

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - NATIONAL DEFENCE STRATEGY

**Lead:** Hugh Jeffrey, Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy and Industry

**Supporting:** Amy Hawkins, First Assistant Secretary National Defence Strategy

**Context:** The Defence Strategic Review recommended Defence produce a biennial National Defence Strategy. The 2024 National Defence Strategy set out the blueprint to deliver the significant and urgent changes required to transform Defence's capability, force posture, force structure, acquisition, recruitment and international engagement. The next National Defence Strategy is planned for delivery in 2026.

### Key Messages

- On 17 April 2024, the Government released the 2024 National Defence Strategy and the 2024 Integrated Investment Program.
- The 2024 National Defence Strategy details the Government's approach to addressing Australia's most significant strategic risks, based on the concept of National Defence, with a Strategy of Denial as the cornerstone of Defence planning.
- The Strategy of Denial seeks to deter any potential adversary from coercing Australia through force, support regional security and prosperity, and uphold a favourable regional strategic balance.
- The 2024 Integrated Investment Program provides a generational uplift in Defence's capabilities to transform the ADF into an integrated, focused force.
- The Government has committed to a biennial National Defence Strategy cycle to ensure Defence policy, strategy, capability and planning keeps pace with the rapidly evolving strategic environment.
- The next National Defence Strategy is planned for delivery in 2026.

### Talking Points

#### 2026 National Defence Strategy Development

- Work is well underway on the 2026 National Defence Strategy, which provides the mechanism for the Government to ensure Defence's strategy and investment keeps pace with the rapidly evolving strategic environment.
- Development of the 2026 National Defence Strategy enables Government to identify refinements needed to ensure the ADF is equipped with the capabilities and resources required to respond to our deteriorating strategic environment.
- Through the development of the 2026 National Defence Strategy, the Government will consider the ADF's capability needs and how those needs should best be resourced.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Nuala Bethell

Position: Assistant Secretary National Defence Strategy Implementation

Division: National Defence Strategy

s47E(d) s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

## National Defence

- *National Defence* is a coordinated, whole-of-government and whole-of-nation approach that harnesses all arms of Australia's national power to defend and advance our interests.
- *National Defence* works alongside broader initiatives to address the deteriorating geostrategic environment facing Australia. These include national resilience; industry and supply chain resilience; innovation, science and technology; national workforce; a robust National Intelligence Community; and integrated statecraft.
- As a key element of *National Defence*, the Government is making a generational reinvestment in the ADF's posture, capability and structure to support a more capable and self-reliant Defence Force that can safeguard Australia's security into the future.
- Over the decade, Australia's annual defence spending will almost double from around \$59 billion in 2025-26 to an estimated \$104 billion by 2034-35.

## Strategy of Denial

- The Strategy of Denial is now the cornerstone of Defence planning.
- The Strategy of Denial aims to deter any potential adversary from succeeding in coercing Australia through force, support regional security and prosperity, and help uphold a favourable regional strategic balance.
  - It focuses on safeguarding Australia's interests in our primary area of military interest, encompassing the Northeast Indian Ocean through maritime Southeast Asia into the Pacific, including our northern approaches.
- To deter actions against Australia's interests, Defence will work with other government agencies, the United States and other key partners to make a credible contribution to a favourable regional strategic balance and hold at risk forces likely to target Australian interests.
- The Strategy of Denial does not focus on a specific adversary. Instead, it is designed to deter any potential adversary by enhancing Australia's defence capabilities and partner cooperation. This is intended to change the calculus of any potential adversary, so that no state will ever conclude that the benefits of conflict outweigh the risks.

## 2024 Integrated Investment Program

- The 2024 Integrated Investment Program provides a generational uplift in Defence's capabilities to transform the ADF into an integrated, focused force.
- In line with the 2024 National Defence Strategy, the 2024 Integrated Investment Program includes deliberate choices to prioritise the introduction of next generation capabilities as soon as possible.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Nuala Bethell

Position: Assistant Secretary National Defence  
Strategy Implementation

Division: National Defence Strategy

s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

- Through the 2024 Integrated Investment Program, the Government is investing \$330 billion on capability investment priorities over the decade to 2033-34.
- This funding boost of \$57.6 billion over ten years, including \$10.6 billion over the forward estimates, is above and beyond Defence's funding trajectory prior to the 2024 National Defence Strategy.
- An updated Integrated Investment Program is planned for delivery alongside the next National Defence Strategy in 2026.

#### Progress on 2024 National Defence Strategy 24 implementation

- Implementation of the 2024 National Defence Strategy continues at pace (many of the below examples are from before the last hearing on 05 December 2025), alongside the implementation of Government's six immediate investment priorities announced in response to the Defence Strategic Review.

#### Government's six immediate investment priorities.

- Key milestones achieved by Defence and the Australian Submarine Agency in support of the acquisition of conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines through AUKUS Pillar 1, include:
  - On 11 December 2025, the Government, along with representatives from the United Kingdom and United States Governments, reaffirmed the shared commitment to the AUKUS partnership.
  - On 1 November 2025, the Government established the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator, responsible for the effective regulatory oversight of Australia's naval nuclear propulsion capabilities, providing independent assurance that the highest standards of nuclear safety and radiological protection are upheld.
- Defence has also progressed the establishment of a resilient sovereign shipbuilding and sustainment industrial enterprise. Key milestones include:
  - On 14 September 2025, the Government committed an initial \$12 billion to the Henderson Defence Precinct in Perth, Western Australia. This new funding will ensure continued momentum behind this major project in support of AUKUS.
  - This announcement brings this Government's additional investment in Defence to \$70 billion over the decade from 2025-26 to 2034-35, the largest increase to Defence funding made during peacetime.
  - On 5 August 2025, the Government announced the accelerated delivery of a larger and more lethal surface combatant fleet with the selection of the upgraded Japanese Mogami-class frigate as the preferred platform for the Navy's future fleet of General Purpose Frigates.
  - Additionally, on 5 August 2025, the Government announced the execution of the Strategic Shipbuilding Agreement with Australia's newly established Strategic

#### Prepared By:

Name: Nuala Bethell

Position: Assistant Secretary National Defence  
Strategy Implementation

Division: National Defence Strategy

§47E(d) / §22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: §47E(d)

Shipbuilder, Austal Defence Shipbuilding Australia Pty Ltd. This agreement will secure a continuous pipeline of shipbuilding work in Western Australia, creating thousands of jobs.

- Defence has progressed the acquisition and delivery into service of long-range strike capabilities across the land, maritime and air domains, and undertaken key steps to develop a guided weapons and explosive ordnance enterprise. Key progress includes:
  - The deepening of our strategic partnership with the United States and shared commitment to building a resilient, interoperable and sovereign Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance capability through the signing of a Joint Statement of Intent towards co-production of guided weapons, and the opening of a new joint office to enhance bilateral cooperation in this critical domain.
  - On 5 December 2025, the Government announced that Australia will start manufacturing Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) missiles after the opening of a new Lockheed Martin Australia factory in Port Wakefield, South Australia, marking a significant milestone in Australia's Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance (GWEO) Enterprise plan.
- Progress has been made toward improving the ADF's ability to operate from Australia's northern bases.
  - On 9 December 2025, the United States and Australia announced the advancement of key priorities across a range of force posture cooperation, including:
    - : Committing to progress Enhanced Air Cooperation through infrastructure works at Royal Australian Air Force Bases Tindal and Darwin to support rotations of US bombers, fighters, and intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft, and scope infrastructure works at Royal Australian Air Force Base Amberley;
    - : Expanding Marine Rotational Force-Darwin capacity through logistics and infrastructure development, including the prepositioning of USMC MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft;
    - : Establishing Northern and Southern nodes within the combined logistics networks in Australia.
- Defence is delivering initiatives to improve the growth and retention of a highly skilled Defence workforce.
  - The permanent ADF headcount as at 1 December 2025 was 59,798, an increase of 2,389 from the previous 12 months.
  - The permanent ADF separation rate was 7.6% on 1 December 2025, which is a reduction from 9.3% 12 months ago.

In close partnership with Australian industry, Defence is lifting its capacity to rapidly translate disruptive new technologies into ADF capability.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Nuala Bethell

Position: Assistant Secretary National Defence

Strategy Implementation

Division: National Defence Strategy

s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

- On 12 December 2025, the Government announced the investment of more than \$300 million to transform air mission training to increase Defence's aircrew training capacity by up to 70 per cent, preparing crews for advanced platforms such as the MC-55A Peregrine and MQ-4C Triton, delivered in partnership with CAE Australia.
  - On 9 December 2025, the Government announced the investment of approximately \$1.4 billion to transition the MQ-28A Ghost Bat into a fully operational war fighting asset for the ADF, providing asymmetric advantage and enhanced fighting depth for existing crewed platforms, reinforcing Australia's position at the forefront of Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA) globally.
  - On 31 October 2025, the Government announced the opening of a new Anduril Sydney Production Facility as an exemplar of how the Government and Defence is partnering with innovative companies to rapidly deliver capability to the warfighter, with the facility to deliver further Ghost Shark autonomous systems that will enhance the Navy's lethality and long-range strike.
- Defence is deepening its diplomatic and defence partnerships with key partners in the Indo-Pacific.
- On 9 December 2025, the Government announced the commitment of both Australia and the United States to a range of new initiatives to advance the safety, security, and prosperity of our two countries and the broader Indo-Pacific region, as well as strengthening the Alliance through commitment to deepening cooperation by accelerating and expanding joint defence initiatives, shared investments in new capabilities, and industrial base integration.
  - On 7 December 2025, the Minister of Defense of Japan Koizumi Shinjiro and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence of Australia the Hon Richard Marles MP met to announce the establishment of the Framework for Strategic Defence Coordination. The Framework will bolster joint cooperation including through increased information sharing, further alignment of activities, and deepening discussions on current and future deterrence activities – such as Flexible Deterrent Options – which demonstrate capability and resolve.
  - On 12 November 2025, Australia and Indonesia agreed to the substantive conclusion of a new bilateral Treaty on Common Security. The Treaty will be a significant extension of existing security and defence cooperation between Australia and Indonesia, and reflects the close friendship, partnership and deep trust between Australia and Indonesia, under our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
  - On 8 October 2025, Australia and Singapore signed a Memorandum of Understanding providing an ambitious framework for deepening defence cooperation including enhanced reciprocal access to defence facilities, deepened and increased defence science and technology collaboration, enhanced

**Prepared By:**

Name: Nuala Bethell

Position: Assistant Secretary National Defence

Strategy Implementation

Division: National Defence Strategy

s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

collaboration on defence supply chains and logistics ecosystems, and expanded professional defence exchanges between both militaries.

- On 6 October 2025, the Australian and Papua New Guinean Governments signed the Papua New Guinea-Australia Mutual Defence Treaty (the Pukpuk Treaty). The Treaty reflects a shared commitment to peace and stability in the Pacific, and provides for the expansion and modernisation of Australia's and Papua New Guinea's defence relationship, including potential future recruitment of each countries' citizens into respective forces.

Defence has also developed and released a suite of subordinate strategies and plans that support the achievement of the 2024 National Defence Strategy and its strategic intent. This includes the Defence Innovation, Science and Technology Strategy, the Australian Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Plan, Defence Workforce Plan and the Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Plan.

#### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
17 April 2024	The Government released the <a href="#">2024 National Defence Strategy and 2024 Integrated Investment Program</a> .
24 April 2023	The Government released the <a href="#">Defence Strategic Review</a> . The independent leads proposed the Government direct Defence to produce a National Defence Strategy on a biennial basis.

#### Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Released
9 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 1, Defence Strategic Review and National Defence Strategy Wording</b> , Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash asked whether Defence had omitted the term 'dangerous' from the Defence Strategic Review and National Defence Strategy.	5 December 2025
9 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 234, Defence Strategic Outlook</b> , Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash asked whether Australia's strategic environment had deteriorated, or improved, since 2016.	1 December 2025

#### Prepared By:

Name: Nuala Bethell

Position: Assistant Secretary National Defence Strategy Implementation

Division: National Defence Strategy

s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

9 October 2025	QoN	No. 235, 2026 IIP and NDS, Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash requested information on the timeline to finalise the 2026 NDS and IIP, and current progress to develop the 2026 IIP	5 December 2025
30 September 2025	FOI	An individual made a request seeking access to all ministerial briefs and internal policy reviews addressing the recommendations from the Defence Strategic Review regarding the ADF being used as the "force of last resort" for domestic disaster response.	30 October 2025 (No documents released)

### Relevant Media Reporting

Australian media has reported extensively on the 2024 National Defence Strategy.

- On 16 January 2026, The Strategist published an article by Alex Bristow titled [Japan aims to be indispensable to Trump, Australia should follow](#).
- On 6 January 2026, The Strategist published an article by Isha Desai titled [An appeal for climate action in Australia's next National Defence Strategy](#).
- On 13 December 2025, The Australian published an article by Greg Sheridan titled [The new US security strategy upends global order and signals big risks for Australia](#).
- On 10 December 2025, The Canberra Times published an article by Courtney Stewart titled [Be clear and unambiguous: who is our biggest threat and what will we do about it?](#)
- On 10 December 2025, The Canberra Times published an article by the Minister for Defence Industry, the Honourable Pat Conroy, MP titled [How we're getting the best bang for our Defence buck](#).
- On 10 December 2025, the Canberra Times published an article by Eleanor Campbell titled [Warnings over defence cash-flow problems](#).
- On 9 December 2025, The Sydney Morning Herald published an article by Jennifer Parker titled [Australia needs to grasp chance to reset defence expectations with the US](#).
- On 8 December 2025, The Strategist published an article by Courtney Stewart [What Trump's National Security Strategy means for Australia](#).
- On 8 December 2025, The Strategist published an article by Malcolm Davis titled [ADF autonomous warfare: go big, go fast](#).
- On 8 December 2025, The Australian published an article by Ben Packham titled [Nation](#)

#### Prepared By:

Name: Nuala Bethell  
 Position: Assistant Secretary National Defence Strategy Implementation  
 Division: National Defence Strategy  
 s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000478

Last updated: 29 January 2026

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey, Amy Hawkins

'needs northern drone wall' to fight swarm attack.

- On 7 December 2025, The Australian published an article by Ben Packham titled US piles fresh pressure on Australia over military spending.
- On 7 December 2025, The Age published an article by Michael Koziol titled US allies that don't step up 'will face consequences', Hegseth warns on eve of Ausmin.

Division: National Defence Strategy

PDR No: SB25-000478

**Prepared by:**

Nuala Bethell  
Assistant Secretary  
National Defence Strategy Implementation

Mob: §22

Ph: §47E(d)

Date: 23 December 2025

**Cleared by Division Head:**

Amy Hawkins  
First Assistant Secretary  
National Defence Strategy Division

Mob: §22

Ph: §47E(d)

Date: 21 January 2026

**Cleared by a/Deputy Secretary/3 Star:**

Hugh Jeffrey  
Deputy Secretary  
Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group

Date: 29 January 2026

**Prepared By:**

Name: Nuala Bethell  
Position: Assistant Secretary National Defence  
Strategy Implementation  
Division: National Defence Strategy  
§47E(d) / §22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
Phone: §47E(d)

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS & SECURITY

**Lead:** Hugh Jeffrey, Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry.

**Supporting:** Bernard Philip, First Assistant Secretary International Policy Division to support on Regional Partnerships and Security.

**Context:** Australia's strategic environment is deteriorating. Sharpening strategic dynamics in the Indo-Pacific demand strong partnerships and a concentrated effort to counter coercive actions to ensure security and stability in Australia's immediate region. This brief covers relationships with Southeast Asian, South Asian, and North Asian partners.

### Key Messages

- The Government is committed to deepening regional defence partnerships across the Indo-Pacific, and working with partners to build a region that is peaceful, stable, prosperous, and respectful of sovereignty and international law.
- The 2024 National Defence Strategy reaffirms that Australia's primary area of military interest is our immediate region, encompassing the Northeast Indian Ocean through maritime Southeast Asia and into the Pacific.
- Australia supports a Southeast Asia region with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) at its centre. We contribute to practical defence cooperation through the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus and its seven Experts' Working Groups.
- Japan is an indispensable partner, and our comprehensive and growing defence relationship is underpinned by unprecedented strategic alignment and ambition.
- Australia and the Republic of Korea are comprehensive strategic partners, and our defence relationship is of vital importance to both countries.
- India is a top-tier security partner for Australia, and we are increasing the depth and complexity of our defence cooperation in support of regional peace and security.

### Talking Points

- In line with the 2024 National Defence Strategy, Australia continues to enhance our regional defence engagement to build partner capacity and meet shared interests.
- Australia's bilateral, trilateral and multilateral defence arrangements are critical components of our international engagement.
  - Dialogues with likeminded partners remains central to our approach to building a region that is open, stable, prosperous and respectful of sovereignty.
  - Multinational dialogues provide an opportunity for ministers to meet, discuss and align on regional issues and common challenges.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)

Position: A/g Assistant Secretary Southeast Asia

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

- . Australia's annual regional engagement activity, Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2025, will engage with all Association of Southeast Asian Nations (except Myanmar), plus Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives, between July 2025 and June 2026.
  - Enabled by whole-of-Government and led by Defence, Indo-Pacific Endeavour is a vehicle for Australia and our partners to work together to strengthen engagement to address shared challenges.

### Southeast Asia

- . Our bilateral defence partnerships with Southeast Asian nations are deep and long standing, enhanced by people-to-people links and practical cooperation.
  - Australia has a Defence Attaché or Adviser resident in every Association of Southeast Asian Nations country.
    - : Each year Defence runs around 50 exercises with Southeast Asian partners and provides approximately 1,000 offers to study in Australia.
  - We are expanding defence cooperation in areas including maritime security, peacekeeping, military medicine and English Language Training.

### Association of Southeast Asian Nations

- . Australia wants to see a regional order with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations at its centre, providing an essential stabilising influence.
- . At the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus on 1 November 2025, Australia announced it was doubling the Association of Southeast Asian Nations -Australia Defence Postgraduate Scholarship Program from 2026 onwards.
- . At the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus, Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP met with his Indo-Pacific counterparts to discuss opportunities to deepen Defence and security cooperation.
- . Australia co-chairs the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus Experts' Working Group on Cyber Security with Cambodia in the current co-chair cycle (2024-27).

### Five Power Defence Arrangements

- . The 2024 National Defence Strategy upholds Australia's ongoing commitment to invest in the Five Power Defence Arrangements.
  - The Five Power Defence Arrangements was established in 1971 between the member nations of Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United Kingdom.
    - : The Five Power Defence Arrangements are the only multilateral security arrangement of its kind focusing on Southeast Asia and Australia's longest-standing regional security mechanism, making a valuable contribution to regional security.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: A/g Assistant Secretary Southeast Asia

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

- Five Power Defence Arrangements' Exercise BERSAMA LIMA 25 incorporated fifth generation assets such as the United Kingdom's Carrier Strike Group and Australia's F35A Lightning II fighter jets.

## Indonesia

- Australia's defence relationship with Indonesia is based on mutual trust, transparency and a shared commitment to regional security.
- Prime Minister Albanese and Indonesian President Prabowo announced in Sydney on 12 November that Australia and Indonesia had substantively concluded negotiations on a new bilateral Treaty on Common Security.
- The Treaty was signed by PM Albanese and President Prabowo on 6 February in Jakarta.
  - Australia and Indonesia will now complete our respective treaty processes required to bring the Treaty into force.
- As Prime Minister Albanese said, Australia's relationship with Indonesia is based on friendship, trust, mutual respect – and a shared commitment to peace and stability in our region.
- The Treaty will build on the 2006 Lombok Treaty that, among other things, reaffirmed Indonesia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. It also builds on the Defence Cooperation Agreement we signed with Indonesia last year.
  - Once ratified, the Defence Cooperation Agreement will enable greater interoperability in our substantial annual exercise program, including Exercise TALISMAN SABRE, Exercise SUPER GARUDA SHIELD and our trilateral Australia-Indonesia-US humanitarian assistance and disaster relief Exercise BHAKTI KANYINI.
- *Refer further questions on the negotiation or operation of the Treaty to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.*

## Singapore

- On 8 October 2025, Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore, Mr Lawrence Wong concluded the next phase of our enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
- On 7 October 2025, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP, and Singapore's Minister for Defence, Mr Chan Chun Sing, signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Enhanced Defence Cooperation which provides the ADF and Singapore Armed Forces enhanced access to one another's facilities and furthers professional cooperation between our militaries.
- Singapore has been training in Australia for over 30 years, and under the Australia Singapore Military Training Initiative, it is contributing AUD\$2.25 billion [FY 2016/17 dollars] towards developing the Shoalwater Bay and Greenvale training areas in Queensland.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: A/g Assistant Secretary Southeast Asia

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

- This will deliver world-class training facilities for use by both the ADF and Singapore Armed Forces.

## The Philippines

- . Our defence relationship makes an important contribution to Australia's Strategic Partnership with the Philippines, which was signed on 8 September 2023.
- . Australia is deepening our defence cooperation with the Philippines through large-scale military exercises – such as Exercise ALON and Exercise BALIKATAN – to support interoperability and regional stability.
- . Australia and the Philippines, in combination with regional partners, regularly participate in Maritime Cooperative Activities in the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone.
  - These activities support the right to freedom of navigation and overflight, as well as other lawful uses of the sea and international airspace, as defined under United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- . Australia welcomes increased coordinated defence cooperation with Japan, the Philippines and the United States, including through maritime cooperation, enhanced coordination, and strengthened capacity building.
- . At a bilateral Defence Ministers' Meeting in Manila last August, the Deputy Prime Minister and his counterpart Secretary Teodoro signed a Statement of Intent on Enhanced Defense Cooperation, which included agreement to negotiate a Defence Cooperation Arrangement in 2026.
- . The Philippines' military infrastructure requirements were also discussed during this meeting with both sides agreeing to 'undertake projects that increase our combined collective capability, enhance interoperability, and strengthen bilateral and multilateral defense cooperation.'
  - Defence, in consultation with the Philippines, has identified eight initial projects at five locations in areas such as logistics, training and fire safety.
  - Work on this defence infrastructure is scheduled to commence in Q1 2026.

## Malaysia

- . Malaysia and Australia share a strong and long-standing defence partnership, built on 70 years of bilateral relations, shared military history, deep people-to-people links and the Malaysia Australia Joint Defence Program.
- . Australia and Malaysia also have a shared commitment to the Five Power Defence Arrangements, Association of Southeast Asian Nations centrality, international law, and regional peace and stability.
- . The Deputy Prime Minister recently attended a High Level Committee on 21 August 2025 in Kuala Lumpur.
  - Progressed cooperation on maritime domain awareness and information sharing.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: A/g Assistant Secretary Southeast Asia

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

*Partnering with mainland Southeast Asia Countries*

- . Australia continues to grow our longstanding defence relationships with Mainland Southeast Asia countries (Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam).
- . Australia is deeply concerned by the recent escalation of hostilities along the Cambodia-Thailand border [from 8 December] and reports of civilian and military casualties.
  - We encourage Cambodia and Thailand to abide by the 28 July 2025 ceasefire agreement, and implement their commitments under the Kuala Lumpur Joint Declaration (signed 26 October 2025).
  - We strongly support a return to dialogue.
    - : Peaceful dialogue benefits us all, and contributes to a stable region.
- . We continue to engage bilaterally with both Cambodia and Thailand on defence issues, through our long-running Defence Cooperation Programs.

**Myanmar**

- . Australia suspended its bilateral defence cooperation with Myanmar in March 2021.
- . Australia remains deeply concerned by the worsening political, security and humanitarian situation in Myanmar.
- . We reiterate our strong support for ASEAN's central role in resolving the crisis, and we call again for the full implementation of ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus.
- . Australia has consistently maintained that a genuine path to peace requires an end to violence, the release of all those unjustly detained and inclusive dialogue with all stakeholders.
  - The elections currently underway [28 December 2025, 11 and 25 January 2026] do not meet the conditions needed for free, fair and inclusive elections.
  - We urge a peaceful transition of power to a civilian democratic government that reflects the will of the people.
- . *Refer questions on sanctions or developments on the ground to Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.*

**Japan**

- . Japan is an indispensable partner to Australia. Our partnership supports regional deterrence and enhances the stability, security, and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific.
- . Defence is accelerating operational cooperation with the Japan Self-Defense Forces under our Reciprocal Access Agreement; recent achievements include:
  - the largest ever Japanese participation in Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2025 (13 July to 4 August 2025), with over 1,500 Japanese Self Defense Forces personnel participating;

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: A/g Assistant Secretary Southeast Asia

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000480

Last updated: 29 January 2026

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey, Bernard Philip

- Australia's inaugural participation in Exercise ORIENT SHIELD (16 to 24 September 2025); and
- HMAS *Brisbane*'s first assisted maintenance period in a Japanese port as part of its Regional Presence Deployment (September 2025).
- . Selection of the Upgraded Mogami-class Frigate as the preferred platform for Australia's next general purpose frigate program is a milestone step towards what will be the largest-ever defence industry agreement between Australia and Japan.
- . On 7 December 2025, the Deputy Prime Minister and Japan's Defence Minister, Koizumi Shinjiro, announced the new Framework for Strategic Defence Coordination.
  - Framework meetings will convene at least annually, and allow greater policy and operational alignment to support regional security.
- . At the September 2025 Australia-Japan 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial consultations, ministers announced a suite of ambitious outcomes, including the intention to elevate the Special Strategic Partnership in 2026 to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Australia-Japan Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation.
- . The trilateral partnership between Australia, Japan and the United States upholds stability in the Indo-Pacific and is crucial to collective deterrence in the region.
- . We are committed to expanding cooperation with other regional partners in the Indo-Pacific, such as India, the Philippines, and the Republic of Korea.

### Republic of Korea

- . Australia and the Republic of Korea are deepening strategic and security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific under our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (December 2021).
- . We share a strong ambition to further enhance our defence cooperation, particularly in areas of training and exercises, interoperability and defence industry.
  - Australia was pleased to welcome the Republic of Korea's significant deployment of over 800 armed forces personnel to Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2025.
  - Exercising together in Australia and the region enhances our interoperability with each other and key partners.

### India

- . Increasing the depth and complexity of our defence cooperation with India is a priority under the 2024 National Defence Strategy.
- . Indian Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh's visit to Australia in October 2025 for the inaugural Defence Ministers' Dialogue was a milestone – the first visit by an Indian Defence Minister in 12 years.
  - The elevation of this meeting to an annual dialogue speaks to both governments' long term ambition for our partnership.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: A/g Assistant Secretary Southeast Asia

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

- Ministers witnessed the signing of an arrangement on submarine search and rescue and established staff talks between our joint operational headquarters.
- The Deputy Prime Minister's visit to India in June 2025 coincided with the fifth anniversary of Australia and India's Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (signed in 2020), which underpins our defence relationship.
- We are focused on enhancing interoperability, improving maritime domain awareness, furthering regional cooperation and exploring opportunities to grow defence industry, science and technology connections.
- Welcomed India's inaugural participation in Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2025.

### Northeast Indian Ocean

- Australia is uplifting engagement with Northeast Indian Ocean partners to build resilience to strategic challenges and their capacity to contribute to our shared interests in regional stability and prosperity.
  - The Deputy Prime Minister's June 2025 visit to the Maldives, Sri Lanka and India underscored the strategic importance of our relationships in the region.
  - The Deputy Prime Minister and Maldives Defence Minister Mohamed Ghassan announced Australia would gift Maldives a Guardian-Class Patrol Boat.
- Australia shares abiding maritime security interests with its Northeast Indian Ocean partners, as nations reliant on maritime trade and sea-lines of communication.
  - We are working closely with our partners to expand defence cooperation, including maritime domain awareness, maritime security and hydrography.

### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
6 February 2026	Prime Minister Albanese and President Prabowo signed the Australia-Indonesia Treaty on Common Security.
7 December 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and Japan's Minister for Defense, Koizumi Shinjiro, released a <a href="#">joint statement</a> announcing the establishment of the Framework for Strategic Defence Coordination following a Defence Ministers' Meeting.
12 November 2025	The Prime Minister and Indonesian President <a href="#">announced</a> conclusion of substantive negotiations on a new bilateral Treaty on Common Security.
1 November 2025	12th <a href="#">Association</a> of Southeast Asian Nations Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus in Malaysia.

#### Prepared By:

Name: **s47E(d)**

Position: A/g Assistant Secretary Southeast Asia

Division: International Policy

Phone: **s47E(d)** & **s22**

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: **s47E(d)**

Date	Event
9 October 2025	At the inaugural Australia-India Defence Ministers' Dialogue in Canberra, ministers <a href="#">announced</a> the signing of an arrangement on submarine search and rescue and established staff talks between our joint operational headquarters.
7 October 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and Singapore's Minister for Defence, Chan Chun Sing, <a href="#">signed</a> a Memorandum of Understanding on Enhanced Defence Cooperation in Canberra, Australia.
5 September 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs released a <a href="#">joint statement</a> with their Japanese counterparts after the 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations in Japan. The Deputy Prime Minister also met with his Japanese counterpart for a Defence Ministers' Meeting.
22 August 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister released a <a href="#">joint statement</a> following the 2nd Philippines-Australia Defense Ministers' Meeting. Australia and Philippines welcomed the enhanced defence cooperation between Australia, Japan and the United States.
5 August 2025	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Industry, <a href="#">announced</a> that Mitsubishi Heavy Industries' (MHI) Upgraded Mogami-Class frigates had been selected as the preferred platform for the RAN's general purpose frigate program.
5 June 2025	Australia and India <a href="#">announced</a> the first joint defence science and technology project arrangement on Towed Sonar Array Target Motion Analysis.
3 June 2025	Deputy Prime Minister, and Maldives Defence Minister Mohamed Ghassan, jointly <a href="#">announced</a> Australia will gift Maldives a Guardian Class Patrol Boat.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- 15 January 2026, ABC News, [Why Australia is investing in defence infrastructure at five military sites in the Philippines](#).
- 5 June 2025, Reporter, Defence Connect, [Australia to donate Guardian Class to Maldives](#).
- 20 February 2025, IndoPacific Defence Forum, [Five Power Defence Arrangements members adapt to regional security challenges](#), by Sarah Chan.

#### Prepared By:

Name: [s47E\(d\)](#)

Position: A/g Assistant Secretary Southeast Asia

Division: International Policy

Phone: [s47E\(d\)](#) & [s22](#)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: [s47E\(d\)](#)

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000480

Last updated: 29 January 2026

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey, Bernard Phillip

<b>Division:</b> International Policy Division	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000480	
<b>Prepared by:</b> s47E(d) Acting Assistant Secretary Southeast Asia Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 23 January 2026	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Bernard Phillip First Assistant Secretary International Policy Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 27 January 2026
<b>Consultation:</b> Karen Radford Assistant Secretary North & South Asia Strategy Policy and Industry Group	
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Hugh Jeffrey Deputy Secretary Strategy Policy and Industry Group Date: 29 January 2026	

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: A/g Assistant Secretary Southeast Asia  
Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
Phone: s47E(d)

**PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – PACIFIC PARTNERSHIPS**

**Lead:** Hugh Jeffrey, Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry.

**Supporting:** Susan Bodell PSM, First Assistant Secretary Pacific.

**Context:** The Pacific is vital to Australia's security and prosperity.

**Key Messages**

- The 2024 National Defence Strategy highlights the security of our Pacific region directly impacts Australia's national security.
- Alongside our Pacific partners, Defence aims to foster a region where sovereignty is respected and collective Pacific-led security responses are the norm.
- Defence is investing in security partnerships in the Pacific through the long-standing Defence Cooperation Program, Pacific Maritime Security Program and Indo-Pacific Infrastructure Program.

**Talking Points**

- Defence continues to deepen its partnerships in the Pacific, as directed in the 2024 National Defence Strategy by:
  - building partnerships through the long-standing and highly-regarded Defence Cooperation Program, now in its 52<sup>nd</sup> year;
    - : Defence is enhancing its training, education and exercise activities with Pacific security agencies, building our collective ability to deliver security outcomes for our region.
    - : In 2025, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Tonga participated in Exercise TALISMAN SABRE for the second time and, for the first time, Papua New Guinea hosted an element of Exercise TALISMAN SABRE.
    - : In September 2024, Defence led the largest ever Operation RENDER SAFE, coordinating with international partners to conduct large-scale explosive ordnance disposal in the Solomon Islands.
  - investing more in the Pacific Maritime Security Program, with additional support for the through-life maintenance and sustainment of the Australian-delivered Guardian-class Patrol Boats, along with expanded maritime training, aerial surveillance and regional operating costs. Australia has allocated \$5.9 billion for Pacific partners (and for the Republic of Maldives) and made a 30-year commitment.
    - : Australia has delivered 23 Guardian-class Patrol Boats, three landing craft and a fleet of smaller vessels to Pacific partners under the Pacific Maritime Security Program.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Susan Bodell PSM  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary  
 Division: Pacific  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000481

Last updated: 4 February 2026

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey, Susan Bodell

- : Australia is also delivering one Guardian-class Patrol Boat to the Republic of Maldives in April 2026.
- delivering and maintaining security-related infrastructure for our regional partners through the Indo-Pacific Infrastructure Program;
- advancing initiatives that enable effective Pacific-led responses to Pacific security challenges, such as the Pacific Response Group; and
- listening to Pacific priorities, and advancing our collective security interests.

### Defence Cooperation Funding

- . The planned expenditure for Pacific in the 2025-26 Defence Budget equates to \$335 million, up from the estimated actual expenditure of \$262 million in 2024-25.
  - This increase primarily consists of increases to the budget for maintenance and sustainment of both the Guardian-class Patrol Boats (\$65 million) and gifted infrastructure (\$30 million).

### Papua New Guinea–Australia Defence Treaty

- . On 6 October 2025, Australian Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP and the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, the Hon James Marape MP signed the Papua New Guinea – Australia Mutual Defence Treaty (Pukpuk Treaty). The Pukpuk Treaty represents Australia's first Alliance in more than 70 years.
- . The core principles of the Pukpuk Treaty include:
  - a mutual defence Alliance which recognises an armed attack on Australia or Papua New Guinea would be a danger to the peace and security of both countries;
  - expansion and modernisation of our defence relationship, including by setting out our shared ambition to establish a recruitment pathway for Papua New Guinea citizens into the ADF;
  - enhancing our forces capability, interoperability and integration;
  - ensuring any activities, agreements or arrangements with third parties would not compromise the ability of either of the Parties to implement the Treaty; and
  - reaffirming both countries' absolute respect for our neighbours' sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

### Recruitment of Papua New Guinea citizens into the ADF

- . The Pukpuk Treaty supports the expansion and modernisation of our defence relationship.
  - Including by setting out our shared ambition to establish a recruitment pathway for PNG citizens into the Australian Defence Force.
- . Discussions between Papua New Guinea and Australia are underway to develop a pathway for implementation once the Treaty enters into force.
- . I would not want to pre-empt this process.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Susan Bodell PSM  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary  
 Division: Pacific  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

- Any recruitment pathway will maintain ADF recruitment standards.

### Exercise TALISMAN SABRE in Papua New Guinea

- Papua New Guinea hosted a Joint Personnel Recovery activity during Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2025 in a number of training locations between Wewak and Lae.
- This is the first time a component of Exercise TALISMAN SABRE has been hosted outside Australia, and reflects the special relationship with the Papua New Guinea Defence Force and the integration between our forces.
- It involved joint coordination of assets from the ADF, the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, and the United States to improve interoperability between Papua New Guinea, Australia and the United States.
- It also enhanced multi-national joint personnel recovery options in the Pacific and promoted Australia's strong relationship with the Papua New Guinea Defence Force.

### Papua New Guinea 50th Anniversary of Independence

- On 16 September 2025, Papua New Guinea celebrated its 50th Anniversary of Independence, which included significant participation from regional and international partners.
- The ADF contribution, under Operation WANTAIM (Tok Pisin for 'Together') included:
  - an ADF vessel to accommodate ADF and selected Pacific partner nation personnel participating in the celebration;
  - an additional ADF vessel to participate in the planned fleet review;
  - medical capability to support deployed ADF force elements;
  - ADF aircraft to provide airlift support and participation in ceremonial flypast (including two F-35A Lightning II over Lae and Port Moresby on 16 September) and airshow events;
  - A ceremonial and performance capability comprising a ceremonial drill team, a music director band, pipes and drums and ceremonial artillery; and
  - A parachute display team.
- The ADF's contribution to the celebrations was the largest by a participating nation and is a demonstration of the deep friendship and partnership between our two countries.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Susan Bodell PSM  
Position: First Assistant Secretary  
Division: Pacific  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
Phone: s47E(d)

## The Pacific Response Group

- The Pacific Response Group is a regional asset that enables more effective and coordinated military support to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief.
  - On 24 October 2025, South Pacific Defence Ministers endorsed the second phase of the Pacific Response Group. This included:
    - : agreeing to move to year round co-location in New Zealand from 1 July 2026, and
    - : exploring options to broaden the Pacific Response Group's mandate to include stabilisation operations.
  - Broadening the Pacific Response Group's mandate to include stabilisation operations would build on what already exists.
    - : It is a natural evolution and will formalise and better prepare us for regional contingencies, drawing on the lessons we have learned through previous deployments, such as the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI).
  - Ministers also tasked Chiefs and Heads of Defence to explore options to establish a Pacific Response Group-led exercise, taking into account the existing cycle of exercises and activities in the POVAI ENDEAVOUR Framework.
- The rapid establishment of the Pacific Response Group has been a testament to the depth and breadth of cooperation between Pacific militaries.
  - In its first year of operation, the Pacific Response Group had its first deployment in response to the earthquake in Vanuatu in December.
  - Over the 2024-25 High Risk Weather Season, members participated in nine training courses and deployed to Exercise CROIX DU SUD 2025, rehearsing multinational Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations and non-combatant evacuation operation.
- At the Pacific Islands Forum in Honiara in September 2025, Leaders declared the Blue Pacific Continent an Ocean of Peace and committed to delivering collective peace and security initiatives, supported by a flexible and responsive regional architecture that enables peace.
  - The Pacific Response Group operationalises this direction.
- The Pacific Response Group further entrenches Pacific-led security response mechanisms, enabling Pacific security to be provided by the Pacific.
  - The Pacific Response Group only deploys at the request of an affected state.
  - It is available to be called upon by all Pacific Islands Forum members, enabling members without militaries to benefit from specialised military Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief support, enhancing our collective resilience.
- The Pacific Response Group responds to the call from Pacific leaders in the 2018 Boe Declaration on Regional Security to strengthen regional security cooperation and collective action.

### Prepared By:

Name: Susan Bodell PSM  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary  
 Division: Pacific  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

**South Pacific Defence Ministers Meeting 2025**

- Defence Ministers or their representatives from Australia, Chile, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Tonga gathered in Viña del Mar for the tenth South Pacific Defence Ministers Meeting from 22 to 24 October 2025.
  - They were joined by observers from Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.
  - Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Mr Baron Waqa, attended as a special guest.
- In addition to endorsement of the second phase of the Pacific Response Group, key outcomes included:
  - Members tasking the Secretariat to commence consultations on a South Pacific Defence Ministers Meeting Status of Forces Agreement and to report back in 2026; and
  - Members endorsing a South Pacific Defence Ministers Meeting Information Sharing Framework, which formalises how and what information is exchanged between and among South Pacific Defence Ministers Meeting Members, the Secretariat, observers and third parties.

**Indo-Pacific Infrastructure**

- The Indo-Pacific Infrastructure Program is delivering security-related infrastructure in cooperation with partner nations.
- Defence's infrastructure partnerships contribute to a region that is economically stable, strategically secure, capable and politically sovereign.
- The Indo-Pacific Infrastructure Program includes 43 active projects and activities across the Indo-Pacific within six different sub-programs: major works, minor works, maritime infrastructure, policing infrastructure, Defence's regional estate, and maintenance and sustainment.
- During the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2025, Defence's infrastructure projects in the Indo-Pacific have contributed an estimated \$644 million to Australian companies through the procurement of goods and services, and an estimated \$323 million to Indo-Pacific small and medium enterprises.
- During 2024-25, projects contributed an estimated \$90 million to Australian companies over 2024-25 through the procurement of goods and services, and an estimated \$60 million to Indo-Pacific small and medium enterprises. Defence completed two major projects in 2025 as follows:
  - On 12 August 2025, the formal handover of *HMPNGS* Tarangau, the Lombrum Naval Base in Papua New Guinea, occurred with the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP in attendance.
  - On 3 October 2025, the formal opening of the Vuvale Maritime Essential Services Centre in Suva, Fiji, occurred with the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP in attendance.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Susan Bodell PSM  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary  
 Division: Pacific  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

- The *HMPNGS* Tarangau redevelopment project, valued at \$503 million, was Defence's largest single investment in the Defence Cooperation Program.
- Due to COVID-19 impacts, ongoing global supply chain pressures, and the Voluntary Administration of the Head Contractor in December 2022, the completion of the project was delayed and increased in budget.

### Pacific Maritime Security Program

- Since 2018, 23 Guardian-class Patrol Boats have been delivered to 12 Pacific partner nations under the Pacific Maritime Security Program.
- On 29 January 2026, the last Guardian-class Patrol Boat to be delivered to a Pacific nation under the Pacific Maritime Security Program was transferred to the Republic of the Marshall Islands during a handover ceremony at HMAS Stirling, Western Australia.
- On 2 June 2025, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP announced Australia will deliver the final Guardian-class Patrol Boat to the Maldives, in order to strengthen maritime security and maritime domain awareness in Maldives' exclusive economic zone and our shared northeast Indian Ocean Region.
- In August 2025, Australia delivered a replacement commercially-built landing craft to Tonga, fulfilling a request made by Tonga in November 2024.
- Defence is enhancing the fixed-wing aerial surveillance services that are provided under the Pacific Maritime Security Program.
  - The Request for Tender for these services closed on 23 June 2025, shortlisting will be finalised and the tender evaluation will commence in Q1 2026.
- Defence is developing a Request for Tender for the Pacific Maritime Support Co-ordinator to manage maintenance and sustainment of delivered capability under the Pacific Maritime Security Program. The tender will be released in Q1 2026.
- Defence recently enacted the first of three possible three-year contract extensions with TAFE Queensland, commencing from August 2026. The contract extension has a value of up to \$50 million.
- The Government of Vanuatu's Guardian-class Patrol Boat, *RVS Takuare*, ran aground on a reef off South Epi Island on 5 October 2025.
  - There were no Australian personnel on board at the time of the grounding.
  - On 16 October 2025, the Deputy Prime Minister agreed to Vanuatu's request to support recovery operations, including stabilising and defueling the vessel, delivering recovery equipment, and sea lifting the vessel to Australia for further assessments, which are currently underway.

### Australia-Pacific Defence School

- Since 2022, the ADF has partnered with forces in Fiji and Timor-Leste to deliver United Nations Peace Operations training to over 100 military personnel from the region under the banner of the Australia-Pacific Defence School.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Susan Bodell PSM  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary  
 Division: Pacific  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

- On 8 August 2024, Government agreed to amplify the effect of the Australia-Pacific Defence School by integrating it within a Regional Training Framework.
- The concept for the Framework was endorsed at the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting in October 2024.
- The online course library will reduce duplication in the training offered across the Pacific Defence community and create operational efficiencies.

#### Vanuatu-Australia Security Relationship

- Australia and Vanuatu are in ongoing negotiations of the Nakamal agreement; any further questions should be referred to DFAT as the lead agency.
- Once domestic processes are completed and the agreement is signed, details and further announcements will be made.
- Defence is aware of the recent amendment to the National Security Act in Vanuatu.
  - Defence is discussing the amendment with relevant partners in the Government of Vanuatu.

#### Tonga-Australia Kaume'a Ofi Agreement

- In September 2025, Australian and Tongan officials signed a Statement of Intent to elevate the bilateral relationship under a new agreement named 'Kaume'a Ofi' [kow-may-ah oh-fee], meaning 'close friendship'.
- Any further questions on the agreement should be referred to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as lead agency.*

#### Australia-Fiji Treaty Negotiations

- Prime Minister Albanese and Prime Minister Rabuka have agreed to commence negotiations to elevate our Vuvale Partnership to a treaty, strengthening our shared commitment to ensure a peaceful, stable and prosperous Pacific.
  - This is an opportunity to build a transformative and durable agreement that lasts for years to come.
- Any further questions should be referred to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as lead agency.*

#### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
29 January 2026	On 29 January 2026, the last Guardian-class Patrol Boat to be delivered to a Pacific nation under the Pacific Maritime Security Program was handed over to the Republic of the Marshall Islands during a handover ceremony at HMAS Stirling, Western Australia.
22 – 24 October 2025	10th South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting in Chile (attended by Defence Ministers or their representatives from Australia, Chile, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Tonga).

#### Prepared By:

Name: Susan Bodell PSM  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary  
 Division: Pacific  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

Date	Event
20 October 2025	The 31 <sup>st</sup> Australia-Papua New Guinea Ministerial Forum was held in Canberra and announced six avenues for initial investment and cooperation.
15 October 2025	The Assistant Minister for Defence the Hon Peter Khalil MP, attended the <a href="#">commissioning ceremony</a> of <i>VOEA Late</i> . His Majesty King Tupou VI of Tonga formally commissioned the landing craft, delivered under Australia's Pacific Maritime Security Program, in Nuku'alofa, Tonga.
6 October 2025	Prime Ministers Albanese and Marape signed the Papua New Guinea – Australia Mutual Defence Treaty (Pukpuk Treaty)
3 October 2025	Formal handover ceremony for the Vuvale Maritime Essential Services Centre, Suva, Fiji.
2 October 2025	A decommissioning ceremony was held in Brisbane, Queensland for the Republic of the Marshall Islands' Pacific Patrol Boat RMIS <i>Lomor 03</i> [pronounced 'Loh-mor'], the last operational vessel from the original Pacific Patrol Boat Program.
16 September 2025	Prime Minister Albanese, Deputy Prime Minister Marles and Minister Conroy attended the 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence Celebrations in Papua New Guinea.
12 August 2025	Formal <a href="#">handover ceremony</a> for the Lombrum Naval Base Redevelopment Project, Manus Island, Papua New Guinea. The total Defence investment in the project was \$503 million.
2 June 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and Maldives Minister for Defence, Mohamed Ghassan Maumoon issued a <a href="#">joint media release</a> announcing Australia will gift an Australian-built Guardian-class Patrol Boat to the Maldives.

## Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
20 October 2025	Media request	The ABC (Steven Dziedzic) sought information on RVS <i>Takuare's</i> grounding.	Request finalised.
11 June 2025	Media request	Reuters sought details on the Request for Tender for fixed-wing aerial surveillance services under the Pacific Maritime Security Program. Defence provided limited information as the tender was ongoing.	Request finalised.

## Prepared By:

Name: Susan Bodell PSM  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary  
 Division: Pacific  
 Phone: **s47E(d)** & **s22**

## Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: **s47E(d)**

**Relevant Media Reporting**

- On 29 December 2025, the [Australian Financial Review](#) reported that China plied Vanuatu with gifts to foil the Australian security deal.
- On 28 October 2025, [ABC News](#) reported, in relation to the Pacific Response Group, that SPDMM ministers 'want to transform a military disaster response group into a taskforce that could also conduct Pacific "stabilisation" missions'.
- On 21 October 2025, [The Australian](#) reported that Deputy Prime Minister Marles signals green light for a \$500m+ loan to Papua New Guinea, on top of new rifles, barracks and pilot training. Says 10,000 recruits is a 'statement of intent' rather than a plan.
- On 18 September 2025, [the Australian Financial Review](#) reported that China loomed large over Prime Minister Albanese's embarrassing set-back.
- On 18 September 2025, [The Australian](#) reported on the delay of the PNG Defence Treaty with Australia, instead sending its Defence Minister to Beijing, raising concerns over Chinese influence.
- On 17 September 2025, [ABC News](#) reported on the delay of the Australia-PNG Defence Treaty due to PNG cabinet approval issues, with both nations signing a communique outlining the agreed terms of a future military alliance.
- On 16 September 2025, [the ABC](#) reported it had seen a copy of the treaty, alongside a PNG Cabinet submission.
- On 15 September 2025, [the Australian](#) reported critics had warned the Australia-PNG defence treaty poses a 'sovereignty threat'.
- On 15 August 2025, [The Australian](#) reported on a plan to recruit PNG citizens into the ADF as part of the PNG-Australia Defence Treaty. It reports the recruitment pathway would have 'stringent requirements; include a requirement for citizenship; and would fill 'skilled tradespeople, drivers and logistics roles'.
- On 12 August 2025, [ABC News](#) reported on Deputy Prime Minister Marles' visit to Manus Province to open the Lombrum Joint Initiative. Stephen Dziedzic and Marian Faa reported that the cost of the redevelopment 'more than doubled from the original \$175 million price tag'.
- On 4 August 2025, [The National Tribune](#) published an article covering the completion of Exercise TALISMAN SABRE in Papua New Guinea.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Susan Bodell PSM  
Position: First Assistant Secretary  
Division: Pacific  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
Phone: s47E(d)

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000481

Last updated: 4 February 2026

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey, Susan Bodell

<b>Division:</b> Pacific Division	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000481	
<b>Prepared by:</b> Susan Bodell PSM First Assistant Secretary Pacific Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 18 December 2025	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Susan Bodell PSM First Assistant Secretary Pacific Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 23 January 2026
<b>Cleared by DFG:</b> Nevin Gamal Assistant Secretary Specialist Groups Date: 19 September 2025	
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Hugh Jeffrey Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group Date: 29 January 2025	

**Prepared By:**

Name: Susan Bodell PSM  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary  
 Division: Pacific  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

**PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - UNITED STATES UPDATE**

**Lead:** Hugh Jeffrey, Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry.

**Supporting:** Bernard Philip, First Assistant Secretary International Policy, to support on the United States defence relationship and force posture policy.

Celia Perkins, Deputy Secretary Security and Estate, to support on AUKUS and force posture related infrastructure and security issues.

**Context:** Under the second Trump Administration, the United States has adopted an 'America First' approach to foreign affairs and defence issues. There has been a significant increase in media and political commentary on the Alliance, the Trump Administration's domestic and foreign policy priorities, and the implications for Australia.

Australia's force posture cooperation with the United States has drawn commentary regarding Australia's sovereignty and potential implications in the event of regional conflict.

**Key Messages**

- The Alliance between Australia and the United States has never been more important, given the challenging strategic environment.
- Our Alliance is underpinned by history, mutual respect for sovereignty and national interest.
- The United States has requested that its global allies and partners around the world increase their defence spending.
- Australia agrees that challenging strategic circumstances demand unprecedented investments, which is why Australia has engaged in the single biggest peace time increase in defence expenditure in Australia's history.
- Australia is working at pace with the United States to progress the priorities agreed at the Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations held in 2025, including the delivery of the AUKUS program, the Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Enterprise, and force posture initiatives.
- We welcome the conclusion of the United States review of AUKUS. We are pleased it reiterates President Trump's direction to move "full steam ahead".
- Our force posture cooperation with the United States helps maintain a peaceful, stable and prosperous region, strengthens interoperability with our ally; and provides a platform for regional engagement.
- Our interoperability with the United States and other partners improves our ability to respond to regional crises.

**Prepared By:**

Name: §47E(d)

Position: a/ Assistant Secretary United States Alliance and International Force Posture Policy Division: International Policy

Phone: §22 &amp; §47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: §47E(d)

## Talking Points

### Strategic Circumstances

- . Australia and the United States have a longstanding Alliance and the United States is our principal strategic partner.
  - We are bound by a history of bipartisan cooperation; and
  - are vital to one another's defence, security and economic prosperity, and that of the region.
  - 2026 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our formal bilateral Alliance.
- . The 2024 National Defence Strategy makes clear that a stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific is reliant on a committed and enduring United States presence in the region.
  - A stable balance of power is a necessary pre-condition to ensure that no country attempts to achieve its goals by force.
- . In a tougher strategic environment, the United States Alliance is of increasing importance to Australia.
  - The Alliance, including AUKUS, fundamentally expands Australia's sovereignty by increasing Australia's ability to protect its interests by providing access to world-leading defence capability and technology, training and combined exercises, and vital intelligence capabilities.
- . Our force posture cooperation with the United States helps maintain a peaceful, stable and prosperous region, strengthens interoperability with our ally; and provides a platform for regional engagement.
  - We achieve this by enhancing logistics interoperability, pre-positioning stores, generating new capability, conducting training and exercises, and increasing people-to-people links.
- . Our engagements with the Trump Administration have reaffirmed the importance of the Alliance and force posture cooperation.

### Australia's priorities for the Alliance with the United States

- . We are pleased with the outcomes from Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations 2025 (AUSMIN) [8 December 2025].
- . Consistent with commitments at the AUSMIN 2025, Australia's priorities for engagement with the United States include:
  - enhancing and maintaining the capability to make greater contributions to collective deterrence;
  - advancing key priorities across an ambitious range of force posture cooperation, taking tangible steps to operationalise the Alliance;

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: a/ Assistant Secretary United States Alliance and International Force Posture Policy  
Division: International Policy

Phone: s22 &amp; s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

- advancing implementation of the Optimal Pathway under AUKUS to deliver at pace and ensure the long-term success of the AUKUS partnership;
- deepening cooperation through streamlining bilateral defence trade and bolstering our defence capability and industrial base collaboration;
- accelerating collaboration on a shared pathway for the Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance (GWEO) Enterprise; and
- investing in Indo-Pacific partnerships with the United States to contribute to regional stability and resilience.

### Australian sovereignty

- On 9 February 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister made a statement to Parliament on ‘Securing Australia’s Sovereignty’. It outlined our extensive cooperation under the Australia-United States Alliance, which is managed through robust policy frameworks and principles that maintain and protect our sovereignty.
- In this statement the Deputy Prime Minister said our alliance with the United States “fundamentally strengthens, rather than diminishes, our sovereignty.”
  - It “affords Australia capability, technology and intelligence advantages we simply could not acquire or develop on our own.”
  - It “expands [Australia’s] strategic options, makes us less vulnerable to coercive action, and enables Australia to pursue our national security interests far beyond what we could achieve alone.”
- Australia-United States force posture initiatives are governed by the treaty-level 2014 Force Posture Agreement, under which United States’ access to, and use of, Australian facilities and areas is on a rotational basis, mutually determined, and at Australia’s invitation, with full respect for Australian sovereignty.
  - The treaty is published on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website.
- Force posture cooperation in, from and through Australian territory is subject to our longstanding, bipartisan Government policies of full knowledge and concurrence and of not hosting foreign military bases.

### United States Review of AUKUS

- We have received the outcomes of the Pentagon’s AUKUS Review and are providing advice to Government.
  - Our officials are working closely with counterparts in the United States and the United Kingdom on the Review’s outcomes.
- It reaffirms President Trump’s clear and unambiguous support for AUKUS during his meeting with the Prime Minister in Washington [21 October 2025].
- As President Trump said, AUKUS is “full steam ahead” and we are moving rapidly to realise the benefits for both our nations.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: a/ Assistant Secretary United States Alliance and International Force Posture Policy  
 Division: International Policy  
 Phone: s22 & s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

- . At the December AUKUS Defence Ministers' Meeting in Washington D.C. the three AUKUS defence ministers reaffirmed their shared commitment to the AUKUS partnership [10 December 2025].
  - The three ministers committed to finding opportunities to strengthen AUKUS, and enhance the pace and focus on delivery to ensure the long-term success of the AUKUS partnership.
- . Our engagements with the Trump Administration have shown clear and consistent support for AUKUS.
  - The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP (11 February 2025, 5 May 2025, 21 October 2025), the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP, (7 February 2025, 30 May 2025, 26 August 2025, 8 December 2025) and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Penny Wong (21 January 2025, 1 July 2025, 8 December 2025) have discussed AUKUS with their counterparts.
- . The AUKUS partnership is a great deal for all three countries, which is why it continues to enjoy strong bipartisan support in the United States and United Kingdom as evidenced by the:
  - passage of important provisions in the *2024 National Defense Authorization Act* to enable the transfer of United States Virginia Class submarines to Australia, and to enable Australians to work on maintenance activities for Virginia Class submarines;
  - announcement by the United Kingdom in June 2025 to significantly expand its conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine fleet by building up to 12 SSN-AUKUS boats to replace the current class of seven Astute boats; and
  - Nuclear Powered Submarine Partnership and Collaboration Agreement between the United Kingdom and Australia, which was signed on Saturday 26 July 2025. The agreement will underpin cooperation between the United Kingdom and Australia on the design, build, operation, sustainment and disposal of SSN-AUKUS submarines.
- . AUKUS makes a substantial contribution to allied deterrence in the Indo-Pacific, including through the development of enhanced defence capabilities; and greater regional presence of allied assets.
- . AUKUS will grow the United States, United Kingdom and Australian defence industries, including by generating thousands of new manufacturing jobs.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: a/ Assistant Secretary United States Alliance and International Force Posture Policy  
Division: International Policy  
Phone: s22 & s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
Phone: s47E(d)

## The United States calls for an increase in Australia's defence spending

*Handling Note: Refer questions on the United States calls for increased defence spending to Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group, Hugh Jeffrey. Refer questions on more detailed Defence spending information to Chief Financial Officer, Steven Groves.*

- . Australia and the United States have a shared view of challenges facing the Indo-Pacific, and we take seriously our role as a trusted and capable ally.
- . The United States has requested allies and partners around the world increase their defence spending, from Europe to the Indo-Pacific. This is not unique to Australia.
- . We agree that challenging strategic circumstances demand unprecedented investments.
  - Over the current decade, Australia's annual defence spending will almost double from around \$59 billion in 2025-26, to an estimated \$104 billion by 2034-35.
- . Australia's defence funding is aligned to our two year National Defence Strategy cycle to ensure alignment of strategy, capabilities and required funding.
- . Through the 2024 National Defence Strategy, the Government committed to a generational reinvestment in the ADF posture, capability and structure.
- . This will deliver \$330 billion across the decade to 2033-34 to increase the range and lethality of the ADF, strengthen Australia's national resilience, and focus our international engagement on enhancing interoperability and collective deterrence.
- . Australia's percentage of GDP spending on defence would be approximately 2.8 per cent if Australia used the same methodology as NATO.
  - This would capture additional defence and security expenditure, such as infrastructure investments, defence housing, pensions for defence personnel, and elements of the Australian Border Force and Australian Intelligence Community.

## Australia's support for future United States military operations

- . The Government has been clear on their commitment in making sovereign, independent decisions with regard to how Defence capabilities are employed.
  - Any decision to commit Australian forces to a conflict will be made by the Government of the day.
- . We work closely with the United States to advance our shared interests in peace and security in the Indo-Pacific.

## Release of the United States National Defense Strategy

- . We welcome the National Defense Strategy's reiteration of the United States' commitment to a peaceful and open Indo-Pacific, and the role that allies and partners play in collective security.

### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: a/ Assistant Secretary United States Alliance and International Force Posture Policy  
 Division: International Policy  
 Phone: s22 & s47E(d)

### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

- Just as Australia's 2024 National Defence Strategy recognised the importance of a strong and active United States military presence to our region's stability and prosperity.

*Handling note: Questions about the specific design and contents of the US National Defense Strategy should be directed to the US Government.*

### Force Posture Cooperation

- In 2024-25, the United States force posture activities included:
  - August to September 2024: a rotation of a United States bomber task force (three B-2 bombers) to RAAF Base Amberley;
  - March to October 2024 and March 2025 to present: several exercises involving United States marines and sailors of the thirteenth and fourteenth iterations of the Marine Rotational Force in Darwin;
  - July to August 2024 and late 2025: United States Army watercraft rotations;
  - August 2024: a submarine tendered maintenance period at HMAS *Stirling*;
  - February 2025: port visit by USS Minnesota to Darwin;
  - March 2024 and March 2025: rotations of United States maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft;
  - progressing delivery of key infrastructure upgrades at RAAF Bases Darwin and Tindal; and
  - prepositioning United States' materiel under the Combined Logistics, Sustainment, and Maintenance Enterprise.

### Does full knowledge and concurrence require Australia to provide explicit approval for the United States' activities from Australia?

- Full knowledge and concurrence means that United States force posture initiatives are undertaken with the approval of the Australian Government of the day.
- At the invitation of Australia, all United States force posture initiatives are mutually determined, and conducted with full respect for Australian sovereignty.
- Force posture cooperation is governed by robust consultation frameworks that ensure activities are conducted in accordance with Australia's policy of full knowledge and concurrence.

### Australian Government transparency regarding force posture activities

- Force posture cooperation with the United States is conducted transparently and in line with Australian Government direction.
  - Joint Statements from annual Australia-United States Ministers' meetings provide updates on force posture activities. These statements are published on the Defence and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade websites.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: a/ Assistant Secretary United States Alliance and International Force Posture Policy  
 Division: International Policy  
 Phone: s22 & s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

- The Defence website also contains information on all six force posture initiatives, as well as links to recent and relevant public announcements.
- All United States funded projects for construction opportunities are released via SAM.gov (the United States equivalent to AusTender).

### Engagement with the Indo-Pacific region on United States force posture cooperation

- Australia and the United States have been transparent and open with regard to our strategic intent and the nature of our cooperation to ensure a favourable regional strategic balance.
- Force posture cooperation helps maintain a secure and resilient region, strengthens interoperability with the United States, contributes to effective deterrence and provides a platform for regional engagement.
  - In 2025, Australia's force posture cooperation with the United States contributed to collaboration with regional countries, including Japan, India, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and the Philippines.
- Australia-United States force posture cooperation is not aimed at any one country. It is a longstanding bilateral program, first announced in November 2011.

### Number of United States defence personnel in Australia

- The tempo of our exchanges, engagements, exercises and rotations means the number of United States defence personnel in Australia varies day to day.
  - Australia and the United States exchange personnel and have liaison staff at various levels within our respective defence organisations to promote information and skills exchanges and people-to-people links.

### Location of United States defence personnel

- Under the Force Posture Agreement access to, and use of, Australian facilities and areas by the United States is on a rotational basis, mutually determined, and at Australia's invitation.
- As announced at successive Australia-United States Ministerial consultations, current and potential future force posture cooperation occurs across Australia, including:
  - in the Darwin region and northern Australia (including training areas);
  - at RAAF Bases Amberley, Curtin, Darwin, Learmonth, and Tindal;
  - at HMAS *Stirling*; and
  - at Bandiana, located in Albury-Wodonga.

### US investment at Albury-Wodonga Military Area

- The United States and Australia have prepositioned United States Army equipment and materiel at Albury-Wodonga (Bandiana) under the Combined Logistics, Sustainment, and Maintenance Enterprise.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: a/ Assistant Secretary United States Alliance and International Force Posture Policy  
 Division: International Policy  
 Phone: s22 & s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

- In August 2025, the United States system sought expressions of interest under the Unspecified Minor Military Construction program for a project to refurbish several warehouses in North Bandiana in Australia's Albury-Wodonga Military Area, as part of the United States Pacific Deterrence Initiative.
- The Australian Government agreed to the warehouse refurbishment project under the Force Posture Agreement with the United States. The project will support the Combined Logistics, Sustainment and Maintenance Enterprise, which is one of six United States Force Posture Initiatives.
- The warehouse refurbishment at Bandiana was announced at AUSMIN 2024.

### United States investments at Cocos (Keeling) Island

- There is currently no United States investments planned for Cocos (Keeling) Island.

### Infrastructure investment and Australia's northern bases

- Australia is committed to improving the ADF's ability to operate from Australia's northern bases, including through our force posture cooperation with the United States.
- United States investment in infrastructure in Australia's northern bases complements Australia's \$14–\$18 billion investment (2024-25 to 2033-34) under the 2024 Integrated Investment Program to ensure Defence has a logistically connected and resilient set of bases, ports and barracks across Australia's north.
  - These investments are pivotal to enhance force projection and improve Defence's resilience and ability to sustain operations through a crisis or conflict.

*Handling note: Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Policy, and Industry will speak to Australia's infrastructure investment as it relates to Australia-United States force posture cooperation. The Chief Finance Officer will speak to Australia's infrastructure investment as it relates to Defence spending.*

- When completed, facilities funded and constructed by the United States become the property of Australia and are approved for use by United States forces until no longer required.
  - Where facilities are used by both Australia and the United States, the parties will share the operation and maintenance costs based on proportionate use of the facilities.
- There are two Australian-funded projects completed – and three in construction – that will deliver upgrades to northern bases.
- There are currently 13 United States-funded projects delivering upgrades to northern bases under the Force Posture Agreement – four completed, eight under construction and one in design.
  - Australian businesses and joint ventures have been awarded United States-funded contracts for force posture infrastructure projects.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: a/ Assistant Secretary United States Alliance and International Force Posture Policy  
 Division: International Policy  
 Phone: s22 & s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

## Status of the Submarine Rotational Force-West

- In line with the Optimal Pathway announced by the Government on 14 March 2023, the establishment of Submarine Rotational Force-West from 2027 at HMAS *Stirling* will support Australia's acquisition of United States Virginia Class SSNs as well as the construction and delivery of SSN-AUKUS as an enduring nuclear-powered submarine capability for Australia.
  - As part of that support, United States personnel will rotate through Western Australia, some accompanied by families.
  - There is no United States base being established as part of Submarine Rotational Force-West.
  - The Australian Government has a longstanding bipartisan policy of no foreign bases.
- United States families will participate in the local community, just as Australian posted personnel and their families do in the United States.

## Nuclear armaments on United States strategic assets rotating through Australia

- Visits by United States strategic assets are consistent with our treaty obligations.
- Successive Australian Governments have understood and respected the longstanding United States policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear weapons on particular platforms.
- Australia will continue to comply with our international obligations, and the United States understands and respects our obligations regarding nuclear weapons.
  - The United States does not station nuclear weapons in Australia. Stationing of nuclear weapons in Australia is prohibited by the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (the Treaty of Rarotonga), to which Australia remains committed.
  - There is no impediment under the Treaty of Rarotonga or the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to the visit of dual-capable foreign platforms to Australia's territory or transiting Australia's airspace or waters.

*Handling note: refer questions on management of radioactive waste generated as part of the Nuclear Powered Submarine Program to the Australian Submarine Agency.*

- The Government is committed to the highest standard of nuclear stewardship, including the safe and secure disposal of radioactive waste as a result of Australia's Nuclear-Powered Submarine (NPS) Program.
- Routine nuclear-powered submarine operations and maintenance activities undertaken at HMAS *Stirling* by United States and United Kingdom nuclear-powered submarines as part of Submarine Rotational Force-West (SRF-West) will result in the generation of low-level radioactive waste.

### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: a/ Assistant Secretary United States Alliance and International Force Posture Policy  
 Division: International Policy  
 Phone: s22 & s47E(d)

### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

- This low-level radioactive waste will be managed in a manner that prioritises safety and security at a licensed and regulated facility, before it is transported for longer-term storage and permanent disposal.
- All radioactive waste will be managed in line with international best practice and in accordance with Australia's international and domestic legal obligations and commitments, including the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga).

### US strikes in Venezuela

*Handling note: Refer questions regarding Venezuela to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.*

- Australia has long held concerns about the situation in Venezuela, including the need to respect democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms.
  - We continue to support international law and a peaceful, democratic transition in Venezuela that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people.

### Did Australia provide support for the US strikes in Venezuela?

- No Australian personnel, including those embedded in United States military units, were involved in any stage of the operation.

### US Foreign Policy on Greenland

*Handling note: Refer questions regarding Greenland to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.*

### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
10 December 2025	<a href="#">AUKUS Defence Ministers' Meeting</a> : the Hon Pete Hegseth, United States Secretary of War, hosted the Hon Richard Marles MP, Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, and the Rt Hon John Healey MP, United Kingdom Secretary of State for Defence, at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.
8 December 2025	Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Secretary of War Pete Hegseth hosted Minister for Foreign Affairs the Hon Penny Wong and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence the Hon Richard Marles on December 8 in Washington, D.C., for the Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations ( <a href="#">AUSMIN 2025</a> ).
1 November 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP, met with the Secretary of the United States Department of War, Pete Hegseth in the sidelines of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus in Kuala Lumpur.

#### Prepared By:

Name: **s47E(d)**

Position: a/ Assistant Secretary United States Alliance and International Force Posture Policy  
Division: International Policy

Phone: **s22** & **s47E(d)**

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
Phone: **s47E(d)**

29 October 2025	The Australian Submarine Agency <a href="#">announced</a> the arrival of a US Virginia-class submarine (USS Vermont) at HMAS <i>Stirling</i> to conduct a larger and more complex package of maintenance work.
21 October 2025	The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, travelled to Washington to meet with President Donald Trump.
13 – 17 October 2025	The Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Pat Conroy MP, travelled to Washington to meet senior officials from the Trump Administration, members of Congress, and key defence industry leaders.
14 September 2025	The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP, and the Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Pat Conroy MP announced \$12 billion additional funding to deliver the Henderson Defence Precinct.
11 September 2025	The Australian Government approved <a href="#">Storage and maintenance of United States Marine Corps (USMC) MV-22 Osprey aircraft in Australia</a>
10 September 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP and Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Pat Conroy MP announced the \$1.7 billion investment to acquire Ghost Shark for the Royal Australian Navy.
26 August 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP met with senior Administration officials, including the Secretary of the United States Department of War Pete Hegseth, Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Washington DC.
20 August 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles confirmed Australia was providing a formal submission to the United States AUKUS review, at the Submarine Institute of Australia Conference in Perth, Western Australia.
30 July 2025	The then United States Department of Defense formally announced the then Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth’s directive to the then Department of Defense to undertake a review of the AUKUS initiative through its official Twitter/X account.
6 June 2025	Australia signed a Memorandum of Understanding for Precision Strike Missiles production, sustainment and follow-on development with the United States.
31 May 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister met with the then Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth in the margins of the 2025 Shangri-La Dialogue.
24 March 2025	Announcement of the delivery of High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems launcher vehicles from the United States.

**Prepared By:**

Name: **s47E(d)**  
 Position: a/ Assistant Secretary United States Alliance and International Force Posture Policy  
 Division: International Policy  
 Phone: **s22** & **s47E(d)**

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: **s47E(d)**

21 March 2025	Announcement of Long Range Anti-Ship Missile operational use following the successful operational test by the Royal Australian Air Force off the coast of California.
17 March 2025	The 14th rotation of the United States Marine Rotational Force - Darwin, arrived in the Northern Territory.

## Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
9 October 2025	PQoN	No. 37 from Senator Henderson, relating to details of AUKUS review advice given to Government.	Answered.
9 October 2025	PQoN	No. 42 from Senator Henderson, regarding briefing support provided by Defence for the Prime Minister's travel to the US.	Answered.
9 October 2025	PQoN	No. 36 from Senator Henderson, regarding AUKUS-related engagements by the Prime Minister and Defence portfolio ministers and US counterparts.	Answered.
9 October 2025	PQoN	No. 237 from Senator Cash, relating to the US review of AUKUS.	Answered.
9 October 2025	FOI	FOI on talking points prepared for Defence ministers in relation to US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth's address to US military commanders.	Decision finalised.
28 August 2025	FOI	FOI on materials prepared for the Deputy Prime Minister's trip to Washington DC in August.	Decision finalised.
28 August 2025	FOI	FOI on briefing pack for the Deputy Prime Minister's trip to Washington DC in August and any documents tracking outcomes.	Decision finalised.
28 August 2025	FOI	FOI on Ministerial International Travel Request lodged by the Deputy Prime Minister to travel to the United States in August.	Decision finalised.
23 July 2025	PQoN	No. 98 from Senator Lambie (Jacqui Lambie Network, Tasmania) relating to the Pentagon's AUKUS Review and the AUKUS agreements.	Answered.

## Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)

Position: a/ Assistant Secretary United States Alliance and International Force Posture Policy  
Division: International Policy

Phone: s22 &amp; s47E(d)

## Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
Phone: s47E(d)

25 July 2025	PQoN	No. 99 from Senator Lambie (Jacqui Lambie Network, Tasmania) relating to the Pentagon's AUKUS Review.	Answered.
17 February 2025	FOI	FOI on media talking points for the Deputy Prime Minister relating to United States visit.	Decision finalised.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- On 21 January, The Nightly published an article titled [Australian Defence boss praises Trump's national security strategy as concern grows over Greenland threats](#) by Andrew Greene.
- On 21 January, the Sydney Morning Herald published an article titled ['Absolutely central': Why Australia is in Trump's good books, according to Bannon](#) by Michael Koziol.
- On 20 January, the Australian Financial Review published an article titled [Can Australia still rely on the US after Trump's latest moves?](#) by Michael Read.
- On 17 January, The Australian published an article titled [Albanese's 'small alliance' strategy risks Australia's critical relationship with the US](#) by Peter Jennings.
- On 17 January, The Guardian published an article titled [Australia's confidence in Trump's US has evaporated. What will it take for the alliance to rupture?](#) by Ben Doherty.
- On 14 January, the Sydney Morning Herald published an article titled [Rudd's successor will need to be a political animal to survive DC](#) by Michael Koziol.
- On 13 January, ABC News published an article titled [Kevin Rudd to resign a year early as Australian ambassador to the US](#) by Joshua Boscaini.
- On 13 January, the Guardian published an article titled [Australia should reconsider alliance with 'fiercely unpredictable' US, former foreign ministers say](#) by Krishani Dhanji and Josh Butler.
- On 3 January, the West Australian published an article titled [Australia quietly sent non-refundable \\$1.5 billion to US for AUKUS 'down payment' last month](#) by Katina Curtis.
- On 18 December, the Advertiser published an article titled [Why the Northern Territory is Australia's first line of Defence](#) by Harry Bill.
- On 12 December, the Australian Financial Review published an article titled [AUKUS ministers discuss slimming down \\$368b pact](#) by Jessica Gardner.
- On 10 December, The Australian published an article titled [Full steam ahead on AUKUS](#) by Joe Kelly.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)

Position: a/ Assistant Secretary United States Alliance and International Force Posture Policy  
Division: International Policy

Phone: s22 & s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
Phone: s47E(d)

- On 10 December, The Australian published an article titled [AUK-ward truth: the sinking feeling behind our subs pact](#) by Greg Sheridan.
- On 10 December, the Australian Financial Review published an article titled [Trump's security blueprint – step up or step aside](#) by Lavina Lee.
- On 9 December, the Age published an article titled [Marles refuses 12 times to say what the Americans want in AUKUS review](#) by Michael Koziol and Matthew Knott.
- On 9 December, The Australian published an article titled [AUKUS 'saved' from Pentagon](#) by Joe Kelly.
- On 9 December, the Sydney Morning Herald published an article titled [Australia needs to grasp chance to reset defence expectations with the US](#) by Jennifer Parker.
- On 4 December, ABC news published an article titled [Marles 'going through' Trump AUKUS review](#) by Olivia Caisley.
- On 24 November, the Mandarin published an article titled [With AUKUS under the microscope, is the US still our most reliable defence supplier?](#) by Mark Dodd.
- On 24 November, ABC News published an article titled [The Trump presidency could be a priceless gift to Australia](#) by James Curran.

<b>Division:</b> International Policy Division	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000482	
<b>Prepared by:</b> s47E(d) a/ Assistant Secretary United States Alliance and International Force Posture Policy Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 17 December 2025	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Mr Bernard Philip First Assistant Secretary International Policy Division Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 27 January 2026
<b>Consultation:</b> s47E(d) Acting Assistant Secretary NDS Policy and Development	
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Mr Hugh Jeffrey Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy and Industry Group	Date: 29 January 2026

**Prepared By:**  
 Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: a/ Assistant Secretary United States Alliance and International Force Posture Policy  
 Division: International Policy  
 Phone: s22 & s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**  
 Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES - CHINA AND THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

**Lead:** Mr Hugh Jeffrey, Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Policy and Industry Group.

**Supporting:** Mr Bernard Philip, First Assistant Secretary International Policy Division to support on international policy questions.

Air Marshal Robert Chipman AO CSC, Vice Chief of Defence Force to support on South China Sea operational questions.

Rear Admiral Jonathan Earley AO CSC RAN, Head Military Strategic Commitments to support on ADF activities and interactions with the People's Liberation Army.

**Context:** We are engaging in defence dialogue with China. The ADF continues operating in the region. We reiterate to China our expectation of safe and professional behaviour by the People's Liberation Army.

### Key Messages

- Defence continues to engage in dialogue with China. Dialogue is critical for us to exchange policy positions and discuss differences.
- Australia is clear-eyed that the relationship will remain challenging, but our approach to engaging China is anchored in our national interests.
- The ADF has maintained a robust program of international engagement with countries in and around the South China Sea for decades.
- The ADF will continue to exercise its rights under international law to freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea, and supports others in doing the same.
- Defence strongly condemns unprofessional and unsafe military conduct that can endanger the safety of ADF personnel and increase the risk of miscalculation.
- Australia continues to raise any instances of unsafe and unprofessional behaviour directly with China through the appropriate channels in Canberra and Beijing.

### Talking Points

#### Defence engagement with China

- Dialogue is at the heart of the Government's efforts to maintain a constructive relationship with China.
  - As the Prime Minister said during his visit to China in July 2025, dialogue needs to be at the centre of our relationship.
- Our defence relationship with China is focused on dialogue with the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Australia-China defence dialogue occurs principally between ministers, respective defence attachés, Australian Defence officials and the People's Liberation Army Office for International Military Cooperation.

#### Prepared By:

Name: §47E(d)

Position: Acting Assistant Secretary North and South Asia

Division: International Policy

Phone: §47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: §47E(d)

- Australia continues to engage alongside the People's Liberation Army in select multilateral fora.

### Recent defence engagement with China

- **Ministerial:** The Deputy Prime Minister met his Chinese counterpart – the Minister for National Defence, Admiral Dong Jun – at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus in Kuala Lumpur on 1 November 2025.
- The Deputy Prime Minister met his Chinese counterpart – the Minister for National Defence, Admiral Dong Jun – at the Shangri-La Dialogue in June 2024.
- **Band 4/4 Star:** On 13 August 2025, Chief of Defence Force Admiral Johnston met Chief of Staff of the Joint Staff Department, General Liu Zhenli in Beijing.
  - Australia affirmed the importance of all countries acting in a manner that respects sovereignty and upholds peace, security and stability.
- **Band 3/3 Star:** Australia and China held the 23<sup>rd</sup> Defence Strategic Dialogue in Beijing on 17 February 2025.
  - The Vice Chief of the Defence Force and Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy and Industry led the Australian delegation.
  - Both sides exchanged views on bilateral, global and regional security issues, as well as military transparency and communication.
  - Australia reiterated the importance of all countries in the region operating in a safe and professional manner at all times to avoid miscalculation or escalation.
- **Band 2/2 Star:** Australia and China held the Defence Coordination Dialogue in Beijing on 17 October 2024, at the First Assistant Secretary level.
  - The two sides discussed regional security issues, expectations for safe and professional military behaviour, and opportunities for future defence dialogue.
  - From 19 to 24 October 2025, a delegation led by Rear Admiral James Lybrand, Commander of the Australian Defence College, visited China's National Defence University in Beijing.
- **Band 1/1 Star:** On 17 to 19 September 2025, a Defence Assistant Secretary represented Australia at the 2025 Beijing Xiangshan Forum – a China-hosted international security dialogue.
- Australia expects to hold another Band 2/2 Star officials' level defence dialogue with China in 2026. We are engaging with China on a mutually agreeable date.

### Taiwan

- As the Prime Minister has said, there has been no change to Australia's bipartisan one-China policy.
- In accordance with our one-China policy, Australia maintains an unofficial relationship

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Acting Assistant Secretary North and South Asia  
Division: International Policy  
Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
Phone: s47E(d)

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000484

Last updated 29 January 2026

Key witnesses: Mr Hugh Jeffrey, Air Marshal Robert Chipman AO CSC, Rear Admiral Jonathan Earley AO CSC RAN, Mr Bernard Philip

with Taiwan focused on economic, trade and people-to-people ties.

- Australia opposes any unilateral action to change the status quo across the Taiwan Strait.
  - Peace and stability are in all our interests.

### ADF activity in the South China Sea

- Australia's longstanding position on the South China Sea is consistent and clear.
  - We continue to speak up – and act – in our national interest, to support a region which is open, secure and prosperous.
- ADF ships and aircraft exercise Australia's rights under international law to freedom of navigation and overflight, including in the South China Sea.
- Australia is deeply concerned when countries pursue claims or engage in activities, which are inconsistent with international law.
  - Or advance claims by intimidation, coercion, or other grey-zone activity.
- China is rapidly modernising its armed forces without the transparency and reassurance expected of a major power.
  - We are now seeing China exercise its growing military capability further afield more often, and with more lethal capabilities.
  - We expect China to exercise this greater power in a way that respects the rights of smaller states and to resolve territorial disputes in accordance with international law.

### Australia transit of the Taiwan Strait

- The ADF periodically transits the Taiwan Strait and will continue to exercise freedom of navigation under international law as it has done for decades.
  - Australia (HMAS *Brisbane*) and Canada (HMCS *Ville de Quebec*) transited the Taiwan Strait on 6-7 September 2025 during routine deployments to the region.

### Unsafe encounters

- The People's Liberation Army's expansion in size, reach and operational tempo means the ADF is operating in close contact with the People's Liberation Army more often.
  - The majority of these interactions are safe and professional.
  - At times, we experience unsafe or unprofessional behaviour by the People's Liberation Army.
  - When this occurs, we raise our concerns with China directly, in both Beijing and Canberra.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Acting Assistant Secretary North and South Asia  
Division: International Policy  
Phone: s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
Phone: s47E(d)

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000484

Last updated 29 January 2026

Key witnesses: Mr Hugh Jeffrey, Air Marshal Robert Chipman AO CSC, Rear Admiral Jonathan Earley AO CSC RAN, Mr Bernard Philip

- . The ADF always operates in a safe and professional manner, and expects the same of the People's Liberation Army.
- . We will continue to call out behaviour that falls short of our expectations.

#### **Unsafe behaviour by People's Liberation Army –Air Force [19 October 2025]**

- . On 19 October 2025, a People's Liberation Army–Air Force Su-35 fighter aircraft released flares in close proximity to a RAAF P-8A aircraft.
  - This was unsafe and unprofessional behaviour by the People's Liberation Army.
- . Defence and DFAT raised concerns with the Chinese Government in Canberra and Beijing on 20 October 2025.
- . The safety and wellbeing of our ADF personnel continues to be our utmost priority.
  - ADF personnel sustained no injuries, and the aircraft sustained no damage.
- . Australia expects all countries, including China, to operate their militaries in a safe and professional manner.

#### **People's Liberation Army - Navy Task Group 31 in the South Pacific [November-December 2025]**

- . On December 1, in response to media reporting a Chinese flotilla might be heading towards Australia, Deputy Prime Minister Marles announced Australia was monitoring a PLA-Navy task group operating in the Philippine Sea.
- . The ADF, in close coordination with international partners, monitored a task group comprised of 1 x Yushen-class Landing Helicopter Assault ship, 1 x Renhai-class Cruiser, 1 x Jiangkai-class Frigate, and 1 x Fuchi-class Replenishment Vessel.
- . Australia maintains situational awareness across our region and routinely monitors all maritime and air traffic in Australia's near approaches.

#### **People's Liberation Army Task Group 107 in vicinity of Australia [February-March 2025]**

- . The ADF monitored these activities using naval and air assets, in close coordination with New Zealand.
- . The ADF operates in the South China Sea because it is a vital waterway which Australia and the entire international community depends on for access to key trade routes.
- . Australia has for decades undertaken activities in the region in accordance with international law, exercising the right to freedom of navigation and overflight.

#### **People's Liberation Army high seas live firing [21-22 February 2025]**

- . Our concerns regarding notification times and best practices when undertaking military exercises stand.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Acting Assistant Secretary North and South Asia  
Division: International Policy  
Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
Phone: s47E(d)

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000484

Last updated 29 January 2026

Key witnesses: Mr Hugh Jeffrey, Air Marshal Robert Chipman AO CSC, Rear Admiral Jonathan Earley AO CSC RAN, Mr Bernard Philip

- The People's Liberation Army did not advise Defence in advance, nor submit a request to Airservices Australia to promulgate a Dangerous Activities Notice to Airmen, or establish a Restricted Operations Zone.
- It is the responsibility of all states to conduct their activities on the high seas with due regard to the safety of civilian aviation.
- Defence and foreign affairs officials made representations following the high seas firing event in Beijing and Canberra.

### Maritime Cooperative Activities with the Philippines in the South China Sea

- The 2024 National Defence Strategy made clear we need to invest in our regional partnerships, and Maritime Cooperative Activities are an important way we do so.
  - Maritime Cooperative Activities are aimed at strengthening the interoperability of the participants' defence and armed forces.
  - As the Deputy Prime Minister stated, Maritime Cooperative Activities demonstrate 'our unwavering commitment to working together to maintain a peaceful, stable and prosperous region'.
  - The most recent Maritime Cooperative Activity the ADF participated in was with the Philippines, New Zealand and the United States over 30 to 31 October 2025.

### Incidents in the South China Sea between China and Philippines

- Australia is deeply concerned by a series of dangerous and aggressive actions by China against the Philippines in the South China Sea.
- This includes the repeated and intentional ramming of Philippine vessels, causing structural damage, and the use of water cannons.
  - Such dangerous actions undermine efforts to de-escalate tensions.
- Australia urges restraint and adherence to international law.
- Australia has raised concerns to China about these instances through both defence and diplomatic channels on multiple occasions.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Acting Assistant Secretary North and South Asia  
Division: International Policy  
Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
Phone: s47E(d)

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: 5825-000484

Last updated 29 January 2026

Key witnesses: Mr Hugh Jeffrey, Air Marshal Robert Chipman AO CSC, Rear Admiral Jonathan Earley AO CSC  
RAN, Mr Bernard Phillip

## Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
1 November 2025	Deputy Prime Minister Marles met with his counterpart Admiral Dong Jun at the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Plus Meeting in Kuala Lumpur.
30 to 31 October 2025	Australia, the Philippines, New Zealand, and the United States participated in a Maritime Cooperative Activity within the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone.
26 October 2025	The United States Navy reported two separate crashes involving US Navy aircraft in the South China Sea while conducting routine operations. The first incident involved an MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopter, and the second involved a F/A-18F Super Hornet fighter jet. All crew members were recovered safely.
19 October 2025	A Royal Australian Air Force P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft experienced unsafe and unprofessional conduct in the South China Sea from a People's Liberation–Air Force fighter jet.
19 to 24 October 2025	A delegation led by Rear Admiral James Lybrand, Commander of the Australian Defence College, visited China's National Defence University in Beijing.
17 September 2025	An Assistant Secretary from Defence's Strategy, Policy and Industry Group attended the 11th Beijing Xiangshan Forum in Beijing.
13 August 2025	Chief of Defence Force Admiral Johnston met Chief of Staff of the Joint Staff Department, General Liu Zhenli in Beijing.
12 to 18 July 2025	Prime Minister Albanese visited China, and met President Xi and Premier Li.
24 June 2025	HMS <i>Spey</i> and HMAS <i>Sydney</i> conducted freedom of navigation activity in the South China Sea.
29 April 2025	Australia, the Philippines, and the United States participated in a Maritime Cooperative Activity within the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone, off the west coast of Luzon.
25 February to 9 March 2025	A series of departmental releases noted the People's Liberation Army – Navy Task Group departed Australia's northern approaches.
22 February 2025	A People's Liberation Army – Navy Task Group conducted a second live fire exercises in Pacific international waters.

## Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Acting Assistant Secretary North and South Asia

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d)

## Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: 5825-000484

Last updated 29 January 2026

Key witnesses: Mr Hugh Jeffrey, Air Marshal Robert Chipman AO CSC, Rear Admiral Jonathan Earley AO CSC RAN, Mr Bernard Philip

21 February 2025	A People's Liberation Army – Navy Task Group announced to commercial airlines it would conduct live fire exercises in international waters between Australia and New Zealand.
17 February 2025	Deputy Secretary SP&I and Vice Chief of the Defence Force attended the 23 <sup>rd</sup> <a href="#">Defence Strategic Dialogue</a> in Beijing.
13 February 2025	A <a href="#">departmental release</a> acknowledged the presence of a People's Liberation Army –Navy Task Group operating near Australia.
11 February 2025	A Royal Australian Air Force P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft experienced unsafe and unprofessional conduct in the South China Sea from a People's Liberation–Air Force fighter jet. Defence and foreign affairs officials made formal representations in Canberra and Beijing on 12 and 13 February 2025.

### Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
7 May 2025	FOI	An individual requested documents regarding China's Intercontinental Ballistic Missile test firing in September 2025.	Decision released.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- On 18 January 2026, [The Australian](#) reported China's ambassador to Australia urged Canberra to prepare for dealing with a "reunified China", declaring Chinese people "will not forgive" countries that obstruct Beijing's push to bring Taiwan under its control.
- On 27 November 2025, the [Australian Financial Review](#) reported on Defence monitoring a 'Chinese flotilla' and raised questions as to whether it was enroute to Australia.
- On 20 October 2025, Acting Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles gave an [interview](#) to Sky News on the unsafe and unprofessional interaction between the ADF and People's Liberation Army - Air Force on 19 October 2025.
- Australian media reported extensively on the Prime Minister's visit to China, including ABC and [Australian Financial Review](#).
- On 30 July 2025, the ABC published an article by Henry Zwartz titled [Intelligence reveals scale of China's base-building in the South China Sea](#).
- On 17 July 2025, the Deputy Prime Minister gave an [interview](#) to 9 News about the live fire incidents. He noted "we are much more often in the vicinity of China than

#### Prepared By:

Name: **s47E(d)**

Position: Acting Assistant Secretary North and South Asia

Division: International Policy

Phone: **s47E(d)**

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: **s47E(d)**

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: 5825-000484

Last updated 29 January 2026

Key witnesses: Mr Hugh Jeffrey, Air Marshal Robert Chipman AO CSC, Rear Admiral Jonathan Earley AO CSC RAN, Mr Bernard Philip

China is in the vicinity of Australia .... because that's where our trade routes [and] sea lines of communication are."

- On 25 June 2025, the ABC published an article by Stephen Dziedzic titled [Australian navy joins UK to conduct freedom of navigation exercises in contested South China Sea](#) on joint Australia-United Kingdom freedom of navigation exercises.

<b>Division:</b> International Policy Division	
<b>PDR No:</b> 5825-000484	
<b>Prepared by:</b> s47E(d) Acting Assistant Secretary North and South Asia Strategy, Policy and Industry Group Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 22 January 2026	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Bernard Philip First Assistant Secretary International Policy Strategy, Policy and Industry Group Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 27 January 2026
<b>Consultation:</b> Captain Steve McCracken CSM RAN Director, Domestic and Regional Military Strategic Commitments Vice Chief of Defence Force Group	
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Hugh Jeffrey Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group Date: 29 January 2025	

**Prepared By:**  
 Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Acting Assistant Secretary North and South Asia  
 Division: International Policy  
 Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**  
 Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

**PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - SUPPORT TO UKRAINE**

**Lead:** Hugh Jeffrey, Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry.

**Supporting:** Bernard Philip, First Assistant Secretary International Policy to support on military assistance to Ukraine and new commitments.

Rear Admiral Jonathan Earley AO CSC RAN, Head Military Strategic Commitments to support on Operation KUDU.

Steven Groves, Chief Financial Officer to support on funding and financial arrangements.

Chris Deeble AO CSC, Deputy Secretary Capability Acquisition and Sustainment to support on disposals.

**Context:** Russian forces continue to advance slowly in Eastern Ukraine at significant cost. The United States has imposed sanctions on major Russian oil companies. The United Kingdom and France have finalised planning to support any ceasefire. Defence has delivered all 49 M1A1 tanks to Ukraine.

**Key Messages**

- Australia condemns Russia's unilateral, illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine.
- The Government remains committed to supporting Ukraine to resolve the conflict on its terms, and to imposing costs on Russia for its aggression.
- Australia has committed more than \$1.7 billion in support to Ukraine, including over \$1.5 billion in military assistance, since February 2022.
- Defence continues to provide support through Operation KUDU, including training Ukrainian personnel in the United Kingdom (as part of the United Kingdom's Operation INTERFLEX).
- From July to October 2025, Australia deployed an E-7A Wedgetail aircraft to Europe to support NATO and Ukraine.
- Defence takes a proactive approach to identifying options to support Ukraine.
- Australia will consider requests to contribute to efforts to strengthen the Armed Forces of Ukraine and support any ceasefire.

**Talking Points**

- Russia continues to exert pressure on Ukraine, including through slow progress in the East, and attacks on military and civilian targets, and critical infrastructure.
  - Ukraine's primary aim is to continue to demonstrate it is able to impose costs on Russian forces and military targets in both Ukraine and Russia.
- Australia supports all meaningful progress towards a just and lasting peace for Ukraine, and greater security and stability for Europe. Russia must end its invasion.
- Australia also welcomes the leadership taken by the United Kingdom and France in planning for a 'Coalition of the Willing' to support a potential ceasefire.

**Prepared By:**

Name: David Lewis

Position: Assistant Secretary Global Partners

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

**Defence's contribution to Government support for Ukraine**

- . Australia's objective is two-fold:
  - support Ukraine to resolve the conflict on its terms; and
  - impose costs on Russia in response to its aggression.
- . Defence continues to work closely with other government departments to support the coordinated response to Russia's invasion.
- . Defence support has taken two principal forms: material and financial support for the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and ADF commitments under Operation KUDU.
- . Australia, through Defence, has committed over \$1.5 billion worth in materiel and financial support for Ukraine's Armed Forces, including equipment from ADF stocks, procurements from Australian defence industry, and grants to partner-managed funds.
  - On 4 December 2025, the Government announced additional support for Ukraine, including:
    - : A \$50 million contribution to NATO's Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List (PURL) initiative, which funds critical military equipment for Ukraine;
    - : A \$43 million package of ADF materiel [tactical air defence, munitions, and combat engineering equipment];
    - : A \$2 million contribution to the Drone Capability Coalition; and
    - : Sanctions on 45 more vessels linked to Russia's shadow fleet.
  - We continue to assess options for further support, aligned with Ukraine's needs.
- . The ADF is undertaking a range of activities under Operation KUDU, including:
  - Training Armed Forces of Ukraine personnel under the United Kingdom's Operation INTERFLEX (recently extended to the end of 2026).
    - : This is provided by a rotational force of approximately 90 ADF personnel.
    - : Over 3,100 Ukrainian personnel have graduated from ADF-delivered training, and more than 56,000 Ukrainians have been trained under the wider Operation INTERFLEX.
  - In 2024, Operation KUDU was expanded to deliver training, logistics, and in-theatre support, participating in Support and Assistance Group – Ukraine (SAG-U) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU) initiative as an operational partner.
    - : Up to 50 ADF personnel are providing logistics coordination and support in Poland and Germany.
  - Operation KUDU is conducted with the consent of the host nations.

**Prepared By:**

Name: David Lewis

Position: Assistant Secretary Global Partners

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

- From July to October 2025, a Royal Australian Air Force E-7A Wedgetail aircraft deployed to Europe to help protect a vital international gateway for humanitarian and military assistance into Ukraine.
- : Under Operation KUDU, up to 150 ADF personnel deployed alongside the aircraft.

### Peace plan negotiations

- Australia supports all meaningful efforts, including those of the United States and partners, towards a just and lasting peace for Ukraine.
- We support efforts to achieve a peace deal that ends Russia's illegal and immoral war and safeguards security and stability in Europe.
  - A lasting peace should uphold Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and ensure Russia does not renew its aggression.

### Australia's position on the 'Coalition of the Willing'

- As the Prime Minister has said, we are proud to be part of multilateral efforts to help Ukraine resist Russian aggression.
- We are pleased to be working alongside key partners, as part of the 'Coalition of the Willing', to coordinate and strengthen support for Ukraine and advance efforts towards a peace on Ukraine's terms.
  - We are involved in planning efforts led by the United Kingdom and France.
  - It is premature to talk about specific contributions.
- As an active participant of the Coalition of the Willing, Australia strongly supports the Paris Declaration issued on 6 January and the robust security guarantees it would provide Ukraine following a ceasefire.
  - *[Note: this does not amount to a commitment for Australia to provide peacekeeping forces, or for Australia to provide security guarantees.]*
- Prime Minister Albanese spoke with President Zelenskyy ahead of the Coalition of the Willing Summit and was represented at the meeting by our Ambassador in Paris.

### Russian drone incursions NATO airspace

- We stand with Ukraine and Europe against Russia's dangerous provocations.
- Recent Russian incursions into NATO airspace are deeply concerning.
- Through this pattern of escalation, Russia is again making it clear it is not serious about peace.

### Bilateral Security Agreement with Ukraine

- We are currently exploring what areas of cooperation a bilateral security agreement with Ukraine could include.

#### Prepared By:

Name: David Lewis

Position: Assistant Secretary Global Partners

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

**Appointment of a Defence Attaché to the Australian Embassy to Ukraine in Kyiv**

- Since April 2025, Defence has had two Australian-based staff posted to the Embassy a uniformed Defence Attaché and a civilian Defence Counsellor.

**Australia's allocations for Ukraine support, breakdown by each financial year**

*[Handling note: refer further questions to Chief Finance Officer.]*

- The following table provides allocations for Ukraine-related activities (military assistance and operations) from Defence by financial year:

Ukraine support	2021-22 [\$'m]	2022-23 [\$'m]	2023-24 [\$'m]	2024-25 [\$'m]	2025-26 (to date) [\$'m]	Total [\$'m]
Military assistance	279.1	325.0	270.0	509.0	112.0	1,495.1
Operation KUDU	-	2.7	19.5	15.0	44.9	82.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>279.1</b>	<b>327.7</b>	<b>289.5</b>	<b>524.0</b>	<b>156.9</b>	<b>1,577.2</b>

**Supplementary funding received by Defence to cover the cost of Ukraine military assistance**

- Since February 2022, Defence has received \$212.90 million in supplementary funding for Ukraine-related activities.
- Defence has to date absorbed the majority of costs related to the provision of support and assistance to Ukraine.

**ADF equipment being sold on the open market which might have been gifted to Ukraine**

*Handling note: Refer more detailed questions on this topic to the Deputy Secretary Capability Acquisition and Sustainment.*

- Australia works closely with Ukraine to ensure we provide assistance that makes a difference.
- Defence is prioritising Ukraine as a potential recipient of surplus items, and Defence's disposals processes have been the source for significant gifting to Ukraine.

**Requests Ukraine has made of Australia**

- Australia will continue our strong and steadfast support for Ukraine. We will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes.
- The Government has received a wide range of requests from the Ukrainian government, including military equipment and engagement.
- It would not be appropriate to comment on the details of these requests.
- The Government remains in regular contact with Ukrainian counterparts, and all formal requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Prepared By:**

Name: David Lewis

Position: Assistant Secretary Global Partners

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

- We continue to assess options for further support, aligned with Ukraine's needs.
- Additional gifting to Ukraine from ADF stocks needs to be balanced against risk to our own sovereign capabilities.

#### Delivery of M1A1 Abrams tanks

- Defence has now delivered all 49 gifted M1A1 Abrams tanks to Ukraine [first tranche July 2025, second tranche December 2025].

#### ARH Tiger Helicopters to Ukraine

- Defence will continue to operate the Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter (ARH) until the capability is replaced by the AH-64E Apache.
- Defence has commenced end of service planning and has engaged Ukraine to understand its requirements and suitability of any gifting option.
- No ARH Tiger helicopters have been formally retired from service.

#### Default provision of retiring materiel to Ukraine

- The Government remains committed to providing military assistance, which is relevant, practical, aligned with Ukraine's needs, consistent with international law, and with no adverse impact on ADF preparedness.
- Not all materiel being retired or otherwise disposed would be appropriate or suitable for gifting to Ukraine.
  - Gifting requires comprehensive considerations around equipment condition, sustainability, export control, and logistics.

#### The Government's view on Ukraine striking targets inside Russia, including with Australian-supplied equipment

- Australia supports Ukraine's right to defend itself against Russian aggression, consistent with international law.
- It is Ukraine's prerogative on how it employs its force, providing it does so consistent with applicable law, including international humanitarian law.

#### ADF using Russian oil

- Australia has strict measures in place to restrict the importation, purchase and transport of oil coming from, or originating in, Russia.
- Regrettably, a number of countries do not have mechanisms in place to track and monitor all of their energy products.
- We are evaluating options to put further pressure on Russia's oil revenue.

#### Russia's links with China, Iran and North Korea

- We are deeply concerned by Russia's deepening cooperation with North Korea, Iran and China given the disruptive implications for global security.

**Prepared By:**

Name: David Lewis

Position: Assistant Secretary Global Partners

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

- The sizeable deployment of North Korean military personnel to Russia represents a dangerous expansion of Russia's war on Ukraine.
- Australia continues to call on China to influence Russia to end its war with Ukraine.

### Defence capturing lessons from Russia's invasion of Ukraine

- Like other countries, we are taking lessons from the conflict, including the evolution of capabilities and what this may mean for potential future conflict.
- This has included discussions with Ukraine – including in Kyiv – and with other close partners.

### Material and financial contributions

- The Government has committed a range of equipment for Ukraine from ADF stocks, including:
  - vehicles:
    - : 49 M1A1 Abrams tanks;
    - : 120 Bushmaster protected mobility vehicles;
    - : 56 M113AS4 armoured vehicles;
    - : 14 special operations vehicles;
    - : 28 MAN 40M medium trucks; and
    - : 14 trailers.
  - artillery capabilities:
    - : six M777 155mm lightweight towed howitzers;
    - : 105mm; and
    - : 155mm ammunition.
  - air defence systems and interceptors;
  - air-to-ground precision munitions and associated capabilities;
  - mortar, cannon and small arms ammunition and anti-armour weapons;
  - 14 Sea boats;
  - combat engineering equipment;
  - soldier equipment, including boots; and
  - de-mining equipment.
- Additionally, \$102 million worth of equipment has been procured from defence industry for gifting, and a further \$124.2 million in assistance provided via grants to credible partner-led funds, including the US-NATO Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List initiative (\$50 million), the United Kingdom administered International Fund for Ukraine (\$50 million) and the Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization Trust Fund (\$24.2 million).

#### Prepared By:

Name: David Lewis

Position: Assistant Secretary Global Partners

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

**Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements**

Date	Event
6 January 2026	France and the United Kingdom co-hosted a Coalition of the Willing leaders' meeting in Paris. Australia was represented by the Australian Ambassador to France.
5 January 2026	The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP spoke with President Zelenskyy by phone.
5 January 2026	Chiefs of Defence for the United Kingdom and France hosted a meeting with counterparts. The Vice Chief of the Defence Force attended virtually on behalf of the Chief of the Defence Force.
4 December 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Defence Industry, and Minister for Foreign Affairs <a href="#">announced</a> a \$95 million package of support for Ukraine, including \$50 million to PURL, \$43 million of ADF materiel, and a \$2 million contribution to the Drone Capability Coalition. The Ministers also announced sanctions on 45 more vessels linked to Russia's shadow fleet.
25 November 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister joined a call of the Coalition of the Willing leaders, co-hosted by France and the United Kingdom.
4 September 2025	The Prime Minister attended a call of Coalition of the Willing leaders, co-hosted by France and the United Kingdom.
25 and 28 August 2025	Defence Chiefs of the United Kingdom and France hosted a virtual 'Coalition of the Willing' meeting. Vice Chief of the Defence Force, Air Marshal Robert Chipman AO CSC joined both meetings on behalf of the Chief of the Defence Force, Admiral David Johnston AC RAN.
17 and 19 August 2025	The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP virtually attended the 'Coalition of the Willing' leaders' calls, co-chaired by France and the United Kingdom.
25 July 2025	In a joint statement, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Penny Wong, United Kingdom's Secretary of State for Defence, the Rt Hon John Healey MP and United Kingdom's Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, the Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP <a href="#">announced</a> Australia's extension of its contribution to training Ukrainian personnel under Operation KUDU to the end of 2026.
19 July 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Pat Conroy MP <a href="#">announced</a> delivery of the first tranche of M1A1 Abrams tanks to Ukraine.
10 July 2025	The United Kingdom's Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP hosted a 'Coalition of the Willing' virtual leaders' call. Australia's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, the Hon Stephen Smith, observed.
7 July 2025	Chiefs of Defence for the United Kingdom and France hosted a virtual meeting of 30 countries ahead of leader's meeting planned

**Prepared By:**

Name: David Lewis

Position: Assistant Secretary Global Partners

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

Date	Event
	for 10 July. The Vice Chief of the Defence Force attended virtually on behalf of the Chief of the Defence Force.
26 June 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs jointly <a href="#">announced</a> deployment of an E-7A Wedgetail aircraft to Poland from August 2025, along with 100 personnel, and new targeted financial sanctions and travel bans.
24 June 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister met the then Minister for Defence of Ukraine, Mr Rustem Umerov during the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Summit at The Hague.
18 June 2025	The Prime Minister spoke with the President of Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during the G7 Summit in Canada.

## Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
7 March 2025	SQ	<b>No. 726, Military Aid and Assistance to Ukraine.</b> Senator Jacquie Lambie (Jacqui Lambie Network, Tasmania) asked about third-party approvals for defence equipment gifted to Ukraine.	Tabled.
9 October 2024	PQoN	<b>No. 763, Disposal of Retire Military Equipment.</b> Rebekha Sharkie MP (Centre Alliance, South Australia) asked about the disposal of retired military equipment without it being offered to Ukraine.	Tabled
12 August 2024	IQ	<b>No. 5, Requests for Military Assistance.</b> Senator Raff Ciccone (Labor, Victoria) asked about the <b>process of receipt and prioritisation of Ukraine's assistance requests</b> through the Ukraine Defense Contact Group.	Tabled
5 August 2024	IQ	<b>No. 1, AIR 6502.</b> Senator the Hon David Fawcett (Liberal, South Australia) asked about advice to Government on Ukraine's need for air defence in relation to the project AIR 6502 Phase 1, Medium Range Ground Based Air Defence.	Tabled
5 August 2024	IQ	<b>No. 2, Tiger helicopters.</b> Senator the Hon David Fawcett (Liberal, South Australia) asked whether Defence consulted with Germany, France and the original equipment manufacturer, Airbus on options for delivery of Tiger helicopters to Ukraine.	Tabled

## Prepared By:

Name: David Lewis

Position: Assistant Secretary Global Partners

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

## Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

Date	Type	Title	Status
5 August 2024	IQ	<b>No. 3, 105mm artillery ammunition.</b> Senator David Van (Independent, Victoria) noted Australia gifted a range of equipment, including 105mm artillery shells, and asked when the ADF last used 105mm ammunition.	Tabled
5 August 2024	IQ	<b>No. 4, Export Finance Australia.</b> Senator David Van (Independent, Victoria) asked why Defence recommended against a loan for an Australian company to produce 122mm Grad rockets for Ukraine.	Tabled
5 July 2024	IQ	<b>No. 2, Support for Ukraine.</b> Senator the Hon David Fawcett (Liberal, South Australia) asked when the last time Defence had new funding to provide support to Ukraine and whether new funding would change Defence's calculus.	Tabled

### Relevant Media Reporting

Australian media outlets have reported extensively on Australian support for Ukraine, for example:

- On 24 October 2025, Sky News [reported](#) Ukraine's Ambassador to Australia had called for further assistance to Ukraine, including more Bushmasters, M113 armoured personnel carriers, and economic assistance.

#### Prepared By:

Name: David Lewis

Position: Assistant Secretary Global Partners

Division: International Policy

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

<b>Division:</b> International Policy	
<b>PDR No:</b> 5825-000485	
<b>Prepared by:</b> David Lewis Assistant Secretary Global Partners, International Policy Division Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 17 December 2025	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Bernard Philip First Assistant Secretary International Policy Division Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 27 January 2026
<b>Consultation:</b> s47E(d) Deputy Director Global Commitments	Date: 30 October 2025
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Hugh Jeffrey Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy and Industry Group	Date: 29 January 2025

**Prepared By:**  
 Name: David Lewis  
 Position: Assistant Secretary Global Partners  
 Division: International Policy  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**  
 Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

**PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - MIDDLE EAST UPDATE**

**Lead:** Hugh Jeffrey, Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry.

**Supporting:** Rear Admiral Jonathan Earley AO CSC RAN, Head of Military Strategic Commitments to support on Current ADF operations.

David Nockels, First Assistant Secretary Defence Trade, Regulation and Industrial Collaboration to support on Defence export control processes.

Bernard Philip, First Assistant Secretary International Policy to support on Australia's defence relationship with Israel.

**Context:** Conflicts in the Middle East and Australia's defence exports to Israel continue to attract strong parliamentary, public and media interest. Questions on the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion in response to the Bondi terrorist attack should be directed to the Department of Home Affairs. Questions on the State of Palestine, sanctions, United Nations votes, and compliance with international law, the Board of Peace and humanitarian assistance should be directed to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

**Key Messages**

- Australia is carefully studying President Trump's Board of Peace proposal.
- Australia welcomes UN Security Council Resolution 2803 on the Gaza ceasefire.
- Australia remains concerned by the potential for escalation of violence in the Middle East. Australia ~~and~~ has consistently called for dialogue, diplomacy and de-escalation.
- Australia deployed a liaison officer to the Civil-Military Coordination Centre in Israel on 24 October 2025.
- Australia has committed \$130 million in humanitarian assistance to support civilians in Gaza and Lebanon since 7 October 2023.
- Australia is a longstanding contributor to security and stability in the Middle East, including through our contribution to peacekeeping operations.
- Australia maintains modest defence engagement with Israel.
- Australia has not supplied weapons or ammunition to Israel since the Gaza conflict began, and for at least the past five years.

**Prepared By:**

Name: §47E(d)

Position: A/g Assistant Secretary Global Partners

Division: International Policy

Phone: §47E(d) &amp; §22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: §47E(d) &amp; §22

## Talking Points

### Board of Peace

- Australia welcomes President Trump's diplomatic efforts towards a sustainable peace in Gaza
  - including the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2803 welcoming the establishment of a Board of Peace.
- Australia is carefully studying President Trump's Board of Peace proposal.
  - Further information from the US Administration has been requested.

### Israel-Hamas

- Australia welcomes UN Security Council Resolution 2803 on the Gaza ceasefire.
- Australia welcomes the Israel-Hamas ceasefire and agreement to President Trump's peace plan.
  - It offers real hope for enduring peace in Gaza after years of immense suffering.
- We urge all parties to uphold the terms of the ceasefire and work towards implementing the plan in full.

### Australian involvement in the Civil-Military Coordination Centre

- Australia has always sought to contribute to international momentum for peace.
  - Since 7 October 2023, Australia has committed more than \$130 million in humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza and Lebanon.
- While Australia's strategic priority is supporting security and stability in the Indo-Pacific, we have a long history of contributing to peace and security in the Middle East.
  - Including to UN and other peacekeeping missions, and activities in the Red Sea.
- Australia welcomes the establishment of a Civil-Military Coordination Centre in Israel to support stabilisation efforts.
  - The United States invited partners to join this Civil Military Coordination Centre.
  - In response, Australia provided an ADF liaison officer to the Civil Military Coordination Centre on 24 October 2025.
  - The Australian Government has deployed liaison officers to the Civil Military Coordination Centre in Israel to support stabilisation efforts.

### Peacekeeping force in Gaza

- We have not received a request to contribute to a peacekeeping mission in Gaza.
- Australia will consider any formal request that may be received.

### Recognition of Palestine

- Australia has been a longstanding supporter of a two-state solution as the only pathway to lasting peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

#### Prepared By:

Name: §47E(d)  
Position: A/g Assistant Secretary Global Partners  
Division: International Policy  
Phone: §47E(d) & §22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
Phone: §47E(d) & §22

- . In September 2025, at the 80th session United Nations General Assembly, Australia recognised the State of Palestine.
  - Building on historic global momentum to break the cycle of violence.
- . Further questions should be addressed to Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

### Unrest in Iran and potential escalation in the Middle East

- . The situation in Iran and the region remains fragile.
- . All Defence personnel deployed to the Middle East, or posted to Embassies, are safe and accounted for. Their safety is our highest priority, and we make arrangements accordingly.

### ADF Personnel in the Middle East

- . While Australia's strategic priority is supporting security and stability in the Indo-Pacific, we have a long history of contributing to peace and security in the Middle East.
  - Including to UN and other peacekeeping missions, and activities in the Red Sea.
- . Refer to brief, ADF Operations Brief SB25 000731.

### Operation BEECH

- . Operation BEECH is Defence's support to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade led Government response to conflicts in the Middle East.
- . Operation BEECH has seen Defence support the assisted departures of Australians in 2023 (from Israel), 2024 (from Lebanon), and 2025 (from Israel).
- . In June 2025, Defence deployed two strategic airlift assets for passenger transport and a contingent of ADF personnel from the Army and the Air Force to provide support to Australians and their immediate families in the Middle East.
  - Two military assisted departure flights were conducted from Tel Aviv between 24 and 25 June 2025, evacuating a total of 147 Australians and their immediate family.
  - All ADF personnel and aircraft assigned to Operation BEECH have returned to Australia.

### Australia's defence relationship with Israel

- . Australia maintains modest defence engagement with Israel:
  - Australia's Defence Attaché position in Tel Aviv was established in 2018, with the first Defence Attaché commencing in the role in February 2019; and
  - a Strategic Dialogue between Australia and Israel has been held three times to date, (2019, 2024, and February 2025).

### Memorandum of Understanding on defence industry cooperation with Israel

- . Australia's Memorandum of Understanding on defence industry cooperation with Israel expired on 28 September 2024.

#### Prepared By:

Name: §47E(d)  
 Position: A/g Assistant Secretary Global Partners  
 Division: International Policy  
 Phone: §47E(d) & §22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: §47E(d) & §22

- The Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2017 to provide a framework for discussion on defence industry and innovation.
- The Memorandum of Understanding has lapsed.

#### Non-renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding on defence industry cooperation

- The 2024 National Defence Strategy calls for strengthened engagement with Indo-Pacific partners. This requires considered decisions on where Defence's resources are prioritised.

#### Is Australia supplying weapons to Israel?

- Refer to brief, Exports to Sensitive Destinations MIN/SEC/CDF Brief - 5825-000487.

#### Export of F-35 fighter jet parts and components

- Refer to brief, Exports to Sensitive Destinations MIN/SEC/CDF Brief - 5825-000487.

#### Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion

- The Australian Government has established a Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion in response to the Bondi terrorist attack.
- The Government has appointed Former High Court Justice the Hon Virginia Bell AC to serve as Commissioner, to report by the end of the year and to ensure this inquiry does not prejudice any future criminal proceedings.
  - The Royal Commission will provide an interim report by 30 April 2026.
- Further questions should be addressed to the Department of Home Affairs.

#### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
08 January 2026	Prime Minister: <a href="#">Press conference with reference to Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion</a>
22 October 2025	Defence <a href="#">Media Statement</a> on ADF contribution to the Civil-Military Coordination Centre.
09 October 2025	Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs <a href="#">Media Statement</a> on the Middle East peace plan.
11 August 2025	Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs <a href="#">Media statement</a> on the recognition of a Palestinian State.
30 July 2025	Prime Minister: <a href="#">Press Conference with reference to Palestinian statehood</a> .
25 July 2025	<a href="#">Prime Minister Media release</a> : Statement on the situation in Gaza.

#### Prepared By:

Name: **s47E(d)**  
 Position: A/g Assistant Secretary Global Partners  
 Division: International Policy  
 Phone: **s47E(d)** & **s22**

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: **s47E(d)** & **s22**

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: 5825-000486

Last updated: 03 February 2026

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey, Rear Admiral Jonathan Earley AO CSC RAN, David Nockels, Bernard Philip

25 July 2025	In the <a href="#">Joint Statement on Australia-UK Ministerial Consultations July 2025</a> Ministers acknowledged the security situation in the Middle East.
29 July 2025	Minister for Foreign Affairs <a href="#">Media release</a> : Israel/Palestinian Territories: Joint statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs – New York Call.
21 July 2025	Minister for Foreign Affairs <a href="#">Media release</a> : Joint statement on the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
20 June 2025	Foreign Minister <a href="#">Media release</a> : Australian Embassy in Tehran.
13 June 2025	Joint Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for International Development <a href="#">Media release</a> : Additional humanitarian funding to meet urgent medical and nutrition needs in Gaza.
10 June 2025	Minister for Foreign Affairs <a href="#">Media release</a> : Joint statement by the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom on measures targeting Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich.

## Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Released
30 October 2025	FOI	FOI 697/25/26 - All documents provided to the minister for defence and the minister for defence industry that refer to the Gaza conflict.  <i>Timeframe: 01/01/2025 - 30/10/2025.</i>	Ongoing
18 November 2024	QoN	No. 834 – Memorandum of Understanding with Israel on Defence. Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) requested release of the Memorandum of Understanding between Australia and Israel on Defence cooperation.	Tabled.
14 June 2024	QoN	No. 116 – Israel and Defence exports briefing notes. Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) requested all briefing notes for this Budget Estimates concerning Israel as well as defence exports.	Tabled.
3 June 2024	Petition	EN6122 – seeking the release of the Memorandum of Understanding between Australia and Israel on Defence cooperation.	Decision finalised.
15 December 2023	PQoN	Senate Notice Paper QoN No. 2963, ADF and Israel Defense Force. Senator David	Tabled.

## Prepared By:

Name: **s47E(d)**  
 Position: A/g Assistant Secretary Global Partners  
 Division: International Policy  
 Phone: **s47E(d)** & **s22**

## Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: **s47E(d)** & **s22**

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000486

Last updated: 03 February 2026

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey, Rear Admiral Jonathan Earley AO CSC RAN, David Nockels, Bernard Philip

		Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked a question concerning whether there were any ADF personnel on secondment or embedded, or in other ways involved with the Israeli Defense Force.	
--	--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

**Relevant Media Reporting**

Australian media outlets have reported extensively on the situation in the Middle East, for example.

- On 19 January, The ABC published an article by Matthew Doran titled [Trump asks Australia, Albanese to join Gaza 'Board of Peace'](#).

<b>Division:</b> International Policy	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000486	
<b>Prepared by:</b> Name: s47E(d) Position: A/g Assistant Secretary Global Partners Division: International Policy Division Phone: s47E(d) / s22 Date: 27 January 2026	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Name: Mr Bernard Philip Position: First Assistant Secretary Group/Service: Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group Phone: s47E(d) / s22 Date: 27 January 2026
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Hugh Jeffrey Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy and Industry Group Date: 29 January 2026	

**Prepared By:**  
Name: s47E(d)  
Position: A/g Assistant Secretary Global Partners  
Division: International Policy  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**  
Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2026 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - EXPORTS TO SENSITIVE DESTINATIONS

**Lead:** Hugh Jeffrey, Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy and Industry.

**Supporting:** David Nockels, First Assistant Secretary Defence Trade, Regulation and Industrial Collaboration.

**Context:** Significant public interest in Australia's defence exports and export control framework at a time of accelerated geostrategic conflict.

### Key Messages

- Australia maintains a robust and thorough export control regime, which requires each application to be assessed on its merits, in accordance with Australian export control legislation.
- Australia assesses the risk of potential misuse of goods and technology, including diversion, as part of its assessment process before the goods or technology leave Australia.
- A permit is refused if, on balance, Australia has identified an export that would be used contrary to the national interest.

### Talking Points

- Australia's defence export legislative framework addresses a range of issues including foreign policy, human rights, national security, regional security and Australia's international obligations including the Arms Trade Treaty.
- All extant permits are under ongoing scrutiny to ensure they remain fit for purpose.
- All export permit decisions to sanctioned destinations are made by the Deputy Prime Minister.
  - : A condition on all permits to sanctioned destinations is that exports are not permitted unless the relevant sanctions permit is obtained from both Defence and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- The Government has taken proactive steps to enhance transparency and public reporting arrangements with regard to Australia's export data. This data is available on the Defence website.
- Defence does not comment on individual export permits for legal, privacy, security and commercial-in-confidence reasons.

#### Prepared By:

Name: §47E(d)

Position: Acting Assistant Secretary

Division: Defence Trade, Regulation and Industry Collaboration

Phone: §47E(d) & §22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: §47E(d)

### Australian exports to the United Arab Emirates and Sudan

- The Australian Government condemns the atrocities and violations of international humanitarian law in Sudan.
- The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has imposed sanctions in relation to Sudan.
  - : It is prohibited to directly or indirectly supply, sell or transfer arms or related material to designated persons or entities in Sudan from Australia without a sanctions permit.
- The Australian Government is aware of reports of goods and technology being supplied to Sudan by the UAE.
  - : Extant permits undergo scrutiny to ensure they remain fit for purpose and in accordance with Australian export control legislation.
- Refer to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for further information on the Sudan and South Sudan Sanctions Framework.

### Australian exports to Israel

- Australia has not supplied weapons or ammunition to Israel since the Israel-Gaza conflict began, and for at least the past five years.
- Extant permits to Israel include a proportion that relate to ADF capability.
  - : Defence is committed to preserving and maintaining our military and law enforcement capabilities.
  - : To maintain those capabilities, items on occasion return to their original manufacturer for maintenance or repair.
- The Government has determined that no action is required for the majority of these export permits.

### Australian exports to Venezuela

- In the last five years, all exports with end-users in Venezuela have been exclusively for dual-use goods and technology.

### Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
17 December 2025	FOI	An individual requested a range of information and documents relating to the Gaza conflict.	Decision pending

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Acting Assistant Secretary

Division: Defence Trade, Regulation and Industry Collaboration

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

Date	Type	Title	Status
15 December 2025	FOI	An individual requested a range of information and documents relating to foreign work authorisations	Decision finalised
3 December 2025	QoN	No. 1004. Senator McKenzie (National Party, Victoria) requested a breakdown of current Part 1 and Part 2 permits by country.	Not tabled
3 December 2025	QoN	No. 1002. Senator Cash (Liberal, WA) asked several questions relating to F35 permits, including about export legislation, if parts made in Australia are treated differently to US parts, mechanisms for Australia to monitor end-use F35 parts and what other goods on the DSGI are considered the property of the US or a US company while in Australia.	Not tabled
3 December 2025	QoN	No. 1001. Senator Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales), requested the Department of Defence provide briefing notes on exports for the December 2025 estimates.	Not tabled
3 December 2025	QoN	No. 934. Senator Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked how many defence military goods permits are currently with the UAE.	Not tabled
3 December 2025	QoN	No. 933. Senator Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked if we have any current military export permits with Sudan. Senator Shoebridge stated there were nine active permits between 2017 and 2023, and then asked how many are currently active.	Not tabled
3 November 2025	FOI	An individual requested a range of information and documents relating to the export of F-35 ammunition.	Decision finalised
3 November 2025	FOI	An individual requested a range of information and documents on export permits to Israel from 1 September 2023 to the present. Initial decision finalised.	Undergoing internal review

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Acting Assistant Secretary

Division: Defence Trade, Regulation and Industry Collaboration

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

**Relevant Media Reporting**

- On 02 December 2025, Declassified published an article by Peter Cronau titled [Selling out our sovereignty](#)
- On 11 November 2025, Amnesty International Australia published an article titled [Australian Department of Defence directive on arms exports to Israel a win for public pressure](#)
- On 6 November 2025, NT News published an article by Remy Varga titled [Australia-Israel arms exchange: The complex reality behind government's denial](#)
- On 3 November 2025, The Nightly published an article by Andrew Greene titled [Australian military companies face new Israel ban as Department of Defence quietly tightens trade restrictions](#)
- On 31 October 2025, Amnesty International Australia published an article titled [A reality check Australia cannot ignore: UN Special Rapporteur's report exposes Australian Government's complicity in Gaza genocide through combat aircraft supply chain](#)
- On 25 October 2025, The Guardian published an article by Henry Belot titled [Australia's \\$20m 'iron fist' deal with Israel's largest arms company signed two weeks before UN genocide finding](#)

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Acting Assistant Secretary

Division: Defence Trade, Regulation and Industry  
Collaboration

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

<b>Division:</b> Defence Trade, Regulation and Industrial Collaboration	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000487	
<p><b>Prepared by:</b>                  s47E(d)                  Acting Assistant Secretary                  Defence Export Controls                  Mob: s22                  Ph: s47E(d)                  Date: 5 January 2026</p>	<p><b>Cleared by Division Head:</b>                  David Nockels                  First Assistant Secretary                  Defence Trade, Regulation and Industrial                  Collaboration                  Mob: s22                  Ph: s47E(d)                  Date: 22 January 2026</p>
<p><b>Consultation:</b>                  Air Commodore Graham Edwards                  Director General Aerospace Combat                  Systems                  Capability, Acquisition and Sustainment                  Group                  David Lewis                  Assistant Secretary Global Partners                  International Policy Division                  Strategy, Policy and Industry Group                  s47E(d)                  Office of the General Counsel - Defence                  Defence Legal</p>	<p>Date: 30 October 2025                   Date: 1 August 2025                   Date: 4 August 2025</p>
<p><b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b>                  Hugh Jeffrey                  Deputy Secretary                  Strategy, Policy and Industry Group</p>	<p>Date: 29 January 2026</p>

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Acting Assistant Secretary  
 Division: Defence Trade, Regulation and Industry  
 Collaboration  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - DEFENCE EXPORT CONTROLS (GENERAL)

**Lead:** Mr Hugh Jeffrey, Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Policy and Industry.

**Supporting:** Mr David Nockels, First Assistant Secretary Defence Trade, Regulation and Industrial Collaboration, to support on export applications and assessments.

**Context:** The ongoing conflict in the Middle East has renewed public attention on Australia's Defence exports and export controls framework. Defence will outline how Australia regulates the export of military and dual-use goods and services in alignment with our international obligations.

### Key Messages

- Australia takes its export controls obligations seriously.
- Each export application is assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine whether it would be prejudicial to Australia's national interests.
- A permit would be refused if, on balance, Australia identified an export would be used contrary to the national interest.
- Defence does not comment on individual exports due to legal, privacy and commercial-in-confidence obligations.
- The Australian Government has delivered on its commitment to streamline defence trade through finalising the implementation of generational legislative reforms that provide reciprocal national exemptions for AUKUS partners from our respective export controls frameworks.
- Defence is committed to ongoing engagement with AUKUS partners, industry, higher education and research sectors to support the implementation of the licence-free environment and further streamlining of international defence industrial collaboration.

### Talking Points

#### How Defence assesses export applications

- Defence undertakes a rigorous assessment on a case-by-case basis of each export application against the relevant legislation.
  - The legislated criteria considers foreign policy, Australia's domestic and international legal obligations, human rights, national security and regional security.
  - Consideration is also given to the nature and utility of the goods or technology for export, the parties involved, end-user and end-use destination, as well as contemporary information drawn from our diplomatic network, partners and allies, intelligence services and experience with exporters.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Emily Hall

Position: Assistant Secretary

Division: Defence Trade, Regulation and Industry Collaboration

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000488

Last updated: 29 January 2026

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey, David Nockels

- Part of Defence's assessment of export applications includes assessing risks around legislative criteria and determining, on balance, whether an export would be in the national interest.

### Exports to Sensitive Destinations

- For information on exports to Sensitive Destinations, please see brief SB25-000487.

### AUKUS licence-free environment

- The AUKUS export licence-free environment commenced on 1 September 2024, unlocking streamlined investment and reducing barriers to collaboration for Australian industry and our AUKUS partners.
- Through the AUKUS export licence-free environment, industry, higher education and research sectors in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States are now able to export most military and dual-use goods, technologies and services among and between AUKUS partners without requiring a licence. Examples include imagery equipment (e.g. thermal cameras and night vision goggles), most ground armoured vehicles, most manned aircraft, most communication equipment (e.g. radios), and most military production equipment.
  - 1 September 2025 marked the one year anniversary of commencement of the licence-free environment.
  - There has been strong uptake of the licence-free environment from industry, higher education and research sectors.
- Defence has prioritised stakeholder collaboration and co-design with industry, higher education and research sectors and other relevant government agencies.
- Defence continues to closely engage with industry, higher education and research sectors to ensure that the licence-free environment is implemented efficiently.
- Australia continues to work with the United Kingdom and the United States to ensure our respective national exemptions on defence export controls maximise licence-free trade among and between AUKUS partners, and allow for expedited decision making where a permit is still required.

### Excluded Technology List

- Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom each have an Excluded Technology List of goods and technologies that cannot be transferred without a permit.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Emily Hall

Position: Assistant Secretary

Division: Defence Trade, Regulation and Industry  
Collaboration

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: 5825-000488

Last updated: 29 January 2026

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey, David Nockels

**Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements**

Date	Event
1 March 2025	The new offences for the amended <i>Defence Trade Controls Act 2012</i> commence (six months following commencement of the amendments on 1 September 2024).
1 September 2024	Amendments to the <i>Defence Trade Controls Act 2012</i> commenced, creating the AUKUS licence-free environment.
6 May 2024	Part IXAA to the <i>Defence Act 1903</i> – Safeguarding Australia’s Military Secrets framework commenced.

**Key Information Requests**

Date	Type	Title	Status
8 December 2025	QoN	Senator Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) requested the number of current permits we have with Sudan	Not yet tabled
8 December 2025	QoN	Senator Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) requested the number of current defence military goods export permits with UAE	Not yet tabled
3 November 2025	FOI	An individual requested a range of information and documents on export permits to Israel from 1 September 2023 to the present. Initial decision finalised	Undergoing internal review
16 October 2025	QoN	No. 874. Senator Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) requested a breakdown of extant defence export permits as of 1 November 2025.	Tabled
16 October 2025	QoN	No. 803. Senator Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked about F-35 weapons parts coming out of Williamstown that have left Australia for Israel	Tabled

**Prepared By:**

Name: Emily Hall

Position: Assistant Secretary

Division: Defence Trade, Regulation and Industry Collaboration

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

Date	Type	Title	Status
16 October 2025	QoN	No. 804. Senator Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked what sovereign control Australia has over the US government and Lockheed Martin sending F-35 parts to Israel out of Williamtown	Tabled
7 October 2025	FOI	An individual requested correspondence and permit applications relating to the export of ammunition for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program	Decision finalised

<b>Division:</b> Defence Trade, Regulation and Industrial Collaboration	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000488	
<b>Prepared by:</b> Emily Hall Assistant Secretary Defence Export Controls Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 10 December 2025	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> David Nockels First Assistant Secretary Defence Trade, Regulation and Industrial Collaboration Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 22 December 2025
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Hugh Jeffrey Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry Date: 29 January 2026	

**Prepared By:**  
 Name: Emily Hall  
 Position: Assistant Secretary  
 Division: Defence Trade, Regulation and Industry Collaboration  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**  
 Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - AUKUS

**Lead:** Hugh Jeffrey, Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy and Industry.

**Supporting:** s47E(d) A/First Assistant Secretary AUKUS Advanced Capabilities, to support on capability progress, resourcing, industry, academia and enabling environments for AUKUS Pillar II.

Bernard Philip, First Assistant Secretary International Policy, to support on United States and United Kingdom defence relationships and United States force posture policy.

David Nockels, First Assistant Secretary Defence Trade Regulation and Industrial Collaboration, to support on export controls and technology transfer.

Sheridan Kearnan, First Assistant Secretary Strategic Policy, to support on Australian sovereignty policy.

**Context:** AUKUS Advanced Capabilities (Pillar II) is generating military advantage by converting cutting-edge technologies into timely, relevant capabilities.

### Key Messages

- Questions on nuclear-powered submarines or Pillar I should be directed to the Australian Submarine Agency.
- AUKUS is an enhanced technology and capability sharing partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- AUKUS partners are moving “full steam ahead” on AUKUS, recognising the importance of advanced capabilities development.
- Under Pillar II, AUKUS is delivering tangible benefit by leveraging cutting-edge technologies at a much faster rate than any one nation.

### Talking Points

#### AUKUS strategic rationale

- AUKUS Pillars I and II contribute to Australia’s Strategy of Denial in the Indo-Pacific.
- AUKUS supports partners’ capabilities, collective security and deterrence by:
  - building on decades of close defence, capability and technology cooperation between our countries; and
  - enhancing AUKUS partners’ collective capability edge over the coming decades.
- AUKUS Pillar II supports Australia’s capacity to rapidly convert disruptive new technologies into Defence capability.

#### AUKUS Defence Ministers Meeting

- Three AUKUS Defence ministers met in Washington D.C. on 10 December 2025 (EST) to reaffirm the shared commitment to the AUKUS partnership.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Matthew Flint  
 Position: Assistant Secretary  
 Division: AUKUS Advanced Capabilities  
 Phone: s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

- As our Defence leaders the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP, Secretary of War, the Hon Pete Hegseth, and the Secretary of State of Defence, the Rt Hon John Healey MP all state, we are committed to finding opportunities to strengthen AUKUS and inject pace and focus on delivery to ensure the long-term success of the AUKUS partnership.
- They discussed opportunities to further accelerate the delivery of advanced capabilities developed under AUKUS Pillar II, with particular focus on near-term warfighting objectives.

