal establishment of Operation HYDRANTH, Australia’s commitment to that ongoing mission.

s33(a)(ii), 33(a)(iii) and 47E(d)



Prepared By:

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Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey
Position: Deputy Secretary
Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry
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s33(a)(ii), 33(a)(iii) and 47E(d)

Background

Operation PROSPERITY GUARDIAN

- On 21 December 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister announced Australia would triple its contribution to the Combined Maritime Forces to support the United States-led Operation PROSPERITY GUARDIAN to help deter further Houthi attacks.
- On 19 December 2023, the Chief of the Defence Force joined representatives from Combined Maritime Forces member states in a call hosted by the United States Secretary of Defense, Mr Lloyd J Austin III, who sought support for United States actions in the Red Sea. The Chief of the Defence Force said Australia would continue to support efforts globally and Australia would consider the request for further support.
- On 19 December 2023, Australia and 43 countries joined a joint statement on Houthi attacks in the Red Sea.
- On 18 December 2023, Secretary Austin announced the establishment of Operation PROSPERITY GUARDIAN, organised under the Combined Maritime Forces to help defend against Houthi threats in the Red Sea.
- On 5 December 2023, Commander United States Central Command, General Michael Kurilla asked framework nations to contribute to the operation during a teleconference with Chief of Joint Operations, Lieutenant General Gregory Bilton.
- On 1 December 2023, the United Nations Security Council condemned Houthi attacks in the Red Sea and underscored the importance of freedom of navigation. The statement called on the immediate end of attacks and the release of the M/V Galaxy Leader and its crew.

Prepared By:

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Division: International Policy

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Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

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s33 and 47E(d)



- On 4 January 2024, the Prime Minister issued a joint statement warning the Houthis would bear responsibility of the consequences should they continue to threaten lives, the global economy and the free flow of commerce in the region’s critical waterways.
 - Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States also joined the statement.

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

2023-24 Additional Estimates: 14 February 2024

Prepared By:

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Position: Assistant Secretary, Global Partners

Division: International Policy

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Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

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- **QoN 20, Deputy Prime Minister conversations with Secretary Austin**, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham (Liberal, South Australia) asked whether the Deputy Prime Minister had any discussions with Secretary Austin during the 16-day period. **TABLED**
- **QoN 35, Navy Capabilities**, Senator Jacqui Lambie (Jacqui Lambie Network, Tasmania) submitted six questions regarding navy capabilities with two questions referring to why the Government did not send a vessel to join Operation PROSPERITY GUARDIAN and how the decision was made. **TABLED**

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 30 October 2023, a media organisation requested Defence finalised estimates briefing pack for the 2023-24 Supplementary Budget Estimates. **The decision to release document is pending.**
- On 5 March 2024 an individual made a request seeking a copy of Defence's finalised estimates briefing pack, including an index of back pocket briefs, for the 2023–24 Additional estimates. **The decision to release documents is pending.**

Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 29 February 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister [announced](#) Australia would be increasing its contribution of ADF personnel to support United States and United Kingdom actions targeting the capabilities used in Houthi rebel attacks in the Red Sea.
- On 4 February 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister released a joint [statement](#) with Bahrain, Denmark, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States on additional strikes against the Houthi attacks in Yemen.
- On 23 January 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister released a joint [statement](#) with Bahrain, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States on additional strikes against the Houthi Attacks in the Red Sea.
- On 12 January 2024, the Prime Minister released a joint [statement](#) with Bahrain, Canada, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States on strikes against the Houthis in Yemen.
- On 4 January 2024, the Prime Minister released a joint [statement](#) with Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States warning the Houthis against further attacks on commercial vessels transiting the Red Sea.

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 29 January 2024, the ABC published an article by Rebecca Trigger and Belinda Varischetti titled [Welfare concerns remain for livestock off WA coast after vessel returns from Red Sea amid security concerns](#). It reported that the MV Bahijah en route to Jordan was ordered by the Department of Agriculture to return to Australia 15 days into its voyage due to the deteriorating situation in the Red Sea.

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Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d) s22

- On 28 January 2024, the Australian Financial Review published an article by Ayesha de Kretser titled [Importers turn to air freight to avoid Red Sea delays](#). It reported that attacks on ships in the Red Sea could result in significant delays for Australian imports.
- On 25 January 2024, Sky News published an article by Max Melzer titled [Houthis target ships hauling cargo for US Defence, State Departments through Red Sea as militants defy Western pressure](#). It reported the Houthis had been targeting ships hauling cargo for United States Defense and State Departments through the Red Sea in response to Western pressure and bombardments.
- On 16 January 2024, Sky News published an article by Max Melzer titled [Houthis escalate Red Sea attacks in response to Western bombings as Australian support fails to materialise](#). It reported the Houthis had escalated Red Sea attacks in response to the strikes by United Kingdom and the United States.
- On 12 January 2024, the Global Security.org website published an article by U.S. Central Command titled [U.S. Forces, Allies Conduct Joint Strikes](#). It reported that Australia had provided support to the joint United States and United Kingdom strikes.
- On 21 December 2023, the ABC published an article by Matthew Duran titled [Australia to send small personnel deployment but no warship to Red Sea](#). It reported that Australia would send personnel to the Red Sea, but no warship.

