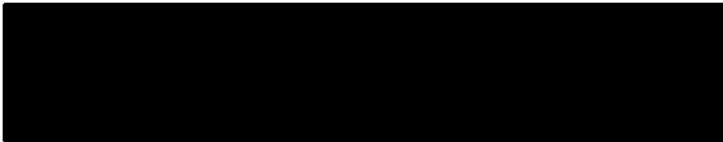




CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE



EC19-003826



Thank you for your interest in the Institute for Regional Security and my engagement with the audience at the 2019 National Security Management Symposium – Climate Change: Impacts on National Security. The documents pertaining to your Freedom of Information request for this event are enclosed.

While your request for information is clearly lawful, I am disappointed that an event that was widely advertised as being held under 'Chatham House Rules', has resulted in a Freedom of Information request from your office. Perhaps more importantly though, I am concerned that using the FOI Act in this way may ultimately limit an important vein of public discourse, and quietly undermine its contribution to our nation's good governance.

I would also ask you to note that I spoke extemporaneously at this event. This was in part because it is my preferred style of delivery and in part because it best suited the format of the event. While I drew on key facts and vignettes from the enclosed material, the documents are not a record of what I said at this symposium and I advise you that I would reject any suggestion that they are my words.

My point of contact on this matter is my Chief of Staff, Colonel Greg Novak, who can be contacted on 02 6265 2859 or by email at gregory.novak@defence.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Angus J Campbell, AO, DSC
General
Chief of the Defence Force

13 September 2019

R1-5-CDF Suite
PO Box 7900
CANBERRA BC ACT 2610

Enclosure:

1. FOI Document Pack



Australian Government
Department of Defence

Reference: Objective ID: BN9211924

FOI 009/19/20 STATEMENT OF REASONS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

1. I refer to your email of 21 August 2019, in which you sought an internal review under section 54 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) of the Accredited Decision Maker's decision dated 29 July 2019.

2. Your requested access to the following documents under the FOI Act:

"all documents relating to remarks to be given by the Chief of the Defence Force at the Institute for Regional Security 2019 National Management Symposium held from 12 to 14 June 2019 at Bowral in New South Wales.

My request includes but is not limited to: any speech or draft speech, speaking notes, talking points, aides-memoire, background notes, slides or other presentational materials and email communications.

This request excludes:

- a. the names of any non-Senior Executive Service officers*
- b. duplicate documents*
- c. private email addresses*
- d. signatures*
- e. personnel numbers and telephone numbers"*

Contentions

3. In your application, you requested an internal review of the original decision to deny access to documents under section 47C of the FOI Act. In summary, you stated:

I ask that the internal review be conducted by an officer who was not involved in or consulted about this decision and who is more senior than the original decision-maker, in accordance with paragraph 9.26 of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's FOI Guidelines ("the FOI Guidelines").

I further ask that, with respect to the original decision-maker's decision to deny access to documents within the scope of my request, the following submissions be given careful consideration.

The documents I seek relate to the text of a speech proposed to be delivered, rather than discussion, evaluation or reflection on approaches that could be adopted in the speech. I contend that the speech notes I seek do not amount to material prepared for a deliberative process.

4. The purpose of this statement of reasons is to provide you with a fresh decision relating to the document subject to the internal review.

Reviewing officer

5. I am authorised to make this internal review decision under arrangements approved by the Secretary of Defence under section 23 of the FOI Act.

Documents subject to internal review

6. Taking into account your contentions, specifically that you seek *“text of a speech proposed to be delivered, rather than discussion, evaluation or reflection on approaches that could be adopted in the speech”*, I have interpreted that you are seeking the final version of the notes prepared for the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) from which the CDF drew information. As such, Document 3, which is the final version and comprises 19 pages, is the subject of this internal review.

Internal review decision

7. The original decision maker denied access to the document on the basis that, while the document was prepared as a draft speech for the CDF, he did not speak verbatim to it, but instead spoke extemporaneously, drawing key facts and vignettes from the document. I agree with this characterisation of the document; however, after careful consideration, I have decided to vary the original decision by releasing this document intact.

8. Please see a copy of Document 3 in the form approved for release.

Material taken into account

9. In arriving at my decision, I had regard to:
- a. the scope of your request and subsequent internal review application;
 - b. the original decision;
 - c. the content of the documents subject to the internal review;
 - d. relevant provisions in the FOI Act; and
 - e. the *Guidelines published by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner under section 93A of the FOI Act.*

Yours sincerely,

Justine
.Nordin

Digitally signed
 by
 Justine.Nordin
 Date: 2019.09.18
 16:28:01 +10'00'

Mrs Justine Nordin
 Decision Maker – Internal Review

CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE
Regional Security National Management Symposium
Bowral, NSW

"Climate change and regional security"

Good evening.

Thank you for that kind introduction.

The impact of climate change on security is not only an interesting topic, but it is a topic gaining interest.

Two years ago, we had a Senate inquiry into the implications of climate change for Australia's national security.

