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Subject: LOSS OF AN MU90 LIGHTWEIGHT EXERCISE TORPEDO IN THE NAVY'S
WESTERN AUSTRALIA EXERCISE AREA

Comment:
Action Area GMS-DMO

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HOT ISSUE BRIEF

ISSUE: LOSS OF AN MU90 LIGHTWEIGHT EXERCISE TORPEDO IN THE NAVY'S WESTERN AUSTRALIA EXERCISE AREA

SENSITIVITY: Medium. JP2070 Replacement Lightweight Torpedo Project is being managed as a Project of Concern by the Defence Materiel Organisation.

KEY ISSUES:

- The practice firing of MU90 exercise torpedoes is occurring in the Navy's Western Australia Exercise Area as part of the JP2070 acceptance test and evaluation program.
- At 7:40 am local time on Thursday 18 November 2010, a MU90 Lightweight Exercise Torpedo fired from HMAS WARRAMUNGA was lost.
- The torpedo ran for a much shorter than planned period and then shut down. It was seen on the surface, as it is programmed to do so it can be recovered, but sank shortly afterwards in 42m of water.
- The torpedo is equipped with an underwater pinger to assist with location and recovery in case of just such an event.

- The MU90 exercise torpedo does not have a warhead and as such, poses no danger to the public or the environment.
- When located, recovery of the torpedo will be attempted with assistance provided by Navy clearance divers who are on standby for this task.

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BACKGROUND:

Joint Project 2070 is acquiring the MU90 light weight anti-submarine torpedo to replace the aging Mk46 for Navy.

The project is in the test and evaluation stage and the firing of an exercise torpedo was conducted as part of the acceptance test process. The torpedo was to be recovered and refurbished as part of the certification process for a mobile post exercise facility.


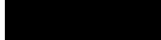
The approximate location of the torpedo is known but recovery will require accurate location using a pinger on the torpedo. The torpedo is in water shallow enough to allow divers to recover it once it is located.

The JP2070 project has recently been audited by the Australian National Audit Office which was critical of Defence's management of the project. Many of the issues raised in the audit have been addressed.

JP2070 is being managed by DMO as a Project of Concern.

TALKING POINTS

- **An MU90 lightweight exercise torpedo was lost on Thursday 18 November 2010 after being fired from HMAS WARRAMUNGA in the Navy's exercise area in Western Australia.**
- **The approximate location of the torpedo is known but recovery will require accurate location using a pinger on the torpedo.**
- **The torpedo is in water shallow enough to allow divers to recover it once it is located and Navy divers are on standby.**
- **The torpedo is an exercise torpedo and does not have a warhead. The torpedo poses no danger to the public or the environment.**

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