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Division: Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group	
PDR No: SB24-000381	
Prepared by: David Lewis Assistant Secretary Global Partners Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 15 April 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Sally Timbs Acting First Assistant Secretary International Policy Division Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 15 April 2024
Cleared by Deputy Secretary: Hugh Jeffrey Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group Date: 19 April 2024	

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Cleared By:
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Timor-Leste – Pacific Maritime Security Program

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry, Hugh Jeffrey to lead.
- First Assistant Secretary Pacific, Susan Bodell to support.
- As the Program works with sovereign naval or law enforcement vessels, Defence should not reveal the operational status of the vessels.

Key Messages

- Australia is continuing to invest in our maritime security partnerships in the Pacific.
 - Working with Pacific partners to enhance regional capability and interoperability, and address common challenges including upholding sovereignty and protecting maritime resources.
- The Pacific Maritime Security Program is a long-standing, \$5.9 billion commitment over 30 years, under which Australia provides partners with sovereign capability to patrol and protect their maritime domains.

Talking Points

- Following the release of the Defence Strategic Review, the Government committed to enhance its investment in our maritime security partnerships throughout the Pacific.
- This has enabled increased support to the Pacific Maritime Security Program, which is the cornerstone of Defence's engagement in the Pacific. This includes:
 - additional support for maintenance and sustainment through-life to ease the burden on local economies; and
 - a review and potential expansion of training provided as part of the program.
- This brings the total commitment under the enhanced Pacific Maritime Security Program to \$5.9 billion over 30 years, which includes:
 - the provision of 22 Guardian-class Patrol Boats;
 - a comprehensive package of maintenance and sustainment support;
 - training for crews through both the Royal Australian Navy's Sea Training Group and commercial providers;
 - embedded in-country Navy advisors to support safe operations;
 - region wide contracted aerial surveillance to enable targeted, intelligence-driven patrols to respond to transnational crime; and
 - enhanced regional coordination and communication.

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Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

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If pressed: Why has Timor-Leste not accepted an offer to receive Guardian-class Patrol Boats?

- Timor-Leste has advised Australia it needs to reassess its Navy's maritime security capability requirements, facilities and readiness before considering acceptance of Guardian-class Patrol Boats.
- This is a sovereign decision for Timor-Leste.
- We value our defence relationship with our near neighbour and share common interests in the stability and security of our region.
- Australia remains committed to working with Timor-Leste on our shared maritime security interests.

If pressed: Were Timorese crews not ready to operate the Guardian-class Patrol Boats?

- Crews have demonstrated a strong commitment to developing as mariners.
- Timorese crew members have completed their individual training requirements, and have conducted 28-day rotations aboard a training vessel to gain experience working as a team at sea.

If pressed: What happens to the two boats Timor-Leste was due to receive?

- Defence will continue to work with Timor-Leste on its future maritime security capability requirements, and the delivery schedule for the remaining Boats will be adjusted accordingly.
- The two Guardian-class Patrols boats currently remain on offer to Timor-Leste.

If pressed: Reports in Timor-Leste that Australia suspended the delivery of the vessels

- Understand this was reported by some Timor-Leste media outlets, but it is not accurate.
- This was a sovereign decision by the Timor-Leste Government based on its own assessment of its facilities and readiness.
- We respect Timor-Leste's decision.

If pressed: Are you concerned about the two Chinese warships visiting Timor-Leste?

- Timor-Leste has defence relationships with many countries, and we respect the right of all countries to make sovereign decisions about their engagements.

If pressed: How is the Government delivering on their commitment to double the funding to the aerial surveillance program?

- The 'Enhanced Aerial Surveillance Program' will be implemented from 2024-25, and includes:
 - fixed wing aerial surveillance services;
 - offer of uncrewed aerial vehicles for use on patrol boats; and

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Budget Estimates June 2024

Last updated: 28 May 2024

SB24-000595
Pacific Maritime Security Program

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Susan Bodell

- a contribution towards the Quad's Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness.

If pressed: Why is the government providing armaments for Guardian-class Patrol Boats?

- . In June 2021 the Government agreed to requests from the governments of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands to arm their nations' Guardian-class Patrol Boats.
 - A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Papua New Guinea on 27 July 2021; and with Solomon Islands on 5 May 2023; and
 - Armaments (.50 calibre machine guns) have been installed on two of Papua New Guinea's Guardian-class Patrol Boats (beginning in August 2023), and one of the Solomon Islands' (in October 2023), Guardian-class Patrol Boats.

If pressed: Will other nations be provided armaments for their Guardian-class Patrol Boats?

- . Partner nations may make the sovereign decision to request armaments for their Guardian-class Patrol Boats.
- . The Government considers each request on a case-by-case basis.
 - Any agreement to provide armaments is accompanied by a comprehensive support package to address sustainment and provide holistic training; including use, storage, and safety procedures.
- . Australia's security assistance is undertaken in accordance with all domestic and international legal obligations and is subject to important safeguards (contained in the Memorandum of Understanding).

If pressed: Why has it taken over 12 months for Vanuatu's and Tuvalu's Guardian-class Patrol Boats to be repaired or replaced after cyclone damage incurred in March of 2023?