## US AUKUS Review

- President Donald J. Trump expressed his clear and unambiguous support for AUKUS during his meeting with the Prime Minister in Washington DC on 20 October, 2025 (EDT).
  - President Trump stated that AUKUS is “full steam ahead”.
- Defence welcomes the conclusion of the AUKUS review.

## AUKUS Pillar II achievements

- Our combined efforts are increasing the integration of advanced capabilities into AUKUS militaries and demonstrating our ability to work together trilaterally.
- Last year was a milestone year for AUKUS Pillar II:
  - AUKUS partners deployed artificial intelligence algorithms on an Australian P-8A Maritime Patrol aircraft for the first time in July 2025. The algorithm assisted processing of large volumes of anti-submarine warfare data from AUKUS partners’ sonobuoys and supported decision-making.
  - AUKUS partners deployed artificial intelligence technologies on robotic and autonomous systems to conduct intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and simulated strike missions against amphibious landings.
  - AUKUS partners developed and deployed autonomous and remotely operated uncrewed underwater vehicles to conduct intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions, protecting our critical underwater infrastructure.
  - Under the Maritime Big Play exercise series, AUKUS partners and Japan worked together at Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 25 to enhance the use of underwater acoustic communications to task an uncrewed underwater vehicle to conduct activities at sea.
  - AUKUS partners conducted the first Hypersonic Flight Test and Experimentation (HyFLiTE) test flight in July 2025. This flight included experiments that will underpin future development of AUKUS hypersonic technologies.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Matthew Flint

Position: Assistant Secretary

Division: AUKUS Advanced Capabilities

Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

## Enabling Environment and Technology Transfer

- The AUKUS partnership is driving reforms in all three nations to incentivise greater industrial cooperation, reducing trade barriers and cost of regulatory compliance.
- A key achievement to date has been the establishment of the AUKUS licence-free environment, which incentivises unprecedented, and more rapid, levels of scientific, technological and industrial collaboration and co-development between and among AUKUS nations' industrial bases.
- Since 1 September 2024, Defence industry, higher education and research sectors in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States have been able to export and supply most military and dual-use goods, technologies and services among and between AUKUS partners without requiring an export licence.
- As of 1 January 2026, there has been strong uptake of the licence-free environment from industry and research sectors:
  - Close to 540 Australian entities are enrolled in the AUKUS licence-free environment.
  - Defence has received around 1600 Notifications of Intent to Export, facilitating over \$280 million in licence-free exports from Australia to the US and UK.
- Defence continues to closely engage with industry, the higher education and research sectors to ensure that the licence-free environment is operating efficiently and to identify opportunities for further reform.

## Independent Private Sector Reports on AUKUS Pillar II

- Independent reports from think tanks and industry about AUKUS Pillar II demonstrate interest and engagement in Pillar II's future.
  - On 15 November 2025, the Business Council of Australia and the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) published a report titled '*Australia's AUKUS Pillar II Opportunity*'.
  - On 11 August 2025, the Australian Industry Group published a report titled, '*Developing Industry Capability and Partnerships for AUKUS Pillar 2*', which provides insights to support AUKUS Pillar II efforts.
    - : Defence sponsored this independent study through its Strategic Policy Grants Program and was consulted during its development.
  - On 25 August 2025, The Center for Strategic & International Studies published a report titled, '*The AUKUS Inflection: Seizing the Opportunity to Deliver Deterrence*'.

## Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator and AUKUS Innovation Challenges

- Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator (ASCA) is supporting the development of priority capabilities identified through AUKUS Pillar II – Advanced Capabilities.

### Prepared By:

Name: Matthew Flint

Position: Assistant Secretary

Division: AUKUS Advanced Capabilities

Phone: s47E(d)

### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry

Phone: s47E(d)

- ASCA and its partners, the UK Defence Innovation - Defence and Security Accelerator (UKDI-DASA) and the US Defense Innovation Unit (DIU), conduct the AUKUS Innovation Challenge, helping identify opportunities to harness commercial technologies to support advanced capability development.
- The second AUKUS Innovation Challenge, launched in March 2025, sought innovative solutions from industry and research institutions around the world to provide capability with a focus on undersea communications and control of autonomous systems.
  - Over 275 submissions were received, signalling the depth of innovation capability across all three nations.

#### Additional Partners

- In April 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister and his AUKUS counterparts announced that they had developed principles for additional countries to collaborate on a project-by-project basis, where there was a mutual capability benefit for the other country and AUKUS partners.
  - As part of this meeting, AUKUS Defence Ministers recognised Japan's strengths and stated AUKUS partners were considering cooperation with Japan on Pillar II advanced capability projects.
  - In July 2025, through Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 25, Japan participated in Maritime Big Play acoustic communication activities.
- AUKUS Pillar II remains a trilateral partnership. Any decision about involving additional projects or countries would be made on a trilateral basis.

#### AUKUS Advanced Capabilities Funding

- The 2023-24 Budget re-prioritised \$148 million over the forward estimates to 2026-27 of existing Defence resources to support Advanced Capabilities activities, as part of increased investment in Defence innovation.
- AUKUS Pillar II is delivered through the 2024 Integrated Investment Program. It also leverages the Government's investment of up to \$3.8 billion over the next decade in the Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator.

#### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
10 December 2025 (EST)	The Hon Pete Hegseth, United States Secretary of War, hosted the Hon Richard Marles MP, Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, and the Rt Hon John Healey MP, United Kingdom Secretary of State for Defence, for the 2025 Defence Ministers' Meeting at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., where they affirmed the shared commitment to the AUKUS partnership.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Matthew Flint  
 Position: Assistant Secretary  
 Division: AUKUS Advanced Capabilities  
 Phone: s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

Date	Event
8 December 2025 (EST)	The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Penny Wong, <a href="#">met with</a> the Hon Pete Hegseth and United States Secretary of State, Marco Rubio for AUSMIN 2+2.
4 November 2025	The Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Pat Conroy MP issued a <a href="#">media release</a> about the quantum clock trial that occurred in Washington D.C. as a part of AUKUS Pillar II.
31 October 2025	The Minister for Defence Industry gave a speech regarding Ghost Shark and AUKUS, which he referred to as the 'most advanced extra-large autonomous underwater vehicle in the world'. He also referred to the AUKUS Pillar II Maritime Big Play activity as an example of 'all three nations working together'.
20 October 2025 (EDT)	United States President Donald Trump expressed his clear and unambiguous support for AUKUS during his meeting with the Prime Minister in Washington D.C.

## Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Released
10 November 2025	FOI	An individual made a request seeking briefings Defence holds regarding possible participation, commercial or otherwise, from New Zealand or New Zealand companies in Pillar II of the AUKUS program between 1 January 2025 and 10 November 2025.	Yes.
7 October 2025	QON	IQ25-00044 Senators as part of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Private Briefing. The Hon. Allegra Spender MP (Independent, NSW) asked a question about fostering industry opportunities under AUKUS Pillar II.	Transferred to the Australian Submarine Agency.
26 August 2025	QON	QON No. 262 AUKUS Pillar II budget and key delivery milestones. Senator Jessica Collins (Liberal, NSW)	Tabled
2 July 2025	FOI	An individual made a request seeking information about "sunk prices and penalties" relating to AUKUS.	Decision Finalised

## Prepared By:

Name: Matthew Flint  
 Position: Assistant Secretary  
 Division: AUKUS Advanced Capabilities  
 Phone: s47E(d)

## Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

## Relevant Media Reporting

Australian and international media has reported extensively about AUKUS Pillar II.

- 15 December 2025, Defence Online published an article titled, [Autonomous Submarine Delivered to the Royal Navy](#), which reported the United Kingdom Royal Navy successfully controlled XV Excalibur, a 12-metre Extra-Large Uncrewed Underwater Vehicle, in UK waters from a remote operating centre in Australia.
- 12 December 2025, Australian Financial Review published an article titled, [AUKUS ministers discuss slimming down \\$368b security pact](#), which reports Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP and his British and American counterparts discussed narrowing the focus of Pillar II.
- 11 December 2025, Financial Times published an article titled, [UK says AUKUS pact must now focus on delivery after US review](#), which reports the Rt Hon John Healey MP, United Kingdom Secretary of State, said AUKUS must shift decisively to the delivery phase.
- 11 December 2025, Defence Connect published a podcast discussion with Peter Dean, Professor of Strategic Studies at the Australian National University, and Hans Tench, Leidos Australia Chief Executive Officer, titled [SPOTLIGHT: AUKUS, industry acceleration and the future of Pillar 2, with Peter Dean and Hans Tench](#), explored why Pillar 2 has been lagging and how political cycles in all three nations slowed momentum.
- 10 December 2025, the Australian published an article titled, [Full steam ahead on AUKUS](#), which reports Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP, did not say whether the review had proposed changes for a narrowing down of AUKUS Pillar II.
- 7 December 2025, UK Defence Journal published an article titled, [Building 'up to 12' new subs requires major Barrow expansion](#), which claimed Sir Stephen Lovegrove told MPs AUKUS Pillar II had become too diffuse and to reduce the number of trilateral projects.

### Prepared By:

Name: Matthew Flint  
Position: Assistant Secretary  
Division: AUKUS Advanced Capabilities  
Phone: s47E(d)

### Cleared By:

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
Phone: s47E(d)

2025-26 Additional Budget Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000857

Last updated: 29 January 2026

Key witnesses: Hugh Jeffrey, s47E(d)

<b>Division:</b> AUKUS Advanced Capabilities	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000857	
<b>Prepared by:</b> Matthew Flint Assistant Secretary AUKUS Advanced Capabilities Division Ph: s47E(d) Date: 17 December 2025	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> s47E(d) A/First Assistant Secretary AUKUS Advanced Capabilities Division Ph: s47E(d) Date: 19 December 2025
<b>Cleared by Australian Submarine Agency:</b> Tim Hodgson Deputy Director-General Technical Date: 19 December 2025	
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Hugh Jeffrey Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group Date: 29 January 2026	

**Prepared By:**

Name: Matthew Flint  
 Position: Assistant Secretary  
 Division: AUKUS Advanced Capabilities  
 Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Hugh Jeffrey  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Strategy, Policy, and Industry  
 Phone: s47E(d)

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - COMMONWEALTH BUDGET, BUDGET REFORM AND INTEGRATED INVESTMENT PROGRAM

**Lead:** Steven Groves, Chief Finance Officer.

**Supporting:** Air Marshal Robert Chipman AO CSC, Vice Chief of the Defence Force and Samuel Volker, First Assistant Secretary Budgets and Financial Services.

**Context:** This brief outlines current headline Defence budget metrics, background on budget reforms agreed in the 2025-26 Additional Estimates and key issues and trends in Defence funding over the coming decade.

Delivery of the 2024 Integrated Investment Program is occurring in a rapidly evolving threat environment and generating higher costs for projects. Capability delivery and pressures on the Integrated Investment Program have been topical in the media and at previous Senate Estimates. On 1 December 2025, the Government announced foundational reforms to Defence's capability development and delivery functions.

### Key Messages

- The Defence Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2025-26 outline key measures and decisions announced since the Portfolio Budget Statements 2025-26.
- The Portfolio Additional Estimates 2025-26 continue the implementation of the 2024 National Defence Strategy through investment in ADF's posture, capability and structure, with the Defence Portfolio increasing from \$56.6 billion in 2024-25 to \$60.9 billion in 2025-26, and further increasing to an estimated \$103.5 billion by 2034-35.
- A key movement in the Portfolio Additional Estimates 2025-26 is the re-profiling of \$2.0 billion from 2027-28 into 2025-26 for increased preparedness and capability acquisition.
- Other key measures in the Portfolio Additional Estimates 2025-26 include:
  - Further program support for the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program.
    - Establishment of a new executive agency within the Department of Veteran Affairs from 1 July 2026, focused on veteran wellbeing to deliver more integrated and connected support for veterans and their families, with funding of \$78.0 million over four years from 2025-26.
    - Support to the Papua New Guinea – Australia Mutual Defence Treaty of \$60 million over four years from 2025-26.
    - Establishment and sustainment of the Defence and Veterans' Services Commission for \$44.5 million over four years from 2025-26 to provide independent oversight and evidence-based advice to government on reforms to improve suicide prevention and wellbeing outcomes for serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force members.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Andrew Crosthwaite  
 Position: Assistant Secretary, Budgeting and Reporting  
 Division: Budgets and Financial Services  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Steven Groves  
 Position: Chief Finance Officer  
 Group: Defence Finance  
 Phone: s22

- On 14 September 2025, the Government committed an initial \$12 billion investment in the Henderson Defence Precinct in Perth, Western Australia. This new funding will ensure continued momentum behind this major project in support of AUKUS, and is a significant payment on a larger commitment in the order of \$25 billion across the decade.
- This announcement brings this Government's additional investment in Defence since 2022 to \$70 billion over the decade from 2025-26 to 2034-35, the largest increase to Defence funding made during peacetime.
- The ADF permanent workforce has seen the highest recorded growth in 15 years due to increases in applications received and improvements in recruitment and retention initiatives. Defence forecasts that improved recruitment and retention processes will continue to drive strong growth into the ADF over coming years. Revised estimates of ADF permanent workforce numbers and expenditure are included as part of the Defence Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2025-26.
- The 2024 Integrated Investment Program sets out the specific Defence capabilities the government will invest in, to enable the 2024 National Defence Strategy.
- Defence continues to deliver against the program of work articulated in the 2024 National Defence Strategy and support the 2024 Integrated Investment Program.
- Ongoing challenges in the 2024 Integrated Investment Program are driven by global supply chain pressures and capacity constraints in industry, both domestically and with overseas suppliers.
- To help address these challenges, the Government has announced major reforms including establishment of a new Defence Delivery Agency headed by a National Armaments Director, and centralisation of capability development functions within the Department of Defence to better deliver an integrated focussed force.
- The 2026 Integrated Investment Program is in development with release anticipated in the first half of 2026.

## Talking Points

### Key Facts and Figures

- In the Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2025-26, Defence's appropriation (excluding the Australian Signals Directorate, the Australian Submarine Agency and the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator) is \$58.1 billion for 2025-26 and \$248.7 billion over the Forward Estimates.
- Defence, the Australian Signals Directorate, the Australian Submarine Agency and the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator combined appropriation is \$60.9 billion for 2025-26 and \$260.0 billion over the Forward Estimates.
- The average total ADF permanent workforce for 2025-26 is estimated to be 61,711 and the average total APS workforce is estimated to be 19,863, as outlined in the Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2025-26.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Andrew Crosthwaite  
 Position: Assistant Secretary, Budgeting and Reporting  
 Division: Budgets and Financial Services  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Steven Groves  
 Position: Chief Finance Officer  
 Group: Defence Finance  
 Phone: s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: 5825-000490

Last updated: 4 February 2026

Key witnesses: Steven Groves, Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Samuel Volker

- Noting the strong growth in the ADF workforce, revised upwards revisions to permanent ADF workforce numbers and budget estimates are included in the Defence 2025-26 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements. The additional funding requirements resulting from this increase are managed as part of the overall Defence budget envelope through reprioritisation activities.
- The Defence portfolio appropriation is split across Defence, the Australian Signals Directorate, the Australian Submarine Agency and the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator. The breakdown of appropriation is provided in [Table 1](#) below.

**Table 1: Defence, Australian Signals Directorate, Australian Submarine Agency and Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator funding over the Forward Estimates**

	2024-25 Actual Result  \$m	2025-26 Budget Estimate  \$m	2025-26 Revised Budget Estimate  \$m	2026-27 Forward Estimate  \$m	2027-28 Forward Estimate  \$m	2028-29 Forward Estimate  \$m	Total Budget and Forward Estimates  \$m
Defence Funding	53,525.5	56,112.7	58,145.2	58,807.4	62,129.8	69,572.9	248,655.3
Australian Signals Directorate Funding	2,740.4	2,478.4	2,325.7	2,538.7	2,386.7	2,271.2	9,522.3
Australian Submarine Agency Funding	353.0	397.6	385.4	496.1	356.9	372.5	1,610.9
Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator	-	-	29.3	50.4	63.7	77.0	220.2
Combined Defence, Australian Signals, Australian Submarine Agency and Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator Funding	56,618.8	58,988.7	60,885.6	61,892.6	64,937.1	72,293.6	260,008.8
Percentage of Gross Domestic Product <sup>(a) (b)</sup>	2.04 per cent	2.03 per cent	2.08 per cent	2.05 per cent	2.06 per cent	2.17 per cent	2.09 per cent

**Notes:**

- GDP figures from 2025-26 Revised Budget onwards are as at 2025-26 MYEFO, released on 17 December 2025, as advised by the Treasury.
- The increase in the 2025-26 GDP is due to the re-profiling of \$2.0bn from 2027-28 to 2025-26 for increased preparedness and capability acquisition within the Integrated Investment Program.
- Totals may not add due to rounding.

- [Table 2](#) below provides a detailed breakdown of the 2025-26 Defence Budget measures and other adjustments since the Defence Portfolio Budget Statements 2025-26.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Andrew Crosthwaite  
 Position: Assistant Secretary, Budgeting and Reporting  
 Division: Budgets and Financial Services  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Steven Groves  
 Position: Chief Finance Officer  
 Group: Defence Finance  
 Phone: s22

**Table 2: Defence 2025-26 Budget Measures and Other Budget Adjustments**

Program	2025-26 Revised Estimate \$m	2026-27 Forward Estimate \$m	2027-28 Forward Estimate \$m	2028-29 Forward Estimate \$m	Total \$m
<b>Budget Measures</b>					
<b>Payment Measures</b>					
Guardian-class Patrol Boat to the Republic of the Maldives <sup>(a)</sup>	2.1	-	-	-	-
Supporting Defence Community Engagement <sup>(b)</sup>	Various	-	-	-	-
Savings from External Labour and Other Non-Wage Expenses <sup>(c)</sup>	Various	-241.0	-376.6	-437.7	-502.7
Papua New Guinea - Australia Mutual Defence Treaty <sup>(d)</sup>	2.1	-	-	-	-
Establishment of the Defence and Veterans' Services Commission	Various	-10.0	-10.4	-12.0	-12.2
Further Investment in Defence Naval Shipbuilding in Australia <sup>(e)</sup>	Various	nfp	nfp	nfp	nfp
Continued Defence Support to Ukraine <sup>(f)</sup>	2.1	-	-	-	-
Establishing the Agency for Veteran and Family Wellbeing	2.3	-10.7	-23.8	-22.9	-20.6
Continuing to Support Veterans and their Families <sup>(g)</sup>	2.12	-	-	-	-
Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program - Further Program Support <sup>(e)</sup>	2.16	nfp	nfp	nfp	nfp
<b>Total Departmental Budget Measures</b>		<b>-261.7</b>	<b>-410.8</b>	<b>-472.6</b>	<b>-535.4</b>
<b>Other Departmental Budget Adjustments</b>					
Operation KUDU	1.2	6.0	-	-	6.0
Foreign Exchange	Various	-200.8	-158.0	-150.4	-272.3
Other Budget Adjustments <sup>(h)</sup>	Various	2,457.3	633.6	-2,244.7	-1,067.3
<b>Total Other Departmental Budget Adjustments</b>		<b>2,262.5</b>	<b>475.6</b>	<b>-2,395.1</b>	<b>-1,339.6</b>
<b>Total Defence Funding</b>		<b>2,000.8</b>	<b>64.8</b>	<b>-2,867.7</b>	<b>-1,875.0</b>

**Notes**

- a. This measure provides \$31.7 million over five years from 2024-25 to 2028-29, which is being met from existing resourcing of the Department of Defence.
- b. This measure provides \$4.3 million for 2025-26, which is being met from existing resourcing of the Department of Defence and revenue from the sale of Airshow tickets.
- c. These measures relate to election commitments /savings identified in the 2025 Pre-election Economic and Fiscal Outlook and also in the 2025 Explanatory Memorandum to the Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2025–2026 and Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2025–2026.
- d. This measure provides \$60.0 million over the period 2025-26 to 2028-29, which is being met from existing resourcing of the Department of Defence.
- e. This measure is nfp due to commercial sensitivities.
- f. This measure provides \$95.5 million for 2025-26, which is being met from existing resourcing of the Department of Defence.
- g. This measure provides \$3.0 million over the period 2026-27 to 2028-29, which is being met from existing resourcing of the Department of Defence.
- h. Adjustments include the re-profiling of \$2.0 billion from 2027-28 to 2025-26 to support increased preparedness and capability acquisition within the Integrated Investment Program. Other movements include the re-prioritisation of funds for the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program (\$1.2 billion re-profiled from 2027-28 and 2028-29, to 2025-26 and 2026-27), and the transfer of Defence funding to support the operation of the ANNPSR (\$0.2 billion over the Forward Estimates).

**Prepared By:**

Name: Andrew Crosthwaite  
 Position: Assistant Secretary, Budgeting and Reporting  
 Division: Budgets and Financial Services  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Steven Groves  
 Position: Chief Finance Officer  
 Group: Defence Finance  
 Phone: s22

**Defence Planned Workforce for 2025-26 and Forward Estimates**

- Table 3 below provides the planned workforce forecast for the 2025-26 Budget and Forward Estimates.
- The average total ADF permanent workforce for 2025-26 is estimated to be 61,711, and the average total APS workforce is estimated to be 19,863.

**Table 3: Planned Workforce Forecast for the 2025-26 Budget and Forward Estimates - Average Full-time equivalent**

	2024-25 Actual	2025-26 Budget Estimate	2025-26 Revised Estimate (M)	2026-27 Forward Estimate (M)	2027-28 Forward Estimate (M)	2028-29 Forward Estimate (M)
<b>ADF Permanent Force<sup>(a)</sup></b>						
Navy	15,239	15,392	15,805	16,191	16,603	17,010
Army	28,050	27,773	29,056	29,685	30,445	31,169
Air Force <sup>(a)</sup>	15,858	16,208	16,850	17,469	17,794	17,834
<b>1 Total Permanent Force</b>	<b>59,147</b>	<b>59,373</b>	<b>61,711</b>	<b>63,345</b>	<b>64,842</b>	<b>66,013</b>
<b>Civilian Employees<sup>(a)</sup></b>						
APS	19,301	19,863	19,863	20,261	20,274	20,275
<b>2 Total Civilian Employees</b>	<b>19,301</b>	<b>19,863</b>	<b>19,863</b>	<b>20,261</b>	<b>20,274</b>	<b>20,275</b>
<b>Total Workforce Strength (1 + 2)</b>	<b>78,448</b>	<b>79,236</b>	<b>81,574</b>	<b>83,606</b>	<b>85,116</b>	<b>86,288</b>

**Notes:**

- All numbers for the permanent and full-time workforce elements represent average full-time equivalents.
- Revised and Forward Estimates reflect the budgeted workforce requirements for ADF and approved Government budgeted allocations for APS.
- The budgeted workforce requirement will be reviewed with each PB Statements and PAES.

**Defence 2025-26 Budget Summary**

- In 2025-26, planned Defence expenditure (excluding the Australian Signals Directorate, Australian Submarine Agency and Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator appropriations) includes:
  - \$20.2 billion for capability acquisition (34.05 per cent of the Defence budget):
    - : \$15.4 billion for military equipment;
    - : \$3.7 billion for facilities and infrastructure;
    - : \$457.1 million for Information and Communications Technology; and
    - : \$665.2 million for other capital equipment (such as minor military equipment and other plant and equipment).
  - \$18.9 billion for sustainment (31.8 per cent of the Defence budget):
    - : \$13.0 billion military capability sustainment;
    - : \$3.8 billion facilities sustainment; and
    - : \$2.1 billion Information and Communications Technology sustainment.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Andrew Crosthwaite  
 Position: Assistant Secretary, Budgeting and Reporting  
 Division: Budgets and Financial Services  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Steven Groves  
 Position: Chief Finance Officer  
 Group: Defence Finance  
 Phone: s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000490

Last updated: 4 February 2026

Key witnesses: Steven Groves, Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Samuel Volker

- \$17.6 billion for workforce (29.6 per cent of the Defence budget):
  - : \$13.4 billion military employees;
  - : \$2.9 billion civilian employees; and
  - : \$1.3 billion other employee costs (e.g. recruitment, training, removalists and other employee related categories).
- \$2.4 billion (4.0 per cent of the Defence budget) for operating activities and services including business travel and consumable items; and
- \$349.0 million for military operations (0.6 per cent of the Defence budget).

### Budget Reforms

- . The budget reforms generated through the 2024 National Defence Strategy aim to strike a balance between accelerating Defence capability delivery while simultaneously enhancing the levels of oversight, assurance and governance.
- . Defence continues to actively manage the 2024 Integrated Investment Program in accordance with the Government approved transition to a capped model for over-programming. This includes monthly reporting on over-programming to key stakeholders, including central agencies.

### Gross Domestic Product

- . The Gross Domestic Product percentage for Australia is calculated by comparing government funding (appropriation) for Defence, the Australian Signals Directorate and the Australian Submarine Agency with official Treasury forecasts of Gross Domestic Product. This methodology has been applied consistently since 2001 and was formalised through the 2016 Defence White Paper.

Defence has recently conducted an analysis to understand the types of expenditure included for the United States and NATO countries for Defence spend as a proportion of GDP. Differing interpretations and a lack of transparency in international calculations made comparisons challenging.

- . Australia's current methodology is restrictive in comparison with the United States and NATO as Australia partially calculates items such as military retirement's benefits and Defence housing compared to the United Kingdom and United States which calculate these items fully.

### 2024-25 outcome for the Integrated Investment Program

- . The outcome of the 2024-25 Integrated Investment Program was an overspend of \$40 million or 1 per cent. This comprised a \$312 million, or 1.7 per cent, overspend in the Acquisition Programs and a \$272 million, or 1.6 per cent, underspend in the Sustainment Programs.
- . This outcome represents a historically high level of expenditure across both the Acquisition and Sustainment Programs.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Andrew Crosthwaite  
 Position: Assistant Secretary, Budgeting and Reporting  
 Division: Budgets and Financial Services  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Steven Groves  
 Position: Chief Finance Officer  
 Group: Defence Finance  
 Phone: s22

- Most recent data shows that the Integrated Investment Program remains under significant fiscal pressure.

### Progress in delivering the 2024 Integrated Investment Program since the last estimates

- To ensure effective delivery of the Integrated Investment Program, the Government announced major reforms to the capability system, including:
  - The establishment of the new Defence Delivery Agency, integrating three existing Defence capability delivery groups: Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group; Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Group; and Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group. The independent agency will report directly to Ministers and have control over its budget, enabling coordinated and holistic delivery of defence capability and growth of sovereign defence industry.
  - A National Armaments Director will lead the new agency, responsible for advice to the Government on acquisition strategies, and the delivery of Government approved projects; and
  - The centralisation of capability development functions under the Vice Chief of the Defence Force, to enable rigorous prioritisation, streamlined decision-making, and clearer accountability for new capability proposals.
- These reforms will strengthen project and budget management, cost estimation and assurance across the life of projects.
- Since the 2025-26 Supplementary Budget Estimates hearing, a number of milestones have been achieved. These are listed in the timeline below.

### Management of the 2024 Integrated Investment Program

- Defence continues to deliver against the 2024 National Defence Strategy, while managing well-known challenges.
  - Cost uncertainty in developing innovative and sovereign capabilities.
  - Global supply chain pressures and industry capacity constraints, exacerbated by conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East.
  - Workforce availability and skills shortage in industry.

### Development of the 2026 Integrated Investment Program

- Through the development of the 2026 National Defence Strategy, Government will review ADF capability needs and resourcing.
  - Defence is prioritising resources to projects delivering the most critical capabilities and managing risks associated with project slippage.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Andrew Crosthwaite  
Position: Assistant Secretary, Budgeting and Reporting  
Division: Budgets and Financial Services  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Steven Groves  
Position: Chief Finance Officer  
Group: Defence Finance  
Phone: s22

## Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
19 December 2025	Multi-year deed signed with Google Australia to deliver secure and air-gapped hyperscale cloud capability for Defence's information and communication technology environment. This deed will support Defence's transition to modern cloud-based infrastructure under projects DEF 2222 and JP 9111.
17 December 2025	Final Operational Capability was declared for the block upgrade of Australia's C-130J Hercules fleet of 12 aircraft. Delivered under Project AIR 5440, upgrades to aircraft systems and safety-critical software and hardware bring the C-130J Hercules fleet up to the latest Block configuration (Block 8.1), enhancing capability, reliability, and mission readiness.
17 December 2025	Release of the 2025-26 MYEFO <a href="#">2025-26 MYEFO delivers a stronger budget   Treasury Ministers</a> .
5 December 2025	Announcement that Lockheed Martin Australia and Defence will commence production of Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System missiles at a new factory in Port Wakefield, South Australia by the end of 2025. The Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System missile is a precision strike weapon launched from the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System recently acquired under the Australian Army's long-range fires project.
4 December 2025	The Government will provide a \$95 million package of military assistance <a href="#">Australia stands with NATO partners in support of Ukraine   Defence Ministers</a> .
1 December 2025	Establishing the new Defence Delivery Agency <a href="#">Reforming Defence capability development and delivery   Defence Ministers</a> .
28 November 2025	Australia's first AH-64E Apache attack helicopters commenced flying operations in Townsville. The delivery of the Apache provides the Integrated Force with a lethal, connected and protected attack aviation capability that can operate across a range of land and amphibious environments.
19 November 2025	Announcement that HIFraser is the first Australian company qualified to supply parts for US Virginia class submarines through the Government-funded Defence Industry Vendor Qualification Program (DIVQP). The DIVQP is a key initiative under Australia's AUKUS Submarine Industry Strategy, accelerating the qualification of Australian products into United States and United Kingdom submarine supply chains.
7 November 2025	Opening of a new Kongsberg Defence Australia office in Newcastle as part of the \$850 million missile manufacturing partnership to produce the Joint Strike Missile and Naval Strike Missile in Australia.

## Prepared By:

Name: Andrew Crosthwaite  
 Position: Assistant Secretary, Budgeting and Reporting  
 Division: Budgets and Financial Services  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

## Cleared By:

Name: Steven Groves  
 Position: Chief Finance Officer  
 Group: Defence Finance  
 Phone: s22

4 November 2025	Defence has signed a contract extension with Raytheon Australia Pty Ltd for sustainment of the combat system for the Collins class submarines. Raytheon Australia Pty Ltd will provide ongoing in-service support for the Collins class submarine combat system following a 3 year and 9 month contract extension worth over \$270 million.
4 November 2025	Announcement that South Australian-based PMB Defence is partnering with BAE Systems in the United Kingdom to enable the potential integration of its advanced nickel zinc battery system into the design of the future conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines. PMB will also supply battery technology for other Royal Navy submarines.
1 November 2025	Establishment of the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator <a href="#">An AUKUS milestone - launch of the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator   Defence Ministers.</a>
31 October 2025	NUSHIP Pilbara, the third Arafura class Offshore Patrol Vessel, was launched as part of SEA1180 Phase 1. This is first of four being constructed in Western Australia at the Henderson Maritime Precinct.
20 October 2025	The Government will gift 4,500 sets of Australian-made combat uniform to the PNG Defence Force. <a href="#">Australia to gift Papua New Guinea Defence Force uniforms   Defence Ministers.</a>
6 October 2025	Australia and Papua New Guinea sign the Mutual Defence Treaty <a href="#">Australia and Papua New Guinea sign Mutual Defence Treaty   Prime Minister of Australia.</a>
29 September 2025	Defence and Veterans' Service Commission begin operation <a href="#">Independent Defence and Veterans' Commission up and running   Defence Ministers.</a>
14 September 2025	Television Interview with The Hon Richard Marles MP relating to the Defence Precinct at Henderson and GDP. <a href="#">Television Interview, ABC Insiders   Defence Ministers.</a>
14 September 2025	The Government will provide \$12 billion towards delivering a Defence Precinct at Henderson to deliver continuous naval shipbuilding and AUKUS in Western Australia. <a href="#">Additional Defence funding to deliver the Henderson Defence Precinct   Defence Ministers.</a>
4 August 2025	The Government is rebuilding the ADF – driving the highest recruitment in 15 years, slashing separation rates, and keeping the force strong at over 61,000 full-time personnel. <a href="#">ADF recruitment surge the biggest in 15 Years   Defence Ministers.</a>

**Prepared By:**

Name: Andrew Crosthwaite  
 Position: Assistant Secretary, Budgeting and Reporting  
 Division: Budgets and Financial Services  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Steven Groves  
 Position: Chief Finance Officer  
 Group: Defence Finance  
 Phone: s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: 5825-000490

Last updated: 4 February 2026

Key witnesses: Steven Groves, Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Samuel Volker

## Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
12 December 2025	QON	<b>No. 1016 Savings from external labour and savings from advertising, travel and legal expenses.</b> Written QON from Senator Jane Hume.	Not yet tabled
12 December 2025	QON	<b>No. 1051 Requests for additional funding.</b> Written QON from Senator Jane Hume on additional funding for operational expenditure.	Not yet tabled
12 December 2025	QON	<b>No. 1038 Movement of Funds.</b> Written QON from Senator Jane Hume on the ten largest movements of funds.	Not yet tabled
12 December 2025	QON	<b>No. 1037 Estimates Variations.</b> Written QON from Senator Jane Hume on the ten largest estimates variations.	Not yet tabled
12 December 2025	QON	<b>No. 1016 Savings from external labour and savings from advertising, travel and legal expenses.</b> Written QON from Jane Hume.	Not yet tabled
5 December 2025	QON	<b>No. 946 Military Retirement Superannuation.</b> Written QON from Senator Fatima Payman on the cost of military retirement superannuation included in the percentage of GDP calculation.	Not yet tabled
15 October 2025	QON	<b>No. 56 GDP Spend on Defence.</b> Written QON from Senator Leah Blyth on what percentage of Australia's GDP is now being spent on Defence.	Tabled
15 October 2025	QON	<b>No.57 Henderson Spending.</b> Written QON from Senator Leah Blyth on the \$12 billion Henderson announcement.	Tabled
15 October 2025	QON	<b>No. 58 Defence Budget on AUKUS.</b> Written QON from Leah Blyth on what percentage of Australia's budget is spent on AUKUS.	Tabled
15 October 2025	QON	<b>No. 85 Defence Budget 2025.</b> Written QON from Michaelia Cash requesting information on Defence spending.	Tabled
15 October 2025	QON	<b>No. 102 Savings from external labour and savings from advertising, travel and legal expenses.</b> Written QON from Senator Jane Hume.	Tabled

## Prepared By:

Name: Andrew Crosthwaite  
 Position: Assistant Secretary, Budgeting and Reporting  
 Division: Budgets and Financial Services  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

## Cleared By:

Name: Steven Groves  
 Position: Chief Finance Officer  
 Group: Defence Finance  
 Phone: s22

Date	Type	Title	Status
15 October 2025	QON	<b>No. 180 Requests for additional funding.</b> Written QON from Senator Jane Hume on additional funding for operational expenditure.	Tabled
15 October 2025	QON	<b>No. 167 Movement of Funds.</b> Written QON from Senator Jane Hume on the ten largest movements of funds.	Tabled
15 October 2025	QON	<b>No. 166 Estimates Variations.</b> Written QON from Senator Jane Hume on the ten largest estimates variations.	Tabled
9 October 2025	QON	<b>No. 43 Combined Defence, Australian Signals Directorate and Australian Submarine Agency Appropriation as a Percentage of GDP.</b> Verbal QON from Senator Dean Smith requesting an updated attachment on the combined Defence Portfolio appropriation as a percentage of GDP.	Tabled
6 August 2025	PQoN	<b>No. 98 AUKUS Program Expenditure.</b> Information sought from the ASA on AUKUS Program Expenditure.	Tabled

### Relevant Media Reporting

- On 15 December 2025, Shane Wright, The Sydney Morning Herald, reported [Midyear budget update: Jim Chalmers signals spending cuts to Defence projects and clean energy initiative.](#)
- On 11 November, Mike Foley from the Sydney Morning Herald reported [Remembrance Day: RSL president Greg Melick calls on Anthony Albanese to increase defence spending.](#)
- On 23 October 2025, Ben Packham from the Australian published an article titled [Defence orders brutal cost cuts.](#)
- On 23 September 2025, The Strategist published an article by Linus Cohen [How to count Australian defence spending as \(almost\) 2.8 percent of GDP | The Strategist.](#)
- On 15 September 2025, Phillip Coorey from the Financial Review reported [Anthony Albanese and Richard Marles' increase on defence spending a not so subtle nod to Donald Trump.](#)
- On 15 September 2025, ABC Listen broadcasted [https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/worldtoday/minister-refuses-to-reveal-defence-budget-/105774638.](https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/worldtoday/minister-refuses-to-reveal-defence-budget-/105774638)
- On 15 September 2025, SkyNews broadcasted <https://www.skynews.com.au/australia-news/defence-and-foreign-affairs/federal->

#### Prepared By:

Name: Andrew Crosthwaite  
 Position: Assistant Secretary, Budgeting and Reporting  
 Division: Budgets and Financial Services  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Steven Groves  
 Position: Chief Finance Officer  
 Group: Defence Finance  
 Phone: s22

[defence-spending-now-28-per-cent-of-gdp/video/09c067264a41542db1625910c8213719](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/sep/14/nato-military-spending-emissions).

- On 15 September 2025, Nina Lakhani from The Guardian reported <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/sep/14/nato-military-spending-emissions>.
- On 15 September 2025, Andrew Brown and Rachael Ward from The Senior reported [Defence spend boost 'not about appeasing the US' | The Senior | Senior](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/sep/14/nato-military-spending-emissions).
- On 15 September 2025, Poppy Johnston from The Daily Advertiser reported <https://www.dailyadvertiser.com.au/story/9065460/always-pulled-our-weight-pm-defends-defence-spending/?src=rss>.
- On 15 September 2025, Sky News reported [Labor refuses to put GDP figure on defence spending](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/sep/14/nato-military-spending-emissions).
- On 3 August 2025, Brett Worthington, ABC News, reported [TikTok and online games driving surge in Defence Force recruitment - ABC News](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/sep/14/nato-military-spending-emissions).
- On 3 August 2025, Matthew Knott, The Sydney Morning Herald reported [Ads on TikTok and online games drive 15-year surge in defence force enrolment](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/sep/14/nato-military-spending-emissions).
- On 14 July 2025, The Strategist published an article by Marc Ablong titled [Cost of Defence's roadmap for spending 3 percent of GDP on defence](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/sep/14/nato-military-spending-emissions).
- On 17 June 2025, Strategic Analysis Australia published an article by Marcus Hellyer titled [No hiding the gap between rhetoric and reality on spending](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/sep/14/nato-military-spending-emissions).
- On 2 June 2025, ABC News published an article by Jake Evans titled [US demands Australia lifts defence spending by \\$40b a year 'as soon as possible'](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/sep/14/nato-military-spending-emissions).
- On 29 May 2025, The Strategist published an article by Marc Ablong titled [The cost of Defence: ASPI Defence Budget Brief 2025-2026](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/sep/14/nato-military-spending-emissions).
- On 31 March 2025, The Strategist published an article titled [3 percent of GDP for defence is no stretch. We did 2.9 percent in the Cold War](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/sep/14/nato-military-spending-emissions) by Todd Newett.
- On 26 March 2025, Marcus Hellyer, Strategic Analysis Australia, wrote [Australia's 2025-26 Defence Budget: \\$59 billion, but the Government's still missing its moment](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/sep/14/nato-military-spending-emissions).

**Prepared By:**

Name: Andrew Crosthwaite  
 Position: Assistant Secretary, Budgeting and Reporting  
 Division: Budgets and Financial Services  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Steven Groves  
 Position: Chief Finance Officer  
 Group: Defence Finance  
 Phone: s22

<b>Division:</b> Budgets and Financial Services	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000490	
<p><b>Prepared By:</b>                  Andrew Crosthwaite                  Assistant Secretary, Budgeting and Reporting                  Defence Finance Group                  Mob: s22 [redacted] Ph: s47E(d) [redacted]                  Date: 20 January 2026</p>	<p><b>Cleared by Division Head:</b>                  Samuel Volker                  First Assistant Secretary Budgets and Financial Services                  Defence Finance Group                  Mob: s22 [redacted] Ph: s47E(d) [redacted]                  Date: 20 January 2026</p>
<p><b>Prepared by:</b>                  s47E(d) [redacted]                  Acting Assistant Secretary Investment Portfolio                  Force Design Division                  Vice Chief of Defence Force Group                  Mob: s22 [redacted]                  Ph: s47E(d) [redacted]                  Date: 15 January 2026</p>	<p><b>Cleared by Division Head:</b>                  Major General Matt Pearse AO                  Acting Head Force Design                  Vice Chief of Defence Force Group                  Mob: s22 [redacted]                  Ph: s47E(d) [redacted]                  Date: 23 January 2026</p>
<p><b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b>                  Steven Groves                  Chief Finance Officer                  Defence Finance Group                  Date: 27 January 2026</p>	
<p><b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b>                  Air Marshal Robert Chipman AO CSC                  Vice Chief of the Defence Force                  Date: 16 January 2026</p>	

**Prepared By:**  
 Name: Andrew Crosthwaite  
 Position: Assistant Secretary, Budgeting and Reporting  
 Division: Budgets and Financial Services  
 Phone: s47E(d) [redacted] & s22 [redacted]

**Cleared By:**  
 Name: Steven Groves  
 Position: Chief Finance Officer  
 Group: Defence Finance  
 Phone: s22 [redacted]

**PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – DEFENCE REFORM**

**Lead:** Nadine Williams, Head of Defence Reform Taskforce

**Supporting:** Chris Deeble, Deputy Secretary CASG

**Context:** On 1 December 2025, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Industry announced reforms to Defence’s capability development and delivery systems, including the creation of the Defence Delivery Agency.

**Key Messages**

- The Government will establish a new Defence Delivery Agency by 1 July 2027, with a singular focus on capability acquisition and sustainment.
- As an interim step, Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group, Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group, and Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Group will be brought together within Defence under a single organisational structure by 1 July 2026.
- Defence’s consolidation of capability development functions aims to better deliver an integrated, focused force outlined in the 2024 National Defence Strategy.
- A whole-of-Government taskforce, led by a Deputy Secretary from PM&C, is now developing a detailed implementation plan for Ministers to consider.
- In parallel, Defence continues to improve its approach to procurement and contracting.

**Talking Points****What structural reforms have Ministers directed Defence to undertake?**

- Throughout its first term, the Government directed a range of reforms to ensure Defence is better able to respond to Australia’s deteriorating strategic circumstances.
- The Government is establishing a new Defence Delivery Agency with a singular focus on capability acquisition and sustainment.
- The Agency will consolidate key groups – Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group, Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Group, and Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group – under one accountable body, reporting directly to ministers.
- As an interim step, these three groups will be brought together under a single organisational structure within Defence by 1 July 2026.
- Defence will also centralise capability development functions under the Vice Chief of the Defence Force to support clearer prioritisation, streamlined decision-making and accountability for new capability proposals ensuring capabilities support an integrated, focused Australian Defence Force.
- This is a large and complex reform that will be implemented in phases, with full implementation expected by 1 July 2027.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Andrew Byrne

Position: Deputy Head of Defence Reform

Taskforce Division: Defence Reform Taskforce

Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Nadine Williams

Position: Head of Defence Reform Taskforce

Group: Defence Reform Taskforce

Phone: s22

### Who is leading the implementation of the reform?

- A whole-of-government taskforce has been established to develop an implementation plan for the reforms.
- The taskforce, led by Nadine Williams, a Deputy Secretary from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, reporting directly to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Industry.
- The taskforce includes representatives from Defence, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and other key Government agencies.

### Why is reform necessary now?

- The 2023 Defence Strategic Review recommended a number of significant reforms to ensure Defence is better able to respond to Australia's deteriorating strategic circumstances.
- Government has funded:
  - Record spending on acquisition and sustainment.
  - With record funding, we need to ensure value for money.
  - The Defence Delivery Agency will provide greater contestability, improved project and budget management, cost estimation and assurance right across the life of a project.

### What are the benefits of the Defence Reform?

- The Government's record investment in Defence is driving a larger, more complex capability program. Reform is essential to ensure those capabilities are delivered on time, to budget and with clear accountability.
  - Fifteen years ago, 27 per cent of the projects we were delivering were rated in the two highest tiers of project complexity; today it is almost 60 per cent.
  - Over the same period, our acquisition budget across the major delivery groups has more than doubled, and it is expected to double again over the coming decade.
  - We are delivering resilient, sovereign defence industries in naval shipbuilding, guided weapons and explosive ordnance, autonomous systems and other sectors critical for Australia's national security, on a scale that is unprecedented since the Second World War.
- Defence should always be looking for ways to make sure we're the most capable, professional organisation we can be, and demonstrating value for money.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Andrew Byrne

Position: Deputy Head of Defence Reform

Taskforce Division: Defence Reform Taskforce

Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Nadine Williams

Position: Head of Defence Reform Taskforce

Group: Defence Reform Taskforce

Phone: s22

- These reforms will position Defence to:
  - Strengthen accountabilities for delivery;
  - Improve the quality of advice to Government on cost, schedule and delivery risk, and strengthen internal contestability; and
  - Create clearer career pathways and professional development opportunities for both capability development and capability delivery.

#### What work has the Defence Reform Taskforce done to date?

- On 1 December 2025, the Government announced the establishment of the Defence Reform Taskforce.
- Identifying for Ministers detailed implementation options for the package of foundational reforms. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Accountability mapping
  - The design and establishment of the Defence Delivery Agency
  - The strengthening of Defence’s contestation functions.

#### What industry and international engagement has been done to date?

- In addition to internal consultation within Defence Groups, the Taskforce has commenced stakeholder engagement with industry, international partners and union representatives.
- This includes industry Primes, Small and Medium Enterprises, State and Territory Representatives, and Peak Bodies and Associations.
- The Taskforce has also sought insights from the United Kingdom and Canadian National Armaments Directors to understand their experiences through the comparable defence reforms being undertaken by the UK and Canada.
- The Taskforce will continue to engage relevant stakeholders as the work progresses.

Date	Engagement
4 December 2025	Initial Briefing – Virtual Call: Industry Primes
4 December 2025	Initial Briefing – Virtual Call: Industry SMEs, State and Territory Representatives, Peak Bodies and Associations
4 December 2025	Initial Briefing – Virtual Call: Union Representatives
14 January 2026	Engagement with Canadian National Armaments Director
15 January 2026	Engagement with United Kingdom National Armaments Director

#### Prepared By:

Name: Andrew Byrne

Position: Deputy Head of Defence Reform

Taskforce Division: Defence Reform Taskforce

Phone: s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Nadine Williams

Position: Head of Defence Reform Taskforce

Group: Defence Reform Taskforce

Phone: s22

28 January 2026	Defence Reform Briefing – Virtual Call: Industry Primes
28 January 2026	Defence Reform Briefing – Virtual Call: Industry SMEs, State and Territory Representatives, Peak Bodies and Associations

**How will the Defence Delivery Agency differ from the Defence Materiel Organisation?**

- The creation of the Defence Delivery Agency goes beyond any previous reforms.
- In contrast to past bodies such as the Defence Materiel Organisation, the Defence Delivery Agency will have autonomy over its budget, and will be directly accountable to Government for delivering capability.
- The Defence Delivery Agency will also rebuild the skilled APS workforce, consolidating specialist project management and commercial expertise.

**How much will it cost to stand up the Defence Delivery Agency?**

- The whole-of-government Taskforce is working on detailed implementation options.

**Will these reforms result in job cuts?**

- As the Deputy Prime Minister said on 1 December 2025, when asked if there would be job cuts: "...those people who are working in those groups today will be those who give rise to the creation of the Defence Delivery Group, and in time, the Defence Delivery Agency. And it will be the same number of people."

**Will the reforms see some senior officers lose their jobs?**

- The new Defence Delivery Agency will integrate the three existing delivery groups.
- The Taskforce is working on detailed implementation design work.

**Procurement Reform**

- Defence continues to evolve and uplift its approach to contracting to simplify how we work with industry, reduce the time it takes to get into contracts, while maintaining appropriate levels of governance, to meet changed strategic circumstances.
- Focus areas include the modernisation and digitalisation of the Australian Standard for Defence Contracting (ASDEFCON) suite of tendering and contracting templates, rationalisation of policy guidance and resources to make mandatory requirements easier to understand and apply, and building and upskilling of Defence’s commercial workforce.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Andrew Byrne  
 Position: Deputy Head of Defence Reform Taskforce Division: Defence Reform Taskforce  
 Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Nadine Williams  
 Position: Head of Defence Reform Taskforce Group: Defence Reform Taskforce  
 Phone: s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: 5826-000040

Last updated: 28 January 2026

Key witnesses: Nadine Williams, Head of the Defence Reform Taskforce

**Facts and Figures**

- Approximately 38 per cent of the defence budget will be delivered by the Defence Delivery Agency.
  - There are 6,434 APS and ADF for the three groups delivering military equipment.
  - There are 2,645 contractors (as at March 2025 External Workforce Census).

**Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements**

Date	Event
01 December 2025	In a joint <a href="#">media release</a> the Minister for Defence and Minister for Defence Industry announced reforms to establish of a dedicated agency designed to strengthen and streamline acquisition and sustainment activities, Reforming Defence capability development and delivery

**Key Information Requests**

Date	Type	Title	Released
3 Dec 25	QoN	<b>No 929, Defence Delivery Agency.</b> Senator Henderson (Liberal, Victoria). Defence Delivery Agency and engagement with industry	Not yet tabled.

**Relevant Media Reporting**

- 02 December 2025, Michael Read, Australian Financial Review, [‘Marles launches biggest Defence overhaul in five decades’](#)
- 02 December 2025, Dana Daniel, Canberra Times, [‘Mega-agency in Defence overhaul’](#)
- 02 December 2025, Editorial, The Australian, [‘Turning hype into Defence gains’](#)
- 02 December 2025, Andrew Greene, The West Australian, [‘Shake-up of Defence must deliver results’](#)
- 02 December 2025, Ben Packham and Noah Yim, The Australian, [‘More bangs for bucks in ALP’s sights’](#)
- 01 December 2025, Olivia Caisley, ABC News, [‘Government unveils Department of Defence overhaul amid delays and cost blowouts’](#)
- 01 December 2025, Ben Packham, The Australian, [‘Marles poised to overhaul Defence Department to boost performance’](#)
- 01 December 2025, Matthew Knott, Sydney Morning Herald, [‘Government to scrap multiple defence agencies to fight massive blowouts’](#)
- 01 December 2025, Tess Ikononou, The Canberra Times [‘Defence set for biggest overhaul in decades’](#)

**Prepared By:**

Name: Andrew Byrne

Position: Deputy Head of Defence Reform

Taskforce Division: Defence Reform Taskforce

Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Nadine Williams

Position: Head of Defence Reform Taskforce

Group: Defence Reform Taskforce

Phone: s22

<b>Division:</b> Defence Reform Taskforce	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB26-000040	
<b>Prepared by:</b> Andrew Byrne Deputy Head Defence Reform Taskforce Defence Reform Taskforce Mob: s22 Date: 28 January 2026	<b>Cleared by:</b> Nadine Williams Head of Defence Reform Taskforce Defence Reform Taskforce Mob: s22 Date: 28 January 2026

<b>Consultation:</b>	
<b>Consultation and cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Chris Deeble Deputy Secretary Capability, Acquisition and Sustainment Group	Date: 6 January 2026

**Prepared By:**

Name: Andrew Byrne  
 Position: Deputy Head of Defence Reform Taskforce  
 Taskforce Division: Defence Reform Taskforce  
 Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Nadine Williams  
 Position: Head of Defence Reform Taskforce  
 Group: Defence Reform Taskforce  
 Phone: s22

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING PROGRAM

**Lead:** Cath Patterson, Associate Secretary.

**Supporting:** Chris Crozier, Chief Information Officer to support on program delivery.

**Context:** Defence successfully delivered Tranche 1B Foundation of the Defence Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) program on 12 May 2025. Tranche 1B Foundation was originally scheduled for delivery in October 2024. On 1 October 2024, Defence announced the deferral of Tranche 1B Foundation to allow for additional testing and assurance, attracting media interest.

### Key Messages

- The Defence Enterprise Resource Planning Program reinforces the Government's commitment to improving Defence enterprise business processes by implementing reform to maximise business commonality and effectiveness.
- On 12 May 2025, the ERP Program achieved a significant milestone with the successful Go Live for Tranche 1B Main, delivering capability for finance, procurement, supply chain management, and land maintenance and engineering.
- Following three months of Hypercare to bed the new system into production, the project transitioned into sustainment on 12 August 2025 and final project closure activities were completed on 29 August 2025.
- The ERP Program successfully deployed scheduled enhancement releases to the T1B foundation in November and December 2025.
- Upcoming activities include finalising Tranche 1B enhancements and progressing delivery of the Tranche 3 scope, which includes a platform upgrade.

### Talking Points

- The Enterprise Resource Planning Program (the Program) is standardising business processes across key Defence functions, replacing ageing systems and integrating processes into one Enterprise Resource Planning solution.
- Defence is delivering the Program through multiple releases, as part of three tranches, over the life of the Program. Defence strategic priorities have determined the order in which systems and processes will be replaced.
- On 12 May 2025, the Program successfully delivered Tranche 1B Foundation, aligning finance, procurement, supply chain management and foundation maintenance and engineering, within the Enterprise Resource Planning solution.
- Tranche 1B Foundation is Defence's fifth capability release for the Program.
- This capability release replaces nine systems in use across Defence, and interfaces with a further 22 systems.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Commodore Marcus Buttler RAN  
Position: Deputy Program Director  
Division: Enterprise Resource Planning  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Chris Crozier  
Position: Chief Information Officer  
Group: Defence Digital  
Phone: s47E(d)

## Tranche 1B Foundation deferral

- Tranche 1B Foundation was originally scheduled to Go Live in October 2024.
- During the final dress rehearsal activity conducted in August 2024, Defence identified inconsistencies between Enterprise Resource Planning and ROMAN, Defence's previous financial management system, resulting in variances in financial data reconciliation.
- Following a comprehensive review of options for the new Tranche 1B Foundation Go Live, and after balancing organisational priorities, risks, and costs, the Defence Committee, in November 2024, endorsed a revised timeline for Go Live in Quarter 2, 2025.
- Financial data variances were remediated through a reset/reload activity, which concluded in February 2025.
- A subsequent dress rehearsal was completed on 14 March 2025 and User Acceptance Testing and Regression Testing was completed on 21 March 2025. With the strong exit from testing, where every data object was fully reconciled, functionally, technically and signed-off by Groups and Services, the Program proceeded towards Go Live.
- On 15 April 2025, the Tranche 1B Foundation received a 'Go' decision from the Enterprise Resource Planning Go Live Review Committee, providing the approval to load all data, activate the required interfaces and allow users into the system on 12 May 2025.
- Cutover activities commenced on 17 April 2025 to transition Defence data from legacy systems into the new Enterprise Resource Planning solution.
- On 12 May 2025, the Program delivered Tranche 1B Foundation.

## Tranche 1B Hypercare Period and transition to sustainment

- Post Tranche 1B Foundation Go Live, Defence entered a three month long Hypercare period to provide heightened support for Defence users.
  - A Tranche 1B Command Centre was established to coordinate cutover and Hypercare support.
  - Online user support channels were well utilised and onsite support teams were available at 19 sites across the country, providing direct support and delivering ad hoc demonstrations to user groups.
- During the Tranche 1B Hypercare period it was observed that goods receipting and invoice payments required heightened business support, communication and technical change.
- This support was required to resolve a backlog in goods receipting activities, improve user awareness and competency, and reduce impacts on industry due to delayed invoice payments.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Commodore Marcus Buttler RAN

Position: Deputy Program Director

Division: Enterprise Resource Planning

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Chris Crozier

Position: Chief Information Officer

Group: Defence Digital

Phone: s47E(d)

- The Tranche 1B Hypercare period concluded on 12 August 2025, with operation and service support responsibilities transferring to Defence's Enterprise Resource Planning Support Organisation and Business Operations Centre for ongoing sustainment.
- Since its release, Tranche 1B Foundation has been stable.

### Current Activities and Next Steps

- The Program is progressing delivery of Tranche 3 scope. Tranche 3 expands on the capability delivered in Tranches 1 and 2 and will deliver new capability to complete the ERP solution. Capabilities to be delivered as part of Tranche 3 include, human resources, financial process controls, budgeting and planning, and expands on procurement, logistics, inventory optimisation, engineering, maintenance, project management and force planning capabilities.
  - The Tranche 3 ERP platform upgrade will upgrade the ERP solution to ensure an optimised technical platform foundation for future releases.
  - Tranche 3 ERP Human Resources Capability Enhancement will deliver enhancements to the Performance and Goals solution, and align current Force Element data to the human resources target state organisational structure and architecture.
  - Tranche 3 ERP Foundation Capability Enhancement Project will deliver enhancements to the ERP Foundation and Case Management solutions, including implementation for the Australian Submarine Agency and Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator, Youth Protection incidents and cases, and integration with One Defence Data.
  - The Complex Maintenance and Engineering Project will deliver an Asset Management solution for complex requirements, mainly in the aviation and maritime domains, building on the foundation established by Tranche 1B.

### Enterprise Resource Planning Program releases to date

- Tranche 1 Release 1A Financial Foundation achieved Go Live in December 2020, providing an enhanced financial reporting capability to Defence.
- Tranche 1B For Element and Tranche 3 Release 1A Performance and Goals delivered the introduction of Force Element and Goals to an initial cohort of Defence Australian Public Servants on 27 November 2023.
- Tranche 2 Case Management Solution achieved Go Live on 27 May 2024, introducing a simplified, integrated and standardised case management system. The Program also delivered the Tranche 3 Release 1A Performance and Goals to the full cohort of Defence Australian Public Servants in this release.
- Tranche 3 Release 1B was delivered as scheduled on 21 October 2024, extending the user base for the performance feedback solution to Australian Defence Force members.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Commodore Marcus Buttler RAN

Position: Deputy Program Director

Division: Enterprise Resource Planning

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Chris Crozier

Position: Chief Information Officer

Group: Defence Digital

Phone: s47E(d)

- Tranche 1B Foundation achieved Go Live on 12 May 2025, delivering capability for finance, procurement, supply chain management, and land maintenance and engineering.
- The Tranche 1B Foundation Hypercare period concluded on 12 August 2025. Operation and service support responsibilities have transferred to Defence's ERP support organisations for ongoing sustainment.
- On 1 November 2025, the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator ERP implementation went live.
- On 3 November 2025, the Australian Submarine Agency ERP implementation went live.

### Program Finances

- The total estimated expenditure over the life of the Program is approximately \$3.5 b, subject to Government approval.
- Defence will continue to update Government on the Program.

### Timeline of Tranche 1B Major Events

Date	Event
29 August 2025	Final Project Closure activities completed.
12 August 2025	Tranche 1B transition to sustainment.
12 May 2025	Delivery of Tranche 1B Foundation to the whole of Defence.
April 2025	Defence commenced cutover for Tranche 1B Foundation.
March 2025	Defence commenced Tranche 1B Foundation User Acceptance Testing.
February 2025	Defence commenced Tranche 1B Foundation Dress Rehearsal 3.
November 2024	Defence Committee endorsed a revised timeline to Go Live in Quarter 2, 2025.
October 2024	Original Tranche 1B Foundation Go Live Date.
August 2024	Final Dress rehearsal for Tranche 1B Foundation.

### Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Released
On 12 December 2024	FOI	A media organisation sought access to the last three Gateway Reviews and the last Independent Assurance Review for the Enterprise Resource Planning program. Access was refused.	Access was refused.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Commodore Marcus Buttler RAN  
 Position: Deputy Program Director  
 Division: Enterprise Resource Planning  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Chris Crozier  
 Position: Chief Information Officer  
 Group: Defence Digital  
 Phone: s47E(d)

10 December 2024	FOI	An individual sought purchasing contracts and their amendments for three contract notices published on AusTender, under the Enterprise Resource Planning program. Access was refused.	Access was refused.
27 September 2024	FOI	A media organisation sought access to documents related to the Defence Enterprise Resource Planning Transformation Project.	Access was refused.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- On 15 July 2025, The Mandarin published an article by Julian Bajkowski titled [Audit season opens: ANAO sets sights on Defence ERP, ATO data risks and Finance's digital frameworks](#).
- On 29 May 2025, InnovationAus published an article by Justin Hendry titled [Second time's a charm for Defence ERP switchover](#).
- On 22 May 2025, The Canberra Times published an article by Connor Pearce titled [Defence scraps contract oversight system without any replacement](#).
- On 18 March 2025, InnovationAus published an article by Justin Hendry titled [Defence preps second ERP cutover attempt as IBM costs mount](#).

#### Prepared By:

Name: Commodore Marcus Buttler RAN  
 Position: Deputy Program Director  
 Division: Enterprise Resource Planning  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Chris Crozier  
 Position: Chief Information Officer  
 Group: Defence Digital  
 Phone: s47E(d)

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026  
 Last updated: 15 January 2026  
 Key witnesses: Cath Patterson, Chris Crozier

PDR No: SB25-000492

<b>Division:</b> Enterprise Resource Planning Division	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000492	
<b>Prepared by:</b> Commodore Marcus Buttler RAN Deputy Program Director Enterprise Resource Planning Division Mob: s22 [REDACTED] Ph: s47E(d) [REDACTED] Date: 13 January 2026	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Steven Hamilton First Assistant Secretary Enterprise Resource Planning Mob: s22 [REDACTED] Ph: s47E(d) [REDACTED] Date: 13 January 2026
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Chris Crozier Chief Information Officer Defence Digital Group Date: 13 January 2026	

**Prepared By:**  
 Name: Commodore Marcus Buttler RAN  
 Position: Deputy Program Director  
 Division: Enterprise Resource Planning  
 Phone: s47E(d) [REDACTED] / s22 [REDACTED]

**Cleared By:**  
 Name: Chris Crozier  
 Position: Chief Information Officer  
 Group: Defence Digital  
 Phone: s47E(d) [REDACTED]

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – AFGHANISTAN INQUIRY COMPENSATION SCHEME

**Lead:** Admiral David Johnston AC RAN, Chief of the Defence Force.

**Supporting:** Ms Cath Patterson, Associate Secretary to support on the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Advocate.

Rear Admiral Brett Wolski AM RAN, Head Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force to support on the compensation process.

Francesca Rush, Chief Counsel to support on the legal aspects of the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme regulations.

**Context:** On 18 July 2024, the Government established the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme (the Scheme). The Scheme is limited to matters identified by the Afghanistan Inquiry where credible information of alleged property damage, unlawful assault and unlawful killing by ADF members while on operations in Afghanistan during the period between 2005 and 2016.

### Key Messages

- The Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme was established under the Defence (*Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme*) Regulations 2024, which fulfilled 15 recommendations made in the Afghanistan Inquiry Report.
- By entrenching the Scheme in law, it is the first of its kind among coalition partners and demonstrates the Government's commitment to the payment of compensation to claimants.
- Afghanistan is a logistically, culturally, and politically complex operational environment and there are significant international policy and humanitarian considerations regarding the provision of compensation.
- Defence continues to engage with a range of individuals, government and non-government organisations to promote the existence of the Scheme.
- As at 16 December 2025, the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme has received 93 applications for compensation, of which 43 have been closed as they do not meet the criteria set out in the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme Regulations, and the remainder are under consideration.
- As at 16 December 2025, six referrals have been made to the independent Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Advocate.
- Defence is unable to comment on the specifics of individual cases in order to protect the personal privacy and safety of claimants.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Rear Admiral Brett Wolski AM  
Position: Head Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force  
Division: Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Cath Patterson  
Position: Associate Secretary  
Phone: s47E(d)

## Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme Outreach

- . Defence continues to engage with a range of individuals, government and non-government organisations to promote the existence of the Scheme.
- . Outreach to date has included correspondence and/or meetings with entities both in Australia and overseas, including:
  - the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, including the Special Representative on Afghanistan in Doha;
  - six non-government organisations; and
  - four individuals with relevant backgrounds.
- . The primary objective of this outreach has been to seek support in raising awareness of the Scheme and the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme website with potential claimants.
- . These third party dealings are deliberative and confidential in nature.
  - In some cases, organisations will only interact with Defence on a confidential basis.
- . Defence remains open to other avenues to contact potential claimants.

## Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme Website

- . On 21 November 2024, the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme website went live, and this has seen an increase in public awareness of the scheme.
- . The website provides information about the Scheme in English, Dari, and Pashto and details how prospective claimants, and/or their authorised representatives, can submit a claim. As at 16 December 2025, the website has received 1682 visitors.

## Actions by Defence on applications and referrals

- . As at 16 December 2025, the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme has received 93 applications for compensation.
  - 43 have been closed as they do not meet the criteria set out in the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme Regulations.
  - The remainder are under consideration.
- . Defence is also taking action to advance the intent of the Scheme, and conducting a review of relevant matters in the Afghanistan Inquiry report to self-initiate claims on behalf of eligible recipients.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Rear Admiral Brett Wolski AM  
Position: Head Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force  
Division: Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Cath Patterson  
Position: Associate Secretary  
Phone: s47E(d)

- . A total of six claims have been referred to the independent Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Advocate.
  - All six referrals remain under consideration by the Advocate.
  - The Chief of the Defence Force has directed that Defence share information with the Advocate to assist her in performing her functions. However, the Advocate's deliberations are independent of Defence.
- . Timeframes for the compensation process will be determined by the unique circumstances of each claim, and the significant practical and logistical considerations that need to be worked through due to the geopolitical situation in Afghanistan.
- . Defence is unable to comment on the specifics of individual cases in order to protect the personal privacy and safety of claimants.

### Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme interaction with other schemes

- . Individuals affected by decisions made under the Scheme may make a complaint to Defence.
  - If a person is not satisfied with the way the Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force handles the complaint, they may lodge a complaint with the Commonwealth Ombudsman.
- . The Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme is separate to any other financial, legal or regulatory mechanism that the person may have access to according to their particular circumstances, which will vary.
  - For example, individuals may pursue recourse under another discretionary scheme, such as the Act of Grace mechanism.

