

**PACIFIC SMALL ARMS ACTION GROUP DEFENCE 2015 WHITE
PAPER SUBMISSION**

The Pacific Small Arms Action Group ('PSAAG') welcomes this opportunity to make this submission to the 2015 Defence White Paper. This submission addresses the following issues: Australia's Strategic Policy Approach, including strategic interests; objectives for the Australian Defence Force and Australia's military strategy; as well as Australia's international relationships.

**Summary of recommendations
(executive summary)**

The 2015 Defence White Paper should:

1. Promote a continued role for the Australian Defence Force (ADF), Australian Federal Police (AFP), and civil society, in providing technical expertise and material support in small arms stockpile management to governments in the Pacific region, in order to improve security.
2. Reflect and mainstream the Australian National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security and outline how the Plan will be implemented in Australia's military strategy in the Pacific, especially highlighting the connection between the NAP and small arms.
3. Explicitly make reference to Australia's endorsement of the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women Peace and Security, and outline how the Australian government, the ADF and the AFP, will assist in the implementation of the plan, as well as in the development of a new Regional Action Plan on Women Peace and Security post-2015.
4. Outline how Australia will work with the Pacific Islands Forum, and bilaterally to support its neighbouring governments in the Pacific to implement strong arms control standards in line with international and regional best practice.

A. Australia's strategic interests

Small Arms in the Pacific poses a threat to Australia's interests in the region – namely to stability and human rights

Previous Defence White Papers have underlined the importance of a stable and peaceful Pacific for Australia's national interests.¹ An essential condition for a stable Pacific is strong arms control and effective armed violence reduction measures. Small arms have fuelled armed conflict and state instability in the Pacific,² including in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Fiji. Even in nations at peace, the Pacific experience shows that only a small number of arms can have a very large impact, particularly on crime, clan rivalry and increasing rates of violence against women, including domestic violence.³ Moreover, unless international controls on the

¹ Australian 2013 Defence White Paper, 7; 24-25; 31; 63-64; Australian 2009 Defence White Paper, 12-13; 35-36; 39-40; 42-43; 45; 54; 98; Australian 2000 Defence White Paper, X-XI; 22-23; 30-31; 43-44.

² Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Small Arms and Light Weapons" accessed 21 October 2014, available at: https://www.dfat.gov.au/security/small_arms.html

³ See: Stephanie Koorey, "Illicit Small Arms in the Pacific: Cause for Concern" in *In Brief 2014/48* (Australian National University, 2014) available at: <http://ips.cap.anu.edu.au/publications/illicit-small-arms-pacific-cause-concern>; Philip Alpers, Robert Muggah and Conor Twyford, "Trouble in Paradise: Small Arms in the Pacific" in *Small Arms Survey* (2004) available at: <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/publications/by-region/asia-and-the-pacific.html>; Anne-Katrin Glatz and Robert Muggah, "The Other Side of the Coin: Demand for Small Arms" in *Small Arms Survey* (2006) available at: <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/publications/by-region/asia-and-the->

arms trade, such as the Arms Trade Treaty are effectively implemented, Pacific Island countries, with their porous borders, risk being subject to unscrupulous and poorly regulated arms deals.⁴ This issue is therefore in Australia's strategic interests to address, and the ADF and AFP hold significant regional expertise in this regard. The ways in which this experience can be shared with Pacific Island countries should be outlined in the 2015 Defence White Paper.

B Objectives for the Australian Defence Force:

1) Provide technical expertise for stockpile management

Stockpile management and leakage of state arms is a significant issue in the Pacific.⁵ This is particularly an issue in Papua New Guinea where some reports have found that the majority of illicit weapons were stolen from insecure (but lawful) state and civilian stocks.⁶ To address this issue, Australian Defence Force personnel have assisted Pacific Island countries to strengthen armoury management.⁷ In particular, Australia has provided assistance to Papua New Guinea.⁸ PSAAG recommends that the 2015 Defence White Paper addresses ways in which the ADF and AFP can work with civil society, including women's organisations, to continue to assist in line with the United Nations Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons with stockpile management and stockpile destruction in the Pacific region in order to improve security in our region.

2) Australia's military strategy: Integrate commitments under the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security into the 2015 Defence White Paper

PSAAG commends the Australian Government for its commitment to the Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. PSAAG also commends the recognition of the important links between arms and the women, peace and security agenda. Australia's NAP highlights the "importance of involving women in the control of small arms and light weapons due to their specific impact on women and girls"⁹ and indicates Australia's support for arms control due to its link with the women, peace and security agenda.¹⁰

In accordance with the Australian government's whole of government commitment to the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, PSAAG recommends that

[pacific.html](#); Nicole Hayley and Robert Muggah, "Jumping the Gun: Armed Violence in Papua New Guinea" in *Small Arms Survey* (2006) available at: <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/publications/by-region/asia-and-the-pacific.html>; Philip Alpers, "Gun-running in Papua New Guinea: From Arrows to Assault Weapons in the Southern Highlands" (2005) available at: <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/publications/by-region/asia-and-the-pacific.html>; Robert Muggah, "Diagnosing Demand: Assessing the Motivations and Means for Firearms Acquisition in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea" Discussion Paper 2004/7, Australian National University, 2004 available at: <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/publications/by-region/asia-and-the-pacific.html>; David Capie, *Under the Gun: The Small Arms Challenge in the Pacific* (Victoria University Press, (2003)

⁴ On an example of such a deal where weapons from North Korea bound for Iran used a shell company in New Zealand to conduct the deal, see: Oxfam International, *Brokers Without Borders* (2010) available at: <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/brokers-without-borders-report-181010.pdf>.