- . Australian-gifted Guardian-class Patrol Boats are sovereign assets of recipient nations.
- . Defence has worked closely with Vanuatu and Tuvalu to assess the damage sustained, and determine whether to repair or replace the vessels.
- . *Tuvalu:* In March of 2024 it was determined that replacing rather than repairing Tuvalu's damaged vessel (*Te Mataili II*) offered best value for money, and would safeguard against ongoing maintenance and safety risks caused by the extensive damage.
 - The Minister for Foreign Affairs recently announced Tuvalu will receive their replacement vessel this year.
- . *Vanuatu:* Vanuatu's Guardian-class Patrol Boat (RVS *Takuare*) is currently undergoing repairs, and is scheduled to be returned to Vanuatu in early 2025.
- . While Vanuatu and Tuvalu are currently without their Guardian-class Patrol Boats, Defence continues to support their maritime capabilities through the provision of interim vessels.

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If pressed: Has the Government increased the number of Guardian-class Patrol Boats under the contract?

- Yes, the Government has agreed to replace Tuvalu's damaged boat and acquire a second Guardian-class Patrol Boat for Kiribati.

If pressed: Why has the Government committed to giving Kiribati a second Guardian-class Patrol Boat?

- Kiribati's Exclusive Economic Zone is among the largest in the Pacific.
- An additional Guardian-class Patrol Boat will meaningfully enhance the ability of Kiribati to protect and patrol its sovereign waters.

If pressed: Why will Kiribati receive a second Guardian-class Patrol Boat before other nations (e.g. the Republic of Marshall Islands) receive their first?

- The Government of Kiribati requested additional capability to protect and patrol its vast Exclusive Economic Zone.
- The Republic of Marshall Islands has a functioning Pacific Patrol Boat, which Australia will help sustain until its Guardian-class Patrol Boat is available.

If pressed: Why has Vanuatu been gifted a landing craft? Will other nations also be gifted landing craft?

- In 2019, the (then) Prime Minister of Vanuatu, the Hon Bob Loughman MP, requested Australia's assistance in procuring a landing craft capability in light of ongoing humanitarian disaster relief challenges.
- Australia agreed to this request, in line with our commitment to respond to the requests of our partners for assistance in addressing security challenges, including humanitarian disaster relief challenges.
- Requests for assistance from partners are considered on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given to existing capability or support that may be available to address the security challenges identified, and the budget available to Government.

Background

Timor-Leste Guardian-class Patrol Boats

- On 11 April 2024, Timor-Leste advised it was not in a position to receive its Guardian-class Patrol Boats, due for handover in May and September 2024, as part of Australia's Pacific Maritime Security Program.

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- Timor-Leste was scheduled to receive two Guardian-class Patrol Boats in May and September 2024 as part our Pacific Maritime Security Program. On 11 April 2024, Timor-Leste's Minister for Defence, Rear Admiral Donaciano Costa Gomes (also known by his resistance-era nom de guerre 'Pedro Klamar Fuik'), wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Industry advising Timor-Leste was not in position to receive the Guardian-class Patrol Boats. While the letter did not decline the Guardian-class Patrol Boats, it deferred Timor-Leste's decision to receive the vessels until further notice.
- Australia has provided the Timor Leste Government with an option to receive its first vessel later this year should it decide before 1 September 2024 to go ahead with the delivery, with the second vessel delayed until at least 2026.
- Two People's Liberation Army Navy vessels – an Amphibious Landing dock (Jinggangshan) and a large training ship (Qijiguang) – will visit Timor-Leste from 31 May to 2 June 2024 after completing an exercise with Cambodia. This follows a pattern of intermittent ship visits since 2016.

Guardian-class Patrol Boats

- Guardian-class Patrol Boats replace Pacific Patrol Boats. They offer significantly advanced capability, including: increased speed, range and crew capacity; accommodation for mixed gender crews; and improved humanitarian assistance and disaster relief capabilities.
- In May 2016, the shipbuilding contract for the Guardian-class Patrol Boats was awarded to Austal Pty Ltd. Two additional vessels have been added to the Austal contract to accommodate Australia's commitment to replace damaged vessels. The current value of the Austal contract is approximately \$360.1 million.
- As of May 2024, 19 boats have been delivered: Papua New Guinea (four), Tuvalu (one), Tonga (two), Samoa (two; the second a replacement after the first was damaged), Solomon Islands (two), Fiji (two), Palau (one), Vanuatu (one), Kiribati (one), Federated States of Micronesia (two), and Cook Islands (one).
- The current In-Service Support Contract with Austal is due to conclude January 2025, and a 12-month extension will be exercised to provide sufficient time to re-define requirements, proceed to market and identify and transition new contractual arrangements. A series of stakeholder engagement workshops have been held including with Pacific Maritime Security Program nation representatives to understand the customer requirements. All gifted Pacific Maritime Security Program maritime assets will be included in future arrangements, including landing craft.

Enhanced Pacific Maritime Security Program – 2023 Budget Announcement

- As agreed by Government, the 2023 Budget took the Program from \$2.5 billion to \$5.9 billion over thirty years, and broadened the scope to include a range of maritime capability, including landing craft, and an increase in support for maintenance and sustainment for the Pacific maritime fleet.

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Training

- In March 2021, TAFE Queensland was contracted by Defence to provide individual training to Guardian-class Patrol Boat crews at their Cairns Campus in Cairns, Queensland.
 - The contract is valued at \$36 million and directly supports 26 Australian jobs.
- Additional training is also provided by other commercial (AUSTAL, Australian Maritime College, Kiribati Marine Training Centre) and the Royal Australian Navy (Sea Training Group, Defence Cooperation Unit) providers.