### Compensation Scheme Process

- . The Chief of the Defence Force may refer a claim to the Advocate if that claim satisfies the regulations' criteria.
- . Prior to referring a claim to the Advocate, the Chief of the Defence Force must be satisfied that the claimant is:
  - reasonably likely to be the victim of an assault or property damage, or a family member of a victim of unlawful killing;
  - not reasonably likely to be a member of a terrorist organisation; and
  - not a sanctioned person and not reasonably likely to act on behalf of, or at the direction of, a sanctioned entity.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Rear Admiral Brett Wolski AM  
Position: Head Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force  
Division: Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Cath Patterson  
Position: Associate Secretary  
Phone: s47E(d)

- The assault, property damage or unlawful killing must be substantiated by credible information, verified by the Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force (Afghanistan Inquiry).
- The Advocate's role is to:
  - Consider claims for compensation following their referral by the Chief of the Defence Force.
  - Make recommendations on appropriate actions to the Chief of the Defence Force.
- The Advocate's functions do not include undertaking an inquiry or investigation as to whether there has been an unlawful killing, assault or property damage, or whether any offence under Australian law has been committed.
- The Advocate must consult with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and may consult other relevant experts, prior to making recommendations to the Chief of the Defence Force.
- The Chief of the Defence Force may act in accordance with the Advocate's recommendation, or take a different action in response to the claim.
- Compensation provided under the Scheme may include monetary compensation, non-monetary compensation and/or a letter of apology or acknowledgment.
- Decisions to pay compensation exist separate to court processes.

#### Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Advocate Activities

- The Deputy Prime Minister announced the appointment of the Hon Ruth McColl AO as the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Advocate on 21 November 2024. The Advocate's appointment is for a period of two years.
- The Advocate's deliberations are independent of Defence.

#### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
21 November 2024	The <a href="#">Deputy Prime Minister announced</a> the appointment of the Hon Ruth McColl AO as the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Advocate.
12 September 2024	The <a href="#">Deputy Prime Minister announced</a> the establishment of the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme under regulations in the House of Representatives.

##### Prepared By:

Name: Rear Admiral Brett Wolski AM  
 Position: Head Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force  
 Division: Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

##### Cleared By:

Name: Cath Patterson  
 Position: Associate Secretary  
 Phone: s47E(d)

19 July 2024	The Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme commenced.
18 July 2024	The Governor-General signed off on regulations establishing the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme.
19 November 2020	The Afghanistan Inquiry report was released, and included 15 recommendations for compensation to alleged victims of war crimes.

## Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
15 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 79, Breakdown of Applications to the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme.</b> Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, NSW) asked for a breakdown of the applications submitted to the scheme, applications referred to the Advocate, reports given to the CDF, and applications referred to other redress pathways. This question is identical to QoN No. 231 which was tabled on 7 October 2025.	Tabled.
26 August 2025	QoN	<b>No. 231, Breakdown of applications to the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme.</b> Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, NSW) asked for a breakdown of the applications submitted to the scheme, applications referred to the Advocate, reports given to the CDF, and applications referred to other redress pathways.	Tabled.
6 June 2025	FOI	An individual requested copies of all claims made to the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme, all referrals made by the CDF to the Advocate, all recommendations made by the Advocate to the CDF, information regarding Defence outreach, and information regarding the internal management of the Scheme.	Decision finalised.

## Prepared By:

Name: Rear Admiral Brett Wolski AM  
 Position: Head Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force  
 Division: Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

## Cleared By:

Name: Cath Patterson  
 Position: Associate Secretary  
 Phone: s47E(d)

26 February 2025	QoN	<b>No. 24, Compensation Scheme assessment process.</b> Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, NSW) asked about the role of the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Advocate and the claims assessment process.	Tabled.
26 February 2025	QoN	<b>No. 25, Community Outreach &amp; NGOs.</b> Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, NSW) asked about notice given to Non-Government Organisations, community outreach efforts and media coverage on the Afghanistan Inquiry Compensation Scheme.	Tabled.

### Relevant Media Reporting

On 28 June 2025, The Saturday Paper published an article titled '[Silent Witness](#)' by Dr Michelle Dimasi, which reported on Afghanistan and The Middle East and war veteran Ben Roberts-Smith.

<b>Division:</b>	Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force		
<b>PDR No:</b>	SB25-000493		
<b>Prepared by:</b> Rear Admiral Brett Wolski AM RAN Head Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 11 August 2025	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Rear Admiral Brett Wolski AM RAN Head Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 7 January 2026		
<b>Consultation:</b> Francesca Rush Chief Counsel Defence Legal	Date: 12 January 2026		
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Ms Cath Patterson Associate Secretary	Date: 9 January 2026		

**Prepared By:**  
Name: Rear Admiral Brett Wolski AM  
Position: Head Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force  
Division: Afghanistan Inquiry Response Task Force  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**  
Name: Cath Patterson  
Position: Associate Secretary  
Phone: s47E(d)

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - POST-SEPARATION EMPLOYMENT CONTROLS

**Lead:** Greg Moriarty, Secretary of Defence.

**Supporting:** John Reid PSM, Deputy Secretary Governance

**Context:** At the October 2023 Senate Estimates hearings, Senator Barbara Pocock (Greens) requested details of the reported 100 former Defence personnel allegedly hired in the preceding five years by KPMG, as cited in an ABC Four Corners episode. Senator Pocock has revisited the line of questioning on Defence contractor controls, and the engagement of former Defence personnel by contracting companies at subsequent Senate Estimates hearings.

### Key Messages

- Defence cannot actively or accurately track the ongoing employment of former personnel once they have separated from Defence.
- Defence is not able to verify the number or identities of the former personnel referenced in the August 2023 ABC Four Corners episode.
- Defence concentrates on the identification, reporting, recording and management of conflicts of interest in post-separation employment before personnel separate, and when they return to Defence as a contractor.
- Defence has a variety of mitigation strategies in place to reduce risk to Defence and the Government, and has controls in place to protect official information gained in the course of a separating employee's Defence employment.

### Talking Points

- Defence is aware that separating personnel often choose to pursue a career in a related field, and encourages those separating from Defence to consider a career in another area of the Defence workforce where their skills and experience may continue to contribute to the achievement of Defence's objectives.
- In turn, Defence actively recruits from the Defence industry workforce, and encourages Defence industry employers to support their employees in becoming members of the ADF Reserves.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Acting First Assistant Secretary Defence Integrity

Group: Governance

Phone: s47E(d) s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: John Reid PSM

Position: Deputy Secretary Governance

Group: Governance

Phone: s47E(d) s22

- Defence acknowledges the risk post-separation employment can pose to the Government, and has a number of controls in place to mitigate these risks, including:
  - security controls to cease security clearance sponsorship as part of the off-boarding process;
  - detective controls to monitor information and communications technology systems for unauthorised access;
  - strengthened consequences for individuals not authorised to access Defence information;
  - policy that requires all personnel to declare offers of post-separation employment that may cause an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest;
  - ‘cooling-off periods’ in Defence-endorsed contracting templates and Deeds of Standing Offer for Defence strategic panels;
  - training and educating personnel focused on conflict of interest including mandatory training requirements;
  - actively engaging with industry on Defence’s post-separation employment and conflict of interest requirements, including the joint release of the Defence and Private Sector: Working with Integrity document;
  - Joint Directive 17/2023 Moratorium on Contracting Recently Transitioned or Separated Personnel, issued in August 2023; and
  - proactive controls on employment with a foreign government or military, through the Safeguarding Australia’s Military Secrets framework, which commenced on 6 May 2024.
- Since 2023, Defence has tracked individuals who have separated from Defence and returned as a contractor within 12-months of departure.

### Numbers of Defence personnel separating and returning as Defence contractors, consultants or outsourced service providers<sup>1</sup>

- From 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, 389 individuals were identified returning to Defence as contractors within a 12-month period post separation.
- From 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, 284 individuals were identified returning to Defence as contractors within a 12-month period post separation.
- From 1 July 2025 to 1 December 2025, 92 individuals were identified returning to Defence as contractors within a 12-month period post separation.

<sup>1</sup> This data is derived by matching records from PMKeys and Other Defence Support (ODS) data where an individual has separated from Defence and then returned within 12 months of the separation and has had an ODS account created. It should be noted that not all individuals who separate from Defence and return as a Defence contractor, consultant or outsourced service provider will have an ODS account created.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Acting First Assistant Secretary Defence Integrity  
 Group: Governance  
 Phone: s47E(d) s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: John Reid PSM  
 Position: Deputy Secretary Governance  
 Group: Governance  
 Phone: s47E(d) s22

- During the period 7 August 2023 (date of release of the Moratorium on Contracting Recently Transitioned or Separated Personnel) to 1 December 2025, the Defence Contractor Taskforce has been notified of 19 exceptions. The exceptions were provided as follows:
  - five were ADF members who initiated the transition process prior to 7 August 2023;
  - two were APS employees who separated or resigned prior to 7 August 2023;
  - three individuals had pre-existing commitments with a future employer;
  - four former APS employees were engaged due to Defence Capability needs;
  - three former APS employees were engaged due to compassionate or special measures;
  - one ADF member transitioned as a result of a Command Initiated Transfer to the Reserves, or reached Retirement Age; and
  - one ADF member medically transitioned.
- One individual was stood down after they were identified as being in breach of the Moratorium on Contracting Recently Transitioned or Separated Personnel.

#### Data on Foreign Work Authorisations required under Part IXAA to the *Defence Act 1903* – Safeguarding Australia's Military Secrets

- As at 1 December 2025, Defence has received 3,885 Foreign Work Authorisation-related requests since the commencement of the Safeguarding Australia's Military Secrets framework on 6 May 2024.
- As at 1 December 2025, 3,872 requests have been resolved:
  - 1,772 Foreign Work Authorisation requests have been granted;
  - four Foreign Work Authorisation requests have been refused;
  - 272 requests to vary a Foreign Work Authorisation request have been resolved;
  - 264 requests to withdraw or cancel a Foreign Work Authorisation request have been actioned; and
  - 1,560 requests that were not required under the legislation or were invalid have been resolved.
- : The number of requests that were not required under the legislation or were invalid has significantly reduced in 2025, with approximately 97 requests that were not required or invalid received since 1 January 2025.
- : This is the direct result of more ongoing communications and awareness efforts, and improvements to the Safeguarding Australia's Military Secrets website.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Acting First Assistant Secretary Defence Integrity  
 Group: Governance  
 Phone: s47E(d) s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: John Reid PSM  
 Position: Deputy Secretary Governance  
 Group: Governance  
 Phone: s47E(d) s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: 5825-000494

Last updated: 19 December 2025

Key witnesses: Mr Greg Moriarty, Cath Patterson

**Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements**

Date	Event
17 September 2024	At the request of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Associate Secretary and First Assistant Secretary Defence Integrity provided an in-person briefing to Senator Barbara Pocock on the controls in place to mitigate risks involved with staff leaving Defence and working as contractors or consultants.

**Key Information Requests**

Date	Type	Title	Status
14 February 2024	QoN	No. 19, Integrity of the Big Four consultancies. Senator Barbara Pocock (Greens, South Australia) asked for details about the allegations and investigations reported in QoN No. 45 from the 2023-24 Supplementary Budget Estimates, including what they related to and the outcome.	Tabled.

**Relevant Media Reporting**

- On 3 August 2025, The Age published an article by Deborah Snow and Michael Koziol titled [The suburban US office that brokered lucrative military contracts with Australia](#).
- On 2 August 2025, WA today published an article titled [Battle stations: The former PM, ministers, and military brass cashing in on Australia's defence spending bonanza](#) by Deborah Snow.
- On 7 August 2023, ABC's Four Corners published an article by Angus Grigg, Jessica Longbottom, Jonathan Miller and Maddison Connaughton titled [Consulting firm KPMG overcharged Defence while raking in billions of dollars, whistleblowers say](#).

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Acting First Assistant Secretary Defence Integrity

Group: Governance

Phone: s47E(d) s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: John Reid PSM

Position: Deputy Secretary Governance

Group: Governance

Phone: s47E(d) s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026  
 Last updated: 19 December 2025  
 Key witnesses: Mr Greg Moriarty, Cath Patterson

PDR No: SB25-000494

<b>Division:</b> Defence Integrity Division	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000494	
<b>Prepared by:</b> s47E(d) Director Integrity Policy and Industry Engagement Defence Integrity Division Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 19 December 2025	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> s47E(d) Acting First Assistant Secretary Defence Integrity Governance Group Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 22 December 2025
<b>Consultation:</b> Emily Hall Assistant Secretary Defence Export Control Strategy, Policy, and Industry Group Date: 19 December 2025  s47E(d) Director Contractor Taskforce External Workforce Reform Branch Defence Finance Group Date: 19 December 2025	
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> John Reid PSM Deputy Secretary Governance Group Date: 22 December 2025	

**Prepared By:**  
 Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Acting First Assistant Secretary Defence Integrity  
 Group: Governance  
 Phone: s47E(d) s22

**Cleared By:**  
 Name: John Reid PSM  
 Position: Deputy Secretary Governance  
 Group: Governance  
 Phone: s47E(d) s22

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - ANAO AUDITS

**Lead:** John Reid PSM, Deputy Secretary Governance.

**Supporting:** David Hanley, Deputy Secretary Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment, to support on the sustainment of Canberra Class Amphibious Assault Ships (Landing Helicopter Dock).

Chris Deeble AO CSC, Deputy Secretary Capability, Acquisition and Sustainment, to support on Maximising Australian Industry Participation through Defence Contracting and Management of the OneSKY Contract.

**Context:** The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) tabled six Performance Audits in 2024-25 relevant to Defence. A number of these have generated media attention.

### Key Messages

- Defence is working to remedy all shortcomings that have been identified by the ANAO.
- Defence is committed to ensuring all Defence programs and projects are professionally executed and managed.

### Talking Points

#### 2024-25 ANAO Activities

- In 2024-25, the ANAO tabled four Defence Performance Audits and two cross entity audits involving Defence:
  - The Defence Performance Audits tabled were:
    - : 27 June 2025: Defence's Sustainment of Canberra Class Amphibious Assault Ships (Landing Helicopter Dock).
    - : 20 May 2025: Maximising Australian Industry Participation through Defence Contracting.
    - : 11 September 2024: Defence's management of ICT systems security authorisations.
    - : 11 July 2024: Defence's procurement and implementation of the myClearance system.
  - The Cross Entity Audits tabled were:
    - : 20 June 2025: Management of the OneSKY Contract; and
    - : 3 June 2025: Targets for Minimum Indigenous Employment or Supply Use in Major Australian Government Procurements — Follow-up.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)

Position: A/Assistant Secretary Audit and Fraud Control

Division: Defence Integrity

Phone: s47E(d) s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: John Reid PSM

Position: Deputy Secretary Governance

Group: Governance

Phone: s47E(d) s22

**Sustainment of Canberra Class Amphibious Assault Ships (Landing Helicopter Dock)**

- Defence acknowledged the findings contained in the Auditor General's report on the sustainment of the Canberra Class amphibious assault ships, including that planning and procurement processes, sustainment management arrangements and performance monitoring and reporting were assessed as partly effective.
- Defence agreed to the nine recommendations and is committed to ensuring the through-life sustainment of the Canberra Class amphibious assault ships deliver the best possible capability outcomes for the Australian Government and the Australian public.
- The Canberra Class landing helicopter docks are complex vessels, able to perform a variety of different functions, from supporting amphibious operations to humanitarian aid and disaster relief.
- Defence has established support systems to resolve any critical system or equipment failures as quickly and as safely as possible.
- Of the six issues identified in the ANAO report:
  - two have been rectified;
  - two are being managed on an ongoing basis through sustainment; and
  - two have been considered as part of capability assurance projects aimed at ensuring key systems on board the vessels remain supportable.

**Defence's failure to follow procurement practices**

- The issues identified by the Australian National Audit Office's audit focussed on deficiencies with Defence process compliance.
- Defence acknowledges that procedural non-compliance weakens value for money, and constantly monitors procurement and contract management capabilities for non-compliance and to identify opportunities for improvement.
- The use of competitive open tender procurement processes by Defence is vital to ensure that sustainment of capabilities such as the Landing Helicopter Docks can be achieved and supports a value for money process.
- Re-tendering is another important part of ensuring ongoing value for money, in accordance with whole of government guidance.

**Probity Issues**

- Defence takes its obligations to demonstrate that procurement processes are fair and that its decisions are impartial very seriously.
- The ANAO report identified that there were process compliance deficiencies.
- As a result of this audit, Defence will take steps to ensure that its internal policies when establishing probity processes are commensurate with the size, scale and risk of those procurement activities.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: A/Assistant Secretary Audit and Fraud Control

Division: Defence Integrity

Phone: s47E(d) s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: John Reid PSM

Position: Deputy Secretary Governance

Group: Governance

Phone: s47E(d) s22

### Allegations of fraud

- Key to resolving allegations of fraud is creating an environment between Defence and industry where parties are comfortable in raising these issues, with a common interest in achieving the best outcome for Defence capabilities.
- The findings of the report indicate there has been an improvement over time in applying Defence processes and in industry providing earlier advice as to potential issues.
- Defence is committed to ensuring that all Defence personnel are aware of their obligations to report and manage suspected fraud or unethical conduct, and that Defence's response conforms to Defence policies and the Commonwealth Fraud and Corruption Control Framework.
- Defence continues to uplift integrity and further encourage a strong fraud and corruption reporting culture through greater communication campaigns and improved face-to-face training delivery.

### Maximising Australian Industry Participation through Defence Contracting

- Defence acknowledged and accepted the key findings and all nine recommendations of the Auditor-General's Performance Audit report.
- Defence is developing a comprehensive Management Action Plan to address all ANAO audit recommendations.
- Specific areas Defence is working to improve include:
  - updating and making consistent contracting templates;
  - broadening the scope of existing procurement and contracting training to include all relevant contracting suites;
  - strengthening processes to ensure identification, management and monitoring of contracted Australian industry participation requirements; and
  - governance oversight and assurance arrangements.
- Defence is currently updating industry policy to give greater consistency and clarity for Australian industry's involvement in Defence procurement.
- Addressing the ANAO's recommendations is concurrent with policy updates to the Defence Policy for Industry Participation, which will define how Defence supports the sovereign defence industrial base in both Australian defence and defence export supply chains, and the review of the Defence Industry Development Strategy.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: A/Assistant Secretary Audit and Fraud Control

Division: Defence Integrity

Phone: s47E(d) s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: John Reid PSM

Position: Deputy Secretary Governance

Group: Governance

Phone: s47E(d) s22

**Management of the OneSKY Contract**

- The ANAO found that Airservices' contract management of the OneSKY program is partly effective. Whilst governance processes and procedures are in place, shortcomings in contract management planning, performance management and probity have limited its effectiveness in managing the contract to minimise cost increases and schedule delays.
- The ANAO made five recommendations to Airservices relating to its contract management plan, risk management, documentation of contract variation value-for-money assessments, performance management, and guidance and practice for accepting gifts, benefits and hospitality.
- The ANAO also raised two opportunities for improvement for Airservices concerning management of probity.
- The audit made no findings or recommendations for Defence.
- While the audit recommendations are for Airservices, as part of the collaboration between Airservices and Defence on the OneSKY Program, Defence will work with Airservices and assist where appropriate to apply the audit recommendations.

**Relevant Media Reporting**

- Australian media reported on the findings from the ANAO audit on the *Sustainment of Canberra Class Amphibious Assault Ships (Landing Helicopter Dock)*.
- On 14 July 2025, Danica De Giorgio, Sky News Regional Australia, [Interview with Jacinta Price](#).
- On 9 July 2025, The Australian published an article by Ben Packham titled [Top brass at risk in ADF overhaul](#).
- On 9 July 2025, The Strategist published an article titled ['Catastrophic failures': Defence budget squeeze hits navy maintenance](#) by David Uren.
- On 5 July 2025, Piers Akerman published an article in The Advertiser titled [Defence audit reveals inefficient, top-heavy governance of Labor's rush to terminal poverty](#).
- On 3 July 2025, Sarah Basford Canales published in The Guardian an article titled [Defence failed to properly investigate bribery allegations against Australian navy contractor officials, audit finds](#).
- On 3 July 2025, Strategic Analysis Australia published an article by Michael Shoebridge, titled [Trouble in the Navy's material world is trouble for Australia's security – & AUKUS](#).
- On 2 July 2025, Sky News published an article by Michael Shoebridge titled [The Australian Navy's two largest ships 'systematically failing': Report reveals 'dysfunction' in country's Naval fleet](#).

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: A/Assistant Secretary Audit and Fraud Control

Division: Defence Integrity

Phone: s47E(d) s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: John Reid PSM

Position: Deputy Secretary Governance

Group: Governance

Phone: s47E(d) s22

- On 1 July 2025, the Australian Defence Magazine published an article by Max Blenkin titled [ANAO finds 'significant deficiencies' in LHD sustainment](#).
- On 1 July 2025, Bernard Keane published an article in Crikey titled [How to make a motza off our navy: An abuser's guide to using taxpayers as an ATM](#).
- On 1 July 2025, Oscar Godsell published an article in Sky News titled ['Not good enough': Defence Minister Richard Marles starved of formal updates on military readiness for more than two years](#).
- On 1 July 2025, Kym Bergmann published an article in the Asia Pacific Reporter titled [ANAO critical of Defence management of LHD support](#).
- On 30 June 2025, Bernard Keane published an article in Crikey titled [Choppers of credibility: How 15 years of Defence debacle gave us dud helicopter carriers](#).
- On 29 June 2025, Rex Patrick of Michael West Media published ["Accumulation of defects". A-G report scathing on Navy shipbuilding](#).
- On 27 June 2025, the Financial Review published an article by Andrew Tillett titled [Alarm sounded over navy ships riddled with defects](#).
- Australian media reported on the findings from the ANAO audit *Maximising Australian Industry Participation through Defence Contracting*.
- On 3 June 2025, PS News published an article by Andrew McLaughlin titled [Audit finds Defence has failed to follow Australian industry policy](#).
- On 23 May 2025, the Australian Defence Magazine published an article by Max Blenkin titled [ANAO reports on AIP](#).
- On 22 May 2025, Robert Dougherty published on Defence Connect an article titled [National Audit office says Defence falls short on Australian industry participation, contract requirements](#).
- Australian media reported on the findings from the ANAO audit *Management of the OneSKY Contract*.
- On 23 June 2025, Julian Bajkowski of The Mandarin published the article titled [Air traffic control system overhaul pinged a third time by auditor](#).

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: A/Assistant Secretary Audit and Fraud Control

Division: Defence Integrity

Phone: s47E(d) s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: John Reid PSM

Position: Deputy Secretary Governance

Group: Governance

Phone: s47E(d) s22

<b>Division:</b> Defence Integrity Division	
<b>PDR No:</b> S825-000517	
<b>Prepared by:</b> s47E(d) A/Assistant Secretary Audit and Fraud Control Defence Integrity Division Governance Group Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 22 December 2025	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> s47E(d) Acting First Assistant Secretary Defence Integrity Defence Integrity Division Governance Group Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 22 December 2025
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> John Reid PSM Deputy Secretary Governance Group Date: 23 December 2025	

**Prepared By:**  
Name: s47E(d)  
Position: A/Assistant Secretary Audit and Fraud Control  
Division: Defence Integrity  
Phone: s47E(d) s22

**Cleared By:**  
Name: John Reid PSM  
Position: Deputy Secretary Governance Group  
Phone: s47E(d) s22

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - MRH-90

**Lead:** Lieutenant General Simon Stuart, Chief of Army, to lead on MRH90 Taipan incidents, investigations and inquiries.

**Supporting:** Air Vice Marshal David Scheul, Head Joint Aviation Systems Division, to support on technical aspects of the MRH90 Taipan helicopter.

**Supporting:** Air Marshal Stephen Chappell, Defence Aviation Authority, to support on questions related to the Defence Flight Safety Bureau investigation and final report.

### Context:

On 28 July 2023, an Australian Army Taipan Multi-Role Helicopter (MRH90) impacted waters near Lindeman Island, Queensland, during a night-time training activity as part of Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2023.

Tragically, Captain Danniell Lyon, Lieutenant Maxwell Nugent, Warrant Officer Class 2 Joseph 'Phillip' Laycock and Corporal Alexander Naggs from the 6th Aviation Regiment were killed, and will always be remembered with great dignity and respect.

### Key Messages

- On 3 April 2025, the Defence Aviation Authority announced that the Defence Flight Safety Bureau has finalised the Aviation Safety Investigation Report into the 28 July 2023 MRH90 Taipan helicopter accident during Exercise TALISMAN SABRE.
- The investigation concluded that the primary cause of the accident was an unrecognised loss of spatial orientation, commonly referred to as spatial disorientation.
- The 2023 MRH90 Taipan accident is subject to ongoing independent investigations and inquiries (Inspector General of the Australian Defence Force, Comcare and the Queensland Coroner).
- Defence has not been formally notified that any of these investigations have concluded.
- Defence is committed to supporting the conduct of thorough and independent investigations to identify causes and appropriate remediating actions that can be taken to help prevent future aviation accidents and incidents.

### Talking Points

#### *Investigations and Inquiries*

- The 2023 MRH90 Taipan accident is subject to ongoing independent investigations and inquiries (Comcare, Inspector General of the Australian Defence Force and the Queensland Coroner).
- The Defence Flight Safety Bureau, Aviation Safety Investigation is complete.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Brigadier Andrew Thomas  
 Position: Deputy Commander Aviation Command  
 Division: Army Aviation Command  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Major General David Hafner  
 Position: Commander Aviation Command  
 Group/Service: Army  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

***Comcare Investigation***

- Defence is aware of a media statement from Comcare stating: “Comcare conducted a thorough investigation and provided a brief of evidence to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions. The Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions advised in July 2025 that it did not consider there was sufficient evidence to commence a prosecution.”
- Defence has not been formally notified that the Comcare investigation has concluded.
- Defence has not been provided the Comcare brief of evidence or the final report regarding their investigation into the MRH90 Taipan accident.
- On 27 August 2025, the Senate approved Order for the Production of Documents No. 115 – Taipan helicopter crash moved by Senator Roberts. The order was for:
  - the Comcare brief of evidence sent to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions; and
  - the Comcare investigation final report
- The order was partially complied with on 1 September 2025, withholding the Comcare brief of evidence on public interest grounds and redacting personal information in the Comcare investigation final report.
- On 1 September 2025, Senator Roberts made a speech in the Senate stating that it was “probably illegal” for Defence to release the Helmet Mounted Sight Display (HMSD) software Version 5.10, named Defence members and made a number of allegations about their involvement in the service release of the system.
  - Specifically that the named Defence members had fabricated documents to support service release, did not follow approved Defence Aviation Safety Regulation processes and acted outside their authorities.
  - Similar comments were made during Senate Estimates on 3 December 2025.
  - These statements are not factually correct.
  - Introduction of the Helmet Mounted Sight Display (HMSD) software Version 5.10 is being considered as part of the Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force Inquiry into the accident.

***Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force Inquiry***

- The Inspector-General has a responsibility to inquire into the cause of death of Australian Defence Force members.
- Finding out what happened, and making recommendations to avoid or limit the risk of such an event occurring again, are important outcomes of this Inquiry.
  - The Inquiry will examine the circumstances and causes of the deaths to determine whether actions or inactions by Australian Defence Force personnel or other personnel, including compliance or non-compliance with policies and procedures, were contributing factors to the crash.
- The Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force Inquiry has completed its public hearings, with the ninth hearing concluding on 9 May 2025.
  - The Inspector-General has invited family members of those who died to be involved in the inquiry process, ensuring their perspectives are considered.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Brigadier Andrew Thomas  
 Position: Deputy Commander Aviation Command  
 Division: Army Aviation Command  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Major General David Hafner  
 Position: Commander Aviation Command  
 Group/Service: Army  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

- Advice received from the Inspector-General in October 2025 indicates:
  - Since the hearings concluded, the Inquiry team has been carefully reviewing the substantial volume of evidence and submissions received.
  - The procedural fairness process has commenced. This legal process allows individuals or organisations who may be affected by proposed findings to respond before those findings are finalised. The Inquiry will ensure reasonable time is provided for these responses, noting this step is expected to continue during Quarter 1, 2026.
  - After considering any feedback from relevant parties, the Inquiry will finalise the report. As required by law, the final report will be provided to the Chief of the Defence Force.

### *Defence Flight Safety Bureau Aviation Safety Investigation*

- The Defence Flight Safety Bureau is the independent Defence aviation investigation organisation responsible for investigating all Defence aviation accidents and select incidents that are serious or complex in nature, in accordance with the International Civil Aviation Organisation convention.
- The purpose of aviation safety investigations is to determine what happened from an aviation safety perspective, and make recommendations that reduce the probability of a reoccurrence.
- The report describes the cause of the accident, contributing organisational and systemic factors and makes recommendations for safety system improvement to prevent re-occurrence.
- The Defence Flight Safety Bureau, Aviation Safety Investigation is complete. The investigation concluded that the primary cause of the accident was an unrecognised loss of spatial orientation, commonly referred to as Spatial Disorientation.
  - On 3 April 2025, a briefing was provided to the families of the members who died in the accident on the findings of the investigation.
  - On 21 May 2025, an Official version of the Aviation Safety Investigation Report was provided to the families and released publically.
- All 46 recommendations made by the Defence Flight Safety Bureau's Aviation Safety Investigation Report have been accepted and are being implemented by Defence.

### *What has Defence done so far in response to the MRH90 Taipan Lindeman Island accident?*

- Defence has been proactive in actioning recommendations from the Defence Flight Safety Bureau Aviation Safety Investigation Report.
  - The action taken so far has been significant, some of which is listed on pages 168 to 171 of the Aviation Safety Investigation Report.
- The Army has:
  - Implemented a series of enhanced risk control measures.

#### **Prepared By:**

Name: Brigadier Andrew Thomas  
 Position: Deputy Commander Aviation Command  
 Division: Army Aviation Command  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### **Cleared By:**

Name: Major General David Hafner  
 Position: Commander Aviation Command  
 Group/Service: Army  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

- Established an Army Aviation Command Safety Campaign Plan to provide an additional layer of assurance and assist in the management and response to incident, in conjunction with revising past reports and reviews to ensure historical lessons have been appropriately addressed.
- Established the International Combat Aviation Safety Summit to draw together Australia's closest allies and partners in combat military rotary wing aviation to investigate, share information and collectively progress key safety issues.
  - : The inaugural summit was held in May 2024, and subsequently in February 2025. The next summit is scheduled for March 2026 to be hosted by the United States Army.
- Commissioned an independent Benchmark Review of Australian Army Aviation against peer international organisations.
  - : An Implementation Directive was issued in May 2025, with nine of the 26 recommendations completed to date.
  - : All recommendations are due for completion by September 2026.
- Focused on an accelerated introduction into service of the UH-60M Black Hawk to replace the MRH90 Taipan capability.
  - : 19 Black Hawks have been delivered to Australia. All 40 aircraft are scheduled for delivery by 2029.
  - : Initial Operational Capability (IOC) was declared in December 2024.
- Leased rotary wing aircraft to supplement the Army aviation capability during transition.
  - : This includes five H-135 Juno helicopters acquired from the United Kingdom to support aircrew training and proficiency.
  - : Flying operations commenced at Oakey, Queensland in December 2024.
- In response to the Defence Flight Safety Bureau Aviation Safety Investigation.
  - : 25 of the 46 recommendations are assigned to Army Aviation.
  - : Army has completed actions for 15 of the recommendations, which are now undergoing independent assurance before the Defence Aviation Authority considers them for closure.
  - : Implementation is ongoing and being prioritised according to aviation safety requirements.

***Army Aviation Test and Evaluation Section flight test report on MRH90 Taipan Helmet Mounted Sight Display (HMSD) 'Top Owl' software Version 5.10***

- . The Army Aviation Test and Evaluation Section (AATES) produced a flight test report on MRH90 Taipan Helmet Mounted Sight Display (HMSD) software version 5.10 in June 2019.
  - The report raised concerns that there was ambiguous display of flight information, under certain circumstances.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Brigadier Andrew Thomas  
 Position: Deputy Commander Aviation Command  
 Division: Army Aviation Command  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Major General David Hafner  
 Position: Commander Aviation Command  
 Group/Service: Army  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

- In response to the report, further test and evaluation of Helmet Mounted Sight Display (HMSD) software version 5.10 was conducted by Army and Navy operational and test aircrew.
  - This resulted in procedures being developed and key risk controls incorporated into MRH90 Taipan aircrew publications to address the identified hazards.
  - The software was subsequently released into service, and was independently assured by the Defence Aviation Safety Authority.
- Aircrew were not permitted to fly with Helmet Mounted Sight Display (HMSD) software Version 5.10 until they completed training on the procedures and risk controls that enabled safe flight operations.
- The Defence Flight Safety Bureau Aviation Safety Investigation found that Captain Lyon and Lieutenant Nugent had completed the training as required, and concluded that it was almost certain that the Helmet Mounted Sight Display (HMSD) 'pitch scale attitude' was not contributory to the crew's loss of spatial orientation as it is not part of the pilots' instrument scan whilst flying in formation.

*On the Army Aviation Test and Evaluation Section flight test report on the MRH90 Taipan Forward-Looking Infra-Red system*

- The MRH90 Taipan Forward-Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) system is part of the Original Equipment Manufacturer aircraft design and was in use from the arrival of the first aircraft in 2007 until 28 July 2023.
  - The MRH90 Taipan Flight Manual identified that the use of the Forward-Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) was as a supplementary flight aid.
- In July 2021, the Army Aviation Test and Evaluation Section (AATES) produced a flight test report on the use of MRH90 Taipan Forward-Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) system.
  - The report raised concerns about use of the Forward-Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) as a primary pilotage aid.
- In response to the flight test report, qualified flying instructors and flight standards officers reviewed the procedures detailed in MRH90 Taipan aircrew publications for use of the Forward-Looking Infra-Red (FLIR), in conjunction with other aircraft systems.
  - Updated procedures were developed that eliminate or minimise the identified hazards so far as reasonably practicable.
  - The MRH90 Taipan Flight Manual was updated to identify that the use of the Forward-Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) as a primary flight aid was prohibited.
  - These procedures were endorsed by Army Aviation Test and Evaluation Section (AATES) in May 2022, and incorporated into MRH90 Taipan aircrew publications.
  - The Defence Flight Safety Bureau Aviation Safety Investigation identified that the Forward-Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) was not in use at the time of the incident.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Brigadier Andrew Thomas  
Position: Deputy Commander Aviation Command  
Division: Army Aviation Command  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Major General David Hafner  
Position: Commander Aviation Command  
Group/Service: Army  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

***On aviation fatigue management***

- The Aviation Safety Investigation found that the Aircraft Captain and Co-Pilot were likely experiencing a level of fatigue shown to impede optimal performance and increase susceptibility to Spatial Disorientation.
- In January 2024, Army introduced updated aircrew fatigue management requirements including the need to complete Fatigue Risk Assessment Tool (FRAT) forms prior to every flight.
- In response to Recommendation 21 of the Aviation Safety Investigation Report, Army Aviation is reviewing standardisation of fatigue management policy to improve mitigation of risk due to aircrew fatigue.
  - The response will consider the efficacy of policies in monitoring, managing and providing oversight of aircrew, maintenance and ground support personnel.
  - The review will consider fatigue management as part of a system which aims to maximise human performance.
  - It is estimated that this recommendation will be completed by the end of April 2026.
- Army will continue to review aviation fatigue management training, policy and procedures, with fatigue management a key area of focus during all military training.

***What support is being provided to the families of the members involved in the MRH90 Taipan Lindeman Island accident?***

- Defence recognises that accidents of this nature are deeply upsetting for all involved.
  - Bereavement support teams and Defence Member and Family Support Helpline staff remain available to provide support to the families and Defence personnel.

***Commemoration activities***

- In July 2024, the Army supported the families with two activities to mark the one-year anniversary of the MRH90 accident, including:
  - the unveiling of the names of the fallen on the Australian Army Aviation Corps Memorial at Swartz Barracks in Oakey, Queensland; and
  - an on-water commemoration service at the accident site in the Whitsunday Islands, Queensland.
- Forty family members and support personnel attended these events, with air transportation provided by the Air Force.
  - A live-stream was provided for family members who could not attend.
- The second anniversary of the Lindeman Island accident was respectfully commemorated during a unit pause at the 6th Aviation Regiment, and a moment of silence at Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025, Exercise Control on 28 July 2025.
- Families have been invited to attend unit commemoration ceremonies on our national days of significance, Anzac Day and Remembrance Day.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Brigadier Andrew Thomas  
 Position: Deputy Commander Aviation Command  
 Division: Army Aviation Command  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Major General David Hafner  
 Position: Commander Aviation Command  
 Group/Service: Army  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

- The 6th Aviation Regiment, like all units in the Australian Army, remember their fallen in the same respectful way on these days whether those men and women died recently or some time ago.
  - Major anniversaries of accidents, such as the 25th anniversary of the 1996 Black Hawk accident and the first anniversary of the MRH90 accident, are commemorated in standalone events.
- The names of Captain Danniell Lyon, Lieutenant Maxwell Nugent, Warrant Officer Class 2 Joseph 'Phillip' Laycock and Corporal Alexander Naggs are recorded on the Australian Army memorials at Swartz Barracks (Oakey, Queensland), 6th Aviation Regiment and the 2nd Commando Regiment (Holsworthy Barracks, Sydney, New South Wales).

### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
1 September 2025	Following an Order for the production of documents the Comcare brief of evidence and final report were tabled to the Senate.
21 May 2025	The Defence Flight Safety Bureau Aviation Safety Investigation Report into the accident was released publically.
9 May 2025	The Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force Inquiry into the MRH90 accident concluded its final public hearing.
3 April 2025	Defence <u>announced</u> the Defence Flight Safety Bureau (DfSB) had completed its Aviation Safety Investigation into the accident. DfSB briefed the families on its findings.

### Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Released
Various	FOI	Defence has received a number of FOI requests from individuals and media outlets seeking access to documentation relating to the 2023 MRH90 incidents and historical documentation.	Decision Finalised.
3 December 2025	QoN	<b>QoN No 922, MRH-90</b> , Senator Malcolm Roberts (One Nation, Queensland) asked about MRH-90 HMSD.	
3 December 2025	QoN	<b>QoN No 938, MRH-90 Engineering standards</b> , Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked about MRH-90 Engineering standards	
6 November 2024	QoN	<b>QoN No 13, Benchmarking report</b> , Senator David Fawcett (Liberal, South Australia) asked about a benchmarking report.	Decision Finalised.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Brigadier Andrew Thomas  
 Position: Deputy Commander Aviation Command  
 Division: Army Aviation Command  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Major General David Hafner  
 Position: Commander Aviation Command  
 Group/Service: Army  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

### Relevant Media Reporting

- On 1 December 2025, various syndications published stories in response to the 60 Minutes interview with the families of the Army Aviators killed in the MRH90 accident, and former Army Test Pilot Ian Wilson who alleges a cover up. [‘End cover-up, say grieving families of dead airmen’](#), [‘Hear it when I close my eyes’](#); [Heartbroken families of Taipan crash unite as questions remain](#), [‘Never should have happened’: Families of the four airmen killed in Taipan chopper crash break their silence](#).
- On 30 November 2025, [‘In exclusive 60 Minutes interviews, the families of four ADF personnel killed in a Taipan crash say Defence is to blame, and the whistleblower alleges a cover-up, with their enduring grief driving a renewed push for accountability.’](#)
- On 1 October 2025, Asia Pacific Defence Reporter published an article by Andrew McLaughlin titled [‘Fleet Air Arm consolidates helicopter fleet while UAS ambitions remain all at sea’](#), which reported on the MRH90 Taipan’s poor availability in ADF service.
- On 26 September 2025, Mackay & Whitsunday Life published an article titled [‘Plaque planned to Honour Taipan Crash Victims’](#), reporting on an initiative by ex-servicemen to install a plaque in the Whitsundays region commemorating the four aviators.
- On 2 September 2025, The Courier Mail published an article by Rachel Riley titled [‘Defence Smoking Gun’](#) covering the release of Comcare investigation documents to the Senate and allegations that Defence committed two serious breaches of the Workplace Health and Safety Act.
- On 2 September 2025, Sky News aired a segment with Ray Hadley called [‘Cover Up’](#) which covers voting in the Senate to not conduct an additional inquiry into the accident following the release of the Comcare investigation documents and alleging a ‘conspiracy’ by the Government.
- On 1 September 2025, the ABC published an article by Laura Lavelle titled [‘Department of Defence failed to minimise risk before fatal Taipan helicopter crash that killed four, documents allege’](#), which reports on the alleged Workplace Health and Safety breaches by Defence outlined in the Comcare investigation documents and incorporates quotes from Mr Daniel Nugent.
- 27 July 2025, Blair Jackson, The West Australian, [‘Geelong Treaty’ with UK boosts AUKUS amid US review](#). Australian media has reported extensively on the inquiries and investigations into the accident.
- On 24 July 2025, the ABC News published an article by Laura Lavelle titled [‘Commonwealth prosecutors won’t lay charges over fatal defence helicopter crash due to lack of evidence’](#), which indicated that the Comcare had referred their investigation to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Brigadier Andrew Thomas  
 Position: Deputy Commander Aviation Command  
 Division: Army Aviation Command  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Major General David Hafner  
 Position: Commander Aviation Command  
 Group/Service: Army  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

- On 21 May 2025, the ABC News published an article by Laura Lavelle and Andrew Greene titled [‘Defence investigation finds Taipan pilot’s actions possibly prevented further fatalities in crash’](#), reported on the Defence Flight Safety Bureau Aviation Safety Investigation and specifically noting that the report identified that the Taipan pilot’s actions possibly prevented further fatalities in crash, and that the loss of spatial orientation was likely not because of night vision technology used by the pilots of Bushman 83.

<b>Division:</b> Army	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000732	
<b>Prepared by:</b> Brigadier Andrew Thomas Deputy Commander Aviation Command Army Mob: §22      Ph: §47E(d) Date: 12 December 2025	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Major General David Hafner Commander Aviation Command Army Mob: §22      Ph: §47E(d) Date: 15 December 2025
<b>Consultation:</b> Brigadier Steven Cleggett      Date: 11 December 2025 Director General Aviation Systems Branch Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group Mob: §47E(d) Air Commodore James Badgery      Date: 11 December 2025 Director General Defence Aviation Safety Authority Mob: §22	
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Major General Chris Smith DSC AM CSC      Date: 15 December 2025 Acting Chief of Army Army	

**Prepared By:**  
 Name: Brigadier Andrew Thomas  
 Position: Deputy Commander Aviation Command  
 Division: Army Aviation Command  
 Phone: §47E(d) / §22

**Cleared By:**  
 Name: Major General David Hafner  
 Position: Commander Aviation Command  
 Group/Service: Army  
 Phone: §47E(d) / §22

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

**Lead:** Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC, Chief of Personnel.

**Supporting:** Rear Admiral Letitia Van Stralen AM CSC RAN, Head Military Personnel.

**Context:** Defence is focused on recruiting and retaining a highly specialised and skilled workforce to meet and deliver on the 2024 National Defence Strategy and 2024 Integrated Investment Program. As a result of targeted recruitment and retention initiatives, the ADF has experienced growth in the last 12 months following a significant decline in the four years prior.

### Key Messages

- At 1 December 2025, the permanent and full-time ADF workforce headcount reached 62,181, which is an increase of 2,545 from the same time 12 months ago.
- Retention has also improved. The ADF separation rate was 7.6 per cent as at 1 December 2025, below the 10-year average of 9.5 per cent.
- The ADF is on track to meet the target of 69,000 Average Funded Strength by the early 2030s, a key outcome of the 2024 National Defence Strategy and the 2024 Defence Workforce Plan, which provides a credible and budgeted pathway to grow the Defence workforce.
- With recent improvements in recruiting and retention, Defence was outperforming the growth path outlined in the 2024 Defence Workforce Plan. Whilst the target (69,000 by the early 2030s) remains, Defence has adjusted its growth path to reach the target.
- While these results highlight significant progress, work continues, particularly to strengthen the middle ranks.
- The APS workforce is on track to return to the workforce requirement of 19,863, and as at 1 December 2025, the APS average staffing level was 227 below this requirement.
- As at 1 December 2025, the APS workforce separation rate was 8.9 per cent which is a reduction of 1.4 percentage points over the last 12 months.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Air Commodore Matthew Cooper  
 Position: Director General Workforce Strategy  
 Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Ms Leisa Craig  
 Position: First Assistance Secretary  
 Workforce and People Strategy  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

## Talking Points

### Workforce Figures and Growth

- Defence re-profiled its workforce requirements to deliver the 2024 National Defence Strategy and 2024 Integrated Investment Program. The 2024 Defence Workforce Plan, released in November 2024, sets out a realistic and budgeted growth path for our permanent force to reach 69,000 by the early 2030s.
- The initial and current published Budgeted Workforce Requirement for the permanent ADF over the Forward Estimates is:
  - 59,373 in 2025-26;
  - 61,049 in 2026-27;
  - 63,272 in 2027-28; and
  - 64,704 in 2028-29.
- With recent improvements in recruiting and retention, Defence was growing faster than anticipated and therefore outperforming the short-term budget phasing. Therefore, Defence has recently adjusted its growth path to 69,000. The adjusted Budgeted Workforce Requirements are:
  - 61,711 in 2025-26.
  - 63,345 in 2026-27.
  - 64,842 in 2027-28.
  - 66,013 in 2028-29.
- These figures will be published in the 2025 Portfolio Additional Estimate Statements in February 2026 and the additional cost will be accommodated within the overall Defence budget envelope through reprioritisation measures, including from planned sustainment activities.
- These figures do not include the Reserve workforce unless members are serving on Service Option C (Continuous Full Time Service).
- At 1 December 2025, ADF Average Funded Strength was 61,191, against the adjusted Budgeted Workforce Requirement of 61,711. The ADF is currently 520 (or 0.8 per cent) under the adjusted growth path for 2025-26. These figures include, Service Category 7 and 6, Service Option C and Service Option G, (Gap Year).

	2025-26 Current published PBS BWR <sup>(1)</sup>	2025-26 Adjusted BWR <sup>(2)</sup>	Average Funded Strength (AFS) at 1 December 2025	Variation to Adjusted BWR	% Variation to Adjusted BWR
Navy	15,392	15,805	15,744	-61	-0.4%
Army	27,773	29,056	28,789	-267	-0.9%
Air Force	16,208	16,850	16,659	-191	-1.1%
<b>ADF</b>	<b>59,373</b>	<b>61,711</b>	<b>61,191</b>	<b>-520</b>	<b>-0.8%</b>

#### Prepared By:

Name: Air Commodore Matthew Cooper  
 Position: Director General Workforce Strategy  
 Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Ms Leisa Craig  
 Position: First Assistance Secretary  
 Workforce and People Strategy  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

- The forecast for 2025-26 indicates the ADF will reach the Budgeted Workforce Requirement growth path by 30 June 2026. Even so, the ADF continues to manage a number of employment categories with shortfalls, particularly in middle ranks.

### ADF Headcount

- At 1 December 2025, the total Permanent and Full Time ADF workforce headcount was 62,181. This is an increase of 2,545 from 12 months ago. This includes:
  - Permanent ADF = 59,798;
  - Gap Year (SERVOP G) = 873; and
  - Reserve Continuous Full time Service (SERVOP C) = 1,510.

### ADF Separations

- At 1 December 2025, the Permanent force separation rate was 7.6 per cent, a decrease of 1.7 percentage points over the last 12 months. The current rate is well below the 10-year average of 9.5 per cent.
- The declining separation rate is aiding the ADF to retain experienced personnel. This is essential as we grow the workforce in the middle ranks.
- Service specific separation rates are follows :
  - Navy's separation rate was 6.7 per cent, a decrease of 0.8 percentage points since 1 December 2024;
  - Army's separation rate was 9.0 per cent, a decrease of 2.4 percentage points since 1 December 2024; and
  - Air Force's separation rate was 5.9 per cent, a decrease of 1.4 percentage points since 1 December 2024.

	Separation Rates - 1 December 2025			
	Navy	Army	Air Force	ADF
Voluntary	4.3%	5.8%	3.5%	4.8%
Involuntary	0.4%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
Medical	2.0%	2.5%	1.7%	2.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>

#### Prepared By:

Name: Air Commodore Matthew Cooper  
 Position: Director General Workforce Strategy  
 Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Ms Leisa Craig  
 Position: First Assistance Secretary  
 Workforce and People Strategy  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**ADF Recruitment**

- Inflow into the Permanent ADF has improved in the last year.
- The ADF's Permanent force inflow target for 2025-26 is 8,782. This target includes both ab initio recruitment into the ADF (through Defence Force Recruiting) as well as prior service entry (such as re-enlistments, transfers from the Reserve and overseas lateral inflow). The full year all avenues target into the permanent ADF is 691 (8.5 per cent) higher than 2024-25.
  - The percentage achievement (at 1 December 2025) against permanent ADF all avenue targets are displayed below. This excludes Service Option G (Gap Year).

	2024-25	2025-26 FY to date
Navy	76%	79%
Army	72%	61%
Air Force	89%	89%
<b>ADF</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>71%</b>

- Defence Force Recruiting application numbers at 1 December 2025 have increased 5.6 per cent year-on-year compared to the same time last year, indicating that the ADF is of interest to Australians.
- The average time taken between the last application and a candidate being booked to enlist is 268 days.
- 27 roles have an average timeframe of less than 150 days in the preceding 12 months.
- **Fastest avenues of entry.** Select Navy and Army general entry roles in technical and non-technical fields are the fastest-moving pipelines, given high Service demand, relatively low pipeline size, and focused efforts to accelerate candidates for these roles.
  - Navy roles include: Communications Operator, Electronics Technician, and Electronic Warfare Operator.
  - Army roles include: Command Support Clerk, Distribution Operator, Operator Petroleum, Recovery Mechanic, Chef, and Artillery Operator.
- **Slowest avenues of entry.** Air Force and Army Reserve officer entry are the slowest moving pipelines due to the high number of candidates relative to the number of positions.
  - Air Force roles include: Pilot, Mission Aircrew, Electronics Engineer, and Aeronautical Engineer
  - Army roles include: Reserve Officer Commissioning Course.
- The Defence Force Recruiting target audience spans prospective candidates and their influencers, such as parents, teachers and career advisors.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Air Commodore Matthew Cooper  
 Position: Director General Workforce Strategy  
 Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Ms Leisa Craig  
 Position: First Assistance Secretary  
 Workforce and People Strategy  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

- Defence Force Recruiting will reach 98.1 per cent of the primary target audience of 16 to 30 year olds (as per the master media agency's proprietary planning tools) at an average frequency of 246 times a year through advertising across television, in cinema and online – through videos, social media, mobile, search, and audio – as well as out-of-home/outdoor billboards. The recent social media ban for under 16s does not impact this reach as the primary target audience is 16 to 30 year olds.
  - As 'ADF Careers', Defence Force Recruiting has a distinct brand presence on social media outlets like YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, X, Reddit, LinkedIn, and Pinterest. TikTok's inclusion as a channel was endorsed by the Department of Finance on 10 September 2024. It was included as a channel within the 'I Am a Submariner' Government Communications Subcommittee (GCS) submission, and formally endorsed by GCS on 18 November 2024.
  - ADF Careers advertising appears on TikTok but there is no ADF Careers TikTok account. The placement of advertising on TikTok aligns with the practice of other Government Departments (such as Health, Social Services, ATO, Foreign Affairs and Trade).

### Recruiting Initiatives – Actions to improve Recruitment and Retention

- Defence has taken the following actions to increase inflow:
  - Introduction of the ADF Referral Scheme in October 2024, where ADF personnel can refer candidates to join the ADF and receive a financial payment incentive of \$1,000. Since Go-Live, ADF Careers has received 361 valid referrals, with 81 active candidates continuing through the recruitment journey. Twelve candidates have successfully enlisted as at 1 December 2025.
  - Streamlined the recruiting system to enable faster recruitment. This includes the reform of initial entry medical assessments and policies to reflect contemporary medical treatments. Candidates who were previously refused may now be eligible to serve.
- Examples of where candidates were previously rejected and now may be eligible to serve are:
  - Those with a history of musculoskeletal injuries, including broken bones.
  - Women who were rejected due to a history of endometriosis but who have now been successfully treated.
  - Those who have some orthodontic appliances, such as braces.
  - Those with a family history of glaucoma, or other mild eye conditions such as foreign bodies or corneal scarring.
  - Those with acne, dermatitis, psoriasis, or history of a pilonidal sinus.
  - Those with some treatable vitamin deficiencies.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Air Commodore Matthew Cooper  
Position: Director General Workforce Strategy  
Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Ms Leisa Craig  
Position: First Assistance Secretary  
Workforce and People Strategy  
Group: Defence People Group  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

- In July 2024, ADF Careers introduced the Basic Key Skills Builder tool to provide an alternate means of educational equivalency for Year 10 or Year 12 maths and/or English.
  - At 1 December 2025, 3,350 candidates had utilised the tool with 2,569 candidates passing the educational assessment related to their preferred employment. 373 candidates have been sent to training who would not otherwise have met the education eligibility criteria.
  - Candidates using Basic Key Skills Builder are typically applying for non-technical roles.

### Recruiting Initiatives – Recruitment of non-Australian citizens

- Defence has increased opportunities for potentially suitable applicants to join the ADF by widening the eligibility criteria.
- From 1 July 2024, eligible permanent residents from New Zealand have been able to apply to join the ADF.
- From 1 January 2025, eligible permanent residents from the remaining Five- Eyes countries have been able to apply to join the ADF.
- As at 1 December 2025, there have been 11,171 enquiries on the non-Australian call queue since 1 July 2024.
- As at 1 December 2025, there were 807 Five Eyes Nations active applicants:
  - Canada – 17;
  - New Zealand – 640;
  - United Kingdom – 124; and
  - United States – 26.
- As at 1 December 2025, 172 candidates are at the pre-enlist stage and 14 have been successfully enlisted. 12 are from New Zealand and two are from the United Kingdom.
- From 1 January 2026, eligible permanent residents living in Australia who are citizens of Papua New Guinea have been able to apply to join the Australian Defence Force.
- As at 18 January 2026, there were 25 active Papua New Guinea candidates.
- Non-Australian citizen candidates require a citizenship waiver in accordance with the Defence Security Principles Framework, aligned to the PSPF in order to begin the security clearance process. This is one contributing factor to the length of time candidates spend in the recruiting journey. To mitigate this time increase, non-Australian citizen candidates only require a baseline security clearance vice a NV1 security clearance prior to enlistment.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Air Commodore Matthew Cooper  
 Position: Director General Workforce Strategy  
 Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Ms Leisa Craig  
 Position: First Assistance Secretary  
 Workforce and People Strategy  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

## Retention Initiatives – Retention Bonuses

- To achieve greater levels of retention and extend the average length of service, an ADF Continuation Bonus was implemented on 1 July 2023, as a two-year pilot initiative, and ceased on 30 June 2025.
- The pilot offered eligible ADF personnel a \$50,000 bonus in return for an additional three years of service, following the completion of their initial service obligation.
- At 1 December 2025, 5,805 eligible ADF personnel had accepted the pilot scheme ADF Continuation Bonus Part One (79 per cent).
- Following a successful pilot, the Government is investing \$604.9 million in recruitment and retention initiatives, including a revised and expanded ADF Continuation Bonus for ADF service.
  - From 1 July 2025, the ADF Continuation Bonus includes two parts. Part One and Part Two are both valued at \$40,000 and are offered at two critical career decision points.
- ADF Continuation Bonus Part One is available to junior ranks, at their first career decision point, which is the completion of their initial service obligation and a minimum of four years of service.
  - Through Part One, personnel at junior ranks are retained for a further three years to progress them through to the middle ranks.
- ADF Continuation Bonus Part Two is offered at a second career decision point; three years after completion of their initial service obligation and a minimum of seven years' service.
  - Part Two seeks to retain members from their seven-year service career point for a further three years, to maintain experience levels across the middle ranks/supervisor levels.
- At 1 December 2025, 3,759 ADF members have been assessed for eligibility for the new program:
  - 2,117 for ADF Continuation Bonus Part One.
  - 1,642 for Continuation Bonus Part Two.
- At 1 December 2025, 2,526 of the 3,741 eligible ADF members have made their election:
  - 2,060 (81.6%) members have ACCEPTED their offer.
  - 466 (18.5%) members have DECLINED their offer.
- The combined effect of the two Continuation Bonus offers is expected to benefit approximately 12,000 permanent ADF personnel over the next three years. Offers commenced 1 July 2025, and will run to 30 June 2028, a three-year initiative. The retention effects therefore last until to mid-2031. Members who accept the bonus in June 2028 will be expected to serve until at least 2031 under this initiative.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Air Commodore Matthew Cooper  
Position: Director General Workforce Strategy  
Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Ms Leisa Craig  
Position: First Assistance Secretary  
Workforce and People Strategy  
Group: Defence People Group  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Retention Initiatives - Other**

- . To address critical skills shortages and grow areas of the workforce that have long-term workforce vulnerabilities, Defence implemented the Targeted Workforce Segments initiative on 5 June 2025, which represents a \$128 million additional investment in ADF salaries in Financial Year 2025 to 2026.
  - The Targeted Workforce Segments permanent salary increase was applied to the Intelligence; Engineering, Maintenance and Construction; and Communications and Cyber segments.
  - ADF personnel in an eligible employment category within the targeted workforce segments received a one pay grade increase.
- . Further initiatives implemented aimed at encouraging personnel to serve longer include:
  - Expansion to the ADF Family Health Benefits Program from 1 July 2023 by increasing services to ADF families, doubling allowances from \$400 to \$800 per dependent, and expanding reimbursable services, including:
    - : Physical activity. The cost of gym memberships or fitness classes where they form part of a program designed to improve a specific diagnosed health or medical condition.
    - : Healthy diet. The cost of dietician-led program subscriptions.
    - : Cancer prevention. Reimbursement for the cost of mole mapping skin cancer clinic appointments and bowel screening kits.
  - Leave allocation has increased from 20 to 25 days, which is in addition to expanded leave benefits including greater flexibility and additional compassionate circumstances under the improved ADF Leave Framework.
  - A new Location Framework, providing targeted benefits to ADF personnel undertaking Alternate Located Work (ALW) agreements, and providing members who are transitioning from the Permanent force with access to housing and other benefits in their transition location. ALW agreements are the agreement between a member and their commander/manager that allows a Defence member to work from another location within Australia that is alternate to their unit's normal working location.
  - Increased investment in the Defence Assisted Study Scheme and Studybank to provide easier access to personal and professional development opportunities and more study choices.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Air Commodore Matthew Cooper  
Position: Director General Workforce Strategy  
Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Ms Leisa Craig  
Position: First Assistance Secretary  
Workforce and People Strategy  
Group: Defence People Group  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

### APS Recruitment and Retention

- Defence's APS is re-balancing to prioritise delivery of the National Defence Strategy.
- Defence APS deliver core capabilities, including policy, governance, capability development, science, technology, and program management.
- Between 2022-23 and 2024-25 the Defence APS has grown by 2,245. This includes 1,850 for contractor conversions and 395 staff to deliver Government priorities including Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance, Continuous Naval Shipbuilding, AUKUS, Space, Cyber and Intelligence associated with new capabilities.
- As at 1 December 2025 the Defence APS Average Staffing Level was 19,636 against the Budgeted Workforce Requirement of 19,863. The Average Staffing Level is 227 or 1.1 per cent below APS Budgeted Workforce Requirement.
- The ongoing APS separation rate is 8.9 per cent as at 1 December 2025, which is a reduction of 1.4 percentage points over the last 12 months. This is 2.7 percentage points lower than the 5-year average of 11.6 per cent.

### Next Comprehensive Update

- In accordance with the biennial National Defence Strategy Development and Implementation Cycle, the 2024 Defence Workforce Plan will be reviewed and updated in line with the 2026 National Defence Strategy and 2026 Integrated Investment Program. This work is underway.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- On Friday 28 November, The Australian's Ben Packham reported that [PNG's new budget raises concerns about low citizen spending](#) while noting the Pukpuk Defence Treaty and potential ADF recruitment challenges, with sentiment trending balanced.
- On Friday 7 November, The Australian reported that the federal government spent over [\\$200 million on advertising last year](#), noting Defence ran the most expensive recruitment campaign yet full-time personnel

#### Prepared By:

Name: Air Commodore Matthew Cooper  
 Position: Director General Workforce Strategy  
 Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Ms Leisa Craig  
 Position: First Assistance Secretary  
 Workforce and People Strategy  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

<b>Division:</b> Workforce and People Strategy Division	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000495	
<p><b>Prepared by:</b> Air Commodore Matthew Cooper Director General Workforce Strategy Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 29 January 2026</p>	<p><b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Ms Leisa Craig First Assistant Secretary Workforce and People Strategy Division Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 29 January 2026</p>
<p><b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b></p> <p>Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC      Date: 29 January 2026 Chief of Personnel Defence People Group</p> <p>Ms Justine Greig PSM      Date: 29 January 2026 Deputy Secretary Defence People Defence People Group</p>	

**Prepared By:**

Name: Air Commodore Matthew Cooper  
Position: Director General Workforce Strategy  
Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Ms Leisa Craig  
Position: First Assistance Secretary  
Workforce and People Strategy  
Group: Defence People Group  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

## PARLIAMENTARY: ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - ADF RECRUITMENT OF NON-AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS

**Lead:** Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC, Chief of Personnel.

**Supporting:** Ms Justine Greig PSM, Deputy Secretary Defence People to support on policy regarding ADF recruitment of non-Australian citizens.

Mr Hugh Jeffrey, Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy and Industry to support on the Pacific.

**Context:** Defence is expanding the eligibility criteria to allow non-Australian citizens who are permanent residents living in Australia to apply to join the ADF. This policy applies to eligible permanent residents from New Zealand, the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Papua New Guinea (PNG).

### Key Messages

- Defence must recruit, retain and grow a skilled workforce to meet Australia's security challenges through the next decade and beyond, and is expanding the eligibility criteria to enable more people to apply to join the ADF.
- Defence expanded recruitment to eligible permanent residents from PNG on 1 January 2026. Defence has previously expanded recruitment to eligible permanent residents from Five Eyes nations in 2024 (New Zealand) and early 2025 (Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States).
- As at 1 December 2025, Defence Force Recruiting have received a total of 11,171 enquiries on the non-Australian call queue since 1 July 2024 resulting in 807 active applications from Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- At 1 December 2025, the active application numbers for these nations are:
  - Canada – 17 applications;
  - New Zealand – 640 applications;
  - the United Kingdom – 124 applications; and
  - the United States – 26 applications.
- As at 1 December 2025, 14 permanent residents from Five Eyes nations have entered the ADF. Non-Australian citizen applicants are continuing to progress through the recruitment process with 172 Five Eyes candidates at the pre enlist phase.
- As at 18 January 2026, there were 25 active Papua New Guinea applicants.
- Defence is expanding recruitment of permanent residents living in Australia through a staged approach.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Brigadier Kirk Lloyd OAM  
 Position: Director General People Policy and Employment Conditions  
 Division: People Policy and Development  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Ky Blackman  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary People Policy and Development  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Talking Points****Recruiting non-Australian citizens**

- Defence's approach to recruiting is changing to respond to workforce challenges and changes in Australia's strategic environment, as laid out in the 2024 National Defence Strategy.
- Under a staged approach, Defence is widening the eligibility criteria to increase the application pool of people to join the ADF, including expanding the recruitment of eligible permanent residents living in Australia.
- From 1 July 2024, eligible permanent residents from New Zealand have been able to apply to join the ADF.
- From 1 January 2025, eligible permanent residents from the remaining Five Eyes countries have been able to apply to join the ADF.
- On 1 January 2026, Defence expanded recruitment to eligible permanent residents from PNG.

**If asked about potential loss of Papua New Guinean citizenship.**

- Defence is aware that loss of PNG citizenship may occur on swearing allegiance to, or joining the defence force of a foreign country.
- There are administrative processes available to potential applicants to ensure they do not automatically lose PNG citizenship on entry to the ADF.
- Any applications to join the ADF from PNG citizens who are permanent residents of Australia will be processed whilst citizenship details are worked through with PNG.
- Defence is working with the PNG Government to address this in advance of any candidate successfully joining the ADF.

**Direct recruitment of Papua New Guinean citizens**

- As part of the Mutual Defence Treaty, Australia and PNG have commenced consultations on a recruitment pathway to enable PNG citizens to join the ADF. For information on direct recruitment from PNG, see SB25-000481–Pacific partnerships.

**Papua New Guinea recruitment linked to a deal over engagement with China**

- Any expansion of recruitment to the Pacific would be in our mutual interests and contribute to deepening our already close partnerships.

**Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements**

Date	Event
1 January 2026	ADF recruitment extended to eligible permanent residents from Papua New Guinea.
6 October 2025	The Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, the Hon James Marape MP signed the Papua New

**Prepared By:**

Name: Brigadier Kirk Lloyd OAM  
 Position: Director General People Policy and Employment Conditions  
 Division: People Policy and Development  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Ky Blackman  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary People Policy and Development  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

	Guinea – Australia Mutual Defence Treaty. The Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese announced that from 1 January 2026, eligible permanent residents living in Australia who are also Papua New Guinea citizens will be able to apply to join the ADF via <a href="#">media release</a> .
27 August 2025	The <a href="#">Papua New Guinea Post-Courier</a> reported on the signing of the Defence Treaty. The article outlined the five key elements of the treaty, including cross-recruitment opportunities.
1 July 2025	During a visit to Canberra, the Fijian Prime Minister, the Hon Sitiveni Rabuka CF OBE MSD reiterated his support for the recruitment of people from Pacific Island Nations into the ADF.
1 January 2025	ADF recruitment extended to eligible permanent residents from <b>Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States</b> .
5 November 2024	The Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP, released the <a href="#">2024 Defence Workforce Plan</a> , which sets out that Defence is looking to work with our Pacific family with a view to expanding the focus on non-Australian citizen recruitment to the Pacific.
1 July 2024	ADF recruitment opens to eligible permanent residents and Special Category Subclass 444 visa holders from <b>New Zealand</b> .
4 June 2024	The Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP announced the <a href="#">Australian Defence Force opens recruitment to non-Australian citizens</a> via media release.
25 April 2024	The Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, the Hon James Marape MP, issued a media release following a visit by the Australian Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP to Papua New Guinea from 22 to 25 April 2024, referring to “promising discussions” regarding the recruitment of Papua New Guineans into the ADF in Canberra.
17 April 2024	The Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP released the <a href="#">2024 National Defence Strategy and the 2024 Integrated Investment Program</a> where he addressed the workforce challenges being faced by Defence, and the potential for widening eligibility criteria to join the ADF to, as appropriate, non-Australian citizens.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- Australian media reported extensively on the announcement made by Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP regarding the [ADF opening recruitment to non-Australian citizens](#)

#### Prepared By:

Name: Brigadier Kirk Lloyd OAM  
 Position: Director General People Policy and Employment Conditions  
 Division: People Policy and Development  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Ky Blackman  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary People Policy and Development  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

- Australian and PNG media reported extensively on the Defence Treaty, with particular focus on recruitment opportunities. On 6 October 2025 - Australia and Papua New Guinea sign landmark alliance vowing to defend each other in conflict by Stephen Dziedzic (ABC).
- There has been significant coverage of the announcement in both traditional and social media in Papua New Guinea, some of which implies direct recruitment of large numbers of Papua New Guineans will begin very soon.
- On 10 December 2025 – [PNG, Australia work on visa pathways](#), by The National reports that PNG and Australia are working to open new visa pathways between the two countries. The article highlights that 10,000 persons (from PNG) are expected to be engaged by the Australia Defence Force.
- On 8 October 2025, the PNG Defence Minister shared a Facebook Post from the PNGDF Recruitment, News & Updates page that '10,000 troops to join the ADF with direct Australian PR to commence in January 2026'. There were no numbers quoted in the official media release on the 6th October 2025.
- On 6 October 2025 - Australia signs key defence deal with Papua New Guinea, by Lana Lam and Kelly Ng (BBC). Reports Australia will gain access to Papua New Guinea's (PNG) military facilities and troops, and that the Treaty will allow as many as 10,000 Papua New Guineans to serve in Australia's military, and give them the option to become Australian citizens.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Brigadier Kirk Lloyd OAM  
Position: Director General People Policy and Employment Conditions  
Division: People Policy and Development  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Ky Blackman  
Position: First Assistant Secretary People Policy and Development  
Group: Defence People Group  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

<b>Division:</b> People Policy and Development Division	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000496	
<b>Prepared by:</b> Brigadier Kirk Lloyd OAM Director General People Policy and Employment Conditions People Policy and Development Division Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 28 January 2026	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Mr Ky Blackman First Assistant Secretary People Policy and Development Defence People Group Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 28 January 2026
<b>Consultation:</b> Hugh Jeffrey, Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy and Industry.	
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b>  Ms Justine Greig PSM Deputy Secretary Defence People Defence People Group Date: 29 January 2026  Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC Chief of Personnel Defence People Group Date: 29 January 2026	

**Prepared By:**

Name: Brigadier Kirk Lloyd OAM  
 Position: Director General People Policy and  
 Employment Conditions  
 Division: People Policy and Development  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Ky Blackman  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary People Policy  
 and Development  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

Last updated: 9 February 2026

Key witnesses: Greg Moriarty AO; Admiral David Johnston RAN; Cath Patterson; Justine Greig PSM;  
Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – DEFENCE'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION INTO DEFENCE AND VETERAN SUICIDE

**Lead:** Mr Greg Moriarty, Secretary of Defence and Admiral David Johnston AC RAN, Chief of the Defence Force.

**Supporting:** Ms Cath Patterson, Associate Secretary to support on enterprise level oversight and governance of implementation activities.

Ms Justine Greig PSM, Deputy Secretary Defence People and Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC, Chief of Personnel to support on the implementation of recommendations concerning the policies and management of Defence Personnel.

**Context:** Defence's Implementation of the Government Response to the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (Royal Commission) in a transparent, timely and thorough manner is central to addressing the issue of Defence and veteran suicide.

### Key Messages

- Defence is implementing the recommendations from the Final Report of the Royal Commission in a timely manner, enacting organisational change and enhancing support for Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families.
- Defence is responsible for 54 recommendations, and shares responsibility for a further 22 recommendations with the Department for Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and other agencies.
- By the end of 2025 Defence had implemented 20 recommendations, with work well progressed on the remaining 56 recommendations.
- Defence has prioritised reform activities related to mitigating health and safety concerns for ADF members, or those which relate to sexual violence, in consultation with DVA and the Sexual Discrimination Commissioner and other relevant Commonwealth departments and agencies.
- In some cases, Defence is taking immediate steps while also preparing for future, more complex policy and legislative changes. Collectively, this work will create comprehensive cultural and systemic change for Defence.
- The *Defence Regulation 2016* was amended on 11 December 2025 by the *Defence Amendment (RCDVS Implementation) Regulations 2025*. These changes took effect on 13 December 2025 and support implementation of several Royal Commission recommendations relating to acts of sexual violence.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Director Implementation Support  
Division: Defence Royal Commission Program  
Management Office  
Phone: s47E(d) /s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Brigadier Melanie Cochbain CSC  
Position: Director General  
Division: Defence Royal Commission Program  
Management Office  
Phone: s47E(d) /s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

Last updated: 9 February 2026

Key witnesses: Greg Moriarty AO; Admiral David Johnston RAN; Cath Patterson; Justine Greig PSM;

Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC

## Talking Points

### The Australian Government response to the Royal Commission Final Report

- On 2 December 2024, the Government announced its response to the Final report of the Royal Commission.
- On the one year anniversary of the Government Response, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel, the Hon Matt Keogh MP addressed the National Press Club on progress made in implementing the Royal Commission's recommendations. The Minister's speech highlighted that in the 12 months following the Government Response, significant progress had been made, with 32 recommendations expected to be implemented across Government by the end of 2025.
- The Defence and Veterans' Service Commission (the Commission), which the Royal Commission stated was its most important recommendation (122), commenced operation on 29 September 2025. *The Defence and Veterans' Service Commissioner Bill 2025*, establishing the Commission in standalone legislation, was introduced on 27 November 2025 and is currently before the House of Representatives.

*Handling note: Questions related to the Defence and Veterans' Service Commission should be referred to the Defence and Veterans' Service Commission.*

### Defence Reform Progress and oversight

- On 16 January 2026, the Program Board agreed that Defence would have a supporting role only in the implementation of Recommendation 93 (rather than a joint lead role with the Department of Veterans' Affairs). As a result, Defence is now responsible for leading implementation of 76 instead of 77 recommendations.
- As at 31 December 2025, Defence had implemented 20 of the 76 recommendations for which it has sole or shared responsibility.
  - The implemented recommendations are Recommendations 6, 7, 9, 10, 15, 16, 22, 29, 31, 34, 53, 55, 56, 59, 60, 84, 104, 109, 112 and 117 (see Attachment A).
- The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Defence Implementation Program Board (the Program Board) is responsible for governance and oversight of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Defence Implementation Program.
- The Chief of the Defence Force chairs the Program Board and its members include Defence senior leaders who have responsibility for implementing recommendations and representatives from DVA. The Program Board meets six-weekly, governing implementation progress, risks and closure.
- As at 31 December 2025, the Program Board had approved 75 Reform Management Plans, with the last Reform Management Plan considered out of session though requires further work before it can be approved.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Director Implementation Support

Division: Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Brigadier Melanie Cochbain CSC

Position: Director General

Division: Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

Last updated: 9 February 2026

Key witnesses: Greg Moriarty AO; Admiral David Johnston RAN; Cath Patterson; Justine Greig PSM;

Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC

- Reform Management Plans are developed by Groups and Services responsible for the implementation of recommendations and outline the approach for implementation.
- The Program Board will next meet on 19 February 2026.

### Addressing Military Sexual Violence

- Proceedings have commenced in the Federal Court of Australia in relation to a class action. This relates to current and former ADF members who have experienced gender based sexual assault, harassment and/or discrimination whilst serving in the ADF.
  - The Commonwealth will be responding to the proceedings. The class action is relevant to current and former female members of the ADF and what is important here is that those current and former members are supported.
  - Defence respects and fully supports the rights of all individuals to take part in this matter.
  - A range of wellbeing support services are available to all Defence personnel, ADF families and those who will be involved in legal proceedings.
- Defence acknowledges there is work to be done and that is why we have prioritised implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission which relate to sexual violence.
- On 7 October 2025, the Chief of the Defence Force Order of the Day – Sexual Violence (the Order of the Day) was released which outlines requirements for Commanders and Managers responding to sexual violence.
  - The Order of the Day reinforced Defence's position that sexual violence has no place in the organisation and directed command-led discussions regarding sexual violence.
  - In line with the Order of the Day, Defence now refers to all sexual offences, sexual related offences, sexual harassment and sex discrimination as sexual violence, rather than sexual misconduct. This better reflects the seriousness and impact of these behaviours and aligns to the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032.
- The *Defence Regulation 2016* was amended on 11 December 2025 by the *Defence Amendment (RCDVS Implementation) Regulations 2025*. These changes took effect on 13 December 2025 and supports implementation of Royal Commission Recommendations 21, 22, 31, 32, 52, 53 and 63 to ensure Defence acts consistently to take action about people who commit acts of sexual violence. Significant changes include:
  - making it mandatory to issue a Notice of Proposed Separation - Involuntary for any Defence member who is found to have committed an act of sexual violence (Recommendations 21 and 22);

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Director Implementation Support

Division: Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Brigadier Melanie Cochbain CSC

Position: Director General

Division: Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

Last updated: 9 February 2026

Key witnesses: Greg Moriarty AO; Admiral David Johnston RAN; Cath Patterson; Justine Greig PSM;

Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC

- providing that mental health conditions must be considered during involuntary separation processes (Recommendation 31);
  - clarifying that a redress of grievance constitutes a merits review process (Recommendations 32 and 52);
  - extending the timeframe from 14 to 21 days for a member to submit a redress of grievance once notified of a decision to end their service early (Recommendation 53); and
  - replacing the term ‘termination’ with ‘early end of service’ or similar de-stigmatised language (Recommendation 63).
- Since January 2023, all Defence personnel have been required to complete mandatory sexual violence prevention education.
    - With independent input, Defence has re-developed its facilitator-led Mandatory Sexual Violence Incident Management Workshop for commanders and managers, implementing Recommendation 16 of the Royal Commission. The Workshop is being tested in early 2026.
  - Defence has updated its definitions of sexual offences (to align with the *Crimes Act 1900*) and processes to provide clear guidance to those managing and responding to sexual offences as part of implementing the Royal Commission’s Recommendation 15.
  - In November 2023, Defence released its Strategy for Preventing and Responding to Family and Domestic Violence, outlining Defence’s commitment to addressing this issue. Defence is aligning the reforms associated with the Royal Commission with the goals of the strategy.
  - Defence, in partnership with the Australian Human Rights Commission and Our Watch, Australia’s leader in prevention of violence against women, has drafted a comprehensive sexual violence prevention strategy, in line with Recommendation 17. This partnership ensures alignment with the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 and other national policies.
  - Defence is implementing the Defence Respect@Work Framework and in line with Recommendation 10, developed initial enterprise and service specific Respect@Work Action Plans which are being implemented from January 2026.
  - Defence has a central policy document (Complaints and Alternative Resolutions Manual – Chapter 9 Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence) for managers and commanders responding to and managing incidents of sexual violence. In December 2025, this policy was updated to:
    - mandate that on receipt of a report of sexual violence, managers and commanders should consult the Joint Military Police Unit to determine whether the conduct reported to them constitutes an offence;
    - include the requirement to complete mandatory training for all Defence personnel;

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Director Implementation Support

Division: Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Brigadier Melanie Cochbain CSC

Position: Director General

Division: Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

Last updated: 9 February 2026

Key witnesses: Greg Moriarty AO; Admiral David Johnston RAN; Cath Patterson; Justine Greig PSM;

Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC

- reflect the change in terminology to sexual violence;
  - amend definitions for sexual and sexual-related offences to reflect the *Crimes Act 1900* (ACT);
  - mandate that commanders and managers must apply workplace protections during sexual violence investigations;
  - mandate Notice of Proposed Involuntary Separation for personnel found to have engaged in acts of sexual violence; and
  - include guidance on prevention of sexual violence in relation to Respect@Work positive duty obligations.
- These updates support implementation of Recommendations 15, 17, 18, 21 and 22.
  - To implement Recommendation 24 of the Royal Commission, the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office (1800 SeMPRO) recruited a Data Curator in March 2025 to collect, analyse, and publish sexual violence data.
    - Defence will increase transparency around sexual violence incidents in Defence, and our response to them, by establishing comprehensive public reporting of sexual violence data.
    - Enhanced public reporting of sexual violence data commenced in the 2025 Defence Annual Report. Defence will incrementally increase the content (as data becomes available) over future financial years via a dedicated annual report until 2027-28 when we will deliver the full reporting required by Recommendation 24.

## The Military Justice System

### *Complaints Management*

- The Complaints, Resolution and Support Services unit commenced operations on 19 January 2026, providing an avenue for complaints of unacceptable behaviour to be made outside chain of command/reporting lines, and anonymously. Recruitment, training and process development has been completed to enable the unit to deliver its functions.
- The job specific training for the complaints intake team will be facilitated through the Commonwealth Ombudsman to ensure the team operates in a trauma-informed and victim-centric manner.
- Defence has established the Alternative Dispute Resolution, Policy and Training Directorate within this unit and this is operating to provide training, dispute resolution services and policy development and updates within Defence.
  - From 1 January to 31 December 2025, the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program delivered 1,944 ADR interventions including mediation, facilitated conversations, group facilitations and conflict coaching. The ADR Program also conducted 309 training presentations and workshops to establish workplace

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Director Implementation Support

Division: Defence Royal Commission Program  
Management Office

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Brigadier Melanie Cochbain CSC

Position: Director General

Division: Defence Royal Commission Program  
Management Office

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

Last updated: 9 February 2026

Key witnesses: Greg Moriarty AO; Admiral David Johnston RAN; Cath Patterson; Justine Greig PSM;  
Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC

expectations, increase communications and provide solid grounding in the complaint management process to over 6,800 members.

- The Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office will remain the Defence unit focussed on support, education and training in relation to sexual violence.
- A number of updates are being made to Defence's central policy to include guidance on restorative engagement at the end of a complaint process to demonstrate acceptance of institutional responsibility for mistreatment experienced by a person during their time in Defence, and responding to family and domestic violence.
- Clear, concise and easy-to-follow guides have been developed and published on the Complaints and Resolution intranet page to assist Defence personnel with understanding the complaints process.
- These guides complement the Complaints and Alternative Resolutions Manual and assist individuals in making complaints, responding to complaints and managing complaints with a focus on support that is available to all impacted persons.
- The guides were consulted across multiple parts of the organisation, including Military and Discipline Law Branch and APS Workplace Relations, to ensure the approach is fit for the enterprise. Further, the Commonwealth Ombudsman has reviewed these documents to ensure they meet the intent of the related Royal Commission recommendations.

#### *Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force inquiry into the weaponisation of the military justice system*

- On 16 August 2024, the Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force commenced an independent inquiry into allegations and perceptions that the military justice system has been, or has the potential to be, 'weaponised' or abused such that it may cause harm to ADF members.

*Handling note: Questions related to the Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force should be referred to the Inspector-General.*

#### *Reporting of offences between ADF and civilian justice systems*

- The Royal Commission (Recommendation 23b) recommended the Government urgently enable the reporting of convictions for sexual and related offences between the ADF and civilian justice systems.
  - From 8 December 2025, ADF members who have been convicted of a sexual offence or other serious offence since 2015 may have those details recorded with the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) and uploaded to the National Police Reference System (NPRS).

#### **Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Director Implementation Support  
Division: Defence Royal Commission Program  
Management Office  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### **Cleared By:**

Name: Brigadier Melanie Cochbain CSC  
Position: Director General  
Division: Defence Royal Commission Program  
Management Office  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

Last updated: 9 February 2026

Key witnesses: Greg Moriarty AO; Admiral David Johnston RAN; Cath Patterson; Justine Greig PSM;

Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC

## Wellbeing

### *Mental Health and Wellbeing*

- A number of the Royal Commission recommendations require input from members with lived experience. Defence has developed and endorsed the Defence Lived Experience Framework to ensure the safe inclusion of lived experience perspectives in the development and review of Defence policies, programs and initiatives.
- The Lived Experience Advisory Forum (LEAF) has been established and has successfully on-boarded 40 members who will provide lived experience expertise during the implementation of relevant recommendations. The first meeting was held on 10 June 2025, with three meetings held in 2025. LEAF meetings are scheduled quarterly, with the next meeting scheduled for March 2026. LEAF members have been engaged in a variety of activities to share their expertise including:
  - the review of the Keep Your Mates Safe Suicide Prevention Training module, providing valuable lived experience insights to continuously improve the training, as required under Recommendation 69;
  - involvement in the development of the World Suicide Prevention Day video, released on 10 September 2025; and
  - contributed to drafting policy for the Defence Health Manual on clinical care and support of members in suicide crisis as part of Recommendation 70.
- Defence has established a suicide postvention working group with DVA to progress Recommendations 76 and 77. Postvention is the support offered to people impacted by a suicide death, including family members, friends, colleagues and the wider community.
  - In January 2025, Defence partnered with suicide postvention experts from Military and Emergency Services Health Australia to develop a suicide postvention framework and associated resources. This work is meeting contract milestones with a framework due to be received in early 2026.
- On 4 September 2025, the Defence and Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2030 and Action Plans (Mental Health and Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention) were launched. Work continues to progress with DVA on interdepartmental governance arrangements and implementation of joint action items.
- Defence and DVA have partnered on the development of the Women Veterans' Strategy which will assist in system-wide cultural and structural reform. This draft Strategy is undergoing internal consultation ahead of external consultation in 2026.
- The Mental Health and Wellbeing Branch within the Defence People Group has established a Directorate of Research Capability to lead research in the identified knowledge gaps of prevention and wellbeing, and translate outcomes into actionable insights and solutions. This Directorate will support the implementation of Recommendations 114, 115, 117 and 121 through its research capability.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Director Implementation Support

Division: Defence Royal Commission Program

Management Office

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Brigadier Melanie Cochbain CSC

Position: Director General

Division: Defence Royal Commission Program

Management Office

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

Last updated: 9 February 2026

Key witnesses: Greg Moriarty AO; Admiral David Johnston RAN; Cath Patterson; Justine Greig PSM;  
Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC

- The Royal Commission's Final Report highlighted the association between physical injury, mental wellbeing and suicide. Defence aims to enhance holistic wellbeing and prevent injuries by promoting occupationally specific physical conditioning through the rollout of the 'ADF Ready' smart phone application.
  - The application was launched in April 2025 to provide physical conditioning guidance and a tool to aid users in establishing and maintaining healthy habits over time.
  - The application assists in building an environment of safe and effective exercise to strengthen our people against physical and mental injury.
  - The initial rollout provides pre-enlistment exercise support for potential ADF candidates and specifically helps them to prepare for the rigours of single service initial training.
  - Since its launch, the application has had a significant uptake with over 23,400 users, and is ranked in Apple's top 100 of the world's health and fitness applications.
  - Approximately 90 per cent of users are ADF candidates in the recruitment pipeline using the App to prepare for and prevent injuries in the initial training environment.
- A new Veteran Defence Common Access Card (DCAC) has been created, affording access to bases for two years post-separation.
  - A six-month pilot program, commenced on 1 November 2025 in Townsville (QLD) and the Albury/Wodonga Military Area (VIC/NSW). An evaluation of the pilot will be conducted prior to any rollout across Australia.

### *Suicide Prevention Program*

- Defence has enhanced our Suicide Prevention Program by developing a system-wide approach to suicide prevention, which includes providing education and training to promote wellbeing, mental health awareness and encourage help-seeking behaviours.
- The Defence Suicide Prevention Training suite was developed to support a system-wide approach to clinical practice change, and scaled to different levels of responsibility, enabling all ranks and roles to provide support to a member who is at risk of or experiencing suicidal crisis. This is consistent with the Royal Commission's Recommendation 69.
- Five courses have been developed to date, with another two Command courses currently being co-designed with Services. In 2026, the Leaders and Managers course (CARE-LM) will be superseded by two in-person courses and e-courses:
  - CARE-C: Skills for command and managers supporting members at risk of suicide, self-harm and harm to others; and
  - CARE-C(A): Advanced skills for command and managers supporting members at risk of suicide, self-harm and harm to others.

#### **Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Director Implementation Support  
Division: Defence Royal Commission Program  
Management Office  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### **Cleared By:**

Name: Brigadier Melanie Cochbain CSC  
Position: Director General  
Division: Defence Royal Commission Program  
Management Office  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

Last updated: 9 February 2026

Key witnesses: Greg Moriarty AO; Admiral David Johnston RAN; Cath Patterson; Justine Greig PSM;

Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC

- Approximate course completion numbers (including ADF, APS and contractors) for the Defence Course, from the commencement date of each course, are:
  - 91,970 completions for Defence Suicide Awareness during the period 1 January to 31 December 2025
  - 1,077 completions for clinician risk formulation and model training during the period 26 August 2024 to 31 December 2025
  - 24,507 completions for leaders and managers training during the period 13 September 2024 to 31 December 2025
  - 3,147 completions for support member training during the period 2 October 2024 to 31 December 2025.

#### *Defence Enterprise Resource Planning Case Management System – creation of Family and Domestic Violence category*

- New Incident Categories have been created in Defence Enterprise Case Management System to improve consistency and accuracy in the recording and reporting of incidents of Family and Domestic Violence.
- These changes align with the 2023-2028 Defence Family and Domestic Violence Strategy which was released in November 2023, the corresponding Action Plan which was released in December 2024, and the Royal Commission's Recommendation 102.

#### **The establishment of the Defence and Veterans' Service Commission**

##### *Review of Schedule 9 of the Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2025*

- Schedule 9 of the *Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2025* established the Defence and Veterans' Service Commission (the Commission) to inquire and report on issues relating to systemic reform to improve suicide prevention and wellbeing outcomes for current and former ADF members.
- The Commission began operation on 29 September 2025 under Acting Commissioner, Ms Penny McKay.
- In accordance with legislation, the Hon Matt Keogh MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel, has requested the Commission lead an independent inquiry into military sexual violence within the ADF. The Inquiry was announced in the Minister's address to the National Press Club on 2 December 2025.
- The Government introduced the Defence and Veterans' Service Commissioner Bill on 27 November 2025, enshrining the Commission in standalone legislation. The Bill also addressed other recommendations of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee review into the Commission.

#### **Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Director Implementation Support

Division: Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### **Cleared By:**

Name: Brigadier Melanie Cochbain CSC

Position: Director General

Division: Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

Last updated: 9 February 2026

Key witnesses: Greg Moriarty AO; Admiral David Johnston RAN; Cath Patterson; Justine Greig PSM;

Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC

## Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office Operations

- From January 2026 the Program Management Office staffing levels have reduced from 41 to 30 ASL and ADF personnel, to reflect the reduction in requirement to support stakeholder development of Reform Management Plan activities. These positions have been re-allocated based on Defence priorities as articulated in the National Defence Strategy.

### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
2 December 2025	The Minister for Defence Personnel <a href="#">addressed the National Press Club</a> to provide an <a href="#">update on the significant progress</a> made in the 12 months since the Government Response.
29 September 2025	<a href="#">A media release from Minister for Defence Personnel</a> recognised the establishment of the Defence and Veterans' Service Commission on 29 September 2025 and acknowledged the Acting Commissioner Penny McKay.
9 September 2025	<a href="#">A media release from Minister for Defence Personnel</a> recognised the 12 month anniversary of the Royal Commissions Final Report. The Minister addressed the media in Perth regarding the anniversary.
4 September 2025	The Minister for Defence Personnel provided <a href="#">an update to the Parliament</a> on the progress of implementation of the Government Response.
17 January 2025	A joint release from the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Personnel <a href="#">announcing the appointment of Michael Manthorpe PSM</a> as the Interim Head of the Defence and Veterans' Services Commission.
2 December 2024	The Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Personnel <a href="#">announced the Government Response</a> to the Final Report.
19 September 2024	The Minister for Defence Personnel, in <a href="#">an interview with 6PR</a> Perth Radio, advised the Government would agree to establish a new oversight entity and respond to the Final Report by the end of 2024.
9 September 2024	The Royal Commission delivered their Final Report to the Governor General, three years and two months after commencement. The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Personnel released <a href="#">a statement</a> regarding the Final Report.
28 August 2024	The Royal Commission held a ceremonial closing hearing that was attended by the Minister for Defence Personnel.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Director Implementation Support

Division: Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Brigadier Melanie Cochbain CSC

Position: Director General

Division: Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

Last updated: 9 February 2026

Key witnesses: Greg Moriarty AO; Admiral David Johnston RAN; Cath Patterson; Justine Greig PSM;

Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC

Date	Event
20 June 2024	The Royal Commission released their lived experience report <a href="#">‘Shining a Light: Stories of Trauma &amp; Tragedy, Hope &amp; Healing.’</a>
7 March 2024	The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Personnel appeared before the Royal Commission during their final public hearing block in Sydney.
26 September 2022	The Government responded to the <a href="#">Interim Report</a> . All agreed recommendations have since been implemented.
11 August 2022	The Royal Commission delivered an <a href="#">Interim Report</a> containing 13 immediate and urgent recommendations.
8 July 2021	The Royal Commission commenced.

## Relevant Media Reporting

- On 2 and 3 December 2025, there was significant reporting following the [Minister for Defence Personnel address to the National Press Club](#). Media reports focussed heavily on the announcement of the [independent inquiry into military sexual violence, which will be undertaken by the Defence and Veterans’ Service Commission](#).
- On 2 September 2025, the ABC published an article [A year on from the landmark royal commission, serving members fear defence culture has not changed](#). The article raised questions about the progress of implementation and whether Defence culture is improving quickly enough.
- On 20 July 2025, the Herald Sun published an article titled [How many more must we lose](#) by Adella Beaini which raised concerns regarding the pace of implementation of the Royal Commission recommendations.
- The Australian media reported extensively on the delivery of the Government Response to the Final Report during the period 2-5 December 2024. Reporting focused particularly on the establishment of the Defence and Veterans’ Services Commission.

### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Director Implementation Support

Division: Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

### Cleared By:

Name: Brigadier Melanie Cochbain CSC

Position: Director General

Division: Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000497

Last updated: 9 February 2026

Key witnesses: Greg Moriarty AO; Admiral David Johnston RAN; Cath Patterson; Justine Greig PSM; Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC

<b>Division:</b> Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000497	
<b>Prepared by:</b> s47E(d) Director Implementation Support Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 9 February 2026	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Brigadier Melanie Cochbain CSC Director General Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 9 February 2026

<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b>	
Mrs Justine Greig PSM Deputy Secretary Defence People Defence People Group Ph: s47E(d)	Date: 9 February 2026
Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC Chief of Personnel Defence People Group Ph: s47E(d)	Date: 9 February 2026
Ms Cath Patterson Associate Secretary Associate Secretary Group Ph: s47E(d)	Date: 20 January 2026

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Director Implementation Support  
Division: Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Brigadier Melanie Cochbain CSC  
Position: Director General  
Division: Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

## Attachment A: Defence Led Royal Commission Recommendations Implemented as of December 2025

#	Recommendation
6	Improve the procedural fairness of the military employment classification system
7	Increase employment opportunities within the Australian Defence Force for members who cannot be deployed
9	Improve organisational culture and leadership accountability to increase member wellbeing and safety
10	Develop service-specific action plans to implement the Defence Respect@Work Framework
15	Clarify definitions and processes related to sexual offences
16	Evaluate training on managing sexual misconduct and make it mandatory for all leaders
22	Adopt a policy of mandatory discharge for Australian Defence Force members convicted of sexual and related offences
29	Establish a new role to improve training and communication on conducting inquiries
31	Consider how mental health may contribute to poor conduct before recommending administrative termination
34	Prioritise the review into the regulations governing court martial panels
53	Give members 21 days to make a complaint after being notified of a decision to terminate their service
55	Conduct an audit into Defence workplace health and safety risk management
56	Improve guidance and understanding of Defence's 'if in doubt, notify' policy
59	Defence to participate in Comcare's Psychosocial Proactive Inspection Program
60	Improve strategies for harm prevention and early intervention by sharing quality data with Comcare
84	Issue separating members with a reference that states their skills, experience and capabilities
104	Improve the profile, resourcing and impact of the Defence Family Advocate
109	Defence to report annually on its progress towards data maturity
112	Include data on suicide and suicidality in the enterprise-wide Defence data catalogue
117	Establish an expert committee on veteran research

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - WELLBEING AND CULTURE

**Lead:** Greg Moriarty, Secretary of Defence, Admiral David Johnston AC RAN, Chief of the Defence Force, Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC, Chief of Personnel and Justine Greig, Deputy Secretary Defence People.

**Context:** Defence recognises people are fundamental to capability. Wellbeing and culture remain enterprise priorities.

### Key Messages

- Culture is fundamental to achieving the Defence mission and implementing the National Defence Strategy. To fulfil our mission, we must keep strengthening our culture to support our people in the achievement of operational effectiveness.
- We continue to progress culture reform with urgency to ensure a capable and high-performing workforce while prioritising health, wellbeing and safety of our people.
- We are implementing the Government-agreed recommendations from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, prioritising those that address sexual violence, suicide prevention, and improved systems for complaints.
- We are implementing the action plans associated with the recent release of the joint Defence and Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2030.
- We are continuing to implement initiatives to address the positive duty under the Respect@Work legislation to actively prevent sexual violence and related behaviours from occurring. This included a recent Chief of the Defence Force directed sexual violence prevention stand down activity for all ADF members.
- We are implementing the Defence Culture Blueprint and associated Action Plan.
- The 2025 staff survey results indicate some improvement in staff engagement, morale and productivity. Most measures, however, remain stable indicating a need for continued work to prioritise actions that evolve our culture to improve the experience of our people at work.
- The 2024-25 Defence Annual Report includes assessment of the performance measures outlined in the Defence Corporate Plan, including investment in our people.

### Talking Points

#### Prevention of unacceptable behaviour and sexual violence

- The Commonwealth is responding to the class action filed in the Federal Court of Australia relating to alleged contraventions of the Sex Discrimination Act in the ADF.
- It would not be appropriate to comment on the particulars of the claim or the individuals involved due to legal considerations, including confidentiality and privacy.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Mrs Rebecca Wootten  
 Position: Assistant Secretary People and Culture  
 Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
 Workforce and People Strategy  
 Phone: s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Mrs Leisa Craig  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary Workforce and People Strategy  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d)

- Defence acknowledges and respects the rights of all individuals to take part in the class action.
- Defence has introduced a new centralised complaints unit, known as the Complaint, Resolution and Support Services. Individuals will be able to report unacceptable behaviour directly to the unit without needing to go through their chain-of-command or reporting line as they have previously.
- Anyone who comes forward will be offered trauma-based support, and complainants can report anonymously if they wish.
- The Complaint, Resolution and Support Services unit does not replace the chain-of-command or reporting line—only complaints of unacceptable behaviour can be reported to the unit. Individuals can still choose to report unacceptable behaviour through their chain-of-command or reporting line if they prefer.
- The Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office continues to provide advice and support and will remain the Defence unit focussed on sexual violence support, education and training.
- In line with the landmark Respect@Work 2022 legislation, Defence is continuing to implement the positive duty, which requires that Defence proactively prevent the risk of sexual violence across the Enterprise.
  - The Chief of the Defence Force directed all ADF and APS personnel who manage ADF members to facilitate a discussion with their teams on preventing and reporting sexual violence.
  - All APS senior leaders were asked to discuss with their teams the importance of respectful and safe workplaces and encouraged completion of sexual violence prevention training.
- Defence has developed and is now (since December 2025) implementing Respect@Work Action Plans in each Service and across the enterprise.
- All Defence personnel have access to a Workplace Behaviour Advisor. Workplace Behaviour Advisors are current Defence personnel who undertake this role supplementary to their main duties. There are over 1300 trained personnel across Defence establishments, ships and deployed personnel across the world.
- Defence is prioritising the development of a comprehensive Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy. The Strategy will deliver a unified strategic direction for prevention, describing all the relevant work across Defence, including Defence's Respect@Work Positive Duty policy. Defence is undertaking this strategy work in partnership with the Australian Human Rights Commission and Our Watch to ensure alignment with the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 and other relevant national policies.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Mrs Rebecca Wootten  
Position: Assistant Secretary People and Culture  
Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
Workforce and People Strategy  
Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Mrs Leisa Craig  
Position: First Assistant Secretary Workforce  
and People Strategy  
Group: Defence People Group  
Phone: s47E(d)

In accordance with the legislation, the Hon Matt Keogh MP, the Minister for Veteran’s Affairs and Defence personnel, has requested the Defence and Veteran’s Service Commission lead an independent inquiry into military sexual violence within the SDF. The Inquiry was announced in the Minister’s address to the National Press Club on 2 December 2025.

The Australian Human Rights Commission has been engaged to develop the Terms of Reference. Consultation on the terms of Reference will take place from 2 December 2025 to end of January 2026.

Defence will support and participate in any formal inquiries undertaken by government into military sexual violence in the ADF.

Date	Completed/Ongoing R@W Positive Duty Implementation
2022 (delivered 2023)	Work with Australian Human Rights Commission to develop the Defence Respect@Work Framework which outlines ways to improve both Defence response and prevention approaches.
December 2022	Passage of Respect@Work legislation
2023	Introduction of Stop Sexual Harassment Direction/ Orders
4 March 2025	Culture Statement
10 March 2025	Respect@Work included in Capstone Training Program (SES 1 & 2)
28 April 2025	Respect@Work included in WHS Diligence Presentation (SES 3)
18 July 2025	Respect@Work information embedded in SeMPRO App OK Training
30 July 2025	Respect@Work input into Psychosocial Risk Model
1 Aug 2025	Respect@Work input SLG Leadership metrics
4 Aug 2025	Respect@Work in Workplace Behaviour Mandatory Training
September 2025	Respect@Work included in the Complaints and Alternative Resolutions Manual (CARM)
October 2025	CDF Stand Down and Sexual Violence messaging Enterprise wide

**Prepared By:**

Name: Mrs Rebecca Wootten  
 Position: Assistant Secretary People and Culture  
 Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
 Workforce and People Strategy  
 Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Mrs Leisa Craig  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary Workforce and People Strategy  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d)

Ongoing	Development of new Respect@Work Positive Duty policy to embed regular Respect@Work Positive Duty risk assessments and develop preventative actions
December 2025	Finalised initial Service and Enterprise Respect@Work Action Plans (per RCDVS recommendation 10)
Ongoing	Development of new Prevention of Sexual Violence Strategy with Our Watch and AHRC as required by Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Recommendation 17

- The definition for sexual violence is: "... sexual activity that happens where consent is not freely given or obtained, is withdrawn or the person is unable to consent due to their age or other factors. It occurs any time a person is forced, coerced or manipulated into any sexual activity. Such activity can be sexualised touching, sexual abuse, sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment and intimidation and forced or coerced watching or engaging in pornography. Sexual violence can be non-physical and include unwanted sexualised comments, intrusive sexualised questions or harassment of a sexual nature. Forms of modern slavery, such as forced marriage, servitude or trafficking in persons may involve sexual violence."
- Defence uses the term 'sexual violence' to encompass the spectrum of unwanted and unwelcome sexualised behaviours. Applying the term 'sexual violence' aligns with the Australian Government's National Action Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032.
- The Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office training continuum became mandatory for all ADF, APS and contracted staff in 2023. This mandatory training includes: Sexual Misconduct Foundation of Knowledge (FoundOK), Application of Knowledge: Consent Matters, Application of Knowledge: Peer Response to a Disclosure and Application of Knowledge: Technology Facilitated Sexual Violence.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Mrs Rebecca Wootten  
 Position: Assistant Secretary People and Culture  
 Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
 Workforce and People Strategy  
 Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Mrs Leisa Craig  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary Workforce and People Strategy  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d)

Table 1

Completion Rates SeMPRO Mandatory Training – per cent (%) as at 1 December 2025	
	Total
NAVY	84%
ARMY	81%
RAAF	83%
APS	75%
<b>Total</b>	<b>81%</b>

\* This data is drawn from WISE, representing APS, ADF (excluding SERCAT 2) and relates to the compliance of completion of three mandatory training modules (one to be completed each year over three years)

\*\* The total column is overall compliance with SeMPRO mandatory training, noting that personnel within the first three years of service can be compliant without yet completing all modules.

- Stop Sexual Harassment Directions and Stop Sexual Harassment Orders have been introduced for the ADF and APS respectively.
- Defence has received three Stop Sexual Harassment Direction applications from ADF members since 2023. No final Stop Sexual Harassment Direction has been made as actions of the unit, such as use of alternative dispute resolution, values and behaviour training and separation of involved parties, were deemed sufficient for each application.
- No Defence APS have applied for a Stop Harassment Order through Fair Work.
- Workshops addressing incident management, incident response and wellbeing are provided on request, and are linked to professional development and promotion courses.
- Defence has progressed interventions to prevent sexual violence and unacceptable behaviour, including at the Australian Defence Force Academy, where additional training and education is provided, and new support officer roles have been introduced.
- Ongoing updates to the Complaints and Alternative Resolutions Manual and associated unacceptable behaviour management resources are being made to ensure a contemporary and best practice approach. Updates to date have included:
  - revision of Chapter 9 – Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence including work safety plans and Commander and Managers Prevention tool
  - the creation of Chapter 12: Responding to Family and Domestic Violence
  - reference to the positive duty policy, in line with Respect@Work, in Chapter 3: Responding to Unacceptable Behaviour.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Mrs Rebecca Wootten  
 Position: Assistant Secretary People and Culture  
 Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
 Workforce and People Strategy  
 Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Mrs Leisa Craig  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary Workforce and People Strategy  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d)

- Policy, training and resources such as work health and safety mandatory training, psychosocial risk management policy, and senior leadership due diligence briefings have been strengthened to support the proactive management of psychosocial risk, including preventing and taking action in response to unacceptable behaviour and sexual violence.
- Trauma Informed Practices training for non-clinical settings is now available to all personnel. This training aims to support practical application of trauma-informed practice in the workforce.

### Fostering a culture of reporting

- Defence recognises people must have confidence that they will be protected and supported, and their experiences will be taken seriously, with appropriate action taken.
- Defence has also clarified expectations of all personnel to take action if they witness unacceptable behaviour within the Chief of the Defence Force Directive 07/2023 – Bystander Behaviour.
- Defence is strengthening reporting to ensure more timely information about instances of unacceptable behaviour is provided to commanders and managers at all levels. Defence has strengthened the focus on ‘action taken’ in response to insights from reporting. For example, Groups and Services are tasked to provide information about how they are taking action against insights and trends identified in the Work Health and Safety Dashboard which is provided to all Group Heads and Service Chiefs quarterly.
- In May 2024, Defence introduced a new case management system to streamline reporting into one Defence system through which unacceptable behaviour is reported. Reporting rates across the last three years remain steady. This system is progressively being enhanced to enable identification of ‘hot spots’.

### Recent Defence Survey Trends

- Experiences of unacceptable behaviour, including sexual violence, remain unsatisfactory.
- The enterprise-wide Workplace Behaviours Survey monitors Defence personnel’s perceptions and experiences of unacceptable behaviour and psychosocial safety. The most recent survey, conducted in June 2025, received over 7,600 responses, 16 per cent of those invited completed the survey.
- While the overall trend has remained relatively stable over the past five years, these numbers are too high and do not reflect the experience we want our people to have in the workplace.
- There were several streams of efforts to improve response rates for the 2025 YourSay Defence Workplace Surveys, including the Workplace Experience and Workplace Behaviours Surveys.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Mrs Rebecca Wootten  
Position: Assistant Secretary People and Culture  
Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
Workforce and People Strategy  
Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Mrs Leisa Craig  
Position: First Assistant Secretary Workforce and People Strategy  
Group: Defence People Group  
Phone: s47E(d)

- To reduce survey burden, from 2025, the surveys will be conducted once per year, with all personnel randomly allocated to complete either the Workplace Experience or Workplace Behaviours Survey.
- The speed and granularity of reporting has been significantly improved to provide Defence with timely and actionable insights.
- Major enterprise programs such as Military Justice Reform and the Defence Culture Blueprint aim to address staff survey concerns.
- Results from the June 2025 Workplace Experience and Workplace Behaviours Surveys identify areas where Defence has improved.
  - There is a positive trend in Recognition, with an increase of six percentage points since the previous year, while Job Engagement and Morale have increased in the last three years. These trends are reflected in both ADF and APS respondents.
  - Individual Wellbeing and Work-Life Balance are higher in APS than ADF, with more than a five percentage-point difference between scores for groups.
  - Since 2023, Intention to Leave has declined by four percentage points; this trend is reflected in both APS and ADF respondents.
- The Surveys also identified areas where there is an ongoing need for action.
  - The 2025 Workplace Behaviours Survey found that 37 per cent of ADF respondents and 41 per cent of APS respondents reported to have experienced a form of unacceptable behaviour in the previous 12 months. These figures have remained relatively stable over the last five years.
  - There are seven types of unacceptable behaviour captured through the survey reporting, as defined in the Defence Complaints Resolution Manual. These seven types of unacceptable behaviour are; harassment; workplace bullying; sexual violence; discrimination; abuse of power; conflict of interest and inappropriate workplace relationships; and violent behaviour.
- The Defence Corporate Plan Performance Measure 4.3 (Defence values and behaviours enable our people to deliver Australia's National Defence) measures Defence's progress towards improving the experience of the ADF and APS using results from Defence's enterprise-wide YourSay surveys.
- Defence's performance in 2024-25 was assessed as 'not achieved' against performance measure 4.3. Achievement would have required at least a 5 per cent change in the responses to the identified survey questions.
  - In 2024-25 results from the Workplace Behaviours Survey showed that 80.9 per cent of participants believed appropriate action would be taken if they reported an incident of unacceptable behaviour. In 2023-24 the result was higher at 82 per cent (Performance Measure 4.3a).

**Prepared By:**

Name: Mrs Rebecca Wootten  
Position: Assistant Secretary People and Culture  
Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
Workforce and People Strategy  
Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Mrs Leisa Craig  
Position: First Assistant Secretary Workforce  
and People Strategy  
Group: Defence People Group  
Phone: s47E(d)

- In 2024-25, results from the Workplace Behaviours Survey showed that 38.8 per cent of respondents had experienced unacceptable behaviour in the previous 12 months. In 2023-24 the result was lower at 37.9 per cent (Performance Measure 4.3b).
- In 2024-25, 80.4 per cent of participants of the YourSay Workplace Experience Survey viewed that Defence values were being used in their work area. In 2023-24 the result was lower 79.6 per cent. (Performance Measure 4.3c)
- Defence has chosen to amend the performance measure 4.3 targets for 2025-26 to reflect the desired state, which is that; 100 per cent of enterprise-wide survey participants believe appropriate action would be taken if they reported unacceptable behaviour; 0 per cent of staff experience unacceptable behaviour; and 100 per cent view that Defence values are used in their work area.
- The amended targets reflect that sexual violence and all unacceptable behaviours have no place in Defence and we are prioritising actions that keep evolving our culture.

### Recruitment and retention

- Recruitment and retention are reliable indicators of the impact of culture change.
- Retention interventions such as the ADF Continuation Bonus and the implementation of the Targeted Workforce Segment pay increase in 2024-25 have been successful in helping to retain ADF members in the junior and middle ranks as well as critical workforce segments.
- As at 1 December 2025, the APS separation rate was 8.9 per cent down from 10.3 per cent 12 months ago.
- As at 1 December 2025, the ADF separation rate was 7.6 per cent, down from 9.3 per cent 12 months ago, and the lowest it has been in over 14 years.
- There is no indication of a single factor for ADF members to leave or remain in service.
  - There were over 5,500 ADF responses to the June 2025 Workplace Experience Survey.
    - o Survey results indicated that improving job satisfaction, benefits and conditions could all influence a members' decision to continue their service.
    - o Survey results indicated that ADF members who leave were those least satisfied with ways of working, and career and personal development.

### Actions to increase job satisfaction and workplace experience

- Defence has introduced improvements to the Defence Assisted Study Scheme and Studybank to enable proactive retraining of individuals who seek other career opportunities or enhancement of their professional development through gaining of tertiary qualifications.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Mrs Rebecca Wootten  
Position: Assistant Secretary People and Culture  
Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
Workforce and People Strategy  
Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Mrs Leisa Craig  
Position: First Assistant Secretary Workforce and People Strategy  
Group: Defence People Group  
Phone: s47E(d)

- The Defence Learning Academy is a project that will enhance APS professionalisation and optimise APS professional development through a centralised strategy-led approach to formal learning, on the job training and experience in Defence or industry.
- The Defence Learning Academy pilot is being rolled out with an initial focus on building skills in priority job families including Project and Program Management; Engineering and Technical; Procurement and Contracting; and Materiel Logistics.

### Continued culture reform including actions to improve mental health and wellbeing and psychosocial safety

- Defence has enhanced programs and supports for Defence personnel and their families, including:
  - Launching the joint Defence and Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2030 (the Strategy). The Strategy complements and builds upon the work of the Defence and Veteran Family Wellbeing Strategy 2025-30 and the Veteran Transition Strategy 2023. The Department of Veterans' Affairs and Department of Defence have worked together to develop the Strategy, together with:
    - the Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan
    - the Suicide Prevention Action Plan.
  - Expanding the ADF Family Health Program.
  - Expanding remote locality leave travel for personnel posted to remote locations.
  - Extending the SafeSide program to support suicide prevention.
- Approximate completion numbers for Defence SafeSide courses are:
  - 91,970 completions for Defence Suicide Awareness (1 January 2025 – 31 Dec 2025)
  - 1,077 completions for clinician risk formulation and model training CARE-RF (26 August 2024 – 31 December 2025)
  - 24,507 completions for leaders and managers training (13 September 2024 – 31 December 2025).
- Early scoping and planning is underway to produce the new in-person version of CARE-LM for leaders and managers. It is planned to be delivered during ab-initio training for Officers, at promotion courses for junior officers, other ranks, and Command courses. The new course/courses will be co-designed developed and implemented in collaboration with single Service group and ADF Training School representatives to ensure that courses are compatible with current curriculum.
- Defence introduced training for all Group Heads and Service Chiefs to ensure they understand and commit to their due diligence obligations and Work Health and Safety accountabilities.
- Mandatory psychosocial risk training, monthly common hazard awareness sessions, and delivery of foundational knowledge presentations, equip participants with knowledge

#### Prepared By:

Name: Mrs Rebecca Wootten  
 Position: Assistant Secretary People and Culture  
 Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
 Workforce and People Strategy  
 Phone: s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Mrs Leisa Craig  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary Workforce and People Strategy  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d)

and tools to identify psychosocial hazards, implement interventions and provide support.

- Defence continues to implement the agreed recommendations of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran suicide.
  - Defence is solely responsible for 54 recommendations, and has shared responsibility for a further 22 recommendations;
  - As of 31 December 2025, 75 Reform Management Plans have been approved by the Defence Royal Commission Implementation Program Board.
- It is important that the Defence workforce reflects the community that it serves. To achieve this, Defence implements measures to improve the representation of women, First Nations people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTQIA+ personnel and those living with disability.

### Culture at the Australian Defence Force Academy

- The Workplace Behaviours Survey is conducted in August each year with trainees during their initial military training.
- The latest results from the 2024 Workplace Behaviours Survey show reductions in unacceptable behaviour at the Australian Defence Force Academy through early intervention and targeted strategies.
  - Australian Defence Force Academy has delivered a 2025 Workforce Behaviours Action Plan that outlines the key initiatives to be undertaken in response to the findings from the 2024 Workplace Behaviours Report.
- The training strategies include: all trainee officers receive training in expected values and behaviours, sexual violence prevention, unacceptable behaviours and respectful behaviours; ongoing Character, Leadership and Ethics education, including the Healthy Relationships training program.
- The support strategies include: Squadron Support Officer Scheme that supports Divisional staff to supervise the wellbeing of Trainee Officers; and a Case Support Officer Scheme that allows Command to appoint a Case Support Officer to provide welfare and administrative support to a member.
  - The Case Support Officer is normally superior in rank, and removed from the trainee's immediate Chain of Command.
- The impact of these initiatives at Australian Defence Force Academy is reflected in the latest Workplace Behaviours Survey results. Of the 78 per cent of Trainee Officers enrolled at Australian Defence Force Academy in 2024 who completed the survey, 38 per cent reported to have experienced unacceptable behaviour, a decrease of 33 percentage points from 61 per cent in 2020. Further, the Psychosocial Safety Climate at Australian Defence Force Academy has continued to improve, with 73 per cent of Officer Trainee respondents categorised as low risk for poor psychological wellbeing, an increase of 20 percentage points from 53 per cent in 2020, while those at

**Prepared By:**

Name: Mrs Rebecca Wootten  
 Position: Assistant Secretary People and Culture  
 Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
 Workforce and People Strategy  
 Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Mrs Leisa Craig  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary Workforce and People Strategy  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d)

high or very high risk fell 15 percentage points from 35 per cent in 2020 to 20 per cent in 2024.

### Culture in other training establishments

- . Defence is working to improve the experience of those in our training establishments.
- . For example, Army is conducting targeted character, values and ethics education at all Army training establishments.
- . The existing supports available at training establishments include:
  - integrated chaplaincy (all faiths), medical and psychological support
  - Indigenous specific support through Indigenous Liaison Officer networks
  - workplace Behaviour Advisor networks
  - mandatory training on workplace behaviour and prevention of sexual violence. This training includes extensive education about 'consent'
  - mandatory Work Health and Safety training which includes a compulsory module on psychosocial risk management for all workers
  - alcohol education
  - robust management of complaints and complaint handling process
  - continued regular workplace behaviour surveys.

### Monitoring and evaluation of Defence culture

- . Defence is strengthening the evaluation and measurement of culture and wellbeing to better identify targeted areas for improvement, target interventions and support for our people.
- . Defence has developed the inaugural annual culture report to baseline data and targets for monitoring the impact of the Defence Culture Blueprint program. This report highlights Defence efforts to keep improving the experience of our people at work, and is scheduled for public release in Quarter 1 of 2026.
- . The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, along with our data insights, reaffirm we have more work to do to evolve Defence's culture to be positive, supportive, inclusive and respectful for all personnel.
- . Defence recognises we must enhance our ability to detect, prevent, educate and respond in relation to incidents of Unacceptable Behaviour. The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide highlighted we still have work to do in building a stronger culture of reporting unacceptable behaviour.
  - We are focused on implementing agreed Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide recommendations and the findings of the 2023 Commonwealth Ombudsman Report, 'Defending Fairness' to build a stronger reporting culture in relation to unacceptable behaviour.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Mrs Rebecca Wootten  
Position: Assistant Secretary People and Culture  
Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
Workforce and People Strategy  
Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Mrs Leisa Craig  
Position: First Assistant Secretary Workforce and People Strategy  
Group: Defence People Group  
Phone: s47E(d)

- This includes reforming our policies and processes, addressing our data and reporting capability shortfalls and ensuring people feel confident in reporting unacceptable behaviour incidents.
- To support Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide implementation and enable a more effective response to unacceptable behaviour in Defence, the 'Defence People Dashboard' has been developed and made available to all Senior Leaders.
- . The dashboard, which displays anonymous data, is designed to improve Defence's unacceptable behaviour reporting capacity through greater centralised data integration to more effectively detect, respond to, and educate Defence personnel in relation to unacceptable behaviour.
  - This data is sourced from Defence's Enterprise Planning Case Management Solution, with a 'go live' date of May 2024, and is refreshed overnight.
  - Available metrics via the dashboard include total numbers of incidents relating to: workplace bullying, sexual violence, harassment, violent behaviour, discrimination, abuse of power and inappropriate workplace relationships for each Defence Group and Service.
  - Additional functionality will be implemented over time as the system is further refined.
- . The dashboard provides Senior Leaders with an interface to assist with identifying emerging culture issues and potential areas of concern that may be caused by unacceptable behaviour incidents and enable a more effective prevention, detection and constructive response to unacceptable behaviour.

### Monitoring and reporting of psychosocial risks

- . Defence monitors relevant Work Health and Safety risks and incidents, including those that are psychosocial in nature, through the provision of the Quarterly Work Health and Safety Dashboard to senior leaders.
- . The Defence Quarterly Work Health and Safety Dashboard highlights serious Work Health and Safety insights and trends. Groups and Services provide information on how they are taking action to manage risks using the Control and Evaluation Table attached to the dashboard. This provides assurance to senior leadership that the controls are being evaluated for effectiveness, and where ineffective, gives senior leadership the oversight needed to ensure action is taken.
- . The Defence Quarterly Work Health and Safety Dashboard continues to identify psychosocial risk as an area of concern. To help Groups and Services act on this, Defence has:
  - Implemented the annual Psychosocial Risk Deep Dive Report, which provides more comprehensive analysis of insights and trends to support targeted action on hotspots within the workforce.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Mrs Rebecca Wootten  
Position: Assistant Secretary People and Culture  
Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
Workforce and People Strategy  
Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Mrs Leisa Craig  
Position: First Assistant Secretary Workforce and People Strategy  
Group: Defence People Group  
Phone: s47E(d)

- Implemented the Defence Work Health and Safety Interactive Group and Service Dashboard that contains incident data and assists with the timely identification of insights and trends to support actions being taken in real-time.
- Introduced a Psychosocial Risk Portal, which contains practical guidance and tools for leaders and individuals at all levels to proactively identify, manage and respond to psychosocial risk and incidents in their workplace.
- Implemented senior leader –level briefings on psychosocial risk management, including legislative and strategic considerations. Legislatively, senior leaders must exercise due diligence to ensure compliance with psychosocial risk management responsibilities. Due diligence under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* means: ensuring awareness of the current state of risk within the area, being responsive to incidents and reports, effectively allocating resources to eliminate or minimise risk, and having a process to ensure that allocated resources are working effectively and are being utilised correctly.

### Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
15 November 2024	QoN	<b>QoN No. 83, Female Cadets</b> , Senator Jacqui Lambie asked for the actions the government has taken to address rates of sexual harassment faced by female cadets.	Tabled.
6 June 2024	QoN	<b>QoN No. 596, Service Level Unacceptable Behaviours Data</b> , Senator David Shoebridge asked for unacceptable behaviour, bullying and sexual harassment results for Navy, Army and Air Force for 2021, 2022 and 2023.	Tabled.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- 5 November 2025, The Lowy Institute, [Beyond the headlines: the risk of stereotyping women in uniform | Lowy Institute](#)
- 25 October 2025, Laura Lavelle, ABC News, [ADF sexual assault class action ignites hope for reform and lasting change - ABC News](#)
- 24 October 2025, Grant McArthur and Niddal Mustafa, The Age, [ADF servicewomen sue Defence over allegations of rape, sexual assault, discrimination](#)
- 24 October 2025, Maeve Bannister, 9 News, [ADF: Multiple women file class action over rates of sexual violence](#)
- 24 October 2025, The Guardian, [Women launch class action against ADF alleging widespread sexual violence, misogyny and harassment | Australian military | The Guardian](#)

#### Prepared By:

Name: Mrs Rebecca Wootten  
 Position: Assistant Secretary People and Culture  
 Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
 Workforce and People Strategy  
 Phone: s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Mrs Leisa Craig  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary Workforce and People Strategy  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d)

<b>Division:</b> Workforce and People Strategy	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000498	
<b>Prepared by:</b> s47E(d) Acting Assistant Secretary People and Culture Workforce and People Strategy s47E(d) Date: 28 January 2026	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Mrs Leisa Craig First Assistant Secretary Workforce and People Strategy Defence People Group s47E(d) Date: 29 January 2026
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Ms Justine Greig PSM Deputy Secretary Defence People Defence People Group Date: 29 January 2026  Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC Chief of Personnel Defence People Group Date: 29 January 2026	

**Prepared By:**

Name: Mrs Rebecca Wootten  
 Position: Assistant Secretary People and Culture  
 Division: Workforce and People Strategy  
 Workforce and People Strategy  
 Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Mrs Leisa Craig  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary Workforce  
 and People Strategy  
 Group: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d)

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - EXTERNAL WORKFORCE & CONSULTANTS

**Lead:** Steven Groves, Acting Associate Secretary

**Supporting:** Sam Volker, First Assistant Secretary, Budgets and Financial Services

**Context:** Defence is committed to supporting the Government's agenda to strengthen the APS workforce by increasing the proportion of work undertaken by public servants and progressing initiatives to implement the 2023 APS Strategic Commissioning Framework. Defence has implemented initiatives to rebalance our workforce, including converting contractors to APS. Defence has achieved a reduction of 2,212 'Above the Line' contractors at December 2024, exceeding the committed reduction of 2,000 contractors.

### Key Messages

- Defence over-achieved on its commitment to reduce its use of contractors by 2,000 by December 2024, achieving a reduction of 2,212 full-time equivalent (FTE), confirmed through the External Workforce Census conducted in March 2025.
- Defence will consider further initiatives and targets in 2025 to continue strengthening the APS and reducing its reliance on the contractor workforce across key job families.
- As Defence implements the 2024 Integrated Investment Program, the demands on the external workforce will change by location, work type and in aggregate.
- Defence will continue to engage technical specialists through the external workforce to respond flexibly to changing circumstances, including surge requirements.
- Further to the commitments to strengthening the APS, the Government continues its broader support for Defence Industry. On 14 September 2025, the Government committed an initial \$12 billion towards delivering a Defence Precinct at Henderson to deliver continuous naval shipbuilding and AUKUS in Western Australia.
- Alongside the Government's record investments across shipbuilding and AUKUS in Western Australia, these commitments will support 10,000 direct jobs over the next two decades as well as providing opportunities for small and medium sized businesses across the state.
- This new funding will ensure continued momentum behind this major project in support of AUKUS, and is the first down payment on a larger commitment of up to \$25 billion across the decade.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Rob Coffey

Position: AS External Workforce Reform

Division: Budgets & Financial Services

Phone: s22 & s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Steven Groves

Position: Chief Finance Officer

Group: Defence Finance

Phone: s22 & s47E(d)

## Talking Points

### Steps Defence has taken to progress the Government's commitment to improving the public service reducing contractor expenditure

- Defence achieved a genuine reduction of 2,212 contractor full-time equivalent (FTE), which represents a 10 per cent increase against the commitment of 2,000 and was confirmed in the results of the March 2025 External Workforce Census.
- Defence is managing its overall workforce in line with the Government's existing policy and guidance, while also responding to increasing work demands.
- To facilitate the conversion from contracted positions to APS staff, Defence was provided an additional 2,000 Average Staffing Level (ASL) on an ongoing basis. These positions were provided in stages:
  - An additional 660 ASL in 2023-24, 1,190 in 2024-25 and 150 in 2025-26.
  - This provides an unfunded ASL uplift of 2,000 by 2025-26.
- Defence has established the External Workforce Reform Branch (formerly the Contractor Taskforce) and developed a 2024-26 External Workforce Reform Action Plan to support Defence in delivering the Government's commitment.

### Commonwealth Savings Measures

- Defence has contributed \$2.8 billion in savings towards the Government's commitment to reduce the costs of external labour. Refer to [Table A](#) below for savings over the Forward Estimates.
- In April 2025, the Government announced across the Commonwealth its election commitment of a further \$6.4 billion in savings from external labour, and other non-wage expenses. The 2025-26 component of this is \$430.5 million,

**Prepared By:**

Name: Rob Coffey

Position: AS External Workforce Reform

Division: Budgets &amp; Financial Services

Phone: s22 &amp; s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Steven Groves

Position: Chief Finance Officer

Group: Defence Finance

Phone: s22 &amp; s47E(d)

Table A – Breakdown of Defence’s Savings over the Forward Estimates

Budget Measure (\$m)	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
2022-23 Oct PBS: One off saving measure	144.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	144.6
2023-24 PBS: Savings from External Labour, and savings from Advertising, Travel and Legal Expenses	-	154.3	158.8	163.7	155.1	-	-	631.9
2024-25 PBS: Savings from External Labour – Extension, and the commissioning of a new Audit of Employment	-	-	23.7	25.8	25.6	196.8	-	271.9
2025-26 PBS: WoG External Labour Savings - Extension Measure	-	-	-	-	-	-	196.8	196.8
<b>Total savings per year</b>	<b>144.6</b>	<b>154.3</b>	<b>182.5</b>	<b>189.5</b>	<b>180.7</b>	<b>196.8</b>	<b>196.8</b>	<b>1,245.2</b>
<b>Cumulative Savings</b>	<b>144.6</b>	<b>298.9</b>	<b>481.4</b>	<b>670.9</b>	<b>851.6</b>	<b>1,048.4</b>	<b>1,245.2</b>	
2025 Election Commitment 2025-26 PAES: Savings from External Labour	-	-	-	188.8	376.6	437.7	502.7	1505.8
2025 Election Commitment 2025-26 PAES: Travel Savings				52.2				52.2
<b>Total savings per year</b>	<b>144.6</b>	<b>154.3</b>	<b>182.5</b>	<b>430.5</b>	<b>557.3</b>	<b>634.5</b>	<b>699.5</b>	<b>2803.2</b>
<b>Cumulative appropriation savings (includes not yet announced)</b>	<b>144.6</b>	<b>298.9</b>	<b>481.4</b>	<b>911.9</b>	<b>1,469.2</b>	<b>2,103.7</b>	<b>2,803.2</b>	
<b>Total</b>								<b>2,803.2</b>

### Size of Defence’s external workforce

- The External Workforce Census in March 2025 reported 36,878 FTE engaged as part of the external workforce in Defence. Overall, the total external workforce increased by 840 FTE (2 per cent) compared to the March 2024 Census.
- 31,020 FTE, or 84 per cent of Defence’s external workforce were engaged through outsourced service providers.
  - This was an increase of 1,947 from 29,073 FTE (80 per cent of the total) since the March 2024 Census. A majority of these contracts are outcomes based, causing some minor variation in results depending on specific workloads during the census.
- 5,650 FTE, or 15 per cent, were engaged as contractors. This reflected:
  - a decrease of 962 contractors since March 2024; and

#### Prepared By:

Name: Rob Coffey

Position: AS External Workforce Reform

Division: Budgets & Financial Services

Phone: §22 & §47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Steven Groves

Position: Chief Finance Officer

Group: Defence Finance

Phone: §22 & §47E(d)

- reclassification of 69 FTE resources from contractors to outsourced service providers.
- 208 FTE, or 1 per cent, were engaged as consultants. This was a reduction of 77 from 285 FTE since March 2024.
- The results of the Defence External Workforce Census in March 2025 showed a genuine contractor reduction (excluding reclassifications) of 2,212 FTE (28 per cent) since March 2023, exceeding the agreed contractor reduction target of 2,000 by December 2024.
- The next External Workforce Census will occur in March 2026.

### Reasons Defence uses contractors and does not employ more APS personnel

- In some areas, Defence has taken a decision to outsource delivery of certain functions because the private sector has specific expertise or skills, and represents better value for money.
- This includes functions such as base services, delivery of health services, or the use of defence industry to sustain military assets of the contracted workforce:
  - 12,284 (33 per cent) are providing Platform or Fleet sustainment and maintenance;
  - 5,616 (15 per cent) are supporting information technology; and
  - 3,705 (10 per cent) are providing property services.
- Defence remains committed to ensuring it achieves best value for the Australian taxpayer when it accesses the external market.
- The majority of Defence's external workforce (31,020 or 84 per cent) are outsourced service providers.
- Overall, 81 per-cent of the external workforce is now contracted on a solely or partially outcomes basis (64 per cent outcome based and 17 per cent combined outcomes/time and materials contract).
- Defence's use of the external workforce is expected to change over the coming years in response to the 2023 Defence Strategic Review, the 2024 National Defence Strategy and the workforce policies set by the Government.
- The 2024 Defence Workforce Plan identifies that Defence will reduce reliance on the contractor workforce for core APS jobs, while recognising there will continue to be a need for contracted support in specialist areas.

### Defence spend on external workforce in 2024-25

- In 2024-25, Defence spent \$12.7 billion on outsourced service providers, \$2.1 billion on contractors and \$124 million on consultants (all figures GST exclusive).
- Defence spent approximately \$2.8 billion on APS employee expenses in 2024-25.

### Background

#### Prepared By:

Name: Rob Coffey

Position: AS External Workforce Reform

Division: Budgets & Financial Services

Phone: s22 & s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Steven Groves

Position: Chief Finance Officer

Group: Defence Finance

Phone: s22 & s47E(d)

- The External Workforce Census provides an estimate of the Full Time Equivalent of outsourced service providers, contractors and consultants engaged by Defence as shown at Table B. Combined with expenditure data shown at Table C, this details how Defence is using external support.
- This year's census shows a marginal increase in overall size of the external workforce (up 2.3%). The growth is only in outsourced service provider staff. Both contractors and consultants have continued to decline. Increase is due to fluctuations in the number and volume of projects under delivery, which is extremely high at present. As outsourced service providers are paid for delivery of services (e.g. base maintenance) on agreed pricing the increase does not necessarily reflect an increase in spend.

**Table B - Past External Workforce Census results**

FTE by Category	March 2023	September 2023 (percentage change)	March 2024 (percentage change)	March 2025 (percentage change)
Contractors	8,523	6,742** (down 21 per cent)	6,681 (down 1 per cent)	5,650 (down 15 per cent)
Outsourced service providers	28,446	28,856 (up 1 per cent)	29,073 (up 1 per cent)	31,020 (up 7 per cent)
Consultants	361	326 (down 10 per cent)	285 (down 13 per cent)	208 (down 27 per cent)
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,330</b>	<b>35,924</b> (down 4 per cent)	<b>36,038*</b> (up 0.3 per cent)	<b>36,878</b> (up 2.3 per cent)

\* Total varies slightly to the figures represented above due to rounding.

\*\* Numbers in table are as published at each census. Note that subsequent contractor numbers include reclassifications and other movements not attributed as savings/reductions and not counted towards the reduction target. The difference between March 2023 and March 2025 is different to the official reduction figure.

**Table C - External Workforce Expenditure over Time**

Overall External Workforce Expenditure (GST exclusive)	2020-21 (\$billion)	2021-22 (\$billion)	2022-23 (\$billion)	2023-24 (\$billion)	2024-25 (\$billion)
Consultants	0.116	0.154	0.162	0.145	0.124
Contractors	1.873	2.487	2.572	2.263	2.126
Outsourced Service Providers	10.955	13.072	11.513	11.970	12.729
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>12.944</b>	<b>15.713</b>	<b>14.247</b>	<b>14.378</b>	<b>14.979</b>

**Prepared By:**

Name: Rob Coffey

Position: AS External Workforce Reform

Division: Budgets &amp; Financial Services

Phone: s22 &amp; s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Steven Groves

Position: Chief Finance Officer

Group: Defence Finance

Phone: s22 &amp; s47E(d)

Expenditure on external workforce as a percentage of Defence expenditure	30.88 per cent	33.99 per cent	29.55 per cent	28.59 per cent	28.30 per cent
--------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------

### The 'Big Four' contracting and consultant firms

- In March 2025, 785 FTE from the Big Four were delivering services to Defence, down from 818 FTE in March 2024, as shown in Table D.

