



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Defence**

### **Joint Statement on Australia-UK Defence Cooperation**

Australia's Minister for Defence, the Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP, and United Kingdom (UK) Secretary of State for Defence, the Rt Hon John Hutton MP, met at the Australia-United Kingdom Ministerial (AUKMIN) Dialogue in the UK on 28 November 2008 to review our operational cooperation, identify ongoing defence interests and set out a strategic framework to guide the future relationship.

#### ***Strategic context***

The Australia-United Kingdom relationship is based on shared history, common ideals, closely aligned strategic outlooks and priorities and our respective close defence relationships with the United States. Our two nations have fought alongside one another when called on to defend our countries and the values we hold dear for over a century. We have significant enduring shared defence interests, particularly in international and regional security, conflict prevention and stabilisation, combating terrorism, and countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

For those reasons we have a substantial defence relationship including: operational cooperation; extensive service-to-service links between our Navies, Armies and Air Forces; capability and materiel cooperation; strategic dialogue; intelligence arrangements and information exchange; defence science and technology; joint training, exercises and personnel exchanges; and participation in security mechanisms such as the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) and America-Britain-Canada-Australia (ABCA) armies program. These deep and longstanding ties have ongoing benefit for our respective capabilities, interoperability, and ability to work in coalitions. It is important, however, to ensure our cooperation remains contemporary, relevant and future-focused, in view of the complex and global nature of the security challenges we face.

#### ***Future intent and implementation***

Having reviewed the benefits of our recent expanded operational cooperation, and noting that our Prime Ministers have agreed to transform the overall bilateral relationship into a contemporary dynamic partnership, we affirmed our intent to maintain and build on the momentum of our work together.

For defence this means establishing a high level mechanism with annual senior level military and civilian Defence Policy Talks to bring further strategic focus and coordination to the large number of service-to-service and functional linkages that comprise our cooperation. These Talks will serve as a conduit between high level strategic intent and practical initiatives and will help prepare outcomes for future Ministerial meetings such as AUKMIN.

JOHN HUTTON  
28 November 2008

JOEL FITZGIBBON  
28 November 2008