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**Australian Government**  
Defence

Ministerial Brief for Action

IS23-000001

FOR: Deputy Prime Minister

Action Requested by: 19 February 2023

Reason for Urgency: Submission due to Select Committee by 20 February 2023

THROUGH: Secretary CDF

CC: ASSOC SEC, DEPSEC SP&I, CFO, DEPSEC DP, CN, CA, CAF, CJC, CJOPS, FAS MECC, HMSC, FAS SP

**SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE - INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S DISASTER RESILIENCE**

**Key Issues:**

Defence has drafted a submission to the Senate Select Committee on Australia's Disaster Resilience addressing the Committee's inquiry into the role of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in responding to natural disasters, the impact of more frequent and more intense natural disasters due to climate change on the ongoing capacity and capability of the ADF, and the impact on the ADF in responding to domestic natural disasters (Attachment A).

The Inquiry presents an opportunity to examine the ADF's directed role in response to natural disasters and to inform consideration of alternative models by illustrating the second order effects and risk associated with increased frequency and scale of reliance on the ADF. This brief draws from previous submissions which have had broad collaboration and consultation within Defence.

**Recommendation:**

**Decision**

That you:

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. <b>Approve</b> Defence's attached submission to the Select Committee on Australia's Disaster Resilience | Approved/Not approved |
|--|-----------------------|

**Media Considerations:**

The increased involvement of the ADF in conducting Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief domestically as well as in the region is commented regularly in the media with a number of commentators identifying the increasing strain that this is placing on the ADF in the evolving strategic environment.

**Signature**

s22  
[Redacted Signature]

Richard Marles

17 Feb 2023

**Minister comments:**

**Cleared by** VADM David Johnston, AC, RAN  
Vice Chief of the Defence Force  
Jan 2023 Phone: s47E(d)

**Contact Officer** CDRE Michael Turner CSM & Bar, RAN  
Director-General Force Exploration  
Phone: s47E(d)

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**Sensitivity:** Yes.

1. The ADF's participation in domestic disaster relief remains high profile, with a direct impact on public perception and reputation. Attempts by the ADF to modify or reduce its perceived role in response to domestic disasters may be viewed unfavourably by sections of the Australian community.

**Financial Impacts:** Yes.

2. Increased reliance on the ADF has financial implications for the Department. There are avenues for cost recovery, but this effectively transfers cost between government departments or between state and federal budgets.
3. Analysis to support a decision on whether to deploy ADF or a commercially contracted option based on availability and cost effectiveness has not been undertaken but may need consideration.

**Systems/legislation/deregulation:** Yes.

4. Defence policy and direction is contained in the *Defence Assistance to the Civil Community Policy* and the *Defence Assistance to the Civil Community Manual*. These documents define the process, roles, and responsibilities for a Defence response to domestic disasters. The ADF defines its enduring response requirements for domestic disaster relief within the Chief of Defence Force's Preparedness Directive, based on the expectations of Government.

**Consultation:**

5. s47E(d) Chief of Staff, Military Strategic Commitments.
6. s47E(d) Director Climate Change Policy, Strategic Policy Division.
7. s47E(d) Headquarters Joint Operations Command.
8. s47E(d) Mobilisation Consultant, Force Design Division.
9. s47E(d) Chief of Staff, Headquarters Joint Capabilities Group.
10. s47E(d) Deputy Chief of Staff, Navy Headquarters.
11. s47E(d) A/Director Preparedness, Army Headquarters.
12. s47E(d) Director Strategic Design, Air Force Headquarters.
13. s47E(d) Human Resources Officer, Defence People Group.
14. s47E(d) Director Financial Analytics and Process Reform, Defence Finance Group.
15. s47E(d) Acting Director, National Capability Coordination, National Emergency Management Australia.
16. Director, Crisis Capability and Readiness, National Resilience Taskforce, Department of Home Affairs.

**Attachment**

Attachment A Defence Submission to the Senate Select Committee on Australia's Disaster Resilience

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Defence

Ministerial Brief for Action

IS23-000003

FOR: Deputy Prime Minister

INFO: Minister for Defence Personnel

THROUGH: CDF

CC: VCDF, Associate Secretary, FASMECC

Action Requested by: 30 March 2023

Reason for Urgency: To meet the JSCFADT submission due date of 31 March 2023.

JSCFADT - INQUIRY INTO THE DEFENCE ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22 - SUBMISSION

**Key Issues:**

The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT) Defence Sub-Committee, has requested the Department of Defence make a submission to the inquiry into the Department of Defence Annual Report 2021–22. The Committee has specifically requested a submission addressing s22 support to national crisis. Defence notes that this Committee is specifically looking at the current policy and resourcing around Defence’s support to national crisis, and the impact on the ADF’s preparation, training, retention, and capability. Defence provided a submission to the Select Senate Committee on Australia’s Disaster Resilience which touches on similar themes (IS23-000001 refers).