Aerial surveillance

- On 28 June 2022, the Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Minister for Defence Industry announced the Government would double Australia's funding for the aerial surveillance component of the Program.
- On 29 September 2023, Defence released the Uncrewed Aerial Vehicle Request for Tender to the open market.
 - The Request for Tender closed on 21 December 2023 and evaluation is underway.
- The Fixed Wing Aerial Surveillance Request for Tender is under development, and expected to be released later in 2024
- In the interim, the contract with the incumbent service provider, Technology Service Corporation, has been extended until 7 December 2024. Additional extension options are available, if required.
- Australian funded aerial assets are available for nations to request through the Forum Fisheries Agency and additional support can be sought through the Pacific Quadrilateral Defence Coordination Group.

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates: 16 June 2023

- **QoN 88, Pacific Security**, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham (Liberal, South Australia) asked questions regarding the Australian Pacific Defence School and updates in Pacific maritime security and aerial surveillance. **TABLED.**

Budget Estimates: 20 June 2023

- **QoN 94, AusTender Contract: CN3968132**, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham (Liberal, South Australia) asked for details regarding the contract to provide a loaned interim vessel to Vanuatu following damage to its Guardian-class Patrol Boat. **TABLED**

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

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Budget Estimates June 2024
Last updated: 28 May 2024
Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Susan Bodell

SB24-000595
Pacific Maritime Security Program

- No FOIs requested.

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Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 8 March 2024, the Minister for Defence Industry posted on X (formerly known as Twitter) about his attendance at the handover ceremony for Fiji's second Guardian-class Patrol Boat, *RFNS Puamau*. The Minister remarked that the patrol boat contributes to the important work of upholding maritime security.
- On 28 July 2023, the Minister for Defence Industry, on [ABC TV Afternoon Agenda](#), stated the two Guardian-class Patrol Boats provided to Solomon Islands were part of Australia's extensive security support to the country.

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 24 April 2024, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond posted on X congratulating Fiji on taking delivery of their second Guardian-class Patrol Boat *RFNS Puamau*.
- On 22 March 2024, Defence Australia posted on X that Timor-Leste would receive two Guardian-class patrol boats in 2024.
- On 14 March 2024, the Vanuatu Daily Post published an article by Glenda Willie titled [New Landing Craft for VPF](#) reporting that the Vanuatu Police Force is expecting to strengthen its maritime capabilities with the addition of a new Landing Craft, to be gifted by Australia to Vanuatu's Police Maritime Wing.
- On 9 March 2024, the Fiji Times posted on X and Facebook that the delivery of a new Guardian-class Patrol Boat would enable Fiji's maritime agencies to effectively monitor and curb illicit activities within Fiji's exclusive economic zone.
- On 26 January 2024, the Samoa Observer published an article by Talaia Mika titled [Drug smuggling concern on the seas](#) reporting on Samoan concerns over drug smuggling on the high seas. The article included comments from Samoan Minister of Police Faualo Harry Schuster on the importance of Nafanua III in Samoa's efforts to secure Samoa's maritime borders and protect national interests.

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Budget Estimates June 2024
Last updated: 28 May 2024
Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey; Susan Bodell

SB24-000595
Pacific Maritime Security Program

Division: Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group	
PDR No: SB24-000595	
Prepared by: Dr Liz Brierley Assistant Secretary Pacific Maritime Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 28 May 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Susan Bodell First Assistant Secretary Pacific Division Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 28 May 2024
Cleared by DFG: Lisé Owens Date: 8 May 2024 Acting Assistant Secretary Joint Capability Group and Specialist Group Sustainment	
Cleared by Deputy Secretary: Hugh Jeffrey Date: 28 May 2024 Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group	

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Timor Leste - Official Histories Project

Handling Note: Deputy Secretary Governance, John Reid, to lead.

Key Messages

- Defence notes the work of the Official Histories Project, which is documenting Australian military operations in the Middle East (from 2001-14) and East Timor (from 1999-2012).
- Official Histories are important stories, and involved Government agencies are working collaboratively to see them published.
- Government agencies involved in the Official Histories continue to provide support to the Australian War Memorial's Official Histories Project.
- Since 2016, Defence has provided the Project with around 130,000 records, totalling over one million pages of information to assist with drafting the volumes.
- The timeline for publishing the remaining volumes is subject to completion of the Official Historian's work and the Government's consideration of the draft volumes.

Talking Points

Defence support to the Official History Project

- Defence continues to support the Australian War Memorial's Official Histories Project, including through coordinating the whole-of-government declassification process of draft manuscripts. Defence also coordinates the Interdepartmental Steering Committee that provides the Official Histories Project with a single point of contact for whole-of-government reviews of draft manuscripts.
- Under the *Archives Act 1983*, the Government is afforded the right to consider whether the public release of any classified information might cause damage to Australia's international relations, defence or national security interests.

If pressed: Why has there been a delay with declassifying Volume 2?

- Defence agreed to coordinate the review and declassification of related volumes in a reasonable amount of time. The size of the draft volumes directly impacts the time needed to work through the manuscripts.
- Volume 2 is very large and at more than 2,000 pages, is over twice the size of Volume 1.
- The declassification process of such a large manuscript is complex and includes multiple agencies from across the Commonwealth.
- The timing of publication is a matter for the Australian War Memorial, subject to successful completion of the declassification process.

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Name: Rowena Bain

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Has Defence attempted to censor Volume 2 of the Official Histories Project?

- No. Defence, and other Government agencies provided the Official Histories Project with extensive access to information to assist with drafting.
- While it is a time consuming process, negotiations between Government agencies and the Project to reach an agreed declassified text are occurring in good faith.

