



Australian Government

Defence Strategic Review

Terms of Reference for the Independent Leads of the Review

3 August 2022

Introduction

An Australian Defence Force Posture Review was last undertaken in 2012 in strategic circumstances far different to those facing the Australian nation today. The conduct of a new Defence Strategic Review ('The Review') that considers both force posture and force structure is now required to ensure that Defence has the right capabilities that are postured to meet the growing strategic challenges that Australia and its partner countries will face in the world in coming years.

The Review is to be a holistic consideration of Australia's Defence force structure and posture by including force disposition, preparedness, strategy and associated investments, including all elements of Defence's Integrated Investment Program.

Background

The 2020 Defence Strategic Update and 2020 Force Structure Plan recognised the trends identified in the 2016 Defence White Paper were accelerating at a rate faster than anticipated. The world is undergoing significant strategic realignment. Military modernisation, technological disruption and the risk of state-on-state conflict are complicating Australia's strategic circumstances. These strategic changes demand the Australian Government re-assess the capabilities and posture of the Australian Defence Force and broader Department of Defence.

Purpose

The purpose of the Review is to consider the priority of investment in Defence capabilities and assess the Australian Defence Force's structure, posture and preparedness in order to optimise Defence capability and posture to meet the nation's security challenges over the period 2023-24 to 2032-33 and beyond.

Critical Information Requirements

The Review is to be informed by intelligence and strategic assessments of the most concerning threats which challenge Australia's security.

The Review will take into account the capability investment, force posture and preparedness implications of Defence policy and plans, cognisant of relationships with partners and allies.

The Review may be informed by other information the Independent Leads deem significant.

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Task

The Independent Leads are to prepare a Review in time for National Security Committee of Cabinet consideration no later than March 2023.

The Review must outline the future strategic challenges facing Australia, which may require an Australian Defence Force operational response.

The Review must identify and prioritise the estate, infrastructure, disposition, logistics and security investments required to provide Australia with the Defence force posture required by 2032-33.

The Review must consider all elements of the Integrated Investment Program and provide recommendations for the Program's reprioritisation, particularly in light of recently announced large-scale projects, to provide Australia with the force structure required by 2032-33.

The Review must outline the investments required to support Defence preparedness, and mobilisation needs to 2032-33.

The Review must outline funding needs to 2032-33 to ensure longer-term strategic investments are progressed.

Recommendations

The Review will make recommendations in relation to Defence force structure, force posture, and preparedness over the period 2023-24 to 2032-33 and beyond; and on any other matters which are deemed appropriate to the Review's outcomes.

Interim Report

An interim report will be provided after the Independent Leads have completed their initial analysis.