**Recommendation:**

**Decision**

That you:

- 1. **approve** the consolidated draft submission for provision to the JSCFADT Defence Sub-Committee on the Inquiry into the Defence Annual Report 2021-22 (Attachment A). Approved/Not approved

**Media Considerations:**

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**Support to National Crisis**

The increased involvement of the ADF in conducting Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief domestically as well as in the region is commented regularly in the media with a number of commentators identifying the increasing strain that this is placing on the ADF in the evolving strategic environment.

s22

Richard Marles  
March 2023

**Minister comments:**

28

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<b>Cleared by</b>	Greg Moriarty Secretary 21 March 2023
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Bree James A/Assistant Secretary Ministerial, Parliamentary and Cabinet Branch Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication s22

**Sensitivity:** Yes.

**Support to National Crisis**

1. The ADF's participation in domestic disaster relief remains high profile, with a direct impact on public perception and reputation. Attempts by the ADF to modify or reduce its perceived role in response to domestic disasters may be viewed unfavourably by sections of the Australian Community.

**Financial Impacts:** Yes.

s22



**Support to National Crisis**

6. Increased reliance on the ADF has financial implications for the Department. There are avenues for cost recovery, but this effectively transfers cost between government departments or between state and federal budgets.

**Systems/legislation/deregulation:** Yes.

**Support to National Crisis**

7. Defence policy and direction is contained in the *Defence Assistance to the Civil Community Policy* and the *Defence Assistance to the Civil Community Manual*. These documents define the process, roles, and responsibilities for a Defence response to domestic disasters. The ADF defines its enduring response requirements for domestic disaster relief within the CDF's Preparedness Directive, based on the expectations of Government.

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**Consultation:** Yes.

8. Ms Justine Greig, Deputy Secretary Defence People.
9. MAJGEN Wade Stothart, Head People Capability, Defence People Group.
10. RADM Robert Plath, Head Recruiting and Retention, Defence People Group.
11. Air Marshal Robert Chipman, AM, CSC, Chief of Air Force, Air Force.
12. Air Vice-Marshal Cath Roberts, AO, CSC, Commander Defence Space Command, Air Force.
13. Air Vice-Marshal David Scheul, OAM, Head Air Defence and Space Systems Division, Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group.
14. s47E(d) Acting Director, Defence Preparedness, Force Design Division.

**Attachment**

Attachment A Draft submission to the JSCFADT Defence Sub-Committee on the Inquiry into the Defence Annual Report 2021-22.

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Background

s22



**Support to National Crisis**

20. Defence notes that this Committee is specifically looking at the current policy and resourcing around Defence's support to national crisis, and the impact on the ADF's preparation, training, retention, and capability. Defence has also provided a submission to the Select Senate Committee on Australia's Disaster Resilience which touches on similar themes.
21. In accordance with the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework (AGCMF) the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) coordinates the Commonwealth approach to preparing for, responding to, and recovering from crises.
22. Defence policy and direction for Defence Assistance to the Civil Community (DACC) during disaster events is contained in the Defence Assistance to the Civil Community Policy and the Defence Assistance to the Civil Community Manual.

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23. Although states and territories have primary responsibility for domestic disaster responses within their jurisdiction, the provision of Defence support to civilian agencies when requested in times of major disasters and emergencies has been a consistent policy of Australian Government assistance.<sup>1</sup> This assistance delivers an outcome or effect at a time when the state's or territory's own resources are unlikely to be sufficient and/or have been overwhelmed.
24. Defence is postured and ready to respond to emergency requests from Commonwealth, and state and territory organisations through the NEMA for the 2022/23 High Risk Weather Season. As identified in the 2020 Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements the ADF has finite resources and is not the first responder to natural disasters or emergencies.
25. The Department of Home Affairs with support from other Government agencies, is considering options for creating additional capacity for the Commonwealth to support states and territories in responding to natural disasters. Defence is supporting this initiative.