Table D – Big Four Full Time Equivalent

Company	Consultant		Contractor		Outsourced Service Providers		Total	
	Mar 2024	Mar 2025	Mar 2024	Mar 2025	Mar 2024	Mar 2025	Mar 2024	Mar 2025
KPMG	1	4	326	238	144	53	470	295
Deloitte	10	23	96	88	65	95	171	205
Scyne	-	-	33	82	3	4	36	86
EY	41	8	50	90	51	101	141	199
<b>Total*</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>785</b>

\*Totals may not add up due to rounding.

- The Big Four provide many services to Defence. Services predominantly relate to project management (399 FTE or 53 per cent of total Big Four FTE) and information technology (167 FTE or 22 per cent of total Big Four FTE).
- In 2025-26 YTD (as at 31 December 2025), Defence has spent \$199m (GST inclusive) with the 'Big Four', comprising:
  - KPMG (\$75 million);
  - ;
  - Deloitte (\$65 million);
  - Ernst & Young (EY) (\$40 million); and
  - Scyne (\$19 million).
- For the Big Four, expenditure was categorised as contractors (65 per cent), outsourced service providers (28 per cent) and consultants (7 per cent).

**Prepared By:**

Name: Rob Coffey

Position: AS External Workforce Reform

Division: Budgets & Financial Services

Phone: s22 & s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Steven Groves

Position: Chief Finance Officer

Group: Defence Finance

Phone: s22 & s47E(d)

**Major Service Providers**

- In March 2025, 4,010 FTE from the major service providers were delivering services to Defence (down from 4,249 FTE in March 2024). The major service providers resources included:
  - Overall:
    - : 2,471 contractors (down from 2,774 FTE);
    - : 1,517 outsourced service provider resources (up from 1,437 FTE); and
    - : 22 consultants (down from 38 FTE);
  - From specific providers:
    - : 1,763 external workforce from Team Downer (Major Service Provider) FTE (down from 1,862 FTE);
    - : 869 external workforce from Team Nova (Major Service Provider) FTE (down from 985 FTE); and
    - : 743 external workforce from KEY (Major Service Provider) FTE (up from 710 FTE); and
    - : 635 external workforce from Jacobs (Major Service Provider) FTE (down from 691 FTE).
  - Primary activities were in the fields of:
    - : property (1,136 FTE or 28 per cent);
    - : sustainment (818 FTE, 20 per cent); and
    - : project management (741 FTE, 18 per cent).

**Relevant Media Reporting**

- On 4 August 2025, the Canberra Times published an article titled [Heavier scrutiny for contracts over \\$2m on the table](#) by Eleanor Campbell.
- On 30 July 2025, The Canberra Times published an article titled [Defence's in-house consultancy racks up four projects as demand outstrips supply](#) by Eleanor Campbell.
- On 14 July 2025, The Braidwood Times published an article titled [Re-arranging the deck chairs': federal government spends \\$137m on consultants since election](#) by Eleanor Campbell.
- On 5 June 2025, The Canberra Times published an article titled [Boutique auditing firm eyes further growth in Canberra despite cuts](#) by Connor Pearce.
- On 12 February 2025, The Canberra Times published an article titled [We deliver': consultants fire back as sector becomes political punching bag](#) by Connor Pearce.
- On 8 December 2024, the Australian Financial Review published an article titled [What Defence spent on consultants could run submarine fleet for a year](#) by Ronald Mizen.
- On 3 November 2024, the Australian Financial Review published an article titled [\\$500m in Canberra consulting to be slashed"](#) by Edmund Tadros.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Rob Coffey

Position: AS External Workforce Reform

Division: Budgets &amp; Financial Services

Phone: s22 &amp; s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Steven Groves

Position: Chief Finance Officer

Group: Defence Finance

Phone: s22 &amp; s47E(d)

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026  
 Last updated: 29 January 2026  
 Key witnesses: Steven Groves

PDR No: SB25-000499

<b>Division:</b> Budgets and Financial Services	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000499	
<p><b>Prepared by:</b>                  Rob Coffey                  Assistant Secretary                  External Workforce Reform                  Defence Finance Group                  Mob: s22 [redacted]                  Ph: s47E(d) [redacted]                  Date: 21 August 2025</p>	<p><b>Cleared by Division Head:</b>                  Sam Volker                  First Assistant Secretary                  Budgets and Financial Services                  Defence Finance Group                  Mob: s22 [redacted]                  Ph: s47E(d) [redacted]                  Date: 29 January 2026</p>
<p><b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b>                  Steven Groves                  Chief Finance Officer                  Defence Finance Group</p>	
<p>Date: 29 January 2026</p>	

**Prepared By:**  
 Name: Rob Coffey  
 Position: AS External Workforce Reform  
 Division: Budgets & Financial Services  
 Phone: s22 [redacted] & s47E(d) [redacted]

**Cleared By:**  
 Name: Steven Groves  
 Position: Chief Finance Officer  
 Group: Defence Finance  
 Phone: s22 [redacted] & s47E(d) [redacted]

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - SENIOR OFFICER ENTITLEMENTS

**Lead:** Admiral David Johnston AC, Chief of the Defence Force

**Supporting:** Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC, Chief of Personnel

**Context:** As Senior Leadership Group members, Star Rank officers have access to specific legislated workplace benefits to support professional duties.

### Key Messages

- The Pay and Conditions Manual (PACMAN) is the ADF's legislative instrument under the *Defence Act 1903*, which carries the force of law ensuring consistent and compliant administration of pay and benefits across the Defence Force.
- The Pay and Conditions Manual captures the Star Rank officer's access to specific workplace benefits of official travel provisions, official travel lounge memberships, designated parking and hand held devices.

### Talking Points

- Pay and Conditions Manual Chapter 4 Part 6: Additional benefits for Star Rank officers captures the Senior Leadership Group member's access to specific workplace benefits of official travel, including lounge memberships, designated parking, and hand held devices.
- As at 1 September 2025, these Star Rank officer entitlements comprise:
  - **Official travel provisions for Senior Leadership Group travel.** Travel must be undertaken by the most efficient, effective, economical and ethical means. All travel requests are reviewed to ensure there is a genuine business need, the best fare of the day is selected, and the requirements of Defence's Official Travel Policy are met. Defence members are not to accept offers by airlines to upgrade their class of travel.
  - **Business class travel.** Business class travel is not supported from Canberra to Sydney or Melbourne. Business class travel is available for Star Rank officers or Senior Enlisted Leaders holding the rank of Regimental Sergeant Major–Army (E) travelling on Defence business if:
    - : they are accompanying a Minister, senior Government official or foreign delegation and collaborative work is required during the flight;
    - : the flight is part of a connecting flight for a longer domestic journey and the total journey is greater than 90 minutes;
    - : they have a recognised medical condition, which precludes them from travelling in economy class; and/or
    - : the scheduled flight time is longer than 90 minutes at the time of booking.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Executive Officer, Senior Officer Management - ADF  
 Division: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Director Senior Officer Management - ADF  
 Division: Defence People Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

- **Spouse accompanied travel.** Spouse accompanied travel is for representational purposes and is defined as travel undertaken at Commonwealth expense by a spouse who will perform a representational role while accompanying a Defence Official during Official Travel.
  - : Approval for Commonwealth-funded travel is only be considered in the most compelling and exceptional circumstances or where serious cultural offence can be reasonably anticipated. The threshold for compelling and exceptional circumstances is very high and must be demonstrably in the interests of the Commonwealth.
  - : For all statutory appointments, the Minister for Defence is the approving authority for Commonwealth-funded spouse or partner accompanied travel.
  - : For all other Defence staff, the Secretary or Chief of the Defence Force is the approving authority.
  - : Spouse or partner accompanied travel (or hosting) not at the Commonwealth's expense is at the discretion of the participating officer's immediate supervisor (independent of whether the role is a statutory appointment). Instances where a host country provides funding for spouses or partners must comply with gifts, benefits, and sponsorship policies.
- **Official Travel Lounge Memberships:** Senior Leadership Group members are entitled to airline lounge memberships through their workplace agreements. These memberships are not extended to partners, and are paid by the individual's Group or Service using Defence-issued travel or purchasing cards. Qantas and Virgin Australia offer complimentary access to their lounge facilities for business class fares purchased for Defence travellers. Defence members are not to solicit gifts of lounge memberships from airlines.
- **Designated Parking Space or Permit:** Full-time Senior Leadership Group members are eligible for a parking space at or near their service location, to which the member may be required to make a contribution. At Russell, Campbell Park, ANZAC Park West, Ben Chifley Building, Brindabella Business Park or Fairbairn (all within the Australian Capital Territory), Senior Leadership Group members are allocated a designated parking bay tied to their position. Access is coordinated by the Security and Estate Group.
- **Hand Held Devices:** Defence will meet the cost of providing and operating a telephone or device, including limited personal use. A member of the Reserves may be eligible if they have a minimum expected liability to serve 100 days per year, or the members' Commander or manager approves that the benefit be made available, with regard to the duties that the member is required to perform.
- **Transition assistance and support programs:** Star Rank officers transitioning from full-time ADF service receive transition assistance funding to assist in securing

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Executive Officer, Senior Officer Management - ADF  
Division: Defence People Group  
Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Director Senior Officer Management - ADF  
Division: Defence People Group  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000686

Last updated: 8 January 2026

Key witnesses: Admiral David Johnston AC; Lieutenant General Natasha Fox AO CSC

follow-on employment or to support meaningful community engagement. These provisions are in line with the Joint Transition Authority Manual and comprise financial advice, transition training support and outplacement support.

<b>Division:</b> Directorate of Senior Officer Management	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000686	
<b>Prepared by:</b> <b>s47E(d)</b> Executive Officer Senior Officer Management – ADF Defence People Group Ph: <b>s47E(d)</b>  Date: 8 January 2026	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> <b>s47E(d)</b> Director Senior Officer Management – ADF Defence People Group Mob: <b>s22</b> Ph: <b>s47E(d)</b>  Date: 08 January 2026
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star</b> Rear Admiral Letitia Van Stralen AM CSC RAN Acting Chief of Personnel Defence People Group  Date: 08 January 2026	

**Prepared By:**  
 Name: **s47E(d)**  
 Position: Executive Officer, Senior Officer Management - ADF  
 Division: Defence People Group  
 Phone: **s47E(d)**

**Cleared By:**  
 Name: **s47E(d)**  
 Position: Director Senior Officer Management - ADF  
 Division: Defence People Group  
 Phone: **s47E(d)** / **s22**

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - ENHANCED MARITIME DOMAIN LETHALITY

**Lead:** Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AO RAN, Chief of Navy

**Supporting:** Mr David Hanley, Deputy Secretary Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment

**Context:** The 2024 National Defence Strategy and 2024 Integrated Investment Program will deliver a larger and more lethal Navy as part of the integrated, focused force. Navy is responding to the direction in the 2024 National Defence Strategy by rapidly developing and delivering the capability priorities in line with the 2024 Integrated Investment Program. Navy is realigning the workforce and sustainment funding associated with capabilities no longer prioritised by the 2024 National Defence Strategy and the 2024 Integrated Investment Program.

### Key Messages

- Navy has made rapid progress in delivering against the independent analysis into Navy's surface combatant fleet's blueprint for a larger and more lethal surface combatant fleet, and the 2024 National Defence Strategy.
- The Government response to the Independent Analysis of Navy's Surface Combatant Fleet included \$11.1 billion in additional funding over the next decade.
- The larger surface combatant fleet increases Australia's ability to participate in operations and exercises, and deepens our relationship with our regional neighbours.
- The safety and security of our national economy is derived from our access to sea lines of communication, including data cables and maritime trade. A larger and more lethal Navy assures this access.
- Defence has made progress in the sovereign development and manufacture of uncrewed autonomous systems.

### Talking Points

- Navy has demonstrated the ability to strike land and sea targets at longer ranges following the successful first-of-class firings of the Naval Strike Missile, Standard Missile 6 and Tomahawk Land Attack Cruise Missile from our surface combatant fleet.
- On 5 August 2025, the Government announced the selection of the Upgraded Mogami frigate built by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries as the preferred platform for Navy's future fleet of general purpose frigates. The first general purpose frigate will be delivered in 2029 and operational in 2030, and replace the Anzac class frigates.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Commodore Edward Seymour, CSC, RAN  
 Position: Director General Maritime Surface and Above Water Warfare  
 Division: Navy Capability  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Rear Admiral Stephen Hughes, AM, CSC  
 Position: Head Navy Capability  
 Service: Royal Australian Navy  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

## General Purpose Frigates

- On 5 August 2025, the Government announced the selection of the upgraded Japanese Mogami Class frigate as the preferred platform for the future fleet of 11 general purpose frigates. It was assessed as the best option to meet the capability requirements and strategic needs of the ADF.
- Defence will establish government-to-government and commercial arrangements for the first three vessels to be built in Japan. Defence is forecast to enter into binding, commercial contracts with Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and other Japanese industry in early 2026, ensuring the first frigate will be delivered to Australia in 2029 and operational in 2030.
- Successful consolidation of the Henderson Precinct in Western Australia will enable the remainder of the build to be constructed locally, in line with the Government's commitment to continuous naval shipbuilding.

## Surface Fleet Lethality

- In response to the Defence Strategic Review, released on 24 April 2023, the Government agreed to conduct an Independent Analysis of Navy's Surface Combatant Fleet to ensure its size, structure and composition complement the capabilities provided by the forthcoming conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines.
- Released on 20 February 2024, the Independent Analysis of Navy's Surface Combatant Fleet agreed with the Defence Strategic Review's assessment that an enhanced lethality surface combatant fleet is required to provide increased strike, air defence, presence operations and undersea warfare to address the breadth of maritime missions.
- The Independent Analysis of Navy's Surface Combatant Fleet was led by retired United States Navy Vice Admiral William Hilarides and assisted by the former Secretary of the Department of Finance Ms Rosemary Huxtable AO PSM, and former Commander of the Australian Fleet, Vice Admiral Stuart Mayer AO CSC and Bar.
  - The Strategic Advisor was Jim McDowell, former Chief Executive Officer of Nova Systems, who served in this role until 28 July 2023. Following this, Mr McDowell commenced as the Deputy Secretary of the Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group on 31 July 2023 to 11 April 2025.
- The enhanced lethality surface combatant fleet will comprise of:
  - three Hobart class destroyers with upgraded strike capabilities;
  - six Hunter class frigates to boost Navy's undersea warfare and strike capabilities;
  - 11 general purpose frigates to provide maritime and land strike, air defence and force protection capabilities and replace the ageing Anzac class frigates; and
  - six large optionally crewed surface vessels to boost Navy's long-range strike capacity and introduce autonomy to Navy's fleet.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Commodore Edward Seymour, CSC, RAN  
Position: Director General Maritime Surface and Above Water Warfare  
Division: Navy Capability  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Rear Admiral Stephen Hughes, AM, CSC  
Position: Head Navy Capability  
Service: Royal Australian Navy  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

- The enhanced lethality surface combatant fleet will deliver more naval power sooner when compared to the previous surface combatant plan.
- The enhanced lethality surface combatant fleet boosts Navy's multi-domain strike, integrated air and missile defence and undersea warfare capabilities.
- Construction commenced on the first Hunter class frigate on 21 June 2024. The first Hunter class frigate will achieve Vessel Acceptance Date in 2032.
- Upgrades to the Hobart class destroyer have commenced, which will add the Aegis Baseline 9 Combat System.
- HMAS *Anzac*, the first of class, was decommissioned on 18 May 2024 after 28-years of service. Navy will provide advice to Government on the decommissioning of the remaining *Anzac* class frigates in due course.

### Uncrewed Maritime Warfare Vehicles

- Uncrewed Systems are increasingly vital for modern warfare due to their ability to support a range of military operations. While the ADF currently operates a very broad range of uncrewed platforms for specific purposes, the Government is investing in emerging technologies to provide asymmetric capability advantage, including highly advanced, extremely capable autonomous systems able to operate and survive in contested warfighting environments.
- Defence is investing in three Australian-designed and manufactured uncrewed maritime warfare vehicles. These systems will be optimised for intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and strike, and complement Navy's surface combatants and conventionally-armed nuclear powered submarines. The performance characteristics of these vehicles, such as range and depth, are classified to maintain an advantage over a potential adversary's ability to exploit them. Likewise, the payload effectors and sensors carried by these platforms are also classified. The number of payload types will continue to grow over time to increase the types of missions able to be performed by the platforms and to take advantage of emerging technology, to defeat evolving threats.
- The three vehicles are the:
  - Anduril Australia Ghost Shark Extra-Large Autonomous Underwater Vehicles;
  - Ocius Bluebottle Uncrewed Surface Vessels; and
  - C2 Robotics Speartooth Large Uncrewed Underwater Vehicles.
- Australia's geographic disposition and operating environment necessitate larger, longer range and more survivable autonomous platforms than those seen in the maritime domain in Europe and Asia.
- Defence has made progress in the sovereign development and manufacture of uncrewed autonomous systems. Importantly, this is an example of Defence's evolving focus on industry partnership to accelerate the creation of sovereign technologies

**Prepared By:**

Name: Commodore Edward Seymour, CSC, RAN  
Position: Director General Maritime Surface and Above Water Warfare  
Division: Navy Capability  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Rear Admiral Stephen Hughes, AM, CSC  
Position: Head Navy Capability  
Service: Royal Australian Navy  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

through prototypes that can be transitioned to Defence capability to meet our strategic circumstances.

- As a result of Defence's collaboration with industry partners, the Australian-made Ghost Shark prototypes have successfully demonstrated their mission readiness against Navy performance parameters. The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Industry officially announced the award of a \$1.7 billion contract to Anduril Australia on 10 September 2025. This contract will develop, deliver, and maintain a fleet of dozens of Ghost Shark XL-AUVs.
- The Bluebottle prototypes have also successfully demonstrated their mission readiness against Navy performance parameters on OPERATION RESOLUTE. Defence is continuing to work with Ocius for future capability investment opportunities.
- The Speartooth prototype continues to progress through its test and evaluation activities to demonstrate mission readiness.

#### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
11 September 2025	Anduril Australia opened a new Ghost Shark manufacturing facility in NSW
10 September 2025	<a href="#">Announcement</a> by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Industry of the Ghost Shark Contract at Garden Island Navy Base.
26 August 2025	Co-signing of the Ghost Shark Contract (GSC) by CoA and Anduril Australia
26 August 2025	Defence and Anduril Australia entered into a five-year, \$1.7 billion contract for the acquisition of Ghost Shark
5 August 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister announced the <a href="#">Mogami class frigate as the preferred platform for the Navy's new general purpose frigates</a> .
01 July 2025	Defence and Ocius extended the contract for provision of Bluebottle ISR as a service to Operation RESOLUTE for another 12 months
30 June 2025	Ghost Shark Prototypes <i>Bravo 1</i> and <i>Bravo 2</i> complete an intense four-week period of trials and Mission Ready Prototype demonstrations in Jervis Bay and the Bass Strait
24 April 2025	Ocius opened a new purpose-built Bluebottle manufacturing and operations facility in Alexandria, NSW
9 December 2024	<a href="#">Navy conducts successful firing of Tomahawk cruise missile</a> .
25 November 2024	<a href="#">Announcement of two preferred shipbuilders, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) and Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems (TKMS), to progress designs for Australia's future general purpose frigates</a> .

#### Prepared By:

Name: Commodore Edward Seymour, CSC, RAN  
 Position: Director General Maritime Surface and Above Water Warfare  
 Division: Navy Capability  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Rear Admiral Stephen Hughes, AM, CSC  
 Position: Head Navy Capability  
 Service: Royal Australian Navy  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

Date	Event
10 August 2024	<a href="#">Navy conducts firing of Standard Missile 6 as part of Government push to provide ADF with enhanced capabilities.</a>
22 July 2024	<a href="#">Navy conducts successful firing of Naval Strike Missile.</a>
21 June 2024	<a href="#">First step in boosting Navy's undersea warfare and strike capability</a>
18 May 2024	<a href="#">HMAS Anzac the first of her class, was decommissioned after 28 years of service.</a>
20 February 2024	<a href="#">Independent analysis into Navy's surface combatant fleet released by Government</a>

### Relevant Media Reporting

- On 29 October 2025, Channel 10 aired a segment titled "[Is Australia Ready for War?](#)" Regarding surface combatants, the segment focussed on replacement timelines of current ship types, which were characterised as 'ageing and increasingly fragile'. The segment did not cover recent steps taken to enhance lethality of the current surface fleet, as detailed in this brief.
- On 04 September 2025, Stephen Kuper of [Defence Connect](#) published an article titled Hunter Class frigate director-general hits back at renewed criticism
- On 02 September 2025, Ben Packham from [The Australian](#) published an article titled Calls to scuttle 'premium' Hunter-class frigate deal
- On 01 September 2025, Ben Packham from [The Australian](#) published an article titled Hunter-class frigates cost \$5bn more each than similar ships purchased from Norway.
- On 14 August 2025, Paul Maley from [The Australian](#) published an article titled Australia's frigate purchase more than just a defence capability win.
- On 06 August 2025, Ben Packham from [The Australian](#) published an article titled Offshore option as Japan frigate wins.
- On 06 August 2025, Stephen Dill from the [Herald Sun](#) published an article titled Frigate deal key to shipshape defence.
- On 06 August 2025, Matthew Knott from [The Sydney Morning Herald](#) published an article titled Cost of Japan warships could hit \$20b: expert.
- On 5 August 2025, Australian media has reported extensively on the announcement of the selection of the Mogami Class frigate as the preferred platform for the Royal Australian Navy future fleet of general purpose frigates.
- On 27 July 2025, Georgie Kibel from [The Advertiser](#) published an article titled Deputy PM Richard Marles, UK Defence Secretary sign AUKUS 'Geelong Treaty'.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Commodore Edward Seymour, CSC, RAN  
 Position: Director General Maritime Surface and Above Water Warfare  
 Division: Navy Capability  
 Phone: [s47E\(d\)](#) & [s22](#)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Rear Admiral Stephen Hughes, AM, CSC  
 Position: Head Navy Capability  
 Service: Royal Australian Navy  
 Phone: [s47E\(d\)](#) & [s22](#)

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000504

Last updated: 28 January 2026

Key witnesses: Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AO RAN, David Hanley

<b>Division:</b> Navy Capability	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000504	
<b>Prepared by:</b> Commodore Edward Seymour CSC Director General Maritime Maritime Surface and Above Water Combat Mob: s22 [redacted] Ph: s47E(d) [redacted] Date: 23 January 2026	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Rear Admiral Stephen Hughes, AM, CSC Head Navy Capability Navy Capability Mob: s22 [redacted] Ph: s47E(d) [redacted] Date: 28 January 2026

<b>Consultation:</b>	
Ms Sheryl Lutz First Assistant Secretary Major Surface Combatants & Combat Systems Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group	Date: 27 January 2026
<b>Cleared by CFO:</b>	
Leonie Neiberding Assistant Secretary Finance - Navy Defence Finance Group	Date: 24 January 2026
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b>	
Rear Admiral Matthew Buckley AM CSC Acting Chief of Navy Navy	Date: 29 January 2026

**Prepared By:**

Name: Commodore Edward Seymour, CSC, RAN  
 Position: Director General Maritime Surface and Above Water Warfare  
 Division: Navy Capability  
 Phone: s47E(d) [redacted] & s22 [redacted]

**Cleared By:**

Name: Rear Admiral Stephen Hughes, AM, CSC  
 Position: Head Navy Capability  
 Service: Royal Australian Navy  
 Phone: s47E(d) [redacted] & s22 [redacted]

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - NAVAL SHIPBUILDING AND SUSTAINMENT

**Leads:** David Hanley, Deputy Secretary Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group; and Celia Perkins, Deputy Secretary Security and Estate Group.

**Supporting:** John Chandler, First Assistant Secretary Submarines (CNSS and NSSP); Sheryl Lutz, First Assistant Secretary Major Surface Combatants and Combat Systems (GPF); RADM Michael Houghton, Head Patrol Boats and Specialist Ships (SSA); and Mr Pat Sowry, First Assistant Secretary Infrastructure (Submarine Rotational Force-West infrastructure).

**Context:** Released on 20 December 2024, the updated Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Plan outlines the Government's approach to delivering maritime capability and uplifting the Australian maritime industrial base.

### Key Messages

- The maritime capability projects and coordinated industrial uplift set out in the 2024 Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Plan (the Plan) underpin the Government's approach to National Defence.
- The Plan outlines the approach to delivering maritime capability and targeted uplift of the maritime industrial base through continuous naval shipbuilding and sustainment.
- The Plan includes a 30-year forecast of naval shipbuilding and sustainment activities at principal shipyards and regional maintenance centres. The Plan will be updated as part of the biennial National Defence Strategy cycle to reaffirm Government's investment priorities in the maritime domain.
- Defence is working with its partners across the Commonwealth, the Western Australian Government and industry to manage the complex infrastructure interdependencies in South-West Perth required to support the AUKUS Pillar 1 Optimal Pathway and continuous naval shipbuilding.

### Talking Points

#### Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Plan

- Australia's sovereign industrial capability is a key driver of our ability to withstand, endure and recover from disruptions. It allows us to exert sovereign control of our maritime assets and contributes to the achievement of desired capability effects.
- The maritime capability projects and coordinated industrial uplift set out in the 2024 Plan underpin the Government's approach to National Defence.
- The Plan sets out an investment of \$123–\$159 billion over the next decade in the acquisition and upgrade of military capabilities, and over \$2 billion annually in fleet sustainment.

#### Jointly Prepared By:

Name: **s47E(d)**  
 Position: Director CNSS  
 Division: Submarines & CNSS  
 Phone: **s22**

Name: Helen Loundes  
 Position: AS Maritime Infrastructure & Integration  
 Phone: **s22**

#### Jointly Cleared By:

Name: David Hanley  
 Position: Deputy Secretary Group: Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment  
 Phone: **s22**

Celia Perkins  
 Deputy Secretary Security and Estate  
**s22**

- The Plan encompasses the acquisition of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines, enhanced lethality surface combatants, Army landing craft and a number of other major construction and upgrade projects.
- The Plan details the construction or upgrade of 79 vessels (73 of which will be built in Australia) over a 30-year period and an initial investment of \$150 million to support industrial uplift through the implementation of the Industrial Cornerstone initiatives:
  - Maritime Workforce and Skills Council;
  - Workforce Planning and Intelligence Service;
  - Shipbuilding Pathways Program;
  - Henderson consolidation;
  - National Maritime Infrastructure Master Plan;
  - Sea Systems Implementation Program; and
  - Maritime Security Assurance Program.
- The program of work contained within the Plan will support over 8,500 direct jobs in naval shipbuilding and sustainment by 2030, plus 20,000 direct jobs in support of the nuclear-powered submarine program over the next 30 years.
- As part of its commitment to Australian industry, the Government intends to release biennial Plan updates to send more frequent demand signals to industry and inform long-term investment opportunities. The next iteration is scheduled for release in 2026.

### The Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Enterprise Strategy

- The Plan supports the implementation of the Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Enterprise Strategy, released as part of the 2024 National Defence Strategy.
- The Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Enterprise Strategy sets out two core objectives for the enterprise:
  - uplift the capacity, productivity and resilience of the naval shipbuilding and sustainment industrial ecosystem to provide national preparedness as a direct input to the operations of the ADF; and
  - generate ongoing economic, export and employment opportunities for decades.

### Henderson Defence Precinct

- The Henderson precinct plays a critical role in delivering continuous naval shipbuilding and sustainment of the surface fleet and Collins class submarines. It is also the agreed site for future sustainment of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines.
- The Government has committed an initial \$127 million over three years to progress concept design studies, environmental studies, stakeholder consultations, and site feasibility assessments. Final plans, including funding options and commercial delivery arrangements will be determined through this work.

#### Jointly Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Director CNSS  
 Division: Submarines & CNSS  
 Phone: s22

Name: Helen Loundes  
 Position: AS Maritime Infrastructure & Integration  
 Phone: s22

#### Jointly Cleared By:

Name: David Hanley  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment  
 Phone: s22

Celia Perkins  
 Deputy Secretary  
 Security and Estate  
 s22

- In addition to the \$127 million, the Government will also provide \$12 billion towards delivering a Defence Precinct at Henderson to deliver continuous naval shipbuilding and AUKUS in Western Australia.

### Submarine Rotational Force – West Infrastructure

- Around \$8 billion is planned for investment to upgrade HMAS Stirling to be an operating base for the initial sovereign conventionally armed nuclear-powered submarine squadron based on the Virginia class submarines.
- In September 2023, the Government approved an initial \$1.8 billion investment to develop and deliver priority upgrades at Stirling to enable the initial operating support of SRF-West from 2027.
- Approved infrastructure works packages received relevant approvals and licences in 2025 from the Public Works Committee, the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) and the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA).
- Defence has completed community engagement as part of these processes. The focus of community interest has been on housing, traffic and local roads, the Little Penguin population, the management of radioactive waste material, and continued recreational fishing access. Defence is working closely with the Australian Submarine Agency and Western Australian Government to ensure industry and the community remain informed.
- Infrastructure works are well underway and progress includes:
  - Recent completion of the base entry upgrades;
  - living-in accommodation at HMAS Stirling (completion estimated Q1 2026);
  - training centre (under construction);
  - Emergency Preparedness and Response Complex (under construction);
  - non-regulated facilities for logistics, small boat storage and working accommodation (under construction); and
  - regulated facilities for the safe mooring of nuclear powered submarines (under construction), and
  - regulated facilities for the management of very low to low radiological waste – the Controlled Industrial Facility (preliminary works have commenced).

### Strategic Shipbuilding Agreement

- On 5 August 2025, the Government announced the Strategic Shipbuilding Agreement between Defence and Austal Defence Shipbuilding Australia Pty Ltd, providing the framework for a steady pipeline of projects to be delivered by Austal Defence Shipbuilding Australia.
- This represents a shift to a new operating model of managing maritime acquisition programs, from the previous project-by-project procurement process to a more strategic and programmatic approach over the long term.

#### Jointly Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Director CNSS  
 Division: Submarines & CNSS  
 Phone: s22

Name: Helen Loundes  
 Position: AS Maritime Infrastructure & Integration  
 Phone: s22

#### Jointly Cleared By:

Name: David Hanley  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment  
 Phone: s22

Celia Perkins  
 Deputy Secretary  
 Security and Estate  
 s22

- The initial term for the Strategic Shipbuilding Agreement is until 31 December 2032. The deed includes an option for a further extension until 28 August 2040.

### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
4 December 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> the Royal Australian Navy will commemorate the service of the final three Armidale class patrol boats during a triple decommissioning ceremony in Darwin.
1 December 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> it will establish the Defence Delivery Agency to integrate CASG; GWEO and NSSG to streamline acquisition and sustainment activities.
1 December 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> a third Product of Concern Summit in Canberra to improve the sustainment performance of Australia's Collins class submarines.
1 November 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> the establishment of the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator to support the delivery of AUKUS.
31 October 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> the first Arafura class Offshore Patrol Vessel built in Western Australia was launched at a ceremony at Henderson
14 September 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> \$12 billion towards delivering a Defence Precinct at Henderson to deliver continuous naval shipbuilding and AUKUS in Western Australia.
21 August 2025	Defence published documents required as part of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> Approval conditions, including the Construction Environmental Management Plan, enabling initial site clearing and construction to commence.
5 August 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> the selection of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries as the preferred platform for the general purpose frigates.
5 August 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> a Strategic Shipbuilding Agreement with Austal Defence Shipbuilding Australia Pty Ltd.
30 July 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> a Project of Concern Summit held to support sustainment of the Collins class submarines.

#### Jointly Prepared By:

Name: **s47E(d)**  
 Position: Director CNSS  
 Division: Submarines & CNSS  
 Phone: **s22**

Name: Helen Loundes  
 Position: AS Maritime Infrastructure & Integration  
 Phone: **s22**

#### Jointly Cleared By:

Name: David Hanley  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment  
 Phone: **s22**

Celia Perkins  
 Deputy Secretary  
 Security and Estate  
**s22**

26 July 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> a bilateral Nuclear-Powered Submarine Partnership and Collaboration Treaty with the United Kingdom under AUKUS Pillar I.
25 July 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> 40 grants worth over \$17.3 million to Australian businesses to deliver capabilities under the Defence Industry Development Grants Program.
28 June 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> the commissioning of HMAS <i>Arafura</i> to the Royal Australian Navy.
2 June 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> it will gift a Guardian-class Patrol Boat to the Maldives.
27 May 2025	DCCEEW issued its approval under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> for the Submarine Rotational Force – West Priority Works
23 May 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> 58 grants worth \$16.5 million to support local manufacturing under the Defence Industry Development Grants.
18 March 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> a \$400 million contract with Navantia Australia to sustain vessels for the Royal Australian Navy.
17 March 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> the commencement of the Defence Industry Pathways Program and the Shipbuilding Employment Pathways pilot in South Australia.
5 March 2025	The Government <a href="#">launched</a> the AUKUS Submarine Industry Strategy to uplift local defence industry and workforce to support AUKUS.
20 December 2024	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> the release of the 2024 Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Plan.
13 December 2024	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> that Collins class submarine sustainment had been listed as a Project of Concern.
25 November 2024	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> the down-selection to two shipbuilders for the general purpose frigates: Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems.
22 November 2024	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> the selection of a design by Damen Shipyards Group for the Army heavy landing craft.
16 October 2024	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> plans to establish a consolidated Commonwealth-owned Defence Precinct at Western Australia’s Henderson shipyard.

**Jointly Prepared By:**

Name: **s47E(d)**  
 Position: Director CNSS  
 Division: Submarines & CNSS  
 Phone: **s22**

Name: Helen Loundes  
 Position: AS Maritime Infrastructure & Integration  
 Phone: **s22**

**Jointly Cleared By:**

Name: David Hanley  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment  
 Phone: **s22**

Celia Perkins  
 Deputy Secretary  
 Security and Estate  
 Phone: **s22**

## Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
21 July 25	FOI	An individual asked for Defence submissions and responses to the ANAO Audit of the Canberra-class Amphibious Assault Ships (Landing Helicopter Docks) and findings of non-compliance with the PGPA Act	Decision Pending
27 July 2025	FOI	An individual asked for documents relating to the ANAO Audit of the Canberra-class Amphibious Assault Ships (Landing Helicopter Docks).	Decision Finalised
21 July 2025	FOI	A reporter from <i>The Guardian</i> asked for briefings or updates provided to the secretary or the minister's office regarding the ANAO's final performance audit report into Defence's sustainment of Canberra Class amphibious assault ships.	Decision Finalised
22 July 2025	FOI	An individual asked for documents relating to contract ID CN4123611, regarding NORSTA and surface ship sustainment in Darwin and Cairns.	Decision Pending
27 August 2024	FOI	An individual asked for ministerial submissions/briefings relating to the termination of procurement process for the ADF Family of Sea Boats (SHIP/RFT/18421/1)	Decision Pending
21 December 2021	FOI	An individual applied to the Information Commissioner and asked for advice provided to Government on location of Full Cycle Docking – IC decision was handed down 3 June 2025	Decision Pending

## Relevant Media Reporting

- On 1 December 2025, the [ABC](#) published an article titled '[Government unveils Department of Defence overhaul amid delays and cost blowouts](#)'.
- On 1 December 2025, [DefenceConnect](#) reported on the decommissioning of the Armidale class patrol boats in preparation for the Evolved Cape Class and Arafura Class vessels.

## Jointly Prepared By:

Name: **s47E(d)**  
 Position: Director CNSS  
 Division: Submarines & CNSS  
 Phone: **s22**

Name: Helen Loundes  
 Position: AS Maritime Infrastructure & Integration  
 Phone: **s22**

## Jointly Cleared By:

Name: David Hanley  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment  
 Phone: **s22**

Celia Perkins  
 Deputy Secretary  
 Security and Estate  
**s22**

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000505

Last updated: 27 January 2026

Key witnesses: David Hanley, Celia Perkins, John Chandler, Sheryl Lutz, RADM Michael Houghton, Pat Sowry

- On 5 November 2025, [DefenceConnect](#) reported that Austal has taken over the Landing Craft Medium Project from Birdon to mature vessel design.
- On 8 September 2025, the [Sydney Morning Herald](#) published a live news update titled '[WA Premier to introduce new laws to prevent major project delays](#)'.
- On 28 August 2025, [Naval News](#) published an article titled '[Austal and Australia sign strategic shipbuilding agreement](#)'.

<b>Division:</b> Submarines and CNSS	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000505	
<b>Prepared by:</b> s47E(d) Director, Continuous Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Branch Ph: s22 Date: 6 January 2026	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> John Chandler First Assistant Secretary Submarines & Continuous Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Ph: s22 Date: 07 January 2026
<b>Prepared by:</b> Helen Loundes Assistant Secretary Maritime Infrastructure and Integration Ph: s22 Date: 15 December 2025	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Pat Sowry First Assistant Secretary Infrastructure Ph: s22 Date: 15 January 2026
<b>Consultation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms Sheryl Lutz, First Assistant Secretary Major Surface Combatants and Combat Systems, NSSG</li> <li>RADM Michael Houghton, Head Patrol Boats and Specialist Ships, NSSG</li> <li>RADM Stephen Hughes, Head Navy Capability, Navy</li> <li>Mr Colin McKenna, Assistant Secretary Defence Henderson Precinct, NSSG</li> <li>s47E(d) Acting Head Policy Strategy and Engagement, Australian Submarine Agency</li> <li>s47E(d) Acting Head Virginia Workforce and Commercial, Australian Submarine Agency</li> </ul>	
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b> David Hanley Deputy Secretary Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Date: 15 January 2026	
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b> Celia Perkins Deputy Secretary Security and Estate Date: 15 January 2026	

**Jointly Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Director CNSS  
Division: Submarines & CNSS  
Phone: s22

Name: Helen Loundes  
Position: AS Maritime Infrastructure & Integration  
Phone: s22

**Jointly Cleared By:**

Name: David Hanley  
Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment  
Phone: s22

Celia Perkins  
Deputy Secretary  
Security and Estate  
s22

**PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - HUNTER CLASS FRIGATE**

**Lead:** Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AO RAN, Chief of Navy.

**Supporting:** David Hanley, Deputy Secretary Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group.

**Context:** The 2024 National Defence Strategy directed the enhancement of Navy's strike and undersea warfare capabilities through the delivery of six Hunter Class frigates under the SEA 5000 Hunter Class Frigate project.

**Key Messages**

- The SEA 5000 Hunter Class frigate project will deliver six Hunter Class frigates to a single configuration baseline.
- Optimised for anti-submarine warfare, the Hunter Class frigate is based on the BAE Systems Type 26 Global Combat Ship design and will be modified to meet Australian requirements.
- Approved scope is for design and construction of the first three vessels in Osborne, South Australia including facilities, infrastructure and industry mobilisation.
- Official construction of the first vessel, Nuship *Hunter* commenced on 21 June 2024, with 47 out of 78 units currently under construction.
- Steel cut for the second of class, Nuship *Flinders*, will occur in 2026.
- The first ship is expected to achieve Vessel Acceptance Date in 2032.

**Talking Points****Strategic Need**

- The Hunter Class frigate was selected as it best suited Australia's requirements for a superior anti-submarine warfare capability. The capability met the mandated requirement to incorporate Australian combat systems, including the US Aegis Combat System, the Australian designed and manufactured CEA Technologies Phased Array Radar and the systems needed to support the Australian inventory of guided weapons and the ability to operate the MH 60R Seahawk Romeo anti-submarine helicopter.
- The acquisition of the Hunter Class frigate is a foundational project for continuous naval shipbuilding, a key part of the —Government's planned expenditure on naval shipbuilding and maritime capability and contributes to the ongoing capability of Defence.
- In February 2024, following the Independent Analysis of Navy's Surface Combatant Fleet, the Government committed to the construction of six Hunter Class frigates of the same configuration, in two batches of three.
- In June 2024, the Government approved construction of the first three Hunter Class frigates to form part of Navy Tier 1 Surface Combatants.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Commodore Edward Seymour CSC RAN  
 Position: Director General Maritime Surface & Above Water Combat  
 Division: Navy Capability  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Rear Admiral Stephen Hughes AM CSC RAN  
 Position: Head Navy Capability  
 Service: Royal Australian Navy

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000506

Last updated: 30 January 2026

Key witnesses: Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AO RAN, Mr David Hanley

- Construction formally commenced on 21 June 2024, at a steel cutting event at the Osborne Naval Shipyard in South Australia. Currently 47 out of 78 units are under construction.
- The SEA 5000 Hunter Class Frigate project is being managed through relationships with industry and a close partnership with the United Kingdom.
- In September 2025, Norway announced the purchase of at least five T26 from the United Kingdom. Norway's request to join the Global Combat Ship User Group has been agreed by Australia, Canada, and the UK.

### Continuous Naval Shipbuilding

- The 2024 National Defence Strategy confirmed the importance of naval shipbuilding as a sovereign industrial capability. The 2024 Defence Industry Development Strategy further emphasised the role of continuous naval shipbuilding and sustainment in the uplift of sovereign defence industrial capability, which is vital for developing higher levels of military preparedness and self-reliance.
- The Hunter Class frigate is a foundational project for continuous naval shipbuilding and sustainment. It will deliver an established industrial base, including combat system architecture and support related industries, as well as heavy engineering and advanced manufacturing industries.
- The SEA 5000 Hunter Class frigate project will contribute to the Government's strategic objectives by supporting development of continuous naval shipbuilding, maximising Australian industrial capability, and developing a skilled science, technology, engineering and mathematics workforce capable of constructing naval ships and submarines.

### Protected Industrial Action

- A series of work stoppages at Osborne were initiated in February 2025. Following negotiations, the workforce accepted BAESMA's offer of a 25.1 per cent increase over 4 years, ending in 2028.
- Initial indications suggest the cost and build program will remain on track, with delivery of ship one expected to be on time and within budget.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Commodore Edward Seymour CSC RAN  
Position: Director General Maritime Surface & Above Water Combat  
Division: Navy Capability  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Rear Admiral Stephen Hughes AM CSC RAN  
Position: Head Navy Capability  
Service: Royal Australian Navy

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

### Project cost and value for money

- As outlined in the 2024 Integrated Investment Program, \$22–\$32 billion has been allocated to the SEA 5000 Hunter Class Frigate project over the decade to 2033–34. The SEA 5000 Hunter Class Frigate project is utilising a staged approval process for this procurement.
- In June 2024, the Government announced that a contract had been signed for the construction phase for the first three Hunter Class frigates. \$19.87 billion was approved to support construction of the first three ships, as well as procurement of other items including delivery of the support system and initial training that will support the Hunter Class frigates.
- The Hunter Class frigate program budget provides for delivery of all fundamental inputs to capability (FIC), not just the cost of the vessels. This includes FIC elements such as infrastructure, training, maintenance, and other sustainment functions.
- In January 2025, the Hunter Class frigate project recorded an amendment to its contract value on AusTender.
- The amended contract value is still within the total project budget approved and previously forecasted project costs remain valid. A further four contract value amendments are planned, as additional Integrated Logistics Support scope elements are added to the contract. All future changes are within the project scope approved in June 2024.
- The acquisition of the Hunter Class frigates provides Defence with a fit-for-purpose undersea warfare ship, and contributes to the Australian economy, through the creation of jobs and sovereign capability.
- The acquisition of the Hunter Class frigate provides value for money in establishing a sovereign shipbuilding capability. The establishment of continuous naval shipbuilding in Australia, including the sovereign combat system enterprise, will increase Australia's self-reliance, support the development of resilient supply chains and enhance export opportunities. It will also develop domestic knowledge and skills, employ and continually upskill a domestic workforce and maintain a domestic complex manufacturing footprint.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Commodore Edward Seymour CSC RAN  
Position: Director General Maritime Surface & Above Water Combat  
Division: Navy Capability  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Rear Admiral Stephen Hughes AM CSC RAN  
Position: Head Navy Capability  
Service: Royal Australian Navy

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

### Unit Cost and Comparisons

- The Hunter Class frigate program budget provides for delivery of all fundamental inputs to capability, not just the cost of the vessels. Examples of non-vessel budget inclusions are; costs to build new facilities for training/operation of the fleet, warehouse and shipyard lease costs, initial spares, training and training devices/systems, post delivery Navy trials, including any test equipment required to support trials such as targets. The budget also includes contingency that Defence does not expect to utilise.
- A cost comparison of the capability provided by the Hunter Class frigate project with the publicly available information of international navies, including the recently announced Norwegian program is not possible. Other militaries are known to use different organisational constructs and cost allocation.
- The recent decision by Norway to purchase T26 frigates demonstrates that the Hunter Class Frigate is still an excellent choice for advanced ASW capabilities. The addition of Norway to the Global Combat Ship User Group will result in four nations working together to ensure the best possible ASW capabilities are maintained at the highest levels.
- Any direct cost comparison with the Mogami-class frigate is not possible. These are significantly different platforms and both provide different capabilities to support the broader enhanced lethality fleet.

### Inclusion of Tomahawk and Naval Strike Missile capability into the Hunter Class frigate

- Since the SEA 5000 Hunter Class Frigate project approval, Tomahawk and Naval Strike Missiles have been agreed to be brought into service.
- Acquisition of the Naval Strike Missile to replace the Harpoon missile was approved by government in December 2022 due to its proven capability.
- In Quarter 2, 2024, the Government agreed the Hunter Class frigate baseline will include the Tomahawk weapon system, subject to the outcomes of a feasibility study which will be provided to Government when finalised.

### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
21 June 2024	<a href="#">The Deputy Prime Minister stated</a> , with reference to the Hunter Class frigate steel cut event, that “the first milestone is not just about cutting steel; we are supporting Australian workers to build frigates in an Australian yard, supporting Australian industry” with the “milestone [exemplifying] our government’s commitment to deliver continuous naval shipbuilding”.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Commodore Edward Seymour CSC RAN  
 Position: Director General Maritime Surface & Above Water Combat  
 Division: Navy Capability  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Rear Admiral Stephen Hughes AM CSC RAN  
 Position: Head Navy Capability  
 Service: Royal Australian Navy

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

11 June 2024	The Government provided Second Pass approval to acquire the first three of six Hunter Class frigates under the SEA 5000 Hunter Class Frigates project to form part of the Tier One surface combatant fleet capability.
--------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

## Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
26 February 2025	QoN	<b>No. 17 Hunter Class Frigate costs</b> , Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked, in relation to the cost being 3.6 times as expensive as the Constellation class frigates, are they 3.6 times as good?	Tabled.
26 February 2025	QoN	<b>No. 16 Hunter Frigates Costs Per Unit</b> , Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked about the cost per unit for the ships.	Tabled.
26 February 2025	QoN	<b>No. 29 Hunter Class Frigate costs comparison</b> , Senator David Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) sought knowledge of other vessels, apart from United States nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, that is more expensive than a Hunter Class frigate.	Tabled.

## Relevant Media Reporting

- On 23 November 2025 Naval News published an article titled [Australian Hunter-class frigate program hits milestone on sonar suite](#)
- On 18 November 2025 Australian Defence Magazine an article titled [Babcock completes Critical Design Review for Hunter frigate system](#)
- On 10 October 2025 Asia Pacific Defence Reporter published an article by Gordon Arthur titled [Construction of first Hunter frigate proceeds apace](#)
- On 4 September 2025, Defence Connect published an article by Stephen Kuper titled [Hunter Class frigate director-general hits back at renewed criticism](#)
- On 2 September 2025, The Australian published an article by Ben Packham titled [Calls to scuttle 'premium' Hunter-class frigate deal](#)
- On 1 September 2025, Navy Lookout published an article titled [Royal Navy Type 26 frigate secures record export success with Norway](#)
- On 8 August 2025, Defence Connect published an article titled [Japan's frigate win: Australia gets a strategic industrial partner, Japan gets a bucket of Australian risks](#) by Michael Shoebridge.
- On 27 July 2025, The West Australian published an article titled ['Geelong Treaty' with UK boosts AUKUS amid US review](#) by Blair Jackson.

## Prepared By:

Name: Commodore Edward Seymour CSC RAN  
 Position: Director General Maritime Surface & Above Water Combat  
 Division: Navy Capability  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

## Cleared By:

Name: Rear Admiral Stephen Hughes AM CSC RAN  
 Position: Head Navy Capability  
 Service: Royal Australian Navy

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

- On 9 July 2025, [NavalToday](#) and [BAE Systems](#) reported on the program meeting a significant milestone after the first machinery unit consolidation that makes up part of the ships keel.
- On 17 March 2025, Defence Connect published an article by Robert Dougherty titled [500 defence workers are taking part in a massive walk-out](#).
- On 29 April 2025, Defence Connect published an article titled [Progress continues on Hunter Class frigate build with expanded supplier partnerships](#).
- On 19 December 2024, Sky News published an article by Michael Shoebridge titled ['Inefficient' US Navy deal a bargain compared to the Australian Defence Force's \\$27 billion cost blowout for just three Hunter Class frigates](#).
- On 18 December 2024, The Australian published an article titled [Big Defence projects are running 36 years late by Ben Packam](#).
- On 18 December 2024, the Australian Defence Magazine published an article titled [Anschütz completes Hunter Preliminary Design Review](#).

**Prepared By:**

Name: Commodore Edward Seymour CSC RAN  
Position: Director General Maritime Surface &  
Above Water Combat  
Division: Navy Capability  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Rear Admiral Stephen Hughes AM CSC  
RAN  
Position: Head Navy Capability  
Service: Royal Australian Navy

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000506

Last updated: 30 January 2026

Key witnesses: Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AO RAN, Mr David Hanley

<b>Division:</b> Navy Capability Division	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000506	
<b>Prepared by:</b> Commodore Edward Seymour CSC RAN Director-General Maritime Surface & Above Water Combat Navy Capability Mob: s22 [REDACTED] Date: 21 January 2026	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Rear Admiral Stephen Hughes AM CSC RAN Head Navy Capability Navy Capability Mob: s22 [REDACTED] Ph: s47E(d) [REDACTED] Date: 29 January 2026
<b>Consultation:</b> Sheryl Lutz First Assistant Secretary Major Surface Combatants & Combat Systems Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group Date: 23 January 2026  Commodore Arran Melville RAN Acting Head Maritime Sustainment Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group Date: 23 January 2026	
<b>Cleared by CFO / DPG / DSR:</b> Leonie Neiberding Assistant Secretary Finance Navy Defence Finance Group Date: 23 January 2026	
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Rear Admiral Matthew Buckley AM CSC RAN Acting Chief of Navy Navy Date: 30 January 2026	

**Prepared By:**

Name: Commodore Edward Seymour CSC RAN  
Position: Director General Maritime Surface &  
Above Water Combat  
Division: Navy Capability  
Phone: s47E(d) [REDACTED] & s22 [REDACTED]

**Cleared By:**

Name: Rear Admiral Stephen Hughes AM CSC  
RAN  
Position: Head Navy Capability  
Service: Royal Australian Navy

Phone: s47E(d) [REDACTED] & s22 [REDACTED]

**PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - COLLINS CLASS SUBMARINE**

**Lead:** Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AO RAN, Chief of Navy.

**Supporting:** David Hanley, Deputy Secretary Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment to support on Collins Class submarine sustainment.

John Chandler AM CSC CSM, First Assistant Secretary Submarines to support on Collins Class submarine sustainment.

**Context:** An enduring, potent and credible submarine capability is critical to Australia's national security. The Collins Class submarines remains one of the most capable, conventionally powered submarines in the world, designed to meet Australian requirements.

**Key Messages**

- The Collins Class submarines provide a potent strike and deterrent capability, designed to meet Australian requirements.
- The planned Collins Class submarine life of type extension supports continuity of Australia's submarine capability and creates options that best support Australia's transition to a conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine force.
- Defence is balancing capability and availability without compromising safety in its approach to the life-of-type extension program.
- The Government's decision to list Collins Class submarine sustainment as a product of concern provides for enhanced ministerial oversight of this critical capability.
- Through the 2024 National Defence Strategy, and underpinned by effective ongoing sustainment, the Government will invest \$4-5 billion to ensure the Collins Class continues to provide a potent and credible capability to conduct operations to safeguard Australia's maritime approaches and sea lines of communication.
- This includes key select capability enhancements to the sonar, communications and electronic warfare.

**Talking Points****Collins Class sustainment listed as a Product of Concern**

- Three Product of Concern Summits to discuss remediating Collin Class sustainment performance have been held to date, with the most recent taking place 1 December 2025.
- Collins Class submarine sustainment was listed as a Product of Concern on 13 December 2024, owing to consistent maintenance overruns at Osborne and Henderson.

**Prepared By:**

Name: John Chandler AM CSC CSM

Position: First Assistant Secretary

Division: Submarines

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: David Hanley

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

## Progress on remediation of Collins Class sustainment performance

- Following listing as a Product of Concern in December 2024, Defence has been working collaboratively with industry as part of the Australian Submarine Enterprise to manage Collins Class sustainment performance through agreed remediation activities.
- Improvements achieved against key activities have focused on establishing a new maintenance program reflective of Australia's strategic circumstances and the age of the Collins Class submarines.
- These activities will help to strengthen the submarine sustainment workforce and enhance productivity with further actions to be delivered in coming years.
- Defence will continue to safely operate Collins Class submarines and will not compromise the safety assurance of the platform.

## Product of Concern framework

- The Government's Product of Concern framework is an important tool in the proper stewardship and governance of Australia's vital Defence capabilities, including the Collins Class submarines.
- The Product of Concern process has demonstrated its value in addressing challenging projects through enhanced ministerial oversight and supporting Defence and industry to come together to remediate projects.

## Cost of Collins Class sustainment

- The Government will continue to invest in the Collins Class, including ongoing sustainment, to ensure a potent and credible capability to conduct operations that safeguard Australia's maritime approaches and sea lines of communication.
- The increase in Collins Class sustainment costs is a result of various factors, including cost increases for contracted labour and suppliers, adjustments to submarine maintenance schedules, the impacts of productivity issues and protected industrial action at ASC Pty Ltd, increased costs associated with sustaining ageing platforms, and foreign exchange adjustments.

## Availability of the Collins Class

- The Government does not make specific comments on submarine operations or availability.
- Defence is continuing to balance Collins Class availability, reliability and lethality, without compromising safety.
- Defence has publicly stated that it is reviewing the usage and upkeep cycle and the availability benchmarks as the Collins Class begins to operate beyond its original design life.

## Collins Class life-of-type extension plans

- Defence is balancing capability and availability without compromising safety, in its approach to the life-of-type extension program.

### Prepared By:

Name: John Chandler AM CSC CSM

Position: First Assistant Secretary

Division: Submarines

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

### Cleared By:

Name: David Hanley

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment

Phone: s47E(d) & s22

- The life extension of the Collins Class submarines will involve a combination of effective ongoing sustainment, selected capability enhancements, and a life-of-type extension project.
- Defence assesses the complexities and technical risks of extending the life of the Collins Class submarines to be significant but manageable.
- Defence continues to work with industry to ensure the optimal approach to delivering the life-of-type extension.

#### AUKUS implications

- The success of the Collins Class program is a priority for meeting the National Defence Strategy and through the transition to conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines.
- The Government, Defence, and industry's focus on the Collins Class submarines through many successful years of superior international benchmark availability demonstrates Australia's ability as a capable and reliable custodian of conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines.

#### Australian National Audit Office Audit

- Defence is aware of the Australian National Audit Office's audit on life-of-type extension and has been supporting Australian National Audit Office in undertaking the audit.

#### Status of the Collins Class Life-of-Type Extension Independent Assurance Activity

- The assurance activity has concluded and the Government is carefully considering the advice of the report, provided to the Government in Quarter 2, 2024.
- In July 2024, the Minister for Defence Industry requested advice from Defence on proposed responses to the findings of the assurance activity. Defence has finalised its response and is addressing the findings as appropriate.
- The report and its findings, as well as the Defence response, are classified as they deal with sensitive matters related to Australia's submarine capability.

#### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
1 December 2025	A third <a href="#">Product of Concern Ministerial Summit</a> was in in Canberra on 1 December 2025 to discuss ongoing progress to remediate Collins Class sustainment performance.
30 July 2025	A second <a href="#">Product of Concern Ministerial Summit</a> was held in Canberra on 30 July 2025 to discuss ongoing progress to remediate Collins Class sustainment performance.
21 March 2025	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> a \$200 million agreement with the United States to acquire additional quantities of MK-48 Heavy Weight Torpedoes.

#### Prepared By:

Name: John Chandler AM CSC CSM  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary  
 Division: Submarines  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: David Hanley  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: 5825-000507

Last updated: 7 January 2026

Key witnesses: Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AO RAN, David Hanley, John Chandler AM CSC CSM

Date	Event
12 February 2025	A <a href="#">Product of Concern Ministerial Summit</a> was held in Canberra on 12 February 2025 to discuss progress to remediate Collins Class sustainment performance.
13 December 2024	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> Collins Class submarine sustainment had been listed as a Product of Concern.
Quarter 2, 2024	The Collins Class submarine Life-of-Type Extension Independent Assurance report was provided to the Government.
27 July 2024	The Minister for Defence Industry and the Minister for Finance jointly <a href="#">announced that</a> the Government had signed a new four-year sustainment contract with ASC Pty Ltd, securing South Australia and Western Australia as the centres of excellence for the sustainment of the Collins Class submarines.
5 June 2024	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> that the optronics upgrade to the Collins Class would not proceed, and installation of the Tomahawk cruise missile into the Collins Class was not viable and did not represent value for money.
25 October 2023	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> an independent assurance activity to inform the Life-of-Type Extension of the Collins Class submarine fleet.

## Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
9 October 2025	QoN	No. 38 requested a copy of the Valdez report (SQ25-000609 with DPMO for consideration)	Not yet tabled.
1 August 2025	QoN	No. 142, Procurement and Sustainment of the Collins class Combat System. Senator the Hon Jacqui Lambie (Jacqui Lambie Network, Tasmania) asked how much has been spent on the Collin Class Combat System (procurement and sustainment) over the past three financial years.	Tabled.
26 February 2025	QoN	No. 20, WA industrial action costings. Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds (Liberal, Western Australia), asked for a breakdown of the variation to Collins Class Sustainment funding in 2024-25 Portfolio Additional Estimate Statements.	Tabled.
6 November 2024	QoN	No. 02, Valdez report Minister reception. Senator the Hon David Fawcett (Liberal, South	Tabled.

## Prepared By:

Name: John Chandler AM CSC CSM

Position: First Assistant Secretary

Division: Submarines

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

## Cleared By:

Name: David Hanley

Position: Deputy Secretary

Group: Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

Date	Type	Title	Status
		Australia), asked whether the Minister for Defence had read the Valdez report.	
6 November 2024	QoN	No. 03, Valdez report departmental advice. Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham (Liberal, South Australia), asked when the department was asked to provide formal advice to the Government on the Valdez report.	Tabled.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- On 12 November 2025, The Australian Defence Magazine published an article titled [ASC selects Siemens' software for Collins submarines](#).
- On 12 November 2025, cyberdaily.au published an article by Daniel Croft, David Hollingworth and Stephen Kuper titled [Exclusive: Threat actor alleges treasure trove of sensitive Hunter, Collins class info](#).
- On 11 November 2025, The Asia Pacific Defence Reporter published an article by Gordon Arthur titled [LOTE or lottery for the Collins class?](#)
- On 3 August 2025, The Age published an article by Deborah Snow and Michael Koziol titled [The suburban US office that brokered lucrative military contracts with Australia](#).
- On 11 June 2025, The Asia Pacific Defence Reporter published an article on [The Sisyphean task of the Royal Australian Navy to maintain and operate its submarine squadron](#).
- On 24 May 2025, The Australian published an article by Ben Packham titled [Strikes a threat to vital defence work, says navy chief Mark Hammond](#).
- On 22 March 2025, The Australian published an article by Cameron Stewart titled [Does Australia sink or swim with AUKUS?](#)
- On 21 March 2025, Defence Connect published an article on the [Government commitment of \\$200m to expand Collins torpedo stocks](#).
- On 19 March 2025, The Australian published an article by Ben Packham titled [Minister admits subpar Collins refit on the cards](#).
- On 19 March 2025, The Advertiser published an article by Paul Starick titled [Pay rise blow for subs](#).
- On 18 March 2025, in The Australian, Peter Jennings reported [Forget Collins - we have much more important priorities](#).
- On 17 March 2025, in The Australian, Ben Packham reported [Secret submarine scandal: Collins lined up for lite-on refit](#).
- On 4 March 2025, The Australian published an article by Paul Garvey titled [Australian, US subs move out as Chinese flotilla nears WA](#).

#### Prepared By:

Name: John Chandler AM CSC CSM  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary  
 Division: Submarines  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: David Hanley  
 Position: Deputy Secretary  
 Group: Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

<b>Division:</b>	Submarines
<b>PDR No:</b>	SB25-000507
<b>Jointly Prepared by:</b>	
<b>s47E(d)</b> Acting Director General Submarine Sustainment Submarines Division Mob: <b>s22</b> Ph: <b>s47E(d)</b> Date: 11 August 2025	<b>s47E(d)</b> Acting Director General Submarines Navy Mob: <b>s22</b> Ph: <b>s47E(d)</b> Date: 12 August 2025
<b>Cleared by Division Heads:</b>	
John Chandler AM CSC CSM First Assistant Secretary Submarines Division Mob: <b>s22</b> Ph: <b>s47E(d)</b> Date: 1 October 2025	Commodore Micheal Jacobson CSM RAN Acting Head Navy Capability Navy Mob: <b>s22</b> Ph: <b>s47E(d)</b> Date: 14 August 2025
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary and 3 Star:</b>	
David Hanley Deputy Secretary Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group Date: 7 January 2026	Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AO RAN Chief of Navy Navy Date: 23 September 2025

**Prepared By:**

Name: John Chandler AM CSC CSM  
Position: First Assistant Secretary  
Division: Submarines  
Phone: **s47E(d)** & **s22**

**Cleared By:**

Name: David Hanley  
Position: Deputy Secretary  
Group: Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment  
Phone: **s47E(d)** & **s22**

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025–26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - GUIDED WEAPONS & EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE ENTERPRISE

**Lead:** Air Marshal Leon Phillips OAM, Chief of Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance.

**Supporting:** Dan Fankhauser, First Assistant Secretary Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Manufacturing Division to support on domestic manufacturing initiatives.

Rear Admiral Nigel Smith CSC, Head Guided Weapons Explosive Ordnance Systems Division to support on warstock inventory uplift and maintenance.

**Context:** In line with the recommendations of the 2024 National Defence Strategy, the Government will invest \$16-21 billion over the next decade to enhance Australia's Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Enterprise.

### Key Messages

- The 2024 National Defence Strategy and 2024 Integrated Investment Program prioritise developing a sovereign capability to produce, maintain, repair and overhaul selected weapons.
- Australia and the United States continue to reaffirm their commitment to supporting GWEO priorities with the AUSMIN Principals endorsing a two-year shared pathway.
- Defence and industry are working in partnership to deliver a domestic manufacturing capability, with Defence opening a factory at Port Wakefield that is producing Lockheed Martin Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System missiles, and Kongsberg constructing a facility in Newcastle which will manufacture Naval and Joint Strike Missiles.
- Three Memorandums of Understanding with the United States have been signed, relating to Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System missiles, Precision Strike Missile and 155mm ammunition.
- Defence seeks to ensure our ADF are equipped with world-class capabilities, which includes sourcing elements from foreign companies.
- Defence has contracts with two Israeli companies (Rafael Systems Australia and Elbit Systems) both supporting LAND 400 Phase 2 and LAND 400 Phase 3, enhancing the lethality and survivability of Army's land vehicles and dismounted soldier capabilities.
- Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Group continues to uplift inventory with close to \$12 billion in recent missile acquisitions.

### Talking Points

#### Australian Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Plan

- The Australian Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Plan was released on 30 October 2024. It sets out how the Government will manufacture guided weapons

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Chief of Staff to First Assistant Secretary Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Manufacturing Division  
 Division: Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Manufacturing  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Leon Phillips OAM  
 Position: Chief of Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance  
 Group: Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

2025–26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000508

Last updated: 19 December 2025

Key witnesses: Air Marshal Leon Phillips, Mr Dan Fankhauser, Rear Admiral Nigel Smith

and explosive ordnance in Australia and deliver a transformative uplift in Australia's defence industrial capabilities.

- The next iteration of the Plan is due to be delivered following release of the 2026 National Defence Strategy.

## AUSMIN

- At the recent AUSMIN meeting in December 2025, Principals re-affirmed their commitment and endorsed a two-year shared pathway for the GWEO Enterprise including:
  - Pursuing co-production, co-sustainment and follow on development of Hypersonic Attack Cruise Missile;
  - Furthering depot-level sustainment of AIM-9X and Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile;
  - Identifying cooperation on maritime strike and interceptor capabilities to be integrated into the pathway in 2026.
- There was a commitment to expand the practical use of export control license exemptions, and usage of authorised exemptions where appropriate to support ongoing and future work related to the GWEO Shared Pathway.

## Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System

- Defence opened a new facility at Port Wakefield, South Australia on 5 December 2025 and, in partnership with Lockheed Martin Australia, commenced the production of the first batch of Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System missiles.
  - Test firings for the first batches of missiles is planned for 2026.
- Creating 20 regional jobs, the facility will be capable of producing up to 300 missiles per annum for use by the ADF, as well as complementing US supply chains.
- On 11 March 2025, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the United States to facilitate information sharing to support the manufacture of the first batch of Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System missiles in Australia.
- On 14 October 2025, Defence, the United States Government and Lockheed Martin Corporation signed a Joint Statement of Intent, paving the way for further co-development and production of variants of the Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System family of munitions and the Precision Strike Missile.

## Australian Weapons Manufacturing Complex

- Australia intends to establish a dedicated Weapons Manufacturing Complex with capacity for high-rate production of guided weapons from 2029.

### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Chief of Staff to First Assistant Secretary  
 Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance  
 Manufacturing Division  
 Division: Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance  
 Manufacturing  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

### Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Leon Phillips OAM  
 Position: Chief of Guided Weapons and  
 Explosive Ordnance  
 Group: Guided Weapons and Explosive  
 Ordnance Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

2025–26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000508

Last updated: 19 December 2025

Key witnesses: Air Marshal Leon Phillips, Mr Dan Fankhauser, Rear Admiral Nigel Smith

- Working with Lockheed Martin Australia, the initial focus is to establish the capacity to produce Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System weapons with a view to providing a pathway for the manufacture of other weapon types, such as Precision Strike Missiles.
  - The Government’s preferred location for establishing the Australian Weapons Manufacturing Complex is subject to due diligence activities and further updates will be made in due course.