But the issue really started to gain traction back in 2007.

That's when the United Nations Security Council held its first debate on the impact of climate change on security.

Back then, not everyone was convinced.

There was doubt if climate change was a security issue.¹

Doubt if the Security Council was the right forum to debate climate change.²

¹ China's representative believed, "The issue could have certain security implications, but, generally speaking, it was, in essence, an issue of sustainable development." [United Nations, Press Release: Security Council holds first-ever debate on impact of climate change on peace, security, hearing over 50 speakers, 17 April 2017](#)

² "China's representative was among those who argued that the Council was not the proper forum for a debate on climate change." [United Nations, Press Release: Security Council holds first-ever debate on impact of climate change on peace, security, hearing over 50 speakers, 17 April 2017](#)

But for one particular delegate, there was no doubt.

Robert Aisi, from Papua New Guinea, represented the Pacific Islands Forum.

He painted a worrying picture.

Pacific Island countries were already impacted by climate change.

He spoke about how, in 2004, Cyclone Heta had left 20 per cent of Niue's population homeless.

How the Cook Islands, once considered outside of the main cyclone belt, had experienced five cyclones in just one month.

How malaria and dengue fever were on the rise in Papua New Guinea.

How rising sea temperatures and winds were expected to push major tuna stocks westward, causing economic problems.

He said 'the impact of climate change on small islands was no less threatening than the dangers guns and bombs posed to large nations'.³

And he was right.

³ ROBERT G, AISI (Papua New Guinea) statement: [United Nations, Press Release: Security Council holds first-ever debate on impact of climate change on peace, security, hearing over 50 speakers, 17 April 2017](#)

More than a decade has since passed.

Today, there is no doubt that climate change *is* a threat to security.

Our national and regional security includes state and human security.

It is inherently linked to the security of health, water, energy, food and economic systems.

Climate change has the potential to impact all of these.

Consider the Syria Civil War.

Scientists now say Syria's severe drought, between 2006 and 2011, was most likely as a result of climate change.

During the drought massive crop failures occurred.

Livelihoods were lost.

1.5 million people moved from rural areas to the cities.

The drought added enormous pressure to existing stressors within the state.

As Robert Glasser from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute put it, 'although the drought was clearly not the

cause of the Syrian Civil War, it contributed to instability and to profound cascading impacts.’⁴

And that is the crux of the issue.

Climate change in itself will not cause conflict.

But its impact on human security and survival – on land and water, health and food – perhaps will.

In that sense, climate change is often referred to as the ‘ultimate threat multiplier’.

It is why our Pacific neighbours say climate change is ‘the single greatest threat’ to Pacific peoples.

It is also why, last year, Australia signed the Boe Declaration.

But to understand the threat of climate change on security, you have to first understand the threat of climate change on the world.

Let’s briefly go back to 1998.

The Great Barrier Reef suffered severe bleaching.

The worst on record.

Caused by rising sea temperatures.

⁴ [Robert Glasser, Special Report: Preparing for the Era of Disasters, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, March 2019, p.9](#)

It was yet another sign that the world was warming.

Our climate is changing.

Statistics told the same story.

Australian weather records started in 1910.

By the year 2000, Australia's average temperature had risen by 0.76 degrees Celsius.⁵

About a decade later, in 2009, it was warmer yet again.

Australia's average temperature for 2009 was 0.9 degrees above the 1961-90 average — making it the nation's second warmest year since record keeping began.⁶

Today, the world continues to warm. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change advises humans have caused the world to warm by about 1 degree Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels.⁷

Since 1998, there have been another five mass bleaching events on the Great Barrier Reef.⁸

And taken together, the past four years — 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 — were the warmest years on record.

⁵ Australia's State of the Environment Report 2001

⁶ Bureau of Meteorology Annual Climate Summary 2009

⁷ IPCC (2018) Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 degrees centigrade

⁸ There were bleaching events in 2001-2002, 2005-2006, 2008-2011, 2016 and 2017: [Australian Institute of Marine Science, Coral bleaching events.](#)

Greenhouse gas concentrations also continue to rise.

Now at the highest concentration in the last 800,000 years.

This is not without consequence.

Our oceans are warming.

Our seas continue to rise and acidify.

Arctic and Antarctic sea ice coverage continues to decline.

We have recently seen large heatwaves affect Europe, and major fires in Greece and California.

At home, North Queensland experienced unprecedented flooding.

And across the world, there have been record-breaking storms, forest fires and droughts.

I should note that it is almost impossible to attribute individual disasters to climate change alone, but it is fair to say that climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of such events.

But we face a different reality.

In about 10 years from now global warming above pre-industrial levels is set to rise by 50 per cent.

At 1.5 degrees of warming, we can expect more significant impacts.⁹

Particularly in regards to oceans, low-lying areas and human health.

The poor and most vulnerable will be hardest hit.

Livelihoods lost.

Food scarce.

Populations displaced.