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<sup>1</sup> Defence Assistance to the Civil Community Policy (Edition 2)

## FOREWORD

1. s22  
[Redacted]
2. **Enhancing the preparedness reporting system.** The DPR Dashboard provides strategic-level situational awareness of defence preparedness by reporting deficiencies and risks in the context of strategic tasks and environment s22  
[Redacted]
3. s33(a)(ii)
  - a. The DPR is designed to provide the CDF and SCG with an assurance that Defence is able to respond to Government requirements through an assessment of concurrency pressures. This assessment is informed by strategic context, operational tempo and reported preparedness deficiencies and risks. The DPR's secondary function is to confirm that the CPD's Preparedness Posture Settings do not require immediate adjustment. This is the first DPR that falls within the Preparedness Posture time period of 0-2 years.<sup>2</sup> s22  
[Redacted]
  - b. s22  
[Redacted]
4. The next CDF's Preparedness and Concurrency Statement to the Minister will be derived from the second quarter DPR and the June PAR. (o)

s22

<sup>2</sup> The desired readiness posture of the force-in-being that directs the preparedness requirements necessary to meet Government's immediate expectations of Defence (Preparedness Management Policy dated 27 Jul 20 (p3))

### PREPAREDNESS REPORTING

s33(a)(ii) [Redacted]

[Redacted]

#### Recommendations

1. The SCG recommends CDF:

s33(a)(ii) [Redacted]

3 APPROVED / PLEASE DISCUSS

s33(a)(ii) [Redacted]

1 AGREED / PLEASE DISCUSS

s33(a)(ii) [Redacted]

AGREED / PLEASE DISCUSS

s33(a)(ii) [Redacted]

NOTED / PLEASE DISCUSS

s33(a)(ii) [Redacted]

NOTED / PLEASE DISCUSS

s22 [Redacted]

*This is a pre-DSR  
govt response perspective.*

*A.*

Chief of the Defence Force

21 Mar 23

s22 [Redacted]

[Redacted]

s33(a)(ii)



c.

d.

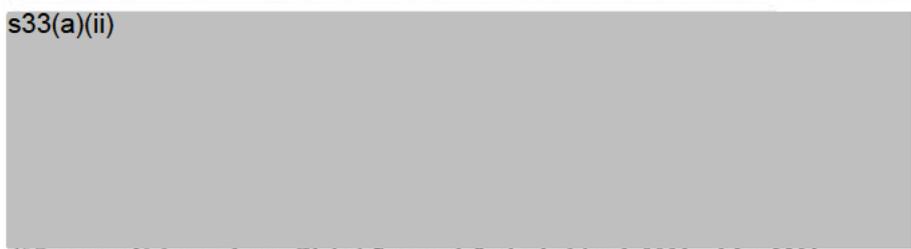
e.

5. The Bureau of Meteorology's Global Seasonal Outlook: March 2023 – May 2023 assesses<sup>15</sup>:

- a. Severe flooding in northern Australia in recent months means the region remains vulnerable to further heavy rain events or tropical cyclones, while elevated bushfire risk in parts of the south could stretch frontline response. (O)
- b. Biosecurity risks to health and agriculture increase significantly during major flooding events. Both vector-borne and water-borne disease can emerge and spread rapidly as floods create favourable conditions for insect populations to breed and disease to spread. (O)
- c. La Nina is expected to ease by March, with a return to neutral conditions (neither El Nino nor La Nina). This is reflected in the rainfall outlook for Australia with average to drier than average conditions likely across much of the west and south. (O)

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s33(a)(ii)



<sup>15</sup> Bureau of Meteorology, *Global Seasonal Outlook: March 2023 – May 2023*

- d. Flood risk is expected to remain elevated in northern and far eastern Australia with soil moisture levels likely to remain high into March and the tropical cyclone season reaching its peak period during February and March. (o)
- e. Further south, the shift to warmer and drier than average conditions during March-May may see bushfire risk increase with late-season fires possible in parts of South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. (o)
- f. The elevated flood and bushfire risk has the potential to cause further disruption to supply lines, with major highways and railways already impacted in many parts of the country. (o)
- g. Rising seas levels and subsequent saltwater inundation is reducing the area of cultivable land in the Pacific. This can lead to an increased reliance on imported food, driving up prices for these populations. (o)
- h. Tropical cyclones in the Pacific reach their peak season in February and March, meaning heavy rainfall, strong winds and storm surge remain possible in the coming months. (o)

s33(a)(ii) [Redacted]

s33(a)(ii) [Redacted]

s33(a)(ii) [Redacted]

s33(a)(ii)

**High Risk Weather Season (HRWS)**

11. The HRWS and aspects of the seasonal outlook for the South Pacific may stress Defence's preparedness to provide domestic disaster relief s33(a)(ii) and offshore humanitarian assistance and disaster relief s33(a)(ii)

12. The CDF HRWS Warning Order requires Defence to ensure it is organised, postured and ready to respond proactively and decisively, to disaster relief and current weather events.<sup>21</sup> (o)

13. HRWS requests for support will need to be assessed and prioritised due to the resulting concurrency risks. (o)

s33(a)(ii)

s33(a)(ii)