### Precision Strike Missile

- On 15 May 2025, Australia and the United States signed a Memorandum of Understanding for Precision Strike Missile production, sustainment and follow-on development.
- The Memorandum of Understanding sets the foundation for future domestic manufacturing and maintenance of Precision Strike Missiles in Australia, with negotiations on these options to commence in 2026.
  - During Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025, Army successfully test fired a Precision Strike Missile from a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System.

### 155mm Large Calibre Munitions

- In 2023, Defence released a tender for the establishment of a domestic forging capability to manufacture 155mm large calibre projectiles.
- Since then, changes in the global industrial base for the manufacture of 155mm large calibre projectiles, along with a surge in international demand for naval 5-inch projectiles, have resulted in Defence reassessing its manufacturing priorities and approach.
- On 27 June 2025, Defence announced it had made the decision to cease the tender activity for the domestic forging of 155mm large calibre projectiles, to refine requirements prior to re-approaching the market.
- A new Request for Tender was released on 28 August 2025 and closed on 21 October 2025. Contract negotiations with the preferred tenderer have commenced, with contract award expected in Quarter 1, 2026.
- Defence will work with industry to deliver a forging capability by 2028, producing 15,000 rounds each year with further additional capacity that will be determined as part of the re-approach to market.
  - On 11 March 2025, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the United States, enabling the co-production of 155mm ammunition in Australia for national defence purposes.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Chief of Staff to First Assistant Secretary  
 Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance  
 Manufacturing Division  
 Division: Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance  
 Manufacturing  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Leon Phillips OAM  
 Position: Chief of Guided Weapons and  
 Explosive Ordnance  
 Group: Guided Weapons and Explosive  
 Ordnance Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

## Naval Strike Missile and Joint Strike Missile

- The Government is progressing the refurbishment of an existing facility at Defence Establishment Orchard Hills, New South Wales, to undertake maintenance and final assembly and check out of explosive components for Kongsberg’s Strike Missile family.
- This Orchard Hills facility is intended to be Government owned contractor operated, and is on schedule for completion in Quarter 2, 2026.
- The intent is for Kongsberg to utilise this facility for both missile assembly and the maintenance of missiles. This capability will be operated collaboratively with the Newcastle facility and is an important step in the future production of Naval and Joint Strike Missiles in Australia.
- The Government has committed up to \$850 million in partnership with Kongsberg Defence Australia to manufacture and service missiles in Newcastle, New South Wales, and qualify Australian companies to manufacture and maintain priority Naval Strike Missile and Joint Strike Missile components.
- On 28 March 2025, Defence signed a contract with Kongsberg to establish a missile production facility in Newcastle for the Naval Strike Missile and Joint Strike Missile.
- Construction of the facility in Newcastle commenced in September 2025. Missile production will commence in 2027, with full-rate production in 2028–29.
- Defence continues to take deliveries of Naval Strike Missiles from Norway with final assembly and check out in Australia commencing at Orchard Hills in 2026.

## Rocket motors

- The Government has committed to invest \$22 million from 2024 to 2026 to develop options for manufacturing rocket motors in Australia by 2030.
- In September 2024, Defence released a limited Request for Information to credible industry providers to refine scope and operating models for a rocket motor manufacturing capability.
  - Industry responses have been assessed and used to inform the development of a sovereign rocket motor manufacturing strategy, which will be considered by Government in 2026.
- Defence has also commenced independent capability studies to inform development of industry uplift priorities, technology opportunities and rocket motor manufacturing site options.

## Long Range Anti-Ship Missile

- AIR3023 Phase 1 (Long Range Anti-Ship Missile) was approved by the Government in April 2020 at a cost of \$640 million.

### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Chief of Staff to First Assistant Secretary  
 Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance  
 Manufacturing Division  
 Division: Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance  
 Manufacturing  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

### Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Leon Phillips OAM  
 Position: Chief of Guided Weapons and  
 Explosive Ordnance  
 Group: Guided Weapons and Explosive  
 Ordnance Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

2025–26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000508

Last updated: 19 December 2025

Key witnesses: Air Marshal Leon Phillips, Mr Dan Fankhauser, Rear Admiral Nigel Smith

- Long Range Anti-Ship Missile is being acquired from the United States via Foreign Military Sales, with all Tranche 1 quantities delivered.
- Australia signed an amended Letter of Agreement on 7 December 2023 to procure an additional (Tranche 2) quantity of Long Range Anti-Ship Missile.

### Spike Missile

- Defence contracted Varley Rafael Australia, now Rafael Systems of Australia, for the acquisition of Spike LR2 and associated hardware to equip the Boxer Combat Reconnaissance Vehicle, Redback Infantry Fighting Vehicle and dismounted soldiers with an anti-tank capability able to engage threats at greater ranges.
- Defence remains in contract with the next deliveries due to arrive in country between late 2026 and early 2028.

### Iron Fist Light Decoupled Active Protection System Contract with Elbit Systems

- On 1 September 2025, Defence contracted Elbit Systems for countermeasure munitions used in the Redback Infantry Fighting Vehicle's active protection system, under LAND 400 Phase 3.
- These countermeasures will be used solely by the Australian Army in operation of the Redback Infantry Fighting Vehicle's active protection system. They are not for export to Israel.
- It is standard practice for Defence to procure explosive ordnance directly from suppliers, consistent with other explosive ordnance acquisition arrangements for Armoured Fighting Vehicles.
- Defence has an obligation to acquire capability that best ensures our ADF personnel are protected and kept safe as they conduct their mission in the defence of Australia.

### Missile Acquisitions

- Defence continues to uplift warstocks with the acquisition of a number of missiles:
  - \$3.5 billion to acquire accelerated missile strike capability inclusive of both Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile Extended Range (JASSM-ER) for Air Force and Naval Strike Missile (NSM) for Navy surface fleet;
  - \$7 billion for the acquisition of Standard Missile 2 Block IIIC and Standard Missile 6 for use on Navy's Hobart Class destroyers, and future Hunter Class frigates;
  - \$2.12 billion in additional stocks of Advanced Medium-Range missiles AIM-120D-3 for the Super Hornet, Growler and Lightning II fleets; and AIM-120C-8 boosting Army's ground-to-air defence capability;
  - \$1.3 billion acquisition of more than 200 Tomahawk cruise missiles for Navy's Hobart Class destroyers;

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Chief of Staff to First Assistant Secretary  
 Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance  
 Manufacturing Division  
 Division: Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance  
 Manufacturing  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Leon Phillips OAM  
 Position: Chief of Guided Weapons and  
 Explosive Ordnance  
 Group: Guided Weapons and Explosive  
 Ordnance Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

2025–26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: S825-000508

Last updated: 19 December 2025

Key witnesses: Air Marshal Leon Phillips, Mr Dan Fankhauser, Rear Admiral Nigel Smith

- \$895.5 million for the acquisition of Long Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM) increasing the Super Hornet, Poseidon and F-35A Joint Strike Fighter’s maritime strike capability;
- Up to \$1.08 billion investment (\$431 million in Aug 2023 and up to \$650 million in Jan 2025) investment to acquire additional Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile-Extended Range missiles, enhancing the air-launched capabilities of Air Force’s Super Hornet, Growler and in future the F-35A Joint Strike Fighter aircraft; and
- \$200 million agreement with the United States for additional quantities of Mk-48 Heavy Weight Torpedoes.

#### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
28 January 2026	The Minister for Defence Industry <a href="#">announced</a> a \$508 million investment in two major capital works projects at Defence Establishment Orchard Hills, Western Sydney, which include the redevelopment of base facilities and the construction of new explosive ordnance storage.
9 December 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister <a href="#">released</a> the Joint Fact Sheet on AUSMIN Consultations 2025, endorsing a two-year shared pathway for the Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Enterprise.
5 December 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Industry <a href="#">announced</a> the commencement of the manufacture of Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System missiles, at a Defence owned facility in Port Wakefield, South Australia.
4 December 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Industry <a href="#">announced</a> that Australia would donate additional munitions to Ukraine as part of a \$95 million military assistance package.
1 December 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Industry <a href="#">announced</a> the establishment of the Defence Delivery Agency as part of its reform agenda.
7 November 2025	The Minister for Defence Industry <a href="#">announced</a> the one-year anniversary of the release of the Australian Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Plan, and the progress made in those 12 months.
14 October 2025	The Minister for Defence Industry <a href="#">announced</a> that Australia, United States and Lockheed Martin Corporation signed a Joint Statement of Intent on guided weapons.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Chief of Staff to First Assistant Secretary Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Manufacturing Division

Division: Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Manufacturing

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Leon Phillips OAM

Position: Chief of Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance

Group: Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Group

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

14 August 2025	The Minister for Defence Industry <u>announced</u> that two major export deals worth a combined \$80 million have been secured by Kongsberg Defence Australia.
25 July 2025	The Minister for Defence Industry <u>announced</u> the successful live firing of a Precision Strike Missile from a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System.
3 July 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Industry <u>announced</u> an investment of up to \$2.12 billion in additional stocks of advanced medium-range missiles.
27 June 2025	Defence <u>announced</u> it had made the decision to cease the 155mm large calibre munitions tender.
6 June 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Industry <u>announced</u> that Australia and the United States signed a Memorandum of Understanding for Precision Strike Missile production, sustainment and follow-on development.
21 March 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Industry <u>announced</u> the successful live firing of the AGM-158C Long Range Anti-Ship Missile.
17 March 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Industry and Capability Delivery <u>announced</u> the signing of the Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System Co-Assembly and 155mm Ammunition Co-Production Memorandum of Understanding with the United States and the Congressional approval for the Foreign Military Sale of additional Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System missile kits.
30 January 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Industry and Capability Delivery <u>announced</u> the investment of up to \$650 million to acquire additional Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile-Extended Range missiles.
10 December 2024	The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Industry and Capability Delivery <u>announced</u> the successful firing from HMAS <i>Brisbane</i> , of a Tomahawk cruise missile during a test and evaluation activity off the west coast of the United States.
6 December 2024	The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Industry and Capability Delivery <u>announced</u> plans to equip the Australian Army with a second long-range fires regiment.
19 November 2024	Defence <u>announced</u> as part of AUKUS Pillar II, Australia, United Kingdom and the United States have established a Project Agreement accelerate the testing of hypersonic vehicles and related technologies.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Chief of Staff to First Assistant Secretary Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Manufacturing Division  
 Division: Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Manufacturing  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Air Marshal Leon Phillips OAM  
 Position: Chief of Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance  
 Group: Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

30 October 2024	The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Industry and Capability Delivery <a href="#">announced</a> the 2024 Australian Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Plan.
-----------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

## Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
11 December 2025	QoN	<b>No. 990, Joint Strike Missile and Naval Strike Missile.</b> Senator Michaelia Cash (Liberal Party of Australia, Western Australia) asked about the construction of Kongberg's Newcastle facility, missile production volumes and export opportunities.	Not yet tabled
11 December 2025	QoN	<b>No. 991, Rocket Motor Program.</b> Senator Michaelia Cash (Liberal Party of Australia, Western Australia) asked about the status of the Rocket Motor program and sub system and component development.	Not yet tabled
11 December 2025	QoN	<b>No. 992, GWEO Timelines.</b> Senator Michaelia Cash (Liberal Party of Australia, Western Australia) asked about GWEO investment priorities, and domestic manufacture of Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System and Precision Strike Missiles.	Not yet tabled
3 December 2025	QoN	<b>No. 925, Imports for production of ammunition.</b> Senator Tyron Whitten (Pauline Hanson's One Nation, Western Australia) asked for a list of the components that are imported for the manufacture of small calibre munitions.	Not yet tabled
21 November 2025	IQ QoN	<b>No. 1, GWEO Investment Pipeline.</b> Senator Deborah O'Neill (Australian Labor Party, New South Wales) asked about the GWEO investment and expenditure to date.	Tabled.
14 November 2025	FOI	An individual sought access to the current contract between Defence and Thales for the operation of the munitions factories in Victoria and New South Wales.	Decision Finalised
3 November 2025	FOI	An individual sought access to the contract(s) and associated documents between Defence and the US Government related to AusTender Contract Notice CN4198387.	Decision Finalised
16 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 904, Munitions Production Tender.</b> Senator Jacqui Lambie (Jacqui Lambie Network, Tasmania) asked about current and future production demand for 155mm and naval 5 inch munitions.	Tabled

## Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Chief of Staff to First Assistant Secretary Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance

Manufacturing Division

Division: Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance

Manufacturing

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

## Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Leon Phillips OAM

Position: Chief of Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance

Group: Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Group

Phone: s47E(d) &amp; s22

2025–26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000508

Last updated: 19 December 2025

Key witnesses: Air Marshal Leon Phillips, Mr Dan Fankhauser, Rear Admiral Nigel Smith

15 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 59, Guided Multiple Launch Rocket Systems manufactured by end of 2025.</b> Senator Leah Blyth (Liberal Party of Australia, South Australia) asked about planned GMLRS manufacture in 2025.	Tabled
15 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 60, Joint Strike Missiles acquired by end of 2025.</b> Senator Leah Blyth (Liberal Party of Australia, South Australia) asked how many Joint Strike Missiles Australia would acquire by the end of 2025.	Tabled
15 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 61, Amount of locally made missiles produced by GWEO.</b> Senator Leah Blyth (Liberal Party of Australia, South Australia) asked how many domestically manufactured missiles Australia has produced to date.	Tabled
15 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 72, 155mm Ammunition - Thales.</b> Senator Jacqui Lambie (Jacqui Lambie Network, Tasmania) asked about the cessation of the M795 155mm tender and subsequent retender.	Tabled
15 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 241, GMLRS Production.</b> Senator Michaelia Cash (Liberal Party of Australia, Western Australia) asked about production volumes of GMLRS.	Tabled
15 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 908, Recipe.</b> Senator Sarah Henderson (Liberal Party of Australia, Victoria) asked about the GWEO cookbook and the Ministers favourite recipe	Tabled
9 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 6, Munitions Production and Supply Chain.</b> Senator Tyron Whitten (Pauline Hanson's One Nation, Western Australia) asked whether Australia's small calibre supply chain uses Australian-produced or imported components.	Tabled
9 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 7, Development Ammunitions Capability in Australia.</b> Senator Tyron Whitten (Pauline Hanson's One Nation, Western Australia) asked if there was a plan to uplift the raw materials industry, specifically brass for use in the manufacture of small arms.	Tabled
9 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 22, GWEO Cookbook cost breakdown.</b> Senator Sarah Henderson (Liberal Party of Australia, Victoria) asked about the production costs associated with the development of the GWEO Cookbook.	Tabled
9 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 23, Re-tender M795 155 Forge Capability.</b> Senator Sarah Henderson (Liberal Party of Australia, Victoria)	Tabled

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Chief of Staff to First Assistant Secretary  
 Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance  
 Manufacturing Division  
 Division: Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance  
 Manufacturing  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Air Marshal Leon Phillips OAM  
 Position: Chief of Guided Weapons and  
 Explosive Ordnance  
 Group: Guided Weapons and Explosive  
 Ordnance Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

		asked for information relating to the re-tender of the M795 155mm contract.	
9 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 24, Costs of tendering for 155mm Forge Capability.</b> Senator Sarah Henderson (Liberal Party of Australia, Victoria) asked about the costs of tendering for the 155mm forge capability tender.	Tabled
9 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 25, Contracts that have been delayed, amended or cancelled since 2023.</b> Senator Sarah Henderson (Liberal Party of Australia, Victoria) asked about the number of GWEO contracts that have been delayed, amended or cancelled since 2023.	Tabled
9 October 2025	QoN	<b>No.30, Current contracts with GWEO.</b> Senator Sarah Henderson (Liberal Party of Australia, Victoria) asked for details on all GWEO contracts.	Tabled
9 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 31, ASL for GWEO Group.</b> Senator Sarah Henderson (Liberal Party of Australia, Victoria) asked about the total ASL for GWEO Group.	Tabled
9 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 32, Amount of munition lines currently producing in volume under the GWEO program.</b> Senator Sarah Henderson (Liberal Party of Australia, Victoria) asked about the lines and volumes of munitions produced at Defence munition factories.	Tabled
9 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 33, Details surrounding Thales contract.</b> Senator Sarah Henderson (Liberal Party of Australia, Victoria) asked for all correspondence relate to the cessation of the M795 155mm tender, citing perceived job losses at Benalla as a result.	Tabled
6 October 2025	FOI	A human rights activist sought documents constituting approval by Defence for Rheinmetall NIOA Munitions to manufacture 25mm ammunition at our Benalla factory.	Decision Finalised

### Relevant Media Reporting

- On 5 December 2025, Defence Connect published an article titled, [Australia kicks off local GMLRS production](#), Stephen Kuper.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Chief of Staff to First Assistant Secretary  
 Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance  
 Manufacturing Division  
 Division: Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance  
 Manufacturing  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Leon Phillips OAM  
 Position: Chief of Guided Weapons and  
 Explosive Ordnance  
 Group: Guided Weapons and Explosive  
 Ordnance Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

2025–26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000508

Last updated: 19 December 2025

Key witnesses: Air Marshal Leon Phillips, Mr Dan Fankhauser, Rear Admiral Nigel Smith

<p><b>Division:</b> Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Manufacturing Division</p>	
<p><b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000508</p>	
<p><b>Prepared by:</b>                  s47E(d) [redacted]                  Chief of Staff                  Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Manufacturing Division                  Mob: s22 [redacted]                  Ph: s47E(d) [redacted]                  Date: 19 December 2025</p>	<p><b>Cleared by Division Head:</b>                  Mr Dan Fankhauser                  First Assistant Secretary                  Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Manufacturing Division                  Mob: s22 [redacted]                  Ph: s47E(d) [redacted]                  Date: 19 December 2025</p>
<p><b>Consultation:</b>                  RADM Nigel Smith, CSC                  Head Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Systems Division                  Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Group</p>	
<p><b>Cleared by DFG:</b>                  s47E(d) [redacted] on behalf of Ms Ariana Kornek                  Assistant Secretary Finance - Army                  Defence Finance Group                  Date: 19 December 2025</p>	
<p><b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b>                  Air Marshal Leon Phillips OAM                  Chief of Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance                  Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Group                  Date: 18 November 2025</p>	

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d) [redacted]  
 Position: Chief of Staff to First Assistant Secretary Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Manufacturing Division  
 Division: Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Manufacturing  
 Phone: s47E(d) [redacted] & s22 [redacted]

**Cleared By:**

Name: Air Marshal Leon Phillips OAM  
 Position: Chief of Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance  
 Group: Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) [redacted] & s22 [redacted]

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES – SPACE AND CYBER DOMAINS

**Lead:** Lieutenant General Susan Coyle AM CSC DSM, Chief of Joint Capabilities

**Supporting:** Major General Robert Watson CSC, Commander Cyber Command to support on cyber capabilities

Rear Admiral Andrew Quinn RAN, Head Space and Cyber Capabilities to support on space capabilities

**Context:** Space and cyber are critical operational domains in their own right, and of vital interest to Defence and Australia's national security. Defence's investment in both space and cyber reflects the priorities set out in the 2024 National Defence Strategy, to construct advanced space and cyber capabilities to respond to Australia's strategic circumstances.

### Key Messages

- The Government is investing \$27–\$36 billion across the next decade in the space and cyber domains, as part of the ADF's shift to an integrated, focused force.
- Defence's Joint Capabilities Group is responsible for the generation and delivery of space and cyber power, and Information Operations as part of the integrated force in competition and conflict.
- The space domain provides satellite-based communications, weather, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, as well as position, navigation and timing information.
- Defence is continuing to develop options to ensure access to the space domain, primarily through satellite communications, space domain awareness and space control capabilities.
- The 2024 National Defence Strategy identified the need for enhanced cyber capabilities to protect the ADF's warfighting networks from counter threats in the cyber domain that are increasing in scale and complexity.
- The cyber domain is comprised of cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum. ADF capabilities apply cyber power in support of the integrated force, enabling all forms of military power. The bedrock of the domain is the cyber terrain that carries our networks, data and applications.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Major General Robert Watson CSC  
 Position: Commander Cyber Command  
 Phone: s22 [REDACTED]  
 Name: Major General Greg Novak AM  
 Position: Commander Space Command  
 Phone: s22 [REDACTED]

#### Cleared By:

Name: Air Vice-Marshal Benjamin Sleeman CSC DSM  
 Position: Acting Chief Joint Capabilities  
 Group: Joint Capabilities Group  
 Phone: s22 [REDACTED]

## Talking Points

### Space Domain

- Government agencies, the commercial sector and the Australian public depend on access to space systems for essential everyday activities including telecommunications, transport, financial services, traffic management, emergency response and environmental monitoring.
- The space domain plays an integral role in how Defence conducts integrated operations.
- The space domain is becoming a more congested and contested environment. Defence must have capabilities that ensure access to space, and deter unwanted actions by potential adversaries in space.
- In response to Australia's strategic circumstances, space capabilities that enhance intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, provide resilient communications, and counter emerging space threats, are the highest space domain investment priorities for Defence under the 2024 National Defence Strategy.
- Defence space workforce delivery continues with the implementation of space employment categories for ADF personnel and a dedicated space domain initial employment training course for space professionals to join the ADF.

### Cyber Domain

- Aligned with strategic direction, Defence is enhancing its cyber domain capabilities, consistent with the other domains.
- The cyber domain is fundamental to secure communications in the interconnected battlespace, maintenance of situational awareness, integrated operations, contemporary logistics supply chain security and military decision-making.
- On 25 March 2024, Defence established a Cyber Command within the Joint Capabilities Group. This saw the amalgamation of the Defence cyber security, worthiness and assurance functions, as well as the creation of an organisation specifically designed to prepare cyber forces to support ADF operations.
- A Joint Force Cyber Component has been established alongside the other components (Maritime/Air/Land/Space). The component conducts integrated planning, enabling the synchronisation of cyberspace and electromagnetic spectrum capabilities and effects.
- Defence is leveraging a hyperscale cloud technology to fundamentally change Defence's approach to warfighting networks and what they will look like in the future.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Major General Robert Watson CSC  
Position: Commander Cyber Command  
Phone: s22 [REDACTED]  
Name: Major General Greg Novak AM  
Position: Commander Space Command  
Phone: s22 [REDACTED]

#### Cleared By:

Name: Air Vice-Marshal Benjamin Sleeman CSC DSM  
Position: Acting Chief Joint Capabilities  
Group: Joint Capabilities Group  
Phone: s22 [REDACTED]

### Threats to Space and Cyber Capabilities

- Competitors' capabilities can interfere with – and influence – satellites and other space domain capabilities. Actions can range from non-kinetic means, such as electronic attack for jamming communications, to kinetic weapons, such as direct-ascent anti-satellite missiles.
- Defence is aware that some of Australia's strategic competitors are deploying advanced space capabilities and technologies, which may be dual use in nature, which could affect the space capabilities of other nations.
- State and non-state actors continue targeting Australian citizens and businesses, the Government and national critical infrastructure providers for financial gain or increased influence persistently threaten cyberspace.
- Defence is a trusted space actor and supports efforts to promote international norms, transparency, and cooperation in encouraging assured access, security, stability and responsible behaviour in space. Defence operates consistently with Australia's international obligations, and the principle of free access to the exploration and use of space.

### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
8 September 2025	Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal Determination: Establishment of inaugural Joint ADF Space Operations Officer and Space Operations Specialist employment categories. A pay case determination was signed in August 2025 with a legislated effective date of 8 September 2025.

### Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
28 July 2025	Media	Mr Nigel Pittaway from the Australian Defence Magazine submitted a Request for Information to inform an upcoming article.	Finalised.
30 May 2025	FOI	A journalist made a request for documents held by Defence related to the use or evaluation of Starlink or SpaceX for communications purposes.	Decision finalised.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Major General Robert Watson CSC  
 Position: Commander Cyber Command  
 Phone: s22 [REDACTED]  
 Name: Major General Greg Novak AM  
 Position: Commander Space Command  
 Phone: s22 [REDACTED]

#### Cleared By:

Name: Air Vice-Marshal Benjamin Sleeman CSC DSM  
 Position: Acting Chief Joint Capabilities  
 Group: Joint Capabilities Group  
 Phone: s22 [REDACTED]

**Relevant Media Reporting**

- On 6 December 2025 Australian Space Outlook reported that [Space Command enhances Defence capability](#)
- On 28 November 2025 [Sky News Australia reported that the ADF was relying on old satellites and signed a \\$180m contract to use a 2012 satellite until 2033.](#)
- On (approx) 28 November 2025 [The Australian reported that the ADF will have to rely on aging vulnerable satellites.](#)
- On 26 November 2025 [Space & Defense reported that the ADF signed a \\$180m to continue the provision of UHF comms.](#)
- On 9 November 2025, [CNN reported that UK and Germany have warned of a growing threat posed by Russian and Chinese satellites.](#) German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius said capabilities include jamming, blinding, manipulating and kinetically destroying satellites.
- On 20 October 2025, the [ABC](#) reported on space junk found near a Western Australia mine linked to Chinese rocket launch.

<b>Division:</b> Joint Capabilities Group	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000509	
<p><b>Prepared by:</b> Major General Robert Watson CSC Commander Cyber Command Cyber Command Joint Capabilities Group s22 Date: 23 January 2026</p> <p>Major General Greg Novak AM Commander Space Command Space Command Joint Capabilities Group s22 Date: 23 January 2026</p>	<p><b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Rear Admiral Andrew Quinn RAN Head of Space and Cyber Capabilities Joint Capabilities Group s22 Date: 27 January 2026</p>

**Prepared By:**

Name: Major General Robert Watson CSC  
Position: Commander Cyber Command  
Phone: s22  
Name: Major General Greg Novak AM  
Position: Commander Space Command  
Phone: s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Air Vice-Marshal Benjamin Sleeman CSC DSM  
Position: Acting Chief Joint Capabilities  
Group: Joint Capabilities Group  
Phone: s22

2025-26 Additional Budget Estimates February 2026

PDR No: 5825-000509

Last updated: 23 January 2026

Key witnesses: Lieutenant General Susan Coyle AM CSC DSM, Major General Robert Watson CSC, Rear Admiral Andrew Quinn RAN

**Cleared by:**Rear Admiral Andrew Quinn RAN  
Head of Space and Cyber Capabilities  
Joint Capabilities Group

Date: 27 January 2026

**Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:**Air Vice-Marshal Benjamin Sleeman CSC DSM  
Acting Chief Joint Capabilities  
Joint Capabilities Group

Date: 27 January 2026

**Prepared By:**Name: Major General Robert Watson CSC  
Position: Commander Cyber Command  
Phone: §22  
Name: Major General Greg Novak AM  
Position: Commander Space Command  
Phone: §22**Cleared By:**Name: Air Vice-Marshal Benjamin Sleeman CSC DSM  
Position: Acting Chief Joint Capabilities  
Group: Joint Capabilities Group  
Phone: §22

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - INNOVATION AND ASYMMETRIC CAPABILITIES

**Lead:** Air Marshal Robert Chipman AO CSC, Vice Chief of the Defence Force.

**Supporting:** Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AO, Chief of Navy, to support on Navy systems.

Lieutenant General Simon Stuart AO DSC, Chief of Army, to support on Army systems.

Air Marshal Stephen Chappell DSC CSC OAM, Chief of Air Force, to support on Air Force Systems.

Hugh Jeffrey, Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry, to support on AUKUS.

Prof Tanya Monro AC, Chief Defence Scientist, to support on science and technology priorities.

**Context:** Innovative technology and the development of asymmetric capabilities are key in ensuring that Defence is fit for purpose and equipped to meet the challenges associated with Australia's most significant strategic risks.

### Key Messages

- Established on 1 July 2023, the Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator (ASCA) is investing up to \$3.8 billion over the next decade to fast-track delivery of critical capabilities, ensuring the ADF remains effective in a rapidly evolving strategic environment.
- ASCA continues to accelerate capability delivery, having launched five Missions, transferred Ghost Shark, conducted three Innovation Challenges and executed 117 contracts valued at \$299.4 million. Strong collaboration with Australian industry remains a key consideration when delivering relevant, scalable capability to Defence personnel at pace
- Defence is adapting its innovation model to better align with operational priorities, with ASCA now positioned within the Vice Chief of the Defence Force Group to align and strengthen integration with capability managers and ensure accelerated delivery of mission-focused solutions.
- The Government is investing in emerging technologies to provide Defence with an asymmetric capability advantage, including highly advanced, extremely capable autonomous systems able to operate and survive in contested environments.
- To enable Australia to remain abreast of capability advancements and opportunities, the Government has allocated over \$10 billion for drone, counter-drone, and autonomous system technologies in the Defence 2024 Integrated Investment Program.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Director Strategic Policy and Plans  
 Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
 Phone: s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Major General Hugh Meggitt  
 Position: Head Advanced Strategic Capabilities Group  
 Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) s22

## Talking Points

### Asymmetry

- The 2024 National Defence Strategy calls for Australia to seek military advantage in innovative ways and highlights the development of asymmetric advantage as one key approach aligned to this goal.
- The Defence Innovation, Science and Technology Strategy, 'Accelerating Asymmetric Advantage', was developed in response to the 2024 National Defence Strategy to ensure that the innovation, science and technology ecosystem is working to deliver the transformational capabilities the ADF requires.

### Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator (ASCA)

- ASCA, established 1 July 2023, will invest up to \$3.8 billion over the next decade to deliver vital capabilities for the ADF to operate effectively in a rapidly changing security environment.
- ASCA's transition into the Vice Chief of the Defence Force Group more closely aligns Defence's technological innovation functions to ADF operational requirements, and Defence capability development and integration functions.
- Innovation and technology are critical to maintaining Defence's capability edge. Continued investment in artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, cyber resilience, and advanced materials will enable the ADF to respond to emerging threats, enhance situational awareness, and deliver operational effects with greater speed, precision, and survivability. Working collaboratively with Service Capability Managers across the five domains, including their respective innovation arms, ASCA's intent is to deliver capabilities that are ready, relevant and required.
- ASCA's remit is to accelerate, in partnership with Australian industry and research organisations, the delivery of capability that addresses Defence priorities.
- After more than two years of operation, ASCA continues to deliver at pace:
  - Five VCDF-endorsed Missions are underway, with 17 contracts signed.
  - Ghost Shark (Mission 0) has been successfully transferred to Navy as Capability Manager and to the Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group as Delivery Manager.
  - ASCA has completed the Sovereign UAS Challenge and launched two AUKUS Pillar II Innovation Challenges and the ASCA Undersea Navigation Challenge.
    - : Planning is underway for the 2026 AUKUS Innovation Challenge, in collaboration with Strategy Policy and Industry Group and military stakeholders.
  - ASCA hosted its inaugural Pitch Day 18 September 2024, and its second Pitch Day 3 November 2025.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Director Strategic Policy and Plans  
Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
Phone: s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Major General Hugh Meggitt  
Position: Head Advanced Strategic Capabilities Group  
Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
Phone: s47E(d) s22

- ASCA has executed 117 contracts valued at \$299.4 million, including:
  - Missions Program – 18 contracts (\$120.1 million);
  - Innovation Incubation Program – 25 contracts (\$20.5 million);
  - Emerging and Disruptive Technologies Program – 58 contracts (\$125.1 million); and
  - Legacy Program – 16 contracts (\$33.7 million).
- ASCA's success is underpinned by strong and sustained engagement with Australian industry. In 2024–25, ASCA representatives presented at over 23 industry events.
- ASCA has commenced providing Classified Briefs to Industry, with the first conducted in Adelaide on 25 September 2025, with further sessions planned in 2026.
- Feedback from industry has been overwhelmingly positive. Participants commended ASCA's openness, transparency, and direct engagement with ADF personnel. Industry stakeholders reported a significant uplift in the relevance and quality of proposals, attributing this to ASCA's streamlined Innovation Challenge process and its commitment to co-design with end users.

#### AUKUS Innovation Challenge Series

- ASCA is supporting the trilateral development of advanced capabilities under AUKUS Pillar II – Advanced Capabilities through the AUKUS Innovation Challenge series.
  - The first AUKUS Innovation Challenge launched in March 2024 focused on electronic warfare.
    - : Defence awarded three contracts worth \$218,000 to Australian companies PentenAmio, Inovor Technologies and Advanced Design Technology.
    - : 12 month follow-on contracts were awarded to PentenAmio and Advanced Design Technology to the value of \$3.0 million and \$4.3 million respectively, to further develop their technologies.
  - The second AUKUS Innovation Challenge launched in March 2025, is focused on undersea communications and control of autonomous systems.
- The AUKUS Innovation Challenge Series is a key initiative that will accelerate advanced capabilities to the ADF and enable Australian industry to engage and develop solutions that also meet capability priorities of AUKUS partners.

#### Uncrewed Systems

- Uncrewed Systems are playing an increasingly vital role in modern warfare due to their asymmetry, persistency and ability to support a range of military operations.
  - The ADF currently operates a range of uncrewed platforms and the Government continues to invest in emerging uncrewed technologies.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Director Strategic Policy and Plans  
Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
Phone: s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Major General Hugh Meggitt  
Position: Head Advanced Strategic Capabilities Group  
Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
Phone: s47E(d) s22

- Defence is developing long-range autonomous undersea warfare capabilities that can conduct stealthy and persistent intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and strike.
  - Ghost Shark, an extra-large autonomous undersea vehicle is an exemplar of how Defence and Australian industry is rapidly developing new sovereign capabilities to respond to contemporary challenges. Government announced in September 2025 that it is investing \$1.7 billion in acquiring Ghost Shark, building on approximately \$140 million already invested in the development of the Ghost Shark platform, payloads and production facilities since entering into a collaborative contract with Anduril Australia in 2022.
  - Speartooth is a large uncrewed undersea vehicle designed for long range, extended duration operations. It is being employed to explore the integration of kinetic and non-kinetic payloads.
  - Ocius Bluebottle is an uncrewed surface vessel that Navy is seeking to introduce to augment the ADF's surface and sub-surface intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities. Defence continue to engage with Ocius on future capability investment opportunities.
- MQ-28A Ghost Bat, a Loyal Wingman aircraft, is a cutting edge capability and the first military aircraft in more than 50 years to be designed, engineered and manufactured in Australia.
  - Autonomous systems work with crewed aircraft and have the potential to fundamentally change the way the ADF operates.
  - Government's total commitment to the development of MQ-28A, under DEF 6014, is \$1.01 billion.
  - Government is investing nearly \$1.4 billion in autonomous collaborative platforms, including MQ-28A, under AIR 6015.
  - Government has approved the next stage of MQ-28A Ghost Bat development that will deliver an additional six Block 2 aircraft and a Block 3 prototype. This will give Air Force a total of nine Block 2 and one Block 3 MQ-28A aircraft by 2030.
- Defence is also developing and acquiring counter uncrewed systems and technologies to provide capability options for the ADF, including protection of personnel, platforms and bases from drones.
  - The Government has allocated over \$10 billion for drone and counter-drone technology and autonomous systems in the Defence 2024 Integrated Investment Program.
  - The ADF has been developing and operating advanced drone systems for many years and continues to develop these capabilities to meet operational needs. Defence is also acquiring and developing counter-uncrewed systems and technologies to protect personnel, platforms and bases from drone threats.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Director Strategic Policy and Plans  
Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Major General Hugh Meggitt  
Position: Head Advanced Strategic Capabilities Group  
Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
Phone: s47E(d) s22

- Project LAND 156 was approved in February 2025 to deliver a counter small uncrewed aerial capability that protects domestic and deployed ADF force elements from threats posed by drones.
  - Project LAND 156 demonstrates delivery of speed to capability.
    - : Just five months after the announcement, the Government has issued a suite of contracts worth \$41.4 million to 20 vendors, including 14 Australian companies.
    - : In August 2025 Leidos Australia was announced as Project LAND 156's Systems Integration Partner in a contract valued at \$41.8 million.
- Through Project LAND 156, the ADF will continually upgrade and refresh capabilities to address emerging drone threats.
- Australia is closely watching developments in Ukraine and other conflict zones. Defence is examining and applying lessons to develop counter drone technology and how they might be employed to counter the evolving drone threat.
  - ASCA's Mission Syracuse is developing advanced counter drone technologies to provide options for integration into LAND 156.
- Defence partners closely with industry, academia and works with international collaborators to develop trusted autonomy of automated systems, through the Defence Science and Technology Group and through AUKUS Pillar 2.
- Defence fosters innovation through various initiatives aimed at enhancing its capabilities to achieve asymmetric advantage in a rapidly evolving strategic environment, including through dedicated service innovation units, such as Army's Robotic and Autonomous Systems Implementation and Coordination Office, Air Force's Jericho Disruption Innovation, and Navy's Maritime Integrated Capabilities.

#### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
6 January 2026	Department of Defence <u>announced</u> that the Australian Government is investing almost \$40 million through ASCA's Emerging and Disruptive Technologies program to strengthen the ADF's Decision Advantage, funding 14 AI-enabled projects across all domains to deliver faster, better-informed decision-making and build future asymmetric capability.
9 December 2025	The Government <u>announced</u> the acquisition of six additional MQ-28A Block 2 and the development of a prototype MQ-28A Block 3 as part of a \$1.4 billion investment.
10 September 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Industry <u>announced</u> a \$1.7 billion contract to Anduril Australia under the Ghost Shark program.

#### Prepared By:

Name: **s47E(d)**  
 Position: Director Strategic Policy and Plans  
 Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
 Phone: **s47E(d)**

#### Cleared By:

Name: Major General Hugh Meggitt  
 Position: Head Advanced Strategic Capabilities Group  
 Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
 Phone: **s47E(d)** **s22**

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: 5825-000510

Last updated: 9 February 2026

Key witnesses: Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond, Lieutenant General Simon Stuart, Air Marshal Stephen Chappell, Hugh Jeffrey, Tanya Monro

27 August 2025	The Minister for Defence Industry <u>announced</u> the acquisition of counter-drone capabilities for the ADF as part of a \$1.3 billion investment.
25 August 2025	The Government <u>announced</u> the signing of three additional Information Warfare and Quantum contracts as part of the Emerging and Disruptive Technologies program.
19 August 2025	The Government <u>announced</u> the successful completion of the Sovereign Uncrewed Aerial Challenge and that Defence is acquiring additional units from across the three companies valuing over \$1.5million.
24 July 2025	The Minister for Defence Industry <u>announced</u> through Project LAND 156 and Mission Syracuse, the acceleration in acquiring cutting-edge drone and counter-drone technologies for the Australian Defence Force to keep Australians safe and protect our military assets.
23 May 2025	The Minister for Defence Industry <u>spoke</u> at a Gold Coast Press Conference about the re-shaping of ASCA.
16 May 2025	The Minister for Defence Industry <u>announced</u> launch of Mission Talon-Strike: Albanese Government to accelerate development of loitering munitions.
9 May 2025	The Government <u>announced</u> the launch of Mission Syracuse: ASCA Launches next Defence mission focused on counter small uncrewed aerial systems.
31 March 2025	The Government <u>announced</u> the launch of the second AUKUS Innovation Challenge: <i>AUKUS partners launch Innovation Challenge 2025</i> .

## Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
24 Sep 2025	FOI	An individual made an FOI request in regards to information relating to the ownership of intellectual property associated with the development of MQ-28A	Decision pending
28 Apr 2025	FOI	An individual made an FOI request in regards to Defence Innovation Hub proposal P19-141479 Goshawk MKII-Maritime Radar endurance Vertical Take Off and Landing Unmanned Aerial Vehicle.	Decision released
25 Feb 2025	FOI	An individual made an FOI request in regards to Defence Innovation Hub proposal P19-141479 Goshawk MKII- Maritime Radar endurance Vertical Take Off and Landing Unmanned Aerial Vehicle.	Decision released

## Prepared By:

Name: **s47E(d)**  
 Position: Director Strategic Policy and Plans  
 Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
 Phone: **s47E(d)**

## Cleared By:

Name: Major General Hugh Meggitt  
 Position: Head Advanced Strategic Capabilities Group  
 Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
 Phone: **s47E(d)** **s22**

### Relevant Media Reporting

- On 14 January 2026, Harnessing tech to drive faster decisions across Defence Coolah District Diary reports the Government is investing \$40 million through ASCA to boost Defence's Decision Advantage, funding 14 AI- and data-driven technology projects from 123 submissions to help the ADF make faster, more accurate decisions in line with the 2024 National Defence Strategy.
- On 6 January 2026, David Allen, Universities, Defence firms share in \$40m AI spend, InnovationAus reports on the Defence announcement, widely syndicated by multiple media outlets, that ASCA had signed 14 new contracts worth \$40million through the latest round of its Emerging and Disruptive Technologies program.
- On 5 January 2026, Max Blenkin, EW Lessons from Ukraine, Australian Defence Magazine, charts the shift to contested battlespace, arguing the ADF must urgently accelerate electronic warfare, counter-UAS and spectrum dominance, with ASCA – supported by AUKUS Pillar II – playing a central role in rapidly closing capability gaps across all domains.
- On 1 January 2026, Nigel Pittaway, Australian Defence Magazine, interviewed Pat Conroy, Minister for Industry, who said the past year marked a shift from policy development to capability delivery. Achievements include a \$70 billion increase in Defence funding over the decade, accelerated delivery of missiles and platforms, early decisions on key naval programs, and progress on domestic missile manufacturing, Ghost Shark and Ghost Bat. The Minister acknowledged schedule pressures but emphasised reform, speed to capability and industry delivery – supported by ASCA and AUKUS initiatives – as priorities for the year ahead.
- On 11 December 2025, Ian Bostock, More bang, less buck, Defence Technology Review, reported the Australian Army has issued an RFP for a low-cost, mass fires capability to deliver sustained indirect fire support out to 80km+, complementing existing artillery and high mobility artillery rocket systems.
- On 11 December 2025, Ian Bostock, OWL-B brings home Talon Strike, Defence Technology Review, reported on selection of Western Australia's Innovaero as the preferred tenderer for ASCA's Mission Talon Strike Program.
- On 10 December 2025, Malcolm Davies, Air-to-air shot a momentous step forward for the Ghost Bat, The Strategist, reported on the successful air-to-air weapons test supporting the delivery of additional MQ-28A Block 2 and the development of the MQ-28A Block 3 as opportunity to build combat mass at speed.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Director Strategic Policy and Plans  
 Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
 Phone: s47E(d)

#### Cleared By:

Name: Major General Hugh Meggitt  
 Position: Head Advanced Strategic Capabilities Group  
 Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) s22

- On 9 December 2025, The Sydney Morning Herald and other media reported extensively on the Government's investment in additional MQ-28A Ghost Bat for the Royal Australian Air Force and the conduct of a successful air-to-air weapons test.
- On 8 December 2025, Malcolm Davis, ADF autonomous warfare: go big, go fast The Strategist, argued that the ADF and defence industry should ensure rapid and continuous adaption and modernisation of autonomous systems.
- On 5 December 2025, Dr Gregor Ferguson, Missions Syracuse Talon Strike, Wings Magazine, reported on Missions Syracuse and Talon Strike rapidly accelerating the development of counter small UAS and loitering munitions.
- On 4 December 2025, Channel 7 News published a story titled: Australia's billion dollar drone defence system. Australia is developing a \$1.3 billion counter-drone defence system capable of detecting, jamming and destroying hostile drones from kilometres away, with deployment planned for the Brisbane Olympics.

<b>Division:</b> Vice Chief of Defence Force Group	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000510	
<b>Prepared by:</b> s47E(d) Director Strategic Plans and Policy Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 22 January 2026	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> MAJGEN Hugh Meggitt, AM CSC Head Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 22 January 2026
<b>Consultation:</b> Professor Tanya Monro, AC Chief Defence Scientist Defence Science and Technology Group Mr Chris Deeble, AO, CSC Deputy Secretary Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group Commodore Ashley Papp, AM Acting Head Navy Capability Navy Brigadier James Davis Acting Head Land Capability Army	Air Marshal Stephen Chappell, DSC, CSC, OAM Chief of Air Force Air Force s47E(d) a/Assistant Secretary AUKUS Policy and Engagement Strategy Policy and Industry Group Commodore Stuart Watters Director General Force Option and Plans Vice Chief of the Defence Force Group
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b>	

**Prepared By:**  
 Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Director Strategic Policy and Plans  
 Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
 Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**  
 Name: Major General Hugh Meggitt  
 Position: Head Advanced Strategic Capabilities Group  
 Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
 Phone: s47E(d) s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: 5825-000510

Last updated: 9 February 2026

Key witnesses: Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond, Lieutenant General Simon Stuart, Air Marshal Stephen Chappell, Hugh Jeffrey, Tanya Monro

Rear Admiral Jonathan Earley, AO CSC RAN  
Acting Vice Chief of the Defence Force  
7 January 2026

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Director Strategic Policy and Plans  
Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
Phone: s47E(d)

**Cleared By:**

Name: Major General Hugh Meggitt  
Position: Head Advanced Strategic Capabilities Group  
Group: Vice Chief of Defence Force Group  
Phone: s47E(d) s22

**PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - AIR DOMAIN**

**Lead:** Air Marshal Stephen Chappell DSC CSC OAM, Chief of Air Force.

**Supporting:** Air Vice-Marshal Gerry van Leeuwen AM CSC, Head Aerospace Systems to support on program delivery.

**Context:** Defence continues to introduce the latest and most advanced combat capabilities to meet the needs of the 2024 National Defence Strategy.

**Key Messages**

- In December 2024, the final F-35A Lightning II was delivered to Australia, bringing the fleet to 72 aircraft.
- On 7 July 2025, Defence achieved Final Operational Capability for AIR 6000 Phase 2A/2B – F-35A Lightning II Acquisition.
- In July 2024, the first MQ-4C Triton arrived in Australia, the second and third aircraft arrived in May 2025, and the final MQ-4C is planned for delivery in 2028.
- In February 2025, the MQ-4C Triton completed its first flight, participated in Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2025, and continues to progress through test and evaluation events to support realisation of an operational capability.
- In January 2026, the first MC-55A Peregrine arrived in Australia. Two more aircraft are scheduled for delivery in the next six months. The aircraft has entered test and evaluation to support introduction to service.

**Talking Points****F-35A Lightning II**

- The F-35A Lightning II will continue to be Australia's most capable and survivable aircraft for conducting air-to-air combat missions against advanced threat aircraft and air-surface missions against well-defended targets.
- Continued investment in the fleet will provide incremental improvements to the aircraft's capabilities, including integration of long-range strike munitions such as the Long Range Anti-Ship Missile, Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile – Extended Range, Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile – Extended Range and the Joint Strike Missile.
- Air Force will continue to optimise and increase effective use of assigned funding. Recent changes to the F-35 support contracts moved us from a period of surge to a normalised level of support. BAE Systems Australia will continue to provide regional depot maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade services for the global fleet. Depot maintenance is planned to increase from 2026. Lockheed Martin Australia (LM) continues to support the F-35 Program, including Air Force workforce supplementation, as well the delivery of regional services through the F-35 Joint Program Office (JPO).

**Prepared By:**

Name: Air Commodore Angus Porter  
 Position: Director General Air Combat Capability  
 Division: Air Force  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Air Marshal Stephen Chappell  
 Position: Chief of Air Force  
 Service: Air Force  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

## MQ-4C Triton

- The MQ-4C Triton is a high-altitude, long-endurance, maritime intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance capability that will enable persistent patrol of Australia's strategic areas of interest and maritime approaches.
- Australia's first MQ-4C Triton arrived at RAAF Base Tindal, Northern Territory, in June 2024. The Deputy Prime Minister unveiled the aircraft in July 2024 and it conducted its first flight in February 2025.
- Australia's second and third MQ-4C Triton Uncrewed Aerial Vehicle arrived at RAAF Base Tindal in May 2025. The three air vehicles are conducting training, test and evaluation events, including participation in exercises such as Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2025 and multiple domestic exercises during 2026.
- Australia's fourth MQ-4C Triton is in production and scheduled for delivery in 2028. There are no plans to expand the Triton fleet beyond four aircraft.

## MC-55A Peregrine

- The MC-55A Peregrine is a first-of-type Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Electronic Warfare aircraft that will enable delivery of multiple sources of intelligence in support of Defence operations.
- Australia's first MC-55A Peregrine arrived at RAAF Base Edinburgh, South Australia, on 22 January 2026. The aircraft has commenced test and evaluation to support introduction into service.
- The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Industry announced all four aircraft will be delivered in 2026.

## Special Purpose Aircraft

- Special Purpose Aircraft have flown authorised persons since 1959. Special Purpose Aircraft support the Government to conduct business in a timely, efficient and secure manner, enabling Government business to continue when commercial travel options are not suitable.
  - The aircraft afford passengers an efficient and secure transport option with reduced transit times. Cabin security and secure communications allow Government passengers to continue working during the flight.
- The Special Purpose Aircraft fleet consists of two 737-8 Boeing Business Jets, three Dassault Falcon 7X aircraft and one KC-30A Government Transport and Communications aircraft.
- These aircraft ensure authorised persons can transit efficiently and securely to fulfil parliamentary and international duties, supporting Australia's position as an important diplomatic partner in our region and the world.
- When Special Purpose Aircraft demand exceeds capacity, Defence seeks advice from the Government as to which tasks are to be prioritised.

### Prepared By:

Name: Air Commodore Angus Porter  
Position: Director General Air Combat Capability  
Division: Air Force  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

### Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Stephen Chappell  
Position: Chief of Air Force  
Service: Air Force  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

- Approval processes for the use of Special Purpose Aircraft are outlined in the *Guidelines for the Use of Special Purpose Aircraft*, which is available on the Defence website.
- Special Purpose Aircraft* schedules are regularly published on the Defence website.

## Background

### F-35A Lightning II

- F-35A Lightning II Initial Operational Capability was declared on 28 December 2020, defined as one operationally-ready squadron and one unit providing a sovereign training capability.
- The final Australian F-35A arrived at RAAF Base Williamtown on 18 December 2024, to mark the completion of Australia's current orders.

### MQ-4C Triton

- The 2016 Defence White Paper stated Defence would acquire up to seven MQ-4C Triton aircraft through a Cooperative Program with the United States.
- Defence joined the Cooperative Program to realise the benefits of shared design and development of the MQ-4C Triton to meet our operational surveillance requirements whilst maximising interoperability.
- On 3 March 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister and Chief of Air Force announced Number 9 Squadron as the operating squadron of the MQ-4C Triton.
- On 19 September 2023, the Minister for Defence Industry and Capability Delivery announced that the Government had approved the purchase of a fourth MQ-4C Triton.
- The 2024 National Defence Strategy and Integrated Investment Program states that Australia will acquire four MQ-4C Triton aircraft to undertake maritime surveillance at greatly extended ranges to detect, deter and respond to potential adversary capabilities.

### MC-55A Peregrine

- On 18 March 2019, the Minister for Defence Industry announced the acquisition of four modified Gulfstream G550 aircraft – to be designated the MC-55A Peregrine – for the Royal Australia Air Force.
- Defence is acquiring MC-55A through a Foreign Military Sales arrangement with the United States Air Force.
- On 24 January 2026, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Industry announced the arrival of Australia's first of four MC-55A Peregrine aircraft at RAAF Base Edinburgh, South Australia.

### Special Purpose Aircraft

- In early 2024, an inter-departmental working group, led by the Department of Finance updated the Guidelines for the Use of Special Purpose Aircraft, incorporating recommendations from a security review led by the Australian Federal Police, endorsed by their Security Coordination Committee.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Air Commodore Angus Porter  
 Position: Director General Air Combat Capability  
 Division: Air Force  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Stephen Chappell  
 Position: Chief of Air Force  
 Service: Air Force  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

- On 28 May 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister approved the updated Guidelines for the Use of Special Purpose Aircraft, which are published on the Defence website.
- On 18 December 2021, the former Government approved two replacement medium-capacity 737-8 Boeing Business Jet aircraft, as it represented a better value-for-money proposition than retaining and refurbishing the legacy 737-700IGW Boeing Business Jet fleet.
- The two replacement 737-8 Boeing Business Jets entered service in July and August 2024 respectively.

#### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
24 January 2026	On 24 January 2026, <a href="#">Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence industry announced</a> the arrival of the first of four MC-55A Peregrine aircraft, to be operated by 10 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force.
31 July 2024	The <a href="#">Deputy Prime Minister unveiled Australia's first MQ-4C Triton</a> aircraft at RAAF Base Tindal, Northern Territory.
17 April 2024	The Deputy Prime Minister and the then titled Minister for Defence Industry and Capability Delivery released the 2024 <a href="#">National Defence Strategy</a> and <a href="#">Integrated Investment Program</a> .
19 September 2023	On 19 September 2023, the then titled <a href="#">Minister for Defence Industry and Capability Delivery announced</a> that the Government had approved acquisition of a fourth MQ-4C Triton aircraft, as a combined announcement with upgrades to the P-8A Poseidon fleet.

#### Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
11 February 2025	FOI	An individual requested information regarding an inflight catering contract relating to a KC-30A GTC SPA flight conducted on 17 December 2024 from Stansted, United Kingdom.	Decision finalised
14 October 2024	FOI	An individual requested a single document detailing specific elements of the 'four most recent' Special Purpose Aircraft missions in which the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP was a passenger. The initial request was refused as no single document was found that detailed the requested information.	External (OAIC) Decision Pending

#### Prepared By:

Name: Air Commodore Angus Porter  
 Position: Director General Air Combat Capability  
 Division: Air Force  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Stephen Chappell  
 Position: Chief of Air Force  
 Service: Air Force  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

	<p>The individual requested an internal review that affirmed the original decision due to not meeting the statutory response timeframes.</p> <p>The applicant has requested an external review by the Office of Australian Information Commissioner, which is ongoing.</p>	
--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

### Relevant Media Reporting

- On 25 January 2026, Contact published an article [Australia's first Peregrine arrives](#).
- On 25 January 2026, Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter published an article [L3Harris delivers intelligence aircraft to USAF: US will transfer planes to RAAF](#).
- On 24 January 2026, Australian Defence Magazine published an article [Arrival of First MC-55A](#).
- On 23 January 2026, The Nightly published an article [MC-55A Peregrine spy plane: ADF's new 'eyes and ears' in the sky finally arrives](#).
- On 23 January 2026, Australian Aviation published an article [RAAF Receives Its First Peregrine Surveillance Aircraft](#).
- On 23 January 2026, Defence Connect published an article [Australia's first MC-55A Peregrine aircraft arrives at RAAF Base Edinburgh](#).
- On 6 November 2025, the Australian published an article by Ben Packham on [F-35 Sustainment Funding](#), reporting that dozens of BAE Systems Australia and Lockheed Martin workers tasked with maintaining and upgrading the Australian F-35A aircraft have been redeployed due to a Defence wide austerity drive to pay for nuclear submarines and surface ships.
- On 23 October 2025, The Australian published an article reporting that [Defence is delaying projects, reducing maintenance costs and cutting workforce spending](#).
- On 20 October 2025, Australian Aviation published an article reporting impending completion of the [Triton Maintenance Hangar](#) at RAAF Tindal.
- On 16 October 2025, The Australian published an article relating to [Triton's participation in Exercise Talisman Sabre](#) and commencement of operational test and evaluation.
- On 31 July 2025, ABC (USA) reported on a [United States Navy F-35C crash in California](#), with the pilot ejecting safely and no other personnel harmed.
- On 25 June 2025, the Australian Defence Magazine published an article titled [Northrop Grumman's MQ-4C Triton undergoes US Navy testing](#), including a reiteration that 'the RAAF has an official requirement for 'up to six' Tritons but whether two additional aircraft will be ordered before Triton production terminates is not clear'.
- On 16 June 2025, the Australian published an article by Nigel Pittaway reporting an [Air of anticipation: RAAF planners look beyond F-35](#) for future unmanned aircraft, including the Global Combat Aircraft Program.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Air Commodore Angus Porter  
 Position: Director General Air Combat Capability  
 Division: Air Force  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Stephen Chappell  
 Position: Chief of Air Force  
 Service: Air Force  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

- On 19 December 2024, the Australian Defence Magazine published an article titled [RAAF completes F-35A fleet](#) indicating the final three F-35A aircraft landed in Australia on 18 December 2024, six years after the first two F-35A arrived in Australia. On 5 September 2024, the Australian Defence Magazine published an article titled [Australia to introduce Joint Strike Missile from 2025](#) reporting that Defence has signed a \$142 million contract with Kongsberg Defence and Aerospace to acquire Joint Strike Missiles (JSM) for the Royal Australian Air Force's F-35A fleet, with deliveries of the missile to begin in 2025.

<b>Division:</b>	Air Force	
<b>PDR No:</b>	SB25-000511	
<b>Prepared by:</b> s47E(d) Acting Director General Air Combat Capability Air Force Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 28 January 2026	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Air Vice-Marshal Nicholas Hogan Head of Air Force Capability Air Force Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 28 January 2026	
<b>Consultation:</b> Air Commodore David Houghton Director General Aerospace Combat Systems Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group Date: 27 January 2026		
Air Commodore Alison MacCarthy Director General Aerospace and Response Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group Date: 27 January 2026		
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Air Marshal Stephen Chappell DSC CSC OAM Chief of Air Force Date: 28 January 2026		

**Prepared By:**

Name: Air Commodore Angus Porter  
Position: Director General Air Combat Capability  
Division: Air Force  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Air Marshal Stephen Chappell  
Position: Chief of Air Force  
Service: Air Force  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - LAND DOMAIN**

**Lead:** Lieutenant General Simon Stuart AO DSC, Chief of Army.

**Supporting:** Major General Richard Vagg DSC, Head Land Capability.

**Context:** Following the release of the Defence Strategic Review in April 2023 and the 2024 National Defence Strategy Army is transforming in response, adopting new concepts, roles, capabilities, organisation and force posture, and reviewing the state of the Army profession.

**Key Messages**

- Since the release of the Defence Strategic Review in April 2023, the Army has rapidly transformed in response to Government direction to optimise for littoral manoeuvre with a long-range land and maritime strike capability.
- The Army is executing its largest equipment recapitalisation in generations, with nearly every major land warfare system to be replaced with world leading equipment between now and 2030.
- New concepts and capabilities position the Army to support maritime and air force projection and manoeuvre to hold adversary forces at risk, control key land positions, support sea denial, maintain persistent forward partnerships and protect and sustain deployed forces.
- The Army has reorganised, including its headquarters to enable more effective command and control during conflict.
- The Army is delivering capabilities in accordance with its approved budget and the 2024 Integrated Investment Program direction.
- The Army is responding proactively to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide to strengthen its culture, individual and collective resilience.

**Talking Points****Concepts**

- Army's transformation includes new concepts to conduct multi-domain operations with a focus on littoral warfighting, long-range land and maritime strike.
  - The new land concepts link 2024 National Defence Strategy directions to how Army operates to control strategic land positions and deny adversaries maritime freedom of action on Australia's northern approaches.
  - These concepts have driven new doctrine and changes to training in Army schools.
- The Army is evolving its capacity for innovation and continued adaptation, through the Army Accelerated Capability Pipeline that combines emerging technology, the Army Battle Lab and Army's experimentation unit.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Brigadier James Davis AM CSC  
 Position: Director General Future Land Warfare  
 Division: Land Capability  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Major General Richard Vagg DSC  
 Position: Head Land Capability  
 Service: Army  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Command, Control and Posture**

- . On 28 September 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister announced a new force structure, enhanced posture and command and control changes.
  - These structural and posture changes best leverage the key characteristics of land forces: persistence, asymmetry, presence, versatility and value.
- . Army implemented command and control changes in early 2025.
  - Army Headquarters is designed to exercise command and control in war, and the bulk of the Army is organised to fight as two Divisions.
    - : The 1st (Australian) Division on littoral operations.
    - : The 2nd (Australian) Division on homeland defence.
    - : Special Operations Command is functionally aligned to four core outputs: special reconnaissance, strategic strike, special warfare and technical enablement.
    - : Army Aviation Command delivers aviation capability to support the generation of land power for the Integrated Force.
    - : Forces Command delivers individual and collective training through a unified land training system that sets the conditions for Army's contribution to Defence expansion or mobilisation.
- . Army also created:
  - the 10th Fires Brigade to deliver long-range land and maritime strike, and air and missile defence; and
  - a Littoral Manoeuvre Group, to operate medium and heavy littoral manoeuvre vessels. The group will grow in size from 2026.
- . Battlefield Aviation Disposition:
  - Support to the Battlefield Aviation capability has been simplified through a reduction to two strategic industry partnerships and operating nodes.
    - : A Boeing Defence Australia node is centred in Townsville, Queensland to support the AH-64E Apache and CH-47F Chinook helicopter fleets.
    - : A Lockheed Martin Australia and Sikorsky node centred in the Sydney, New South Wales region, supporting the UH-60M Black Hawk and Navy's MH-60R Seahawk.
  - On 1 July 2023, Government announced its decision to relocate the 1st Aviation Regiment from Darwin, Northern Territory to Townsville, Queensland. This relocation has commenced, coinciding with the introduction into service of the AH-64E Apache into Townsville, and the relocation of the 16th Aviation Brigade Headquarters from Brisbane to Townsville.
- . Army made hard choices to achieve these changes within assigned resources:
  - disestablishing the 6th Brigade;
  - redesignating the 9th Brigade as a part time formation;

**Prepared By:**

Name: Brigadier James Davis AM CSC  
 Position: Director General Future Land Warfare  
 Division: Land Capability  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Major General Richard Vagg DSC  
 Position: Head Land Capability  
 Service: Army  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

2025-26 Additional Budget Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000512

Last updated: 30 January 2026

Key witnesses: Lieutenant General Simon Stuart AO DSC; Major General Richard Vagg DSC

- disestablishing the 7th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment; and
- rerolling the 1st Armoured Regiment from an armoured cavalry regiment to an experimentation unit.

## Capability

- . Army capability delivery is focused on:
  - Long Range Strike:
    - : Government approved the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System to equip the first long-range fires regiment in January 2023. The first High Mobility Artillery Rocket System launcher arrived in Australia on 21 March 2025 and a further six have subsequently been received.
    - : Army will continue to progressively introduce increments of the Precision Strike Missile to extend the range and variety of targets land based long-range fires can strike. Precision Strike Missile was delivered a year early, and live-fired two years ahead of schedule, as demonstrated on Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2025.
    - : Army is developing options for Government consideration for the missile and launcher combination for the second long-fires regiment under LAND 8113 Phase 2.
  - Littoral Manoeuvre:
    - : In June 2024, Government approved the build of 18 Landing Craft Medium and 15 Amphibious Vehicle Logistics under LAND 8710 Phase 1. Defence is now working with the Strategic Shipbuilder to commence construction of Landing Craft Medium in 2026. Birdon Group has been contracted to design and deliver the Amphibious Vehicle Logistics.
    - : In November 2024, Government selected the LST 100 as the Landing Craft Heavy design. Defence is currently in commercial discussions with the Strategic Shipbuilder for design development of the Landing Craft Heavy.
    - : Army has substantially increased recruitment and training to ensure crews are ready for the first vessels.
  - Combined Arms Fighting System:
    - : The Combined Arms Fighting System centres on the M1A2 SEPv3 Abrams main battle tank. 74 tanks have now been delivered and are being operated in training and on regional activities.
    - : Army has also received 14 of the 29 Assault Breaching Vehicles and eight of the 17 Joint Assault Bridges. Initial training commenced in August 2025.
    - : Army has received 25 Block I and 12 Block II Boxer Combat Reconnaissance vehicles. Six Australian-built Block II Boxers deployed on Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2025.
    - : The Combined Arms Fighting System will be supported by protected mobile fires. In February 2025, Defence received the first three Korean-built

### Prepared By:

Name: Brigadier James Davis AM CSC  
Position: Director General Future Land Warfare  
Division: Land Capability  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

### Cleared By:

Name: Major General Richard Vagg DSC  
Position: Head Land Capability  
Service: Army  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

- vehicles – two AS-9 Huntsman Self-Propelled Howitzers and one AS-10 Armoured Resupply Vehicle.
- : Production is underway at the Hanwha Centre of Excellence, Geelong, to deliver the remaining 28 AS-9 and 14 AS-10 vehicles.
- : In July 2023, Government approved the acquisition of a world-leading Hanwha Redback Infantry Fighting Vehicle. The first vehicle is scheduled to be delivered in 2027. The design process to support this delivery schedule is progressing as planned. Defence has recently received prototype hulls from South Korea that will support the conduct of verification and validation activities for the vehicles.
- Battlefield Aviation
  - : Army's Battlefield Aviation capability is rebuilding capacity through proven and mature platforms.
  - : In February 2023, Government approved the acquisition of 40 UH-60M Black Hawk Utility Helicopters with delivery commencing from July 2023 and Initial Operating Capability achieved in December 2024. UH-60M Black Hawk has continued test and evaluation activities through 2025 in accordance with the capability realisation plan. As at 27 January 2026, 19 UH-60M Black Hawks have been delivered to Australia. All 40 aircraft are expected by 2030.
  - : Government approved the acquisition of 29 AH-64E Apache helicopters in January 2022 to replace the Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopters. The first four AH-64E Apache helicopters were delivered to Australia in October and November 2025, with flying operations commencing in Townsville on 27 November 2025. All 29 aircraft are expected by 2029.
  - : Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter withdrawal activities have commenced in accordance with the approved End of Service Strategy. Defence is developing disposal options.
  - : An expanded fleet of 14 CH-47F Chinook helicopters achieved Initial Operating Capability in June 2025, and will continue to deliver Defence's battlefield helicopter capability through to the achievement of Final Operating Capability in June 2028.
- Robotics and Autonomous Systems and Counter Uncrewed Aerial Systems:
  - : Army is planning the organisations, training and governance required to field uncrewed systems at scale from early 2027.
  - : LAND 135 – Uncrewed Land Warfare is currently undergoing strategy planning and consultation. LAND 135 seeks to advance Army's Robotics and Autonomous Systems (RAS) capability through a 'learn, experiment, innovate' methodology to invigorate Australian industry and academia.
  - : LAND 156 – Counter Uncrewed Aerial Systems. Defence awarded contracts worth \$86 million to 20 vendors, including 14 Australian companies, to rapidly deliver counter-drone capability and technologies. Enhanced

**Prepared By:**

Name: Brigadier James Davis AM CSC  
 Position: Director General Future Land Warfare  
 Division: Land Capability  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Major General Richard Vagg DSC  
 Position: Head Land Capability  
 Service: Army  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

counter-UAS systems are being delivered to Army's highest readiness forces under the LAND 156 capability rollout.