If pressed: Which agencies have signed off on the draft of Volume 2?

- No agency has signed off on Volume 2.
- Defence has provided two rounds of detailed whole-of-government feedback on Volume 2.
- Following this feedback, the Official Histories Project has engaged with each agency constructively to address any matters of concern.

Once this process is complete, the declassification of the draft will be reviewed by the Secretaries Committee on National Security. Background

- The Official Histories Project was established by the former Government in April 2015, sponsored by the then Minister for Veterans' Affairs. Oversight and direct management of the Official Historian was assigned to the Australian War Memorial. Initial funding of \$12.8 million was approved for the Official Histories Project from 2015 to June 2021. This funding was not from the Defence budget; however, in January 2018, Defence provided the Australian War Memorial with a one-off contribution of \$4.4 million when the former Government authorised an 18-month extension to the Official Histories Project.
- The Official Histories Project is currently scheduled to deliver six volumes as follows:
 - Volume 1: East Timor 1999-2000 (published in December 2022);
 - Volume 2: East Timor 2000-2012 (Classified draft with Government Agencies for declassification);
 - Volume 3: Middle East 2001–2005 (Classified draft with Government Agencies for declassification);
 - Volume 4: Iraq 2003–2011 (Currently being drafted);
 - Volume 5: Afghanistan 2005–2010 (Currently being drafted); and
 - Volume 6: Afghanistan 2010–2014 (Currently being drafted).
- The Official Histories Project was originally due to complete all draft manuscripts by June 2022; however, the project team could not meet the original timeline given the scale of the work.
- Apart from drafting the volumes, the bulk of the work has fallen to Defence, the National Intelligence Community Agencies and the Department of Foreign Affairs and

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Trade. This work involved extensive document search and provision activities for all six volumes, completing the review and declassification of Volume 1 and continuing work to declassify Volume 2.

The Drafting Process, Volume 1 and Volume 2

- Since 2016, Defence has provided the Project with around 130,000 records. Based on these documents, the Official Histories Project drafts the volumes and provides them back to Defence and other relevant government agencies at the SECRET level for declassification. This is a complex and resource intensive process. Removed information is generally limited to intelligence material and information, which may harm the security or international relations of the Commonwealth.
- Declassification of Volume 1 was a lengthy process. The size and project initiated scope increase of the manuscript, as well as negotiations with the Official Histories Project concerning the sensitivities of the content, resulted in a process that took three years. Volume 1 was published in December 2022.
- Defence and other relevant government agencies provided the Official Historian with multiple tranches of extensive feedback and advice. The Inter-Departmental Steering Committee (chaired by First Assistant Secretary Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication and the Department of Veterans' Affairs) has managed agency engagement in the declassification process for Volume 2.
- The declassification process for such a large manuscript is complex and includes multiple agencies from across the Commonwealth. This work is resource intensive and must be balanced against current agency priorities. The final decision to publish will require Government approval.

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

- No QoNs asked.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 19 February 2020, an individual sought correspondence between the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian War Memorial regarding changes to the draft of East Timor Volume 1. The Australian War Memorial initially refused access to the documents, and later provided partial access under review. On 11 April 2024, the Information Commissioner varied the Australia War Memorial's decision, and granted greater access to the documents. On 9 May 2024, the Australian War Memorial appealed the Information Commissioner's decision to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

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Name: Rowena Bain

Position: Acting Deputy Secretary

Group: Governance

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Recent Ministerial Comments

- No recent comments.

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 16 May 2024, the Guardian published an article by Karen Middleton titled [DFAT accused of attempting to censor official history of military operations in Timor-Leste](#) discussing that Volume Two has yet to be declassified by Government after nearly three years, and claims the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade have attempted to censor the book.
- On 27 March 2024, Professor Stockings presented at the Australian National University on the Official Histories Project, where he stated that “the most difficult, traumatic, frustrating, mentally and emotionally draining aspect of producing the volume was the bureaucratic process of clearing this book”.
- On 23 January 2023, the Mandarin published an article by Maeve McGregor titled [Government accused of silencing Australia’s official war history on East Timor](#) which claimed “unprecedented political interference” with East Timor Volume 1 due to the lack of a book launch and a perception by some that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade attempted to censor the book’s content.

Division: Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication	
PDR No: SB24-000584	
Prepared by: Luke McGowan Assistant Secretary Media and Information Disclosure Branch Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 22 May 2024	Cleared by Division Head: Mark Bazzacco Acting First Assistant Secretary Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 23 May 2024
Cleared by Deputy Secretary: Rowena Bain Acting Deputy Secretary Governance Group Date: 24 May 2024	

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Cleared By:
 Name: Rowena Bain
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APS Recruitment and Retention

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary Defence People, Ms Justine Greig PSM, to lead.
- First Assistant Secretary Workforce and People Strategy, Mrs Leisa Craig to support.

Key Messages

- The 2023-24 Defence Average Staffing Level guidance is 17,445. At 1 May 2024, Defence's Average Staffing Level was 17,880.
- The 2024-25 APS workforce requirement outlined in the Portfolio Budget Statement is 19,127 Average Staffing Level.
- The 2024-25 increase includes 1,190 for contractor conversions and staff to deliver Government priorities including Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance, Continuous Naval Shipbuilding and AUKUS.
- Defence has introduced APS recruitment prioritisation arrangements to manage APS growth within the 19,127 workforce requirement, ensuring recruitment is focused on core areas of growth to support the delivery of the 2024 National Defence Strategy and revised Integrated Investment Program.
- Ongoing skilling and professionalisation of the APS workforce remains a priority.