<sup>21</sup> CJOPS WARNING ORDER 22/039

s33(a)(ii)

s33(a)(ii)



s33(a)(ii)

BoM assesses that the HRWS is likely to require increased requests for ADF assistance, with elevated risks of flooding, tropical cyclones, coastal flooding, heatwaves and bushfires.<sup>33</sup>

s33(a)(ii)



s33(a)(ii)



<sup>33</sup> Bureau of Meteorology, *Global Seasonal outlook: December 2022 – February 2023*



44. *Strategic context:* The tropical cyclone seasonal outlook for the South Pacific indicates an above average number of cyclones are likely, while the risk of coastal inundation remains high.<sup>34</sup> s33(a)(ii)  
s33(a)(ii)



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<sup>34</sup> Bureau of Meteorology, *Global Seasonal outlook: December 2022 – February 2023*

[REDACTED]

s33(a)(ii)

s33(a)(ii)

s33(a)(ii)

s33(a)(ii)

**5. Provide domestic disaster relief**

Small to medium scale forces are routinely required for this task. s33(a)(ii)

**6. Provide off-shore humanitarian assistance and disaster relief**

Small to medium scale forces are regularly required for this task.

s33(a)(ii)

**High Risk Weather Season (HRWS):** The HRWS and aspects of the seasonal outlook for near-equatorial Pacific will further stress Defence's preparedness to provide domestic disaster relief s33(a)(ii) and offshore humanitarian assistance and disaster relief s33(a)(ii). The CDF HRWS Warning Order requires Defence to ensure it is organised, postured and ready to respond proactively and decisively, as required. Significant weather events are expected to require ADF assistance with flood response measures, evacuations, and food/medical supply drops. As the frequency of major events like bushfires, flood and drought increases, so too does the likelihood of multiple events coinciding, or occurring. Putting increased strain and reliance on the ADF for assistance. This reliance on the ADF has the potential to impact preparedness for other contingencies. (0)

s33(a)(ii)

	<b>DECISION BRIEF FOR CDF:</b> <b>Preparedness and Mobilisation Assurance Report – June 2023</b>	
	s22 	s22 

s33(a)(ii)



s22  <b>Anthony Rawlins, DSC, AM</b> MAJGEN HFD s22  Jun 23	s22  <b>David Johnston, AC</b> VADM, RAN VCDF 23 Jun 23	a. <u>Noted</u> / Please discuss b. <u>Signed</u> / Please discuss c. <u>Noted</u> / Please discuss s22  <b>Angus Campbell, AO, DSC</b> GEN CDF 28 Jun 23
s22 		s22 
		s22 



s33(a)(ii)

s33(a)

## FOREWORD

1. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence require the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) to ensure the preparedness of the joint force. The Vice Chief of the Defence Force (VCDF) provides strategic decision support by developing preparedness requirements and providing strategic-level situational awareness, assurance and advice. Force Generation is the responsibility of the entire Defence organisation, but direct responsibility is assigned to a range of Force Providers – principally the Joint and Service Chiefs and some Group Heads that provide specific Force Elements or enabling services. (O)

s33(a)(ii)

3. Defence preparedness is defined as the ‘sustainable capacity to apply capabilities to accomplish Government directed tasks’. Essential components of the system are:

- a. Readiness – ‘the ability of a capability to be applied to a specific activity within a nominated timeframe, for a specified period of time, to achieve a desired effect’.
- b. Sustainability – ‘the ability of Defence to maintain capabilities to meet government expectation over time’. (O)

4. Balancing these components requires a strategic risk management process to deliver a persistent, affordable state of preparedness against the strategic context, while also investing in capabilities to ensure future preparedness. (O)

s33(a)(ii)

[Redacted]

s33(a)(ii)

[Redacted]

s33(a)(ii)

s33(a)(ii)

[Redacted]

s22

[Redacted]

Angus J Campbell, AO, DSC

General

Chief of the Defence Force

30 Jun 2023

s22

[Redacted]

s22

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

s33(a)(ii)

s33(a)(ii)

## CONCURRENCY PRESSURES

27. Output capacity is the level of output that the joint force can sustain – incorporating the performance and quality of all inputs – across a variety of Strategic Tasks. Defence defines concurrency as ‘the capacity of the joint force-in-being to maintain preparedness requirements while simultaneously conducting other directed operations.’<sup>24</sup> s33(a)(ii)

28. Output capacity and concurrency pressure can be multi-faceted and it can be difficult to isolate the root cause of issues. s33(a)(ii)

s33(a)(ii)

<sup>24</sup> Australian Defence Glossary ID: 69878