- : DEF 129 has replaced Army's RQ-7B Shadow 200 tactical uncrewed aerial systems with the Integrator, providing an enhanced intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability. The Integrator is employed by the 20th Regiment in Brisbane, Queensland. Initial Operational Capability was declared in September 2025 and Minimum Viable Capability was declared in December 2025.
- : DEF 129 is also delivering small uncrewed aerial systems for use by the Army and the Air Force. These small systems include the Quantum Vector 2-in-1, and the Sypaq CorvoX. The Vector 2-in-1 small uncrewed aerial system will be assembled and sustained by Quantum-Systems in their Asia-Pacific hub in Brisbane, Queensland. The Sypaq Systems CorvoX uncrewed aerial system was developed through the Defence Innovation Hub and will be manufactured and sustained in Melbourne, Victoria. Delivery of these systems will commence in Quarter 1, 2026.

## Culture

- . The Army is preparing its soldiers for the challenges of the future operating environment.
  - This includes a review into the state of the Army profession to examine the Army's jurisdiction, professional body of knowledge and regulation.
- . Army is responding proactively to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide to reduce the incidence of suicide and suicidality, by building individual and collective resilience, cohesive teams, and aligning policy and practice and better integration of families.
- . Related to this work, Army is implementing a system to monitor and record exposure to low-level blast during training, and concurrently introducing controls to reduce blast and overpressure injuries – referred to as Mild Traumatic Brain Injury.
  - This is informed by allies and partners best practice and an advisory panel comprising of Australia's leading brain injury experts.
  - Although no specific threshold for low-level blast exposure currently exists, general workplace health and safety legislation mandates that risks be minimised so far as reasonably practicable.
- : The United States has introduced an interim threshold of 4 pounds per square inch. Defence introduced the same interim threshold on 01 October 2025.

### Prepared By:

Name: Brigadier James Davis AM CSC  
 Position: Director General Future Land Warfare  
 Division: Land Capability  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

### Cleared By:

Name: Major General Richard Vagg DSC  
 Position: Head Land Capability  
 Service: Army  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

## Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
28 November 2025	Defence <a href="#">announced</a> the commencement of AH-64E Apache flying operations in Townsville. This was amplified on 5 December 2025 by a departmental and industry media engagement at RAAF Base Townsville to discuss Army Aviation milestones.
2 October 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Industry <a href="#">announced</a> the arrival of Australia's first AH-64E Apache attack helicopters. This was supported by a departmental media engagement at RAAF Base Townsville.
25 July 2025	The Minister for Defence Industry <a href="#">announced</a> the successful test firing of a Precision Strike Missile from a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System by the Army for the first time.
24 July 2025	The Minister for Defence Industry <a href="#">announced</a> that under Project LAND 156, contracts worth \$16.9 million to 11 vendors have been issued, including five Australian companies, to rapidly deliver counter-drone capability and technology.
8 July 2025	Defence <a href="#">announced</a> the Army Aviation Training Centre will transfer flying training to Oakey from 2026. Locating elements of the Black Hawk fleet is crucial to fulfilling Defence's utility helicopter requirements, and is the next step in establishing a sovereign UH-60M training capability.
1 July 2025	Defence <a href="#">announced</a> that in a world first, Australian Army soldiers fired an AIM-9 Sidewinder from National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System Hawkei high-mobility launcher at Woomera Test Range.
18 June 2025	Defence <a href="#">announced</a> that Australian Army sappers have begun training on the M1150 Assault Breacher Vehicle and M1110 Joint Assault Bridges, which significantly enhance soldier protection and mobility in conflict.
6 June 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister <a href="#">announced</a> Australia and the United States have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for Precision Strike Missile production, sustainment and follow-on development.
1 May 2025	Defence <a href="#">announced</a> the Australian Army has consolidated its heavy armour capabilities in Townsville, to bolster operational readiness and align with the 2024 National Defence Strategy.
30 April 2025	Defence <a href="#">announced</a> the realisation of 10th Brigade located in the Edinburgh Defence Precinct, and equipped with new capabilities, including National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System and High Mobility Artillery Rocket System.
24 March 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister <a href="#">announced</a> the delivery of the first two High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, providing the ADF with long-range precision strike capability as directed in the Defence Strategic Review.

## Prepared By:

Name: Brigadier James Davis AM CSC  
 Position: Director General Future Land Warfare  
 Division: Land Capability  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

## Cleared By:

Name: Major General Richard Vagg DSC  
 Position: Head Land Capability  
 Service: Army  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

27 February 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister <a href="#">announced</a> the receipt of the first two AS9 Huntsmans and the first AS10 armoured ammunition resupply vehicle. The Deputy Prime Minister also announced the commencement of domestic production of these vehicles at the Hanwha Armoured Vehicle Centre of Excellence.
19 February 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence Industry <a href="#">announced</a> the achievement of an Initial Operational Capability for the Australian Army's UH-60M Black Hawks.
22 November 2024	The Government <a href="#">announced</a> that it had selected a design by Damen Shipyards Group as the preferred option for the Landing Craft Heavy.
23 July 2024	The Minister for Defence Industry <a href="#">announced</a> the accelerated build of 18 Medium Littoral Vessels in addition to heavy landing craft, all to be built by Austal at Henderson, Western Australia.

## Key Information Requests

· Nil

## Relevant Media Reporting

· Australian media has reported extensively on all the issues represented in this paper.

<b>Division:</b>	Land Capability
<b>PDR No:</b>	SB25-000512
<b>Prepared by:</b> Brigadier James Davis AM CSC Director General Future Land Warfare Army Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 11 December 2025	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Major General Richard Vagg DSC Head Land Capability Army Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 30 January 2026
<b>Consultation:</b> Brigadier Andrew Thomas Deputy Commander Aviation Command / Director General Aviation	
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Lieutenant General Simon Stuart AO DSC      Date: 14 January 2026 Chief of Army Army	

## Prepared By:

Name: Brigadier James Davis AM CSC  
Position: Director General Future Land Warfare  
Division: Land Capability  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

## Cleared By:

Name: Major General Richard Vagg DSC  
Position: Head Land Capability  
Service: Army  
Phone: s47E(d) & s22

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES - AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE SATCOM SYSTEM

**Lead:** Lieutenant General Susan Coyle AM CSC DSM, Chief of Joint Capabilities.

**Supporting:** Rear Admiral Andrew Quinn, Head Space and Cyber Capabilities Joint Capabilities Group

Chris Deeble AO CSC, Deputy Secretary Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group to support on commercial aspects.

**Context:** It is pre-emptive to speculate on timelines for the delivery of alternate capabilities before finalisation of engagement with our military partners and commercial providers and consideration by Government.

### Key Messages

- Project SPACE 9102 (SPA 9102) has not been cancelled or terminated; and Defence continues to pursue the delivery of a resilient, multi-orbit satellite communication (SATCOM) system.
- The 2024 National Defence Strategy describes space as a critical enabler of military operations, supporting communication, targeting and situational awareness.
- The 2024 National Defence Strategy directs continued investment in a satellite communication system that enhance ADF communications in the Indo-Pacific region.
- SPA 9102 was originally planned for delivery over three phases, with Phase 1 intended to deliver a sovereign Geosynchronous Satellite Communications system covering the Indo-Pacific region.
- Changes in the strategic environment, particularly in relation to technology options and counter-space capabilities, have resulted in Defence reassessing the planned phased approach.

### Talking Points

- Defence will take a continuous capability development approach to evolve its satellite communication capability.
- The new approach will generate resilience through the delivery of capabilities across multiple space orbits.
- Wherever possible, Defence will look to leverage Australian innovation in future solutions for the Project.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Brigadier Hamish Ashman  
Position: Director General Space Capability  
Division: Space and Cyber Capabilities  
Phone: s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Lieutenant General Susan Coyle  
Position: Chief of Joint Capabilities  
Group: Joint Capabilities Group  
Phone: s22

OFFICIAL

## Project 'Cancellation'

- Project SPA 9102, formerly known as Project JP 9102 Phase 1, was not cancelled. Defence ceased commercial activity for the Project with Lockheed Martin Australia in late 2024.
- Defence reassessed its approach to deliver a resilient satellite communications system due to emerging threats, evolving technologies and strategic priorities in alignment with the 2024 National Defence Strategy.

## SATCOM Capability Requirements

Defence is reviewing satellite communications requirements and capability options for further consideration.

## Request for Information: Narrowband

- Defence released a Request for Information to industry in June 2025. The request sought rough order of magnitude pricing and delivery schedule for a Narrowband SATCOM capability.
- The Narrowband Request for Information sought to address Defence's most urgent capability needs.
- The Request for Information closed in August 2025. Responses to the request will inform the options and timeframes that are presented to Government.

## Overview of Project activity:

- Over the past 12 months, since late 2024 Defence has undertaken a program of work to move from the previous approach of discrete, infrequent, large-scale updates to continual enhancement of the SATCOM system and supporting ground and management infrastructure.
- Key activities include:
  - The development of project artefacts and documentation to support Government's consideration of a continuous SATCOM delivery approach.
  - The engagement of an independent External Expert Advisory Team (EEAT) to validate Defence's planning assumptions supporting the revised approach.
  - Ongoing engagement with Australian Space industry.

## Dependence on Military Partners and Commercial Providers

- Australia's cooperation with international partners, including the United States, is managed through robust policy frameworks and principles that maintain and protect our sovereignty.
- Existing frameworks guide how we collaborate together to conduct activities and acquire capability effects in line with Australia's national interests.

### Prepared By:

Name: Brigadier Hamish Ashman  
Position: Director General Space Capability  
Division: Space and Cyber Capabilities  
Phone: s22

### Cleared By:

Name: Lieutenant General Susan Coyle  
Position: Chief of Joint Capabilities  
Group: Joint Capabilities Group  
Phone: s22

### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
26 June 2025	Defence released a Request for Information to industry seeking a rough order of magnitude pricing and delivery schedule, along with development and delivery risks for a resilient Narrowband Satellite Communications (SATCOM) component. Responses to the Request for Information closed on 18 August 2025.
04 November 2024	Lockheed Martin Australia notified of Defence's decision to cease procurement activities under SPA9102 Phase 1.
03 April 2023	Lockheed Martin Australia announced as preferred tenderer.
22 April 2021	Defence released a tender for a Defence owned and operated Geostationary Earth Orbit satellite communications system.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- On 28 November 2025, [The Australian](#) reports that the Australian Defence Force will have to rely on an ageing, vulnerable commercial satellite for battlefield communications for up to eight more years following the axing of a planned \$7 billion military-grade system. The decision will test the patience of the US, which will have to share valuable bandwidth with the ADF if Australia's satellite communications are disabled. Australian Strategic Policy Institute analyst Malcolm Davis said the cancellation of Defence's long-term satellite communications plan had forced Defence to "go back to this old, obsolete satellite" that lacked modern electronic warfare protection.
- On 24 November 2025, [InnovationAus.com](#) reported on Defence's extension of the Intelsat 22 Narrowband capability, noting capability linkages to JP9102.
- On 16 October 2025, [The Australian](#) reported on the multi-orbit approach, noting the scope of the recent Request for Information released to industry.
- On 27 June 2025, [Australian Defence Magazine](#), [Space Connect](#) and [Defence Connect](#) reported on the release of a Request for Information.
- On 16 June 2025, The Australian published an article by Malcolm Davis titled [Where to next for Australian satellite communications](#).

#### Prepared By:

Name: Brigadier Hamish Ashman  
 Position: Director General Space Capability  
 Division: Space and Cyber Capabilities  
 Phone: s22 [REDACTED]

#### Cleared By:

Name: Lieutenant General Susan Coyle  
 Position: Chief of Joint Capabilities  
 Group: Joint Capabilities Group  
 Phone: s22 [REDACTED]

<b>Division:</b> Space and Cyber Capabilities Division	
<b>PDR No:</b> SB25-000514	
<p><b>Prepared by:</b>                  Brigadier Hamish Ashman                  Director General Space Capability                  Space Capability Branch                  Mob: s22                  Ph: s47E(d)                  Date: 28 January 2026</p>	<p><b>Cleared by Division Head:</b>                  Rear Admiral Andrew Quinn                  Head Space and Cyber Capabilities                  Joint Capabilities Group                  Mob: s22                  Ph: s47E(d)                  Date: 28 January 2026</p>
<p><b>Consultation:</b>                  Air Vice-Marshal David Scheul OAM                  Head Air Defence and Space Systems                  Division Capability Acquisition and                  Sustainment Group                  Date: 25 September 2025</p>	
<p><b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b>                  Lieutenant General Susan Coyle AM CSC DSM                  Chief of Joint Capabilities                  Joint Capabilities Group                  Date: 29 January 2026</p>	

**Prepared By:**

Name: Brigadier Hamish Ashman  
 Position: Director General Space Capability  
 Division: Space and Cyber Capabilities  
 Phone: s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Lieutenant General Susan Coyle  
 Position: Chief of Joint Capabilities  
 Group: Joint Capabilities Group  
 Phone: s22

**PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – PREPAREDNESS REPORTING**

**Lead:** Vice Chief of the Defence Force, Air Marshal Robert Chipman, AO, CSC

**Context:** Andrew Tillett (*Australian Financial Review*) published an article on 30 June 2025, titled 'Defence Minister left in the dark over formal reporting', stating 'military chiefs failed for almost two and a half years to provide formal updates to the Defence Minister'.

**Key Messages**

- The 2024 National Defence Strategy outlined the Australian Defence Force's (ADF's) shift from a balanced force capable of responding to a range of contingencies, to an integrated, focused force designed to address the nation's most significant strategic risks.
- This shift in strategy required Defence to review and adjust preparedness settings.
- Defence paused specific preparedness reporting from early 2023 during the development of the Defence Strategic Review and the 2024 National Defence Strategy.
- Preparedness judgements were an element of the Defence Strategic Review and the National Defence Strategy considerations that were presented to Government.
- Defence continued to advise the Government on the capacity and status of capabilities of the force through other reporting means.
- Formal preparedness reporting to Government resumed in 2025.

**Talking Points****Pause in formal preparedness reporting**

- Defence maintains multiple forms of reporting to Ministers and the Government on the status of Defence capabilities, equipment, workforce, and projects.
- Preparedness reporting is structured against the requirements of the defence strategy at the time.
- The 2024 National Defence Strategy focused Defence preparation on prioritised scenarios, delivering integrated capability across the five domains to enhance lethality and range.
- Defence paused specific reporting against the superseded preparedness requirements while the new Defence Preparedness Management System was developed and introduced to meet National Defence Strategy direction.
- Internally, Defence continued to manage and report force capability risks and issues. As appropriate, these issues were reported to Government.

**Prepared By:**

Name: Air Vice-Marshal John Haly  
 Position: Head Military Strategic Plans  
 Division: Military Strategic Plans  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Air Marshal Robert Chipman  
 Position: Vice Chief of the Defence Force  
 Group: Vice Chief of the Defence Force  
 Phone: s47E(d)

## How Defence informed Government on preparedness during the development of the 2024 National Defence Strategy

- Defence provided specific reporting to Government related to sustainment and readiness of platforms and materiel. This included a number of classified on-occurrence reporting related to the availability of certain capabilities.
- Defence keeps the Government informed through the National Security Committee of Cabinet, on-occurrence reporting, National Defence Strategy updates and project reports.

### New preparedness reporting system

- Formal preparedness reporting to Government has resumed.
- The new Defence Preparedness Management System brings the following improvements:
  - consideration of whole-of-Defence contributions to the operations of an integrated force, not just ADF contributions;
  - consideration of Defence's contributions to National Defence over time, not just contributions of the current force;
  - close linkage to intelligence assessments and National Defence Strategy updates; and
  - reporting that better reflects Defence preparedness requirements for the changing strategic environment.

### Media reporting on the relationship between Government and Defence

- Defence officials regularly meet with Government on a range of issues within the Defence portfolio. Defence works productively and impartially to serve the Australian Government of the day.

### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
30 June 2025	The Defence Preparedness Management System (DPMS), which is responsible for coordinating preparedness (including reporting) across the Defence enterprise, reached Initial Operational Capability (IOC).
27 June 2025	Auditor-General Performance Audit – Sustainment of Canberra Class Amphibious Assault ships (Landing Helicopter Dock) report published.
4 November 2024	Classified investment program update, including future preparedness system details.
15 October 2024	Classified maritime capability availability update.

#### Prepared By:

Name: Air Vice-Marshal John Haly  
 Position: Head Military Strategic Plans  
 Division: Military Strategic Plans  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Robert Chipman  
 Position: Vice Chief of the Defence Force  
 Group: Vice Chief of the Defence Force  
 Phone: s47E(d)

16 September 2024	Classified supply ship capability update.
9 July 2024	The Vice Chief of the Defence Force (VCDF) approved the re-establishment of the Defence Preparedness Management System (DPMS).
17 April 2024	<a href="#">The Deputy Prime Minister issued a media release, announcing the release of the National Defence Strategy and the Integrated Investment Program.</a>

## Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Released
15 October 2025	QoN	<b>No. 9, Preparedness Reporting.</b> Senator Michaelia Cash (Liberal, Western Australia) asked about preparedness reporting to Government, including the period of suspension and recommencement.	Not yet tabled.

## Relevant Media Reporting

- On 16 September, ABC published an article by Jake Evans titled [Concurrent disasters will overwhelm responders, stress ADF, risk report warns](#). The article references the National Climate Risk Assessment recommendation that a dedicated disaster recovery force is needed, as the ADF will not be able to respond to natural disasters concurrently with defending Australia.
- On 11 July 2025, Defence Connect published an article by Robert Dougherty titled [Risk report: Australia's defence plan headed for strategic failure without radical reform](#), which references an independent white paper authored by NWE Strategic Risk Management principle Peter Robinson, examining the ADF's preparedness for an upcoming conflict.
- On 9 July 2025, Sky News published an article by Charlie Tchetchenian titled [ADF set for major re-structure as Richard Marles plans dump top defence chiefs due to mounting budget constraints](#). This article stated 'the growing rift between the Defence Minister and ADF' is partly due to the Government not receiving 'formal military readiness reports from the Department of Defence for more than two years according to a report from the Auditor General'.
- On 01 July 2025, the Australian Financial Review published an article by Andrew Tillett titled [Anthony Albanese needs to fix defence dysfunction before spending increase](#), which further criticised the lapse in official preparedness reporting to government amidst pressure from 'Donald Trump and China hawks to increase defence spending'.

## Prepared By:

Name: Air Vice-Marshal John Haly  
 Position: Head Military Strategic Plans  
 Division: Military Strategic Plans  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

## Cleared By:

Name: Air Marshal Robert Chipman  
 Position: Vice Chief of the Defence Force  
 Group: Vice Chief of the Defence Force  
 Phone: s47E(d)

- On 30 June 2025, the Australian Financial Review published an article by Andrew Tillett titled [Defence minister left in the dark over formal reporting](#), which stated 'Military chiefs failed for almost two and a half years to provide formal updates to Defence Minister... on the readiness of the army, air force and navy to be deployed on missions, an audit report revealed, sparking accusations of a bureaucratic culture intent on hiding bad news.'
- On June 27 2025, the Australian Financial Review published an article by Andrew Tillett titled [Alarm sounded over navy ships riddled with defects](#), which reported on the auditor-general's report which 'slammed the Defence Department's handling of maintenance for the navy's landing helicopter docks, finding no evidence it had delivered value for money for taxpayers, contracts had not been managed effectively and probity issues were dealt with inadequately'.

<b>Division:</b> Military Strategic Plans	
<b>PDR No:</b> S825-000519	
<b>Prepared by:</b> Brigadier Michael Scott Director General Defence Preparedness Defence Preparedness Branch Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 29 October 2025	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Air Vice-Marshal John Haly Head Military Strategic Plans Military Strategic Plans Division Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 26 November 2025
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Air Marshal Robert Chipman, AO, CSC Vice Chief of the Defence Force Vice Chief of the Defence Force Group Date: 18 August 2025	

**Prepared By:**

Name: Air Vice-Marshal John Haly  
 Position: Head Military Strategic Plans  
 Division: Military Strategic Plans  
 Phone: s47E(d) & s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Air Marshal Robert Chipman  
 Position: Vice Chief of the Defence Force  
 Group: Vice Chief of the Defence Force  
 Phone: s47E(d)

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES – DELIVERING THE FUTURE ESTATE

**Lead:** Celia Perkins, Deputy Secretary Security and Estate Group.

**Supporting:** Peter West, First Assistant Secretary Estate Transformation, to support on the Defence Estate Audit.

Pat Sowry, First Assistant Secretary Infrastructure, to support on Estate planning.

**Context:** The Defence estate must enable an integrated, focussed and lethal ADF to address the nation's most significant strategic risks. The Defence estate needs to be logistically networked and resilient to support force posture and the ADF's ability to operate from Australia's northern bases.

### Key Messages

- The 2024 National Defence Strategy set clear priorities to contend with the challenging strategic environment, with a Strategy of Denial now the cornerstone of Defence planning.
- In response to the recommendations of the 2023 Defence Strategic Review, the Government agreed that an enterprise-wide, independent audit be undertaken to assess whether the Defence estate meets contemporary operational and capability requirements, now and in the future.
- The report was delivered to Government in December 2023.
- The Government directed Defence to undertake further analysis to understand the impacts of the audit's findings and recommendations, particularly with respect to ADF personnel and capability.
- The Deputy Prime Minister released the outcomes of the Audit, and the Government's response, on 4 February 2026.

### Talking Points

#### 2024 National Defence Strategy

- Australia's strategic environment demands a fundamentally new approach to the defence of Australia and its interests.
- The Defence estate must be enhanced and prioritised to enable the delivery of critical capabilities in line with the 2024 Integrated Investment Program.
- Delivering the Future Estate will allow Defence to focus its force posture efforts and resourcing on bases most appropriate to Australia's strategic circumstances.
- The Defence Estate will be continually reviewed to ensure alignment with Defence priorities.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Director Estate Strategy & Engagement  
 Division: Estate Transformation  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Celia Perkins  
 Position: Deputy Secretary Security and Estate  
 Group: Security and Estate  
 Phone: s47E(d) s22

**Defence Estate Audit**

- The independent Defence Estate Audit report was delivered to Government in December 2023.
- Led by independent co-leads, Jan Mason and Jim Miller, the Defence Estate Audit report made a number of recommendations to ensure Defence's estate is best structured to support the force posture, force generation and resourcing in response to Australia's strategic circumstances.
- The Government released the Report on 4 February 2026 after considering the full range of impacts of the proposed findings and recommendations, including any impacts to Defence capability, Defence personnel and their families, and the local community.
- A total of 68 sites were identified for divestment by the Audit. The Government has agreed to, wholly or partially, divest 67 sites.
- The independent co-leads visited more than 70 Defence sites across Australia to identify common themes, trends and issues.
- Site visits were supplemented with stakeholder engagement sessions with more than 50 Defence senior leaders.
- Internal roundtables and discussions were held with industry partners and external assurance providers as well as representatives from Commonwealth, state and territory governments and peak industry bodies.
- The Audit is a very impressive piece of work and we thank Jan Mason and Jim Miller for their thoughtful contributions.
- Their work makes clear that many Defence properties are no longer needed, now or in the future, to defend Australia.
- These properties, including many vacant or uninhabitable pieces of land and buildings, are fast decaying, increasingly irrelevant and too expensive to maintain.
- Every site proposed for divestment was rigorously assessed against Defence's current and projected capability requirements in consultation with all Groups and Services.

**Defence Site Divestments**

- The Defence estate is large, ageing and unsustainable.
- Defence needs to make hard decisions to reprioritise activities on the estate, particularly where effort and resources are being diverted from core activities.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Director Estate Strategy &amp; Engagement

Division: Estate Transformation

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Celia Perkins

Position: Deputy Secretary Security and Estate

Group: Security and Estate

Phone: s47E(d) s22

- The divestment of underutilised and ageing properties will enhance Defence's ability to deliver a more contemporary estate that better supports the health and wellbeing of personnel. Talent attraction and retention strategies rely on providing contemporary work environments that cater to the needs of the total Defence workforce.
- The sites identified by the Audit and confirmed by subsequent Defence capability analysis, are no longer aligned with current or future capability needs.
- Net proceeds from the divestment program will be reinvested in the Defence portfolio to meet National Defence Strategy priorities.
- Disposal timelines will vary by site due to commercial sensitivities, heritage, and environmental factors.
- Divestment proceeds will support costs associated with the divestments program including relocation of personnel and capability, and key national security priorities in the National Defence Strategy and Integrated Investment Programs.
- Defence will work with the Department of Finance to divest sites after personnel and capability have relocated.

#### Relocation of Defence Personnel

- Defence's most important capability is its people.
- In response to the Audit, the Government directed Defence to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts on personnel, capability and broader business/community groups.
- Defence has developed transition options to support the relocation of personnel and capability from divested sites to alternative locations.
- These options will undergo further consultation with on-site personnel to ensure they meet operational and individual needs.
- Relocations will be coordinated with unit commanders, and personnel will receive clear timelines and support throughout the process.
- Defence will maintain regular communication with impacted personnel and support will be offered to assist with the transition.
- Defence will also ensure effective communication with Defence contractors and industry partners.
- Defence Housing Australia and commercial providers will be used where necessary to ensure personnel and families have appropriate housing options.
- Consultation with APS employees will be undertaken in accordance with the Defence Enterprise Collective Agreement.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Director Estate Strategy &amp; Engagement

Division: Estate Transformation

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Celia Perkins

Position: Deputy Secretary Security and Estate

Group: Security and Estate

Phone: s47E(d) s22

## Community

- Local governments, veteran groups, cadet units, other communities groups, and organisations will be engaged as part of planning processes for future use of divested sites, this includes options for relocating services or maintaining access to sites where possible.
- Community access following the divestment of the site will depend on future land use determined by planning authorities.
- Defence will work with affected organisations and stakeholders to ensure the needs and voices of impacted personnel and communities are heard.

## Cadets

- In response to the Audit, the Government directed Defence to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts on personnel, including cadets, capability and broader business/community groups, and to formulate comprehensive transition plans
- This is to ensure that all Defence personnel, cadets, and capability will be transitioned to alternative sites
- Defence will engage with all affected cadets to sensitively manage through this process.
- Defence will ensure that there will be continued cadet opportunities for young people and their families in communities across Australia.

## History and Heritage

- Defence takes its Heritage stewardship responsibilities seriously.
- The divestment process will remain compliant with all relevant obligations including the Environmental Protection & Biodiversity Act.
- Sites with significant heritage obligations are expensive to maintain, and divestment reduces these costs while ensuring heritage values are preserved through proper processes.
- The Audit highlighted that some heritage assessments may be overstated, that sites with genuine heritage value are often not accessible to the public, and that current heritage obligations can outweigh the primary purpose of bases in supporting capability.
- Defence will work with local governments and other stakeholders to preserve historically significant areas and collections so the public can continue to engage with our military history.
- Where retention is not possible, Defence will work with heritage organisations to relocate collections or maintain public access.
- Museum collections with significant historical value will be preserved in consultation with relevant authorities.

### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Director Estate Strategy & Engagement  
Division: Estate Transformation  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

### Cleared By:

Name: Celia Perkins  
Position: Deputy Secretary Security and Estate  
Group: Security and Estate  
Phone: s47E(d) s22

## Housing

- Defence's priority in Delivering the Future Estate is to allow Defence to focus its force posture efforts and resourcing on bases most appropriate to Australia's strategic circumstances.
- Future land use, including housing, will be determined by state and local planning authorities.
- Defence's role is limited to providing accurate site information to support those planning processes.

## The role of the Department of Finance

- The Department of Finance will conduct the Divestment Program identified through the Audit, on behalf of the Department of Defence.
- Finance is responsible for facilitating due diligence, remediation activities, and heritage obligations amongst other divestment actions required.
- Defence will be responsible for transitioning capabilities and personnel, including any constructions required and the security uplift of Defence sites adjacent to properties being divested.

## The value of sites proposed for divestment

- The Audit estimated that approximately \$1.8 billion net proceeds could be realised through the sale of 68 properties at full market value (\$3 billion gross and \$1.2 billion of transition costs).
- The actual realised value of divested sites will depend upon a number of factors. The divestment process is being managed by the Department of Finance.

## Why are not all 68 sites being divested? Why are some only partial divestments?

- All 68 sites identified by the Audit underwent a Defence capability analysis to determine whether they aligned with current or future capability needs.
- Based on this analysis, the Government has agreed to the full or partial divestment of 67 sites, with one site Pittwater Annex in NSW to be retained in full.
- Pittwater Annex provides critical training for Navy water operations and diver training for HMAS Penguin which is unable to be replicated on other Defence sites.
- Partial divestments occur where a site delivers critical capability that must be retained, but includes surplus land Defence no longer requires to meet Australia's security needs now or in the future.
- These areas can be responsibly released without affecting Defence operations or future capability needs.

### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Director Estate Strategy & Engagement  
Division: Estate Transformation  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

### Cleared By:

Name: Celia Perkins  
Position: Deputy Secretary Security and Estate  
Group: Security and Estate  
Phone: s47E(d) s22

- Releasing excess Defence estate will enable new developments to occur, providing broader benefits to our people around their workplace experiences, as well as for communities, for example social and affordable housing.

#### Remuneration for Defence Estate Audit Independent Co-Leads

- On 28 August 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP and the then Assistant Minister for Defence, the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP, issued a joint media release confirming the appointment of the independent co-leads of the Defence Estate Audit, and provided a summary of its purpose.
- The independent co-leads were appointed on 1 August 2023, having been selected for their relevant skills and insights from managing large infrastructure and property portfolios
- Each independent co-lead was engaged via an outcome-based contract to deliver a final report to the Government by the end of 2023.
  - The total contract value for each co-lead was \$297,000 (GST inclusive), comprised of a fixed-fee component payable on completion of defined milestones, and a provision for reimbursable expenses. The contracts were published on AusTender on 14 September 2023.
  - Both independent co-lead's contracts were extended to 30 June 2024 for up to five additional days to support post report activities, with services provided on a pro-rata daily rate.

#### Estate Investment

- The 2024 Integrated Investment Program includes upgrades and development of Australia's northern network of bases, ports and barracks prioritised in line with the 2024 National Defence Strategy direction.
- The \$14–\$18 billion investment over the decade to 2033–34 will strengthen Australia's northern bases, and will include:
  - major maintenance to airfield pavements, lighting and drainage at Royal Australian Air Force Base Darwin and Mount Bunday Airfield, Northern Territory;
  - the redevelopment of Royal Australian Air Force Base Townsville, Queensland, including facilities enhancements, capacity improvements and upgrades to engineering services;
  - airfield works at Royal Australian Air Force Bases Curtin and Learmonth, Western Australia; and
  - sustainment, maintenance and enhancements to airfield pavements and supporting infrastructure at prioritised airfield sites.
- The 2024 Integrated Investment Program also includes investments of:

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Director Estate Strategy &amp; Engagement

Division: Estate Transformation

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Celia Perkins

Position: Deputy Secretary Security and Estate

Group: Security and Estate

Phone: s47E(d) s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: S825-000515

Last updated: 6 February 2026

Key witnesses: Celia Perkins, Peter West, Pat Sowry

- \$17–\$22 billion in enterprise infrastructure across key Defence facilities, including projects designed to enhance resilience across northern Australia as well as significant upgrades to recruitment and training institutions in southern Australia; and
- \$3.7–\$4.8 billion in improvements to develop and enhance fuel holdings and storage and distribution capabilities.

#### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
6 February 2026	The Deputy Prime Minister visited and held a <a href="#">press conference</a> at Victoria Barracks, Sydney.
4 February 2026	The Deputy Prime Minister held a radio interview with <a href="#">ABC Melbourne</a> .
4 February 2026	The Deputy Prime Minister released the Defence Estate Audit at a <a href="#">press conference</a> in Canberra. This was alongside the Assistant Minister for Defence, Minister for Finance, and the independent co-leads, Jan Mason and Jim Miller.
17 December 2025	The City of Sydney, New South Wales following public consultation, released its <a href="#">Guiding Principles for Victoria Barracks</a> .
1 December 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP at a press conference announced the Government would establish a <a href="#">Defence Delivery Agency</a> . At this press conference, when asked about the timing of releasing the Defence Estate Audit, the Deputy Prime Minister advised it would be release in the coming months.

#### Prepared By:

Name: **s47E(d)**  
 Position: Director Estate Strategy & Engagement  
 Division: Estate Transformation  
 Phone: **s47E(d)** / **s22**

#### Cleared By:

Name: Celia Perkins  
 Position: Deputy Secretary Security and Estate  
 Group: Security and Estate  
 Phone: **s47E(d)** **s22**

## Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
9 October 2025	QoN	No. 863, Defence Estate Audit. Senator Sharma (Liberal, NSW), questioned the Department's processes for disposing, selling or repurposing Defence surplus or unused landholdings.	Tabled.
9 October 2025	QoN	No. 819, Defence Estate Audit. Senator Shoebridge (Independent, NSW), questioned if a copy of the Defence Estate Audit would be provided to the committee.	Tabled.
5 March 2025	QoN	No. 65, Defence Estate Audit. Senator Sharma (Liberal, NSW), questioned when the Defence Estate Audit will be released.	Tabled.

## Relevant Media Reporting

- On 6 February 2026, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute published an article by Jennifer Parker titled ["Defence land policy should reflect mobilisation and reserves planning"](#).
- On 6 February 2026, The Mercury published an article by David Killick titled ["RSL takes aim at plan to close defence sites"](#).
- On 5 February 2026, the NT News published an article by David Killick titled ["RSL slams 'catastrophic' plan to close 15 Tasmanian defence sites"](#).
- On 5 February 2026, the Herald Sun published an article by Alesha Capone and Nathan Mawby titled ["VIC Defence sell-off"](#).
- On 4 February 2026, The Nightly published an article by Andrew Greene and Caitlyn Rintoul titled ["Defence fire sale: Mass sell-off as Albanese Government scrambles for military cash"](#).
- On 4 February 2026, syndicated reported published articles on the [Government divesting Defence sites after release of the Defence Estate Audit](#).
- On 4 February 2026, syndicated reported published articles on ["Defence ready to sell off historic Victoria Barracks"](#).
- On 28 January, ABC NEWS published an article by Olivia Caisley titled ["Albanese government turns defence sights north, completing \\$355m upgrade to RAAF Base Tindal"](#).
- On 3 December 2025, The Australian Financial Review published an article by Michael Read titled ["Prime Defence real estate would sell to developers for billions"](#).

## Prepared By:

Name: **s47E(d)**  
 Position: Director Estate Strategy & Engagement  
 Division: Estate Transformation  
 Phone: **s47E(d)** / **s22**

## Cleared By:

Name: Celia Perkins  
 Position: Deputy Secretary Security and Estate  
 Group: Security and Estate  
 Phone: **s47E(d)** **s22**

- On 21 November 2025, The Australian Financial Review published an article by Michael Read titled [‘Mosman residents warn Defence against \\$675m property sale’](#).
- On 14 November 2025, The Daily Telegraph published an article titled [‘High Hopes near VIC Barracks’](#).
- On 7 November 2025, The Sydney Morning Herald published an article by Matthew Knott titled [‘City of Sydney pushes ahead with grand plan to develop Victoria Barracks’](#).
- On 12 September 2025, the ASPI Strategist published an article by Raelene Lockhorst titled, [‘Promises, proceeds and posture: why the Defence estate audit matters’](#).
- On 24 July 2025, The Canberra Times published an article by Eleanor Campbell titled [‘Foreign fighters outside AUKUS to be eligible for Defence housing’](#).
- On 13 May 2025, The Daily Telegraph published an article by Natalie Vikhrov titled [‘Moving date confirmed for Adelaide Hills’ 16<sup>th</sup> Regiment but mystery surrounds the future of Woodside Barracks’](#).
- On 7 May 2025, Southbank News published an article by Sean Car titled [‘Veterans’ arts group slams government over inaction at 310 St Kilda Rd’](#).
- On 1 May 2025, the Australian Defence Magazine published an article written by ADM staff, describing the role of Security and Estate Group within Defence in managing the Defence estate, and the Defence Estate Audit arising from the Defence Strategic Review recommendation.
- On 22 April 2025, The Daily Telegraph published an article by Ian Royall titled [‘A veterans charity wants to put an empty government building to good use. Their idea just got denied’](#).

**Division:** Estate Transformation

**PDR No:** SB25-000515

**Prepared by:**

s47E(d)

Director

Estate Strategy and Engagement

Security and Estate Group

Mob: s22

Ph: s47E(d)

Date: 6 February 2026

**Cleared by Division Head:**

Peter West

First Assistant Secretary

Estate Transformation Division

Security and Estate Group

Mob: s22

Ph: s47E(d)

Date: 6 February 2026

**Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:**

Celia Perkins

Deputy Secretary

Security and Estate Group

Date: 6 January 2026

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)

Position: Director Estate Strategy & Engagement

Division: Estate Transformation

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Celia Perkins

Position: Deputy Secretary Security and Estate

Group: Security and Estate

Phone: s47E(d) s22

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - PFAS INVESTIGATION AND MANAGEMENT

**Lead:** Celia Perkins, Deputy Secretary Security and Estate

**Supporting:** Pat Sowry, First Assistant Secretary Infrastructure

**Context:** Defence's PFAS Investigation and Management Program is focused on monitoring, managing and remediating PFAS contamination on and around Defence bases due to the historic use of legacy fire-fighting foams. PFAS contamination is a significant issue for impacted communities, who are concerned about health and impacts to their property values.

### Key Messages

- On 12 September 2025, the Assistant Minister for Defence announced the PFAS National Coordinating Body to strengthen coordination across and between all levels of Government. The first meeting was held on 10 November 2025.
- On 24 October 2025, the Assistant Minister for Defence announced QLD and the NT have joined NSW as members of the PFAS National Coordinating Body.
- The Assistant Minister for Defence has oversight of the PFAS National Coordinating Body, which will pilot initiatives in NSW through a Williamstown Working Group.
- The Williamstown Working Group will take practical actions to address PFAS at a local level. An expression of interest for community members to join the Williamstown Working Group closed on 3 October 2025. The first meeting of the Williamstown Working Group was held on 20 November 2025.
- On 19 November 2025, the Select Committee on PFAS released its final report into the extent, regulation and management of PFAS, with recommendations focusing strongly on health concerns, regulation of PFAS, and impacts on First Nations communities.
- Defence works closely with stakeholders, particularly state, territory and local governments, in responding to PFAS contamination.
- Currently available technologies do not completely stop the movement of PFAS from a base. Remediating low-levels of contamination across large areas is not feasible.

### Talking Points

- Defence's PFAS Investigation and Management Program manages risks associated with PFAS contamination on and around Defence properties resulting from the historic use of legacy firefighting foams. From 2004, Defence transitioned away from these legacy firefighting foams.
- Defence has completed investigations at 28 priority sites across the estate. These investigations assessed the nature and extent of PFAS contamination, and any associated human health and/or ecological risks.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: A/g Assistant Secretary, PFAS Investigation and Management Branch  
 Division: Infrastructure  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Pat Sowry  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary Infrastructure  
 Group: Security and Estate  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

- All sites have specific plans in place that recommend remediation and/or other actions to manage and reduce the risks, including the continued movement of PFAS from the Defence estate. Remedial works are underway, planned or complete at many sites.
- Defence continues to monitor PFAS at affected locations to track changes to where PFAS are found and at what concentrations.
- Defence provides access to information about its response to PFAS in plain English factsheets, presentations, monitoring reports and various technical reports via Defence's website and through the pfas.gov.au website.
- Since 2015, Defence has held 187 community engagement events for PFAS-affected communities. Defence will continue to keep communities informed with town hall events or through tailored engagements with specific stakeholders.

### PFAS National Coordinating Body and Williamstown Working Group

- The PFAS National Coordinating Body has been established, and the first meeting held on 10 November 2025. Members include representatives from key Commonwealth portfolios, together with NSW, QLD and NT officials, to promote a stronger and more integrated government response to PFAS.
- The Assistant Minister for Defence has direct oversight of the PFAS National Coordinating Body, together with;
  - the NSW Minister for the Environment, the Hon Penny Sharpe;
  - the NT Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment, the Hon Joshua Burgoyne; and
  - the QLD Minister for Environment, the Hon Andrew Powell.
- The PFAS National Coordinating Body will commence with pilot initiatives in NSW through the Williamstown Working Group, including to drive progress on local PFAS-related issues such as improvements to drainage near RAAF Base Williamstown, NSW.
- Members of the Williamstown Working Group include representatives from;
  - NSW Environment Protection Authority;
  - NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme);
  - Port Stephens Council;
  - Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council;
  - local community; and
  - Defence.
- A Williamstown Working Group technical sub-working group undertook a walk-over of the Williamstown drainage system on 11 December 2025 with community members.
- The second meeting of the Williamstown Working Group was held 29 January 2026.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: A/g Assistant Secretary, PFAS  
Investigation and Management Branch  
Division: Infrastructure  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Pat Sowry  
Position: First Assistant Secretary Infrastructure  
Group: Security and Estate  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

- Defence has published the outcomes of the inaugural Williamstown Working Group meeting online. Opportunities will be available for the broader community to offer input to the Working Group.
- The terms of reference for the National Coordinating Body and the Williamstown Working Group were agreed by members at the respective inaugural meetings.
- The National Coordinating Body will agree strategic priorities to action the Government response to the PFAS Independent Review. The next meeting is 20 February 2026.
- The Williamstown Working Group agreed the annual Williamstown Work Plan, which outlines the Working Group's priorities for the year.

### Select Committee on PFAS: Inquiry into the extent, regulation and management of PFAS

- The Senate Select Committee on PFAS released the Inquiry Report and recommendations on 19 November 2025.
- The report has 47 recommendations, four of which specifically reference Defence:
  - Recommendation 8 that work health and safety regulations extend to private companies working on PFAS remediation, such as for Defence;
  - Recommendation 20 that Australian Government agencies, including Defence, work with First Nations communities to update PFAS management plans;
  - Recommendation 23, that Defence reach out to local health services to co-design material for Aboriginal communities impacted by PFAS contamination at the Katherine River; and
  - Recommendation 26 that Australian Government agencies, including Defence, identify additional airport sites impacted by PFAS, not yet addressed by existing PFAS management programs.
- Two other recommendations call for actions for the PFAS National Coordinating Body including establishing community based working groups and collaborative actions with the Heads of Environmental Protection Authorities to conduct an audit and develop plans, frameworks and national standards on PFAS remediation.
- Government will consider the recommendations and provide a response in due course.

### Select Committees on PFAS: New South Wales Legislative Council Inquiry

- On 11 September 2025, the NSW Government Select Committee on PFAS Contamination in Waterways and Drinking Water Supplies throughout NSW released its report and recommendations.
- The Select Committee made 32 recommendations, several of which relate to Defence's PFAS management response in NSW, particularly in Williamstown.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: A/g Assistant Secretary, PFAS  
Investigation and Management Branch  
Division: Infrastructure  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Pat Sowry  
Position: First Assistant Secretary Infrastructure  
Group: Security and Estate  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

- On 10 December 2025, the NSW Government published its response to the NSW Government Select Committee report. The NSW Government supported 11 recommendations in full, 11 in principle and one in part. The NSW Government did not support three of the recommendations and a further six were noted.
- The NSW Government noted two recommendations, relating to Defence, on the basis that responsibility falls outside their jurisdiction or because the recommendation is already being actioned through other mechanisms, such as the Australian Government's response to the Independent Review.

### National Health and Medical Research Council Updated Australian Drinking Water Guidelines

- On 25 June 2025, the National Health and Medical Research Council released updated PFAS drinking water guidelines. The guidelines include significantly reduced values for the previously regulated PFAS compounds PFOS, PFOA and PFHxS, and introduce a new guideline value for the previously unregulated compound PFBS.
- Defence is reviewing PFAS impacted properties on the Defence estate to assess whether the current measures remain adequate, and to determine if further management and remediation is required.

### 3M (PFAS Manufacturer) settlement

- Options in relation to potential action against the manufacturers and suppliers responsible for manufacturing, importing and/or selling aqueous film forming foam containing PFAS are being considered.

### RAAF Base Pearce - Bullsbrook Scheme Water Infrastructure

- A number of private groundwater bores are impacted by PFAS from RAAF Base Pearce, in the Bullsbrook area. Defence currently provides bottled water to 66 properties.
- Providing long-term safe drinking water for the Bullsbrook community is a key priority for Defence.
- On 6 September 2024, Defence awarded a contract, valued at \$22 million to Perth-based Civcon Civil and Project Management to connect up to 205 properties in West and South Bullsbrook to the Water Corporation potable water mains.
- The West Bullsbrook and the South Bullsbrook pipeline are now complete and commissioned for operation.
- The WA Water Corporation requires a device be installed at each connected property to mitigate potential for backflow of water into the scheme water pipeline. Defence will cover the annual test costs for backflow devices which will align with the remaining tenure of current water assistance provisions.
- As of 5 January 2026, 181 properties have signed up to scheme water connections. Defence has committed to paying the water bills, supply charges, and associated maintenance costs for a period of eight years for these properties.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: A/g Assistant Secretary, PFAS  
Investigation and Management Branch  
Division: Infrastructure  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Pat Sowry  
Position: First Assistant Secretary Infrastructure  
Group: Security and Estate  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

- Defence will flush and test properties after connection to ensure the drinking water meets the Australian Drinking Water guidelines. Defence will take any necessary actions to meet the guidelines and will continue to provide alternative drinking water until the testing process is complete.
- On 24 May 2025, Defence held a community drop-in session to keep the Bullsbrook community informed of progress. Defence has held 15 community engagement sessions for communities surrounding RAAF Base Pearce.

### Jervis Bay Range Facility/HMAS *Creswell* Management Actions

- Defence plans to commence construction of a new water treatment plant at Jervis Bay Range Facility by mid-2026.
- As of August 2025, two temporary water treatment plants at the facility have treated over 37.7 million litres of water.
- One of the temporary water treatment plants was decommissioned in July 2025. The remaining plant on site now treats the additional water. This plant will operate until the larger water treatment plant is complete.
- In December 2025, Defence completed major remediation works at the Jervis Bay Range Facility and the headwaters of Mary Creek. The works involved excavation and disposal of PFAS contaminated soil, capturing contaminated surface water and groundwater, and diverting clean surface water to reduce flow over impacted soils.
- Over time, Defence's PFAS management activities on and around Defence sites at Jervis Bay will reduce the amount of PFAS migrating off-base.
- Residents in the Jervis Bay Territory can use mains water for all purposes, including drinking, washing and food preparation. There are no PFAS impacts to mains water.

### Working with the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community at Jervis Bay

- On 2 October 2025, Defence representatives participated in the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council NAIDOC Week event, hosting an information stall focused on PFAS remediation activities at Jervis Bay Range Facility.
- In September 2025, Defence supported Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council representatives to replace missing or damaged precautionary health advice signage at key locations around Wreck Bay. Defence is also working with the community to design new precautionary health advice signage with improved messaging. The community will be presented with options before the design is finalised.
- Defence attended a board meeting of the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council on 30 July 2025 to provide an update on remediation and monitoring at Jervis Bay Range Facility and HMAS *Creswell*.
- On 7 May 2025, Defence representatives met with nine Booderee National Park Rangers to provide training and equipment to facilitate independent community-led sampling for PFAS at off-base locations in areas of community interest.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: A/g Assistant Secretary, PFAS Investigation and Management Branch  
Division: Infrastructure  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Pat Sowry  
Position: First Assistant Secretary Infrastructure  
Group: Security and Estate  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

- Defence conducts monthly walkovers of the Mary Creek remediation work areas with representatives of the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council. These walkovers provide updates on remediation works, and an opportunity for community to ask questions about the works.
- Defence has held 11 stakeholder engagements with the Wreck Bay community. Defence will continue to engage regularly with the community on remediation and monitoring activities.

#### New detections at Swartz Barracks, Oakey in 2025

- Defence is investigating PFAS detections west of Swartz Barracks. Monitoring results show detections of PFAS in groundwater further west than previously detected.
- Defence has informed the Department of Environment, Tourism, Innovation and Science, and the Department of Primary Industries and Health, of the new detections and will work with agencies on next steps.
- Defence is undertaking further groundwater sampling and investigations to better understand PFAS movement.
- Defence held drop-in sessions for stakeholders on 12 and 13 September 2025 in Jondaryan (west of Oakey), with 22 residents attending across both days.
- Following the engagement, Defence sampled 21 private properties. Defence is currently engaging with property owners about their results and providing support.
- Since 2014, Defence has routinely monitored PFAS in groundwater on and around Swartz Barracks. Previous monitoring found PFAS concentrations above Australian Drinking Water Guidelines at numerous off-site locations primarily to the south and south-west of Swartz Barracks. Monitoring did not previously indicate PFAS migration to the west.

#### Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
17 November 2025	The Assistant Minister for Defence issued a <a href="#">media release</a> announcing the Williamtown Working Group membership.
24 October 2025	The Assistant Minister for Defence issued a <a href="#">media release</a> announcing Queensland and NT would join NSW as members of the PFAS National Coordinating Body.
3 October 2025	Williamtown Working Group community membership expression of interest closed.
12 September 2025	The Assistant Minister for Defence, issued a <a href="#">media release</a> announcing the establishment of the PFAS National Coordinating Body, the Williamtown Working Group and the expression of interest.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: A/g Assistant Secretary, PFAS Investigation and Management Branch  
 Division: Infrastructure  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Pat Sowry  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary Infrastructure Group: Security and Estate  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

25 August 2025	The Assistant Minister for Defence, wrote to the Hon. Lia Finocchiaro MP, NT Chief Minister, and to the Hon Andrew Powell MP, Queensland Minister for Environment and Tourism, to provide an update on the National Coordinating Body and invite them to nominate representatives.
5 December 2024	In a <a href="#">joint media release</a> , Ms Meryl Swanson MP, and the Minister for Defence Personnel and Veterans' Affairs, the Hon Matt Keogh MP, released the independent review of land uses around key Defence sites impacted by PFAS and the Government's response.

## Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
5 September 2025	IQ	No. 24 Senate Select Committee on PFAS requested a breakdown on legal costs, details about litigation against PFAS manufacturers and an update on management actions at Wreck Bay.	Tabled
5 September 2025	IQ	No. 23. Senate Select Committee on PFAS requested Defence's total spend on PFAS management and health.	Tabled
5 September 2025	IQ	No 18. Senate Select Committee on PFAS Chair requested a breakdown of settlement values for class actions, litigations and non-litigated claims.	Tabled
27 June 2025	IQ	No. 67. Senate Select Committee on PFAS Chair requested an update on the status and actions undertaken by the National Coordinating Body and Williamtown Working Group.	Tabled
25 June 2025	IQ	No. 68. Senate Select Committee on PFAS Chair requested a summary of Program expenditure, project completions and further information about the foams transition.	Tabled
22 January 2025	IQ	No 29. Senate Select Committee on PFAS Chair asked about management of PFAS at Jervis Bay, support for the Wreck Bay community, foams transition and Defence's historic knowledge of PFAS.	Tabled
22 January 2025	IQ	No 27. The Senate Select Committee follow up after Defence's testimony at the Nowra hearing.	Tabled

## Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)

Position: A/g Assistant Secretary, PFAS Investigation and Management Branch

Division: Infrastructure

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

## Cleared By:

Name: Pat Sowry

Position: First Assistant Secretary Infrastructure Group: Security and Estate

Phone: s47E(d) / s22

## Relevant Media Reporting

- On 13 December 2025, the Newcastle Herald published an article [Residents losing faith in long PFAS fight](#).
- On 25 November 2025, the ABC published an article [Victorian government blocked fire service from pursuing US giant over PFAS contamination](#).
- On 21 November 2025, the Blue Mountains Gazette published an article [Dissent over tough line against cancer linked chemicals](#).
- On 21 November 2025, the ABC published an article [Inquiry demands immediate supply of clean drinking water for Aboriginal community contaminated by PFAS](#).
- On 20 November, the ABC published an article [Senate inquiry urges government to ban use of PFAS in firefighting foams](#).
- On 19 November, the ABC published an article [PFAS inquiry hands down 47 recommendations to better regulate 'forever chemicals' in Australia](#).
- On 17 November, the Newcastle Herald publish an article [New PFAS working group members seek 'meaningful outcomes' on behalf of community](#).
- On 29 October 2025, the Sydney Morning Herald published an editorial article [Stonewalling bureaucracies cannot turn customary blind eye to new PFAS research](#).
- On 29 October 2025, the NT News published an article [The Northern Territory join the PFAS National Coordinating Body](#).
- On 23 October 2025, Seven News Wagga Wagga, ran a segment on [Defence's community information sessions](#) for RAAF Base Wagga and Blamey Barracks.
- On 17 September 2025, *Blue Mountains Gazette* published an article [Call for PFAS testing](#).
- On 16 September 2025, [ABC Newcastle interviewed Celia Perkins](#), Deputy Secretary, Security and Estate.
- On 11 September 2025, ABC published an article [Report finds Sydney Water was too quick to claim no PFAS hotpots in drinking water catchments](#).
- On 8 August 2025, Channel Seven program Sunrise ran a segment titled [Bullsbrook Water Fight](#).
- On 5 May 2025, *National Indigenous Times* published an article ['No excuse for Labor' - Lidia Thorpe says it's time for action and justice](#).
- On 8 April 2025, *The Daily Advertiser* published an article [No communication: Wagga inquiry hears 'forever chemicals' concerns linger](#).

Division:	Infrastructure
PDR No:	SB25-000516
Prepared by: §47E(d)	Cleared by Division Head: Pat Sowry

Prepared By:  
Name: §47E(d)  
Position: A/g Assistant Secretary, PFAS Investigation and Management Branch  
Division: Infrastructure  
Phone: §47E(d) / §22

Cleared By:  
Name: Pat Sowry  
Position: First Assistant Secretary Infrastructure  
Group: Security and Estate  
Phone: §47E(d) / §22

Acting Assistant Secretary PFAS Investigation and Management Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 5 January 2026	First Assistant Secretary Infrastructure Security and Estate Group Mob: s22 Ph: s47E(d) Date: 5 January 2026
<b>Cleared by CFO :</b> Jennifer Makunde Assistant Secretary Finance Enabling Group	Date: 5 August 2025
<b>Cleared by Defence Legal</b> Michael Lysewycz Defence General Counsel Dispute Resolution & Litigation	Date: 17 December 2025
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Celia Perkins Deputy Secretary Security and Estate Group	Date: 6 January 2026

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: A/g Assistant Secretary, PFAS  
 Investigation and Management Branch  
 Division: Infrastructure  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Pat Sowry  
 Position: First Assistant Secretary Infrastructure  
 Group: Security and Estate  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

## PARLIAMENTARY: 2025-26 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - BASE SECURITY AND RESILIENCE

**Lead:** Celia Perkins, Deputy Secretary Security and Estate.

**Supporting:** Lieutenant General Simon Stuart AO DSC, Chief of Army, to support on Legislation and technology for countering Unmanned Aerial Systems.

Major General Jason Walk AM, Head National Support, to support on Supply Chain Security.

Peter West, First Assistant Secretary Estate Transformation, to support on Espionage and Foreign Interference, dual citizenship declaration, SAFEBASE System, and Defence Security Principles Framework.

Lee-anne Monterosso, First Assistant Secretary Service Delivery, to support on Security Limitations.

**Context:** Base security issues have been the subject of ongoing media interest, particularly the threat from drones and threats to AUKUS related bases, especially HMAS *Stirling* in Western Australia.

### Key Messages

- Defence works closely with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority and the Australian Federal Police to counter Unmanned Aerial Systems at Defence bases in compliance with Australian law.
- Defence is also exploring capability options to conduct counter Uncrewed Aerial Systems activities to protect bases and assets from the drone threats.
- Defence engages closely with law enforcement and intelligence agencies in deterring, identifying, mitigating and responding to Espionage and Foreign Interference threats.
- Defence works closely with the Department of Home Affairs in their role as the whole of government policy lead on the security of foreign manufactured connected vehicles, and with national security agencies to assess and manage risks associated with connected vehicles.
- Defence is engaging with internal and external stakeholders, and other government agencies to develop and implement consistent and mutually reinforcing supply chain security measures across Australia and with international partners.
- Defence has established policy and procedures to review and manage base security through 'SAFEBASE', and can adjust base security levels nationally or locally in response to any credible threat.

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
 Position: Executive Officer to Peter West  
 Division: Defence Security  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Celia Perkins  
 Position: Deputy Secretary Security and Estate  
 Group: Security and Estate  
 Phone: s47E(d) / s22

## Talking Points

### Countering Unmanned Aerial Systems

- Defence works closely with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, the Australian Federal Police and some State and Territory law enforcement agencies to counter Unmanned Aerial Systems at domestic Defence bases, in compliance with Australian law.
- The Governor-General of Australia signed into law the *Defence Amendment (Counter UXS Measures) Regulations 2025*, which came into effect on 13 December 2025.
- Defence has implemented drone detection systems.
- Defence is also introducing capability to respond to the drone threat through Project LAND 156 Counter Small Unmanned Aerial Systems.
  - Project LAND 156 is delivering counter-drone sensors and effectors to protect Defence facilities, people and capabilities from drone threats.
  - Project LAND 156 has also established an industry panel of counter-drone providers that will enable Defence and other Government agencies to procure counter-drone services for domestic security.
  - Defence Security is working closely with LAND 156 to ensure that all LAND 156 providers comply with Defence Security requirements, including being members of the Defence Industry Security Program (DISP) and not using any DJI drone technology.

### Espionage and Foreign Interference

- Hostile foreign intelligence activity is occurring at an unprecedented scale in Australia, and Defence is aware that its information, people, assets and capabilities are all targets for foreign intelligence services and their proxies.
- Defence takes these threats seriously, and has layered security policies and procedures to protect our people, information and capabilities.
- Defence engage closely with law enforcement and intelligence agencies in deterring, identifying, mitigating and responding to espionage and foreign interference threats.
- Defence continues to support the prosecution of former ADF member Kira Korolev.
  - In response to the serious allegations made against Ms Korolev, Defence suspended the member from service, which included the immediate suspension of accesses to Defence bases and information and communication technology systems, and commenced separation processes.
  - Ms Korolev was separated from Defence on 8 October 2024.
- As highlighted by the Director-General of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Mike Burgess AM, at the time of the arrest, Government security processes worked well in identifying and managing risks while investigations and law enforcement activities were ongoing.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Executive Officer to Peter West  
Division: Defence Security  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Celia Perkins  
Position: Deputy Secretary Security and Estate  
Group: Security and Estate  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000554

Last updated: 5 January 2026

Key witnesses: Celia Perkins, Peter West, Lieutenant General Simon Stuart, Major General Jason Walk, Lee-anne Monterosso

- This case highlights that hostile foreign intelligence activity is currently occurring in Australia.
- Defence is unable to provide further information on an active investigation.

### Dual Citizenship Declaration

- Dual nationals are first, and foremost, Australian citizens. Defence does not discriminate against dual nationals.
- All Defence employees are vetted to ensure their allegiance to Australia as part of the security clearance process.
- Recent changes to the Government Protective Security Policy Framework have strengthened vetting and waiver standards, to ensure security settings are appropriate for the current threat environment.

### Supply Chain Security

- Defence is engaging with internal and external stakeholders, and other government agencies, to develop and implement consistent and mutually reinforcing supply chain security measures across Government and with international partners.
- Defence is finalising a supply chain security control that will be incorporated into the Defence Security Principles Framework.
- Given the diversity of Defence's global supply chain, Defence's approach to protecting supply chains will be policy led, intelligence informed and risk based.
- Defence is also working closely with the Department of Home Affairs on implementation of the broader Government Technology Vendor Review Framework, as announced by the Minister for Home Affairs, the Hon Tony Burke MP on 20 December 2024.
- Defence supply chain security will also continue to be reinforced by the Defence Industry Security Program.

### SAFEBASE system

- SAFEBASE is a security alert level system used to alert people to the threat of a violent act on Defence premises in Australia.
- Defence has well established policies and procedures in place to manage SAFEBASE, and reviews the national SAFEBASE level in response to threat level changes made by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation.
- The SAFEBASE system allows for tailored alert levels for specific bases and sites across the Defence estate, which can be enacted locally in response to any specific threat.

### Connected Vehicles

- Defence does not comment on individual security arrangements at bases. Defence proactively monitors movements around the Defence Estate to ensure the highest levels of safety and security are maintained. The Department of Home Affairs is the

#### Prepared By:

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Executive Officer to Peter West  
Division: Defence Security  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

#### Cleared By:

Name: Celia Perkins  
Position: Deputy Secretary Security and Estate  
Group: Security and Estate  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

- government policy lead on security of foreign manufactured connected devices including vehicles.
- Defence works closely with the Department of Home Affairs and national security agencies, through the Government Security Committee, to assess and manage risks from connected vehicles.
- Defence base security complies with Government Protective Security Policy Framework requirements, and includes a range of policies and operational practices controlling vehicular access to bases and sensitive areas on bases.

### Defence Security Principles Framework

- Defence applies government Protective Security Policy Framework requirements through the Defence Security Principles Framework.
- The Defence Security Principles Framework is Defence's source for protective security policy, and provides tailored security controls that take account of local needs and unique business requirements.
- Defence reporting is incorporated into the public Protective Security Policy Framework Annual Assessment Report, published by the Department of Home Affairs.

### Security Limitations and Base Hardening Planning

- Defence employs a range of protective security controls to ensure the safety and security of the Estate and assets. Including physical and electronic security, access controls, security governance such as threat and risk management, security training, the management of security incidents, and information security arrangements.
- Defence conducts regular reviews and updating of security policies, Security Risk Assessments and Base Security Plans across all sites.
- Defence Base Security and Incident Management procedures, responsibilities, and accountabilities are articulated through the Joint Framework for Base Accountabilities.
- The Joint Framework for Base Accountabilities provides direction on the management of base incidents to ensure the safety of Defence personnel and assets.
- These directions are aligned with the SAFEBASE, and regulatory and legislative provisions.
- Defence has an ongoing program of base security uplift to meet evolving threats. This program is driven by 2024 National Defence Strategy priorities and security risk assessments.
- For security reasons, Defence does not publicly comment on specific base security procedures or provisions.

**Prepared By:**

Name: s47E(d)  
Position: Executive Officer to Peter West  
Division: Defence Security  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Celia Perkins  
Position: Deputy Secretary Security and Estate  
Group: Security and Estate  
Phone: s47E(d) / s22

## Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
4 August 2025	A Chinese national living in the Australian Capital Territory was charged with an espionage offence by the Australian Federal Police, under the Counter Foreign Interference Taskforce.
31 July 2025	The Director-General of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Mike Burgess AM, delivered a speech at the 26th annual Hawke Lecture titled ' <a href="#">Counting and Countering the Cost of Espionage</a> '.
24 July 2025	The Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Pat Conroy MP <a href="#">announced the acceleration of counter-drone technology</a> .

## Key Information Requests

Date	Type	Title	Status
26 February 2025	QoN	No. 4, Removing someone from the ADF. Senator Shoebridge (Greens, New South Wales) asked about the threshold for removing someone from the ADF, following discovery of demonstrated loyalty a foreign nation.	Tabled.

## Relevant Media Reporting

- On 25 November 2025, the Australian Financial Review published an article by Michael Read titled '[Taiwan asks to join AUKUS, warns on China's coercive behaviour](#)'.
- On 18 November 2025, the Daily Telegraph UK published an article by Tom Cotterill titled '[MoD tells staff not to discuss secrets in cars amid China spying fears](#)'.
- On 6 November 2025, The Daily Telegraph published an article by Charles Chadwick titled '[Chinese EVs risk national security](#)'.
- On 27 October 2025, news.com.au published an article titled '[Chinese 'listening devices' parked beside Australia's biggest air base](#)' by Danielle Collis and James Chung
- On 17 September 2025, 7NEWS Spotlight on Channel 7 and 7plus aired a segment titled '[Australia's defence – Exposing critical gaps in Australia's national security](#)'.
- On 1 August 2025, The Australian published an article titled '[Spies hunting AUKUS secrets](#)' by Mr Geoff Chambers.
- On 26 July 2025, The Guardian published an article by Mr Josh Taylor titled '[Australian army officer stripped of security clearance over Israel loyalty leaves defence force](#)'.

## Prepared By:

Name: **s47E(d)**  
 Position: Executive Officer to Peter West  
 Division: Defence Security  
 Phone: **s47E(d)** / **s22**

## Cleared By:

Name: Celia Perkins  
 Position: Deputy Secretary Security and Estate  
 Group: Security and Estate  
 Phone: **s47E(d)** / **s22**

2025-26 Additional Estimates February 2026

PDR No: SB25-000554

Last updated: 5 January 2026

Key witnesses: Celia Perkins, Peter West, Lieutenant General Simon Stuart, Major General Jason Walk, Lee-anne Monterosso

- On 10 July 2025, the Sydney Morning Herald published an article titled '[Accused Russian-born spy allegedly worked for WA cleaning company](#)' by Ms Hannah Murphy.
- On 20 June 2025, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute published an article in its online magazine 'The Strategist' titled '[Legislation, not technology, is the biggest problem for ADF drone defence](#)'.
- On 16 May 2025, the Sydney Morning Herald published an article titled '[Accused Russian Spy's request from Queensland custody](#)' by Ms Cloe Read.

<b>Division:</b>	Defence Security	
<b>PDR No:</b>	SB25-000554	
<b>Prepared by:</b> §47E(d) Executive Officer to Peter West Defence Security Division Mob: §22 Ph: §47E(d) Date: 5 January 2026	<b>Cleared by Division Head:</b> Peter West First Assistant Secretary Defence Security Security and Estate Group Mob: §22 Ph: §47E(d) Date: 8 January 2026	
<b>Consultation:</b> Brigadier Colin Bassett Acting Head Land Capability, Army Date: 18 December 2025		
Major General Jason Walk Head National Support, Joint Capabilities Group Date: 18 December 2025		
<b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary/3 Star:</b> Celia Perkins Deputy Secretary Security and Estate Group Date: 8 January 2026		

**Prepared By:**

Name: §47E(d)  
Position: Executive Officer to Peter West  
Division: Defence Security  
Phone: §47E(d) / §22

**Cleared By:**

Name: Celia Perkins  
Position: Deputy Secretary Security and Estate  
Group: Security and Estate  
Phone: §47E(d) / §22