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Subject: UXO IN VICINITY OF GERALDTON, WA - UPDATE  
Comment:  
Action Area HDSO

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**SENSITIVITY:** This issue is considered sensitive due to the risk from Unexploded Ordnance (UXO). The quantity found (200) is significant as is the potential impact on an infrastructure worksite in Western Australia (a development being undertaken by Queensland Rail).

#### **KEY ISSUES:**

- Since the initial advice, approximately 200 inert, World War Two, obsolete aircraft practice bombs have been uncovered, at a Queensland Rail project, 10km from Geraldton, WA.
- The source site (the quarry that delivered the gravel to the Queensland Rail project) has been identified as being gazetted as an Air Force practise bombing range during WWII.
- There has been no requirement to destroy any item in location at this stage, as all items are inert and safe for removal.
- Both the Queensland Rail site and the source site remain closed and controlled by WA Police.
- The administration area of the Queensland Rail site will be cleared no later than 9 Sep 11, allowing Queensland Rail to safely remove vehicles and equipment.
- Reconnaissance of the source site has been conducted with further obsolete aircraft practice bombs discovered.
- Defence Support Group is considering the further action required to remediate the source site.

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### **BACKGROUND:**

WA Police contacted Joint Logistics Unit West, Explosive Ordnance Services, at 1300 hours on 05 Sep 2011.

Gravel delivered to a Queensland Rail project in the vicinity of Geraldton exposed one item of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO). Subsequent search has found approximately 200 UXO in the gravel delivered to the project site. All unexploded ordnance discovered to date are obsolete aircraft practice bombs that are no longer in RAAF inventory.

The gravel originated from a pit located at [REDACTED], which is operated by [REDACTED] a Western Australian based earthworks company.

The site of the gravel pit was previously used as a weapons range during WWII, known as the 'walkway air to ground armament range'.

On advice from Defence, WA Police closed both the gravel pit and the Queensland Rail worksite.

As the gravel pit supplies gravel to a number of construction sites, any significant closure of the pit has a potential impact on several infrastructure projects in the area.

Queensland Rail advised that they will report the current issue through their chain of command as a construction delay.

There has been local media reporting with no adverse commentary toward the ADF.

The Defence Support Group is responsible for managing Defence's involvement in land contaminated by UXO from previous Defence activities. Accordingly, Defence's ongoing involvement with contamination of the quarry pit will be managed by the Defence Support Group.

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## **TALKING POINTS**

- **On Monday, 5 September 2008 Defence received a request from Western Australian Police to investigate the discovery of unexploded ordnance, at site approximately 10km from Geraldton, Western Australia.**
- **The unexploded ordnance was found in gravel delivered to a Queensland Rail project from a nearby gravel pit.**
- **The source site has been identified as being gazetted as an Air Force practise bombing range during WWII.**
- **As at 5pm on 7 September, approximately 200 inert, obsolete aircraft practice bombs have been found.**
- **There has been no requirement to destroy any item in location at this stage, as all items are inert and safe for removal.**

- **Both the Queensland Rail site and the source gravel pit remain closed.**
- **It is expected that the Queensland Rail site will be cleared no later than close of business on 9 September.**
- **In addressing this incident, Defence continues to work closely with Western Australian Police and the Western Australia Fire and Emergency Service Authority.**

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