Talking Points

Average Staffing Level

- As at 1 May 2024 the Defence APS Average Staffing Level was 17,880 against portfolio guidance of 17,445. This equates to an Average Staffing Level of 435 or 2.5 per cent above APS guidance.

Headcount

- The Defence APS ongoing headcount as at 1 May 2024 was 19,248, an increase of 1,532 over the last 12 months.

APS Separation Rate

- As at 1 May 2024, the ongoing Defence APS separation rate was 10.6 per cent, a reduction of 1.8 per cent over the last 12 months.

APS Growth over time

- Defence's future Average Staffing Level guidance is being reviewed through the development of a new Defence Workforce Plan to align with the requirements of the 2024 National Defence Strategy and Integrated Investment Program.
- The existing Defence APS workforce projection is to reach 20,150 by 2027-28 (Portfolio Budget Statement) and around 21,000 by 2039-40. This includes:

Prepared By:

Name: Ms Leisa Craig

Position: First Assistant Secretary Workforce and People Strategy

Division: Workforce and People Strategy

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

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Budget Estimates June 2024

Last updated: 30 May 2024

SB24-000596

APS Recruitment and Retention

Key witnesses: Ms Justine Greig PSM; Mrs Leisa Craig.

- growth of 1,850 commencing from 2024-25 (based on the 2020 Force Structure Plan); and
- growth of 2,000 commencing from 2023-24 as contractor conversions.

If pressed: Should the Defence APS be cut to fund the ADF?

- Defence is developing a new Workforce Plan to deliver on the requirements set out in the 2024 National Defence Strategy.
- This plan will consider the composition of the whole Defence workforce, including ADF members, APS employees and contractors, as well as when we need the workforce growth and the associated workforce costs.
- A strong APS is an integral part of our integrated Defence workforce.
- The APS deliver core capabilities to achieve Defence outcomes, including: policy, governance, capability development, science, technology, and enabling functions, amongst many others.
- Together with our ADF, our APS manage our bases, deliver intelligence and lead international engagements. An integrated ADF and APS workforce is essential for the delivery of capability across Defence's five domains, including space and cyber.
- The Government is focused on upskilling and professionalising the APS workforce to further reduce reliance on contracted staff and develop the APS workforce agility required to meet future capability needs, including in priority areas such as guided weapons and naval shipbuilding capabilities.
- Any decisions on the composition of the workforce need to ensure the important role of the APS is not adversely affected.

Location of APS Workforce

- As at 1 May 2024, the headcount of APS personnel located outside of the Australian Capital Territory was 10,682 or 54 per cent broken down as follows:
 - New South Wales 2,638 (24.7 per cent);
 - Northern Territory 222 (2.1 per cent);
 - Queensland 1,386 (12.9 per cent);
 - South Australia 2,194 (20.5 per cent);
 - Tasmania 88 (0.8 per cent);
 - Victoria 3,585 (33.5 per cent); and
 - Western Australia 569 (5.5 per cent)
- As at 1 May 2024, the headcount of APS personnel located in the Australian Capital Territory was 8,566 or 46 per cent.

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Participation – Women, First Nations, CALD, People with a Disability

- As at 1 May 2024:
 - The representation of women in the ongoing APS was 9,312 or 48.4 per cent, an increase of 0.9 per cent or 896 women over the last 12 months.
 - The representation of First Nations in the ongoing APS was 364 or 1.9 per cent, a decrease of 0.3 percent or 22 First Nations people over the last 12 months.
 - The representation of culturally and linguistically diverse people in the ongoing APS was 6,990 or 36.3 per cent, an increase of 0.6 per cent or 665 people over the last 12 months.
 - The representation of people with a disability in the ongoing APS was 584 or 3 per cent, a decrease of 51 people or less than 1 per cent over the last 12 months.

APS Job Families

- In the last 12 months Defence has seen growth in key job families associated with the delivery of 2024 National Defence Strategy, including procurement and contracting, program and project management and engineering and technical.
- The Administration and Customer Service job family currently accounts for 19.5 per cent of the overall APS Headcount. Defence is managing growth in this job family through the introduction of new recruitment prioritisation arrangements.

Table 1: APS Headcount by Job Family - 1 May 2024

Job Family	Number	% of Total Headcount	12 Month Change No.	12 Month Change %
Accounting and Finance	767	3.9	125	19.5
Admin and Customer Service	3,821	19.5	355	10.2
Audit, Assur & Fraud	197	1.0	-18	-8.4
Engineering and Technical	1,690	8.6	165	10.8
Health	376	1.9	-11	-2.8
Human Resources	1,697	8.6	107	6.7
Info & Knowledge Management	659	3.4	23	3.6
Info Comms Technologies	850	4.3	40	4.9
Infrastructure	438	2.2	-19	-4.2
Intelligence	898	4.6	138	18.2
Legal	147	0.7	35	31.3
Logistics	1,203	6.1	24	2.0
Media and Communications	210	1.1	15	7.7
Procurement and Contracting	1,112	5.7	170	18.0
Project and Program Management	1,786	9.1	335	23.1
Science and Technology	2,079	10.6	-32	-1.5

