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**Sent:** Friday, 6 June 2008 16:59  
**To:** White Paper  
**Subject:** SEC: UNCLASSIFIED WWW enquiry: Submission: 13. Miscellaneous

Name: Chris Epskamp

Submission: Supportive of a strong, well resourced and technologically superior ADF that is capable of independent actions. Regardless of any strategic alliances, the changing world political environment plus pressures on many nations from climate change, over population and environmental degradation mean when we need to have armed forces that provide effective deterrent and also capacity for independent action which is not reliant on 'coalition' support.

I support and ongoing expenditure of over 3% of GDP on defence and am supportive of the general strategic direction of the last two years.

Major shortfalls and areas of concern in defence resources include the following.

- Retention. If you pay peanuts, you get monkeys is the old saying. I support our ADF members getting well above award wages to ensure retention of sufficient numbers of experienced personnel.
- Infantry. Regardless of recent announcements of increasing numbers of infantry, recent deployments have shown the major limiting factor in achieving our goals is a lack of full-time, fully resourced infantry. We need to aim to have an army of three and in infantry that means 3 mech, 3 motor and 3 light infantry battalions.
- Mech infantry/combined arms groups. Need our mech forces to be up to date. Our modern tank needs to be supported by modern tracked AIFV, self propelled(sp) artillery, sp SAMs etc.
- Airpower. Immediate purchase of EF/A-18G to fill EW void. This has been a major gap in capability for the effective use of our airpower. Even the USAF has felt the pressure of not having dedicated EW aircraft since the retirement of the Ravens and as such relies on USN Prowlers.
- Naval Airpower - serious consideration needs to be given to achieving an at sea air power capability to effectively support ADF operations. The Canberra class provides the opportunity for this. The new AWDs cannot provide effective air defence by themselves and shore based air support for naval operations is laughable at best. A small number of JSFs capable of operating from the Canberras would provide a massive boost to capability and self defence.
- Airlift. Replacement of Caribou is long overdue. Expanded numbers of Chinook and purchase of C27j need to occur ASAP.
- Air refuelling. Increase number of new Airbus refuellers to at least 8 (or more). Strategic reach is becoming more important as the century progresses.
- Taking up the option of a fourth AWD would provide for at least 2 vessels at sea at any time. This option should be taken up.
- Sealift. The continued decline of Australian flagged and crewed merchant shipping is a massive concern. Our sealift capacity is ever decreasing. At least two large dedicated sealift vessels should be purchased to complement the Canberra class. Urgent work and funds need to be directed to ensure we have a viable Australian flagged and crewed blue water merchant fleet - Helicopters. It is time to make a commitment to purchase the naval version of the Nh-90 to finally rationalise the ADFs helicopter fleet.
- Icebreaker. The purchase of at least one vessel capable of all year round operations in the Antarctic will go some way to protecting our interests in this increasingly important area.
- Defence industry and manufacturing sector in general. Need to ensure that we continue to have effective manufacturing sectors to not only support the ADF but also to allow us to be independent of others in times of crisis.

In a climate of high cost and dwindling fuel supplies, the use of nuclear power for our next generation of ships and submarines should be explored.

Defence costs money - so what. Don't bother having a defence force if it is not fully functional and capable of independent action. Spend the money and we reap the security rewards.

I agree to my submission being published on the Defence website

I agree to my submission being quoted in the Community Consultation Report