



## **THE HON. JOEL FITZGIBBON MP Minister for Defence**

Saturday, 2 May 2009

### **AN ENHANCED INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE AND RECONNAISSANCE CAPABILITY**

As part of the 2009 Defence White Paper, the Australian Government will make a substantial investment in Defence's Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance capabilities.

"Our troops need the best eyes and ears they can get to give them the situational awareness they need to get the job done," the Minister for Defence, the Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP said.

To achieve this goal Defence will embark on a major enhancement of its Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance management processes and information technology architecture.

These projects will ensure that Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance resources and information sources are more effectively utilised, different systems are linked, universal data standards and protocols are employed, and critical information is made available to those who need it, in real time. Defence will ensure that the principle of 'need to share' rather than 'need to know', within sensible security constraints, becomes the norm.

"These enhancements will allow Defence to put all of the pieces of the surveillance and intelligence picture together quickly, clearly and in a way that can get to where the war fighter needs it," Mr Fitzgibbon said.

"Australia's large area of interest means that surveillance of our northern regions is a vital part of our information gathering process. Of course, in other circumstances, similar information will be necessary to ensure high levels of situational awareness in a specific area of Australian Defence Force operations such as Afghanistan or East Timor," Mr Fitzgibbon said.

Many Defence assets and agencies provide input as part of this information gathering exercise. To manage that information effectively, Defence will increasingly need to merge information from many sources and deployed assets.

These will include submarines, Over-the-Horizon radar, airborne Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance assets, maritime patrol aircraft, long-range

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Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, Airborne Early Warning & Control aircraft, the Joint Strike Fighter (which will have unprecedented Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance capabilities for a combat aircraft), the Air Warfare Destroyer and other surface combatants, as well as signals and human intelligence, imagery and from a variety of space-based intelligence and surveillance systems.

Mr Fitzgibbon added, "The range of sources of intelligence and surveillance information is now huge. By beefing up our ability to process, collate and distribute this information to where it needs to go, we beef up our nation's defences. It's that simple."

The 2009 Defence White Paper represents the most comprehensive statement on Defence ever produced. It affirms the Government's commitment to the defence of Australia, the protection of our sovereign interests and the security and stability of our region.

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