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Job Family	Number	% of Total Headcount	12 Month Change No.	12 Month Change %
Security	439	2.2	-13	-2.9
Senior Officer	233	1.2	5	2.2
Strategic and International Pol	977	5.0	144	17.3
Trades and Labour	56	0.3	-4	-6.7
Total	19,636	100	1,585	8.8

NOTE: The below includes both ongoing and non-ongoing APS employees

APS Recruitment Prioritisation

- Targeted recruitment of APS with skills and experience in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics related fields will continue to be prioritised to support the delivery of the 2024 National Defence Strategy and the Integrated Investment Program.
- New APS recruitment arrangements have been implemented to ensure recruitment to job families critical to our National Defence are prioritised. These job families include contracting and procurement, program and project management and the engineering and technical job family.
- Defence is closely managing recruitment to the administration and customer support job family as well as enabling job families including human resources, finance, ICT, and media and communications. Recruitment to these job families require the job family sponsors (SES Band 3) endorsement to proceed.
- As at 21 May 2024, the following recruitment activities were endorsed to proceed:
 - 11 Administration and Customer Service, including 3 contractor conversions;
 - 2 Human Resources;
 - 1 Infrastructure;
 - 2 ICT; and
 - 1 Communications
- The new recruitment arrangements took effect on 8 May 2024 and will be reviewed after three months.

Recruitment and Retention Initiatives including skilling

- Defence has used additional pay in the form of Building Defence Capability Payments to attract and retain APS critical occupations.
 - As at 1 May 2024, 23 per cent of the APS workforce, or 4,483 people, were in receipt of Building Defence Capability Payments.
- Defence also uses Individual Flexibility Arrangements to attract and retain individuals with critical skill sets.

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APS Recruitment and Retention

Key witnesses: Ms Justine Greig PSM; Mrs Leisa Craig.

- As at 1 May 2024, 3 per cent of the APS workforce, or 521 people, were in receipt of Individual Flexibility Arrangements.
- As at 1 May 2024, of those in receipt of either Building Defence Capability Payments or Individual Flexibility Arrangements 41 per cent were female; 59 per cent were male.
- Defence is investing in the skilling and professionalisation of its APS workforce.
 - Defence has broadened the study options available to personnel under the Studybank scheme. As a result, to date 742 APS employees have been approved for study for Academic Year 2024. This is:
 - : 53 more APS employees than approved in the entire of 2023; and
 - : 238 more than approved in 2022.
 - As part of the introduction of the One Defence People System, Defence has established a new APS People Capability Branch dedicated to APS recruitment, professionalisation and talent management.
 - Defence personnel have been involved in the establishment and implementation of the whole-of-government HR, Digital and Data Profession Streams.

Reforming the use of the external workforce

- Defence acknowledges the importance of reducing the external workforce to align with the Government's Strategic Commissioning Framework.
- Defence is committed to a reduction of 2,000 contractors by 31 December 2024.
- The recent External Workforce Census conducted from 26 February – 1 March 2024 confirmed the net achievement of 948 genuine contractor reductions. The next Census will be conducted in August 2024.
- Defence currently has a contractor workforce of 6,681 full time equivalents, down from 8,523 in March 2023 (a reduction of 1,842):
 - 1,753 full time equivalent (26 per cent) are in Project Management;
 - 1,498 full time equivalent (22 per cent) are in Information Technology; and
 - 964 full time equivalent (14 per cent) are in Platform or Fleet Sustainment and Maintenance.
- In the last 12 months Defence has converted and filled 316 APS positions as a result of converting contracted roles to APS roles. A further 411 conversions are underway and expected to be complete before the end of 2024.
- To facilitate the conversion from contracted positions to APS staff, Defence was provided an additional 660 Average Staffing Level in 2023-24, 1,190 Average Staffing Level in 2024-25, and 150 Average Staffing Level in 2025-26. This represents a total of 2,000 Average Staffing Level over a three year period.

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APS Workforce Budget

- The APS headcount is funded from the Defence workforce budget. The workforce budget includes costs for both the APS and ADF workforce.

2023-24 Estimated Actual \$m	2024-25 Budget Estimate \$m	2025-26 Forward Estimate \$m	2026-27 Forward Estimate \$m	2027-28 Forward Estimate \$m	Total \$m
15,770.7	16,694.7	17,460.2	18,407.3	19,413.0	87,745.9

Reference: 2024-25 Portfolio Budget Statement Table 4b, page 16.

- As Defence increases the number of APS and reduces the scale of its external workforce, commensurate funding will be transferred from acquisition, sustainment and operating budgets into workforce. This is because workforce budgets support employees, whereas contractors are funded from other cost categories.
- Government savings initiatives have reduced the Defence budget by \$1.05 billion since the 2022-23 budget, with savings projected over the forward estimates. Budget reductions are to account for the net cost differential between a contractor and an APS employee.

Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates: 31 May 2023

- **QoN No. 37. Staffing**, Senator the Hon Jacqui Lambie (Jacqui Lambie Network, Tasmania) asked for the breakdown of APS staffing statistics.
- **QoN No. 74, Average Staffing Levels**, Senator the Hon Jane Hume (Liberal, Victoria) requested the number of current ASL allocated to the Department as at 1 February 2024.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- No FOIs requested.

Recent Ministerial Comments

- No recent comments.

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 28 May 2024, The Australian published an article by Marcus Hellyer titled [Is the glass half empty or half full on funding](#), discussing Defence workforce growth.