⁵ David Capie, *Under the Gun: The Small Arms Challenge in the Pacific* (Victoria University Press, (2003) p97-109.

⁶ Philip Alpers, (2009) "Papua New Guinea: Small Numbers, Big Fuss, Real Results" in *Contemporary Security Policy* 29:1, p154.

⁷ David Capie, *Under the Gun: The Small Arms Challenge in the Pacific* (Victoria University Press, (2003) p119.

⁸ Silvia Cattaneo, Sarah Parker, *Implementing the United Nations Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons* (United Nations Publications, 2008) p160.

⁹ Australian National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security 2012-2018, p40.

¹⁰ Australian National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security 2012-2018, p10.

the 2015 Defence White Paper mainstreams and incorporates Australia's commitments under the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, in relation to arms and security in the Pacific.

3) Australia's military strategy: Support the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

As a member of the Pacific Islands Forum, Australia needs to engage and commit to the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Given Australia's leadership role in the Pacific on defence issues, Australia's 2015 Defence White Paper should incorporate commitments from the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. As the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security will expire at the end of 2015, the 2015 Defence White Paper should also include ways in which the Australian government can assist in the development of a successor plan that recognises the important links between small arms, regional stability and violence against women.

Australia's military strategy also needs to include support for capacity building for Pacific Island countries to mainstream gender into strategies and policies relating to arms and armed violence reduction in accordance with Australia's obligations under the women, peace and security agenda.

C International relations: Support the implementation of strong arms control standards across the Pacific through the Pacific Islands Forum and bilateral engagement with Pacific Island Governments

Australia has an important role to play in supporting the implementation of strong regional and international arms control measures. Such controls play a role in ensuring the stability of Pacific Island countries by reducing the risks posed by small arms. The 2015 Defence White Paper should address Australia's role in regional arms control and armed violence reduction by:

- a) Outlining how the Australian Government including the ADF and AFP will work with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and Pacific Island countries to implement strong regional arms controls across the Pacific region including the Arms Trade Treaty, the United Nations Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Pacific Islands Forum Model Weapons Control Bill.
- b) Outlining ways in which the Australian Government will work with New Zealand to promote the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty across the Pacific, including through providing assistance for the *Model Law to Assist Pacific States to Implement the Arms Trade Treaty*.¹¹
- c) Outlining ways in which the Australian Government including the ADF and AFP will work to reduce armed violence in Australia and the Pacific in line with the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development.

¹¹ New Zealand Government and the Small Arms Survey, *Arms Trade Treaty: Model Law* (2014), available at: <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/about-us/highlights/highlights-2014/att-model-law.html>.

Appendix I: Information about the Pacific Small Arms Action Group

Purpose: The Pacific Small Arms Action Group (PSAAG) was formed in July 2009 to coordinate civil society action to reduce the deadly impact of small arms and light weapons in our region.

Activities: To address this problem, PSAAG aims to encourage widespread Pacific implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA) and the universalisation of the legally binding UN Arms Trade Treaty. We also use our civil society networks and expertise to support local, national and regional initiatives that prevent or reduce armed violence in our region, especially where it undermines justice, human security, development, public health, gender equity and human rights.

PSAAG engages in direct lobbying and information exchange with governments, UN and regional bodies, NGOs and other stakeholders. We aim to expand Pacific civil society representation in international and regional fora, disseminate evidence-based research and policy analysis, and support partners engaged in locally based initiatives to reduce armed violence.

Members: PSAAG has a diverse membership made up of various organisations and individuals across the Pacific. As the only Pacific-based coalition focussed on small arms, our membership is constantly expanding, allowing for greater coordination of actions and information sharing while ensuring a strong Pacific voice and representation at the international level.

Contacting PSAAG

PSAAG can be contacted via its current chair: benm@oxfam.org.au

<p>Members of PSAAG are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act for Peace – National Council of Churches in Australia • Australian Council for International Development • Caritas Australia • Cate Buchanan, Surviving Gun Violence Project and Athena Consortium • Centre for Armed Violence Reduction • Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue ▪ Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ema Tagicakibau ▪ femLINKpacific ▪ GunPolicy.org ▪ International Action Network on Small Arms (Pacific) ▪ John ToGuata ▪ Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency ▪ Medical Association for the prevention of War (MAPW) ▪ National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Otago University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oxfam Australia ▪ Oxfam New Zealand ▪ Pacific Foundation for the Advancement of Women (PACFAW) ▪ Pacific Concerns Resource Centre ▪ Peace Foundation Melanesia ▪ Rod Alley ▪ UNIFEM Australia. <p>Observers of PSAAG are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peace Movement Aotearoa ▪ Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Aotearoa New Zealand section.
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