



THE HON. JOEL FITZGIBBON MP Minister for Defence

Saturday, 2 May 2009

A NETWORKED ARMY ON THE BATTLEFIELD

The Minister for Defence, the Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP, has today announced significant investment in the communications and networking capability of the Australian Army.

“The 2009 White Paper outlines the Government commitment to equip our land forces with enhanced communications, networking and battle management systems, both for troops and the new vehicle fleet,” Mr Fitzgibbon said.

“Australia’s 21st century land force must be capable of conducting joint land combat in complex operational environments characterised by increasing lethality and operational uncertainty within the complex environments.”

These enhancements will increase the Army’s interoperability with coalition partners and will ensure the Army is better postured to exchange tactical information on the battlefield and in real time.

“An effective communications and battlefield networking backbone will significantly enhance the land force’s situational awareness and the ability of Commanders to direct forces. This increased awareness and agility will increase the Army’s capacity to succeed in combat,” Mr Fitzgibbon said

The Army will integrate these new communications and networking capabilities into a range of current and future systems. These new capabilities will interact with Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) systems to ensure the rapid flow of information to those who need it.

Integration of battle management and combat support systems, like the new field artillery platforms, will allow the delivery of coordinated and precise effects, while networked logistic support systems will allow a more responsive provision of integrated logistic support to deployed forces.

A new Combat Vehicle System will make up part of this enhanced capability as it will be built and delivered with an integrated battle management system from inception. This will reinforce Defence’s networking capability, and thus significantly enhancing Army’s and Defence’s situational awareness on the battlefield.

A Defence Force for the 21st Century

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“The Combat Vehicle System will be developed closely alongside other combat and combat support projects to ensure land forces are provided with an integrated combat capability that enhances survivability and mobility enabling the land force to win on the modern battlefield,” Mr Fitzgibbon said.

“The provision of these communications and networking capabilities will move us towards the goal of a networked Australian Defence Force. It will enable Army elements to communicate with Navy and Air Force platforms and to employ their capabilities effectively in land environments,” Mr Fitzgibbon said.

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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