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PDR No: SB24-000596	
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Consultation: N/A	
Cleared by CFO / DPG / DSR: Mr Sam Volker Date: 29 May 2024 First Assistant Secretary Budget and Financial Services	
Cleared by Deputy Secretary (or equivalent Band 3/3*): Ms Justine Greig PSM Date: 30 May 2024 Deputy Secretary Defence People Defence People Group	

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JP9102 Phase 1 – SATCOM System

Handling Note:

- Acting Chief of Joint Capabilities, Rear Admiral David Mann to lead.
- Head Air Defence and Space Systems Division, Air Vice-Marshal David Scheul to support on project status, including contracts, tenders, and industry engagement activities.

Key Messages

- JP9102 Phase 1 delivers a sovereign-controlled satellite communications capability providing coverage over the Indo-Pacific..

s33 and 47E(d)

- Space and cyber capabilities play a significant role in safeguarding national security. Space is a critical enabler of military operations, supporting communications, targeting and situational awareness.
- On 3 April 2023, Defence announced Lockheed Martin Australia as the preferred tenderer and progressed to the next stage of the project development process, engaging in Offer Definition and Improvement Activities, which concluded in October 2023.

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Talking Points

- Satellite communication is a key enabler for the Integrated Force, with many planned 2024 Integrated Investment Program projects requiring access to satellite communications.

s33 and 47E(d)

- Defence is seeking to expedite JP9102 Phase 1 within a prudent risk envelope.

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Budget Estimates: June 2024
Last updated: 31 May 2024
Key witness: Rear Admiral David Mann; Air Vice-Marshal David Scheul

PDR No: SB24-000348
JP9102 Phase 1 – SATCOM System

Joint Project 9102 Phase 1

s33 and 47E(d)



- Defence will enable the Integrated Force through the delivery of assured, resilient, agile and flexible satellite communication operations in a congested, contested and competitive space environment.

Opportunities for Australia's space industry

- JP9102 Phase 1 is planned to launch large communications satellites into geostationary orbits.
- The National Defence Strategy highlights key areas that will support Australian Industry.
- While there is no current industry in Australia to produce geostationary satellites, JP9102 Phase 1 will accelerate the development of this industry, with opportunities including:
 - software development and support, such as for the Satellite Communications Management System;
 - satellite communications terminals certification support services;
 - security management and Information and Communications Technology security accreditation;
 - engineering, maintenance and training support services;
 - operating support; and
 - growing the skills and expertise of the workforce.

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 JP9102 Phase 1 – SATCOM System

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Progress following Request for Tender release

- In November 2022, Defence completed the tender evaluation.
- On 3 April 2023, Defence announced Lockheed Martin Australia as the preferred tenderer.

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If pressed: Why is the JP9102 Phase 1 project a Project of Interest?

- JP9102 Phase 1 was recommended as a Project of Interest in May 2021 due to the project’s strategic importance, workforce availability issues, and significant schedule challenges.

s33, 47E(d) and 47G

If pressed: Why was Lockheed Martin Australia selected as the preferred tenderer?

- Defence assessed the Lockheed Martin Australia tender as the best value-for-money against the evaluation criteria published in the Request for Tender.

Background

JP9102 Phase 1 – SATCOM System Finance Information

Approved Project Expenditure	Life to Date Expenditure to 30 June 2023	Budget Estimate 2023-24	Expenditure from 1 July 2023 to 31 March 2024
\$357 million	\$54 million	\$45 million	\$26 million

2024 Integrated Investment Program – investments in space and cyber

- The below table indicates the investment breakdown detailed in the 2024 Integrated Investment Program. These figures cover numerous related projects and are not specific to JP9102.

Capability Element	Approved Planned Investment (2024-25 to 2033-34)	Unapproved Planned Investment (2024-25 to 2033-34)	Total Planned Investment (2024-24 to 2033-34)
Satellite communications	\$150 million	\$5.0 - \$7.0 billion	\$5.2 – \$7.2 billion

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JP9102 Phase 1 – SATCOM System

Supporting Information

Questions on Notice

- No QoNs asked.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- No requests

Recent Ministerial

- No recent comments.

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 19 January 2024, the Lowy Institute published an article titled '[Space surveillance and AUKUS: The power of awareness](#)'. The journalist Rebecca Connolly comments on Defence finalising a contract with Lockheed Martin to deliver Australia's first "sovereign controlled" military satellite communication constellation under JP9102. The article highlights the collaborative nature of JP9360 between the United States and Australia and the Governments 2023 cuts to Space spending. The article also mentions China and Russia's increased investment in Space Capabilities.
- On 15 January 2024, Lockheed Martin Australia published on their news hub [SmartSat-equipped Satellite Uploads New Mission On-Orbit | Lockheed Martin](#) outlining the ASPIN docking port will be a standard feature of the Lockheed Martin LM2100 bus as part their tendered bid for JP9102 Phase 1.

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JP9102 Phase 1 – SATCOM System

Key witness: Rear Admiral David Mann; Air Vice-Marshal David Scheul

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Consultation: Capability Acquisition & Sustainment Group Air Vice-Marshal David Scheul Head Air Defence and Space Systems Division Date: 2 May 2024 Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d)	
Cleared by DSR/NDS: Major General Matt Pearse Head Plans and Capability Integration Date: 27 March 2024 Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d)	
Cleared by DFG: Ms Lise Owens Acting Assistant Secretary Finance – Specialist Groups Date: 22 April 2024 Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d)	
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