Diseases spreading.

And this now looks like our best-case scenario.

The latest UN Special Report on Climate Change says, 'the world will require an unprecedented industrial and technological transformation to limit warming to *just* 1.5 degrees Celsius'.

Should it rise above that — to 2 degrees of warming— the impacts will be dramatic and dire.

Predictions indicate a doubling of species extinction.

Sea levels half a metre higher.

More and more summers with no ice in the Arctic.

⁹ IPCC Report 2018 states that the earth is likely to reach 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels from 2030

81 million people negatively affected by changes to crop yields.

More cyclones.

More floods.

More fires.

More droughts.

More heat waves.

This will, of course, have flow on effects.

Several hundred million *more* people are predicted to be driven into poverty.

Up to a quarter of a billion people may not have access to drinking water.

Land will be engulfed by sea. People will be in search of new homes.

If the predictions are right, climate change will have serious ramifications for global security.

...Serious ramifications for the Australian Defence Force.

Climate change has the potential to exacerbate conflict.

The New Zealand Ministry of Defence says:

*“When the effects of climate change intersect with a complex array of environmental and social issues, they can be a significant contributor to both low-level and more violent conflict.”*¹⁰

Defence may need to prepare for more conflict both between, and within states.

It will be worse where governance is weak — where corruption is rife.

Defence may also be increasingly called upon to support stabilisation, governance or peace keeping activities.

It is part of what we do and our ongoing commitment to the region.

As well as to respond to natural disasters.

We do after all live in the most natural disaster prone region in the world.¹¹

Over the last 20 years, the number of disasters in our region has increased.

¹⁰ New Zealand Ministry of Defence, The Climate Crisis: Defence Readiness and Responsibilities, November 2018, p. 6

¹¹ <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sgsm19126.doc.htm>

So has the number of disaster relief missions involving the Australian Defence Force.¹²

You only have to look as far back as the last few years.

In 2016, Defence supported disaster relief missions for Cyclone Winston in Fiji

...floods in South Australia and New South Wales

...and the earthquake in Christchurch.

In 2017, we assisted after Cyclone Debbie hit Queensland and the Manaro volcano erupted in Vanuatu.

Last year was particularly busy.

There was Cyclone Marcus in the Northern Territory.

And natural disasters in Tonga, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, as well as the Laos dam disaster.

So far this year, Defence has helped clean up after the floods in north Queensland and Cyclone Trevor in the Northern Territory.

Climate change is predicted to make disasters more extreme and more common.

¹² [Ben Deacon, Climate change-related disaster relief is increasing demand on Defence Department, Senate hears, ABC News, 8 June 2018](#)

We also face longer disaster seasons – be they bushfires or cyclones.

And defence might need to respond to more than one disaster at a time.

This will significantly impact us.

Australia sent around 1,000 troops to support Operation Fiji Assist.

About 1,600 ADF personnel assisted after Cyclone Debbie hit Queensland.

And earlier this year, close to 3,000 troops helped north Queensland clean up after the floods.

Compare that to our commitment to the war in Afghanistan.

At the height of our involvement, we had about 1,500 troops in Afghanistan.

The number of troops deployed on disaster relief missions can, at times, be a significant commitment for Defence.

Deploying troops on *numerous* disaster relief missions, *at the same time*, may stretch our capability and capacity.

The issue of climate change could also influence our long-standing relationships with our Pacific Island neighbours.

Sea levels across the Pacific region are expected to rise much faster than anywhere else in the world.

The water of the central Pacific is currently rising up to four times faster than the global average.

This is causing more flooding

...more coastal erosion

...inundation of living areas

...contamination of freshwater aquifers and arable land.

The extra salt in the water and soil is destroying gardens.

It is harder for coastal communities to grow root crops — a staple food source.

For some Pacific island states and territories, climate change is an existential threat.

For others it has the potential to impact access to food

...increase economic disruption

...cause climate displacement that could lead to civil unrest and other tensions.

Pacific Islanders also have a strong relationship with the land and oceans that sustain them.

Climate change threatens their customs, culture and way of life.

But Pacific Island countries have little ability to stem the effects of climate change.

They are collectively responsible for only a tiny percentage of the world's greenhouse gas emissions — 0.03 per cent

And are calling for the rest of the world to take more ambitious and decisive action.

Particularly to Australia, as their neighbour.

Recent statements by Pacific Island leaders indicate they see climate change as the biggest threat to their national security and they want us to do more.

How we respond to climate change could affect our relationship with our neighbours.

It could impact our ability to influence their choices for support in the region.

Our engagement with the region will be perceived within the frame of our action on climate change.

Climate change may also increase strategic competition in the region.

Sea level rise threatens to submerge low-lying atolls.

This is already happening.

For example at the Carteret Islands in the Pacific.

Its highest point sits just 1.5 metres above sea level.

It is at risk as the sea inches closer — shrinking the land.

Another risk is surging water.

Storm surges wash away houses — vegetable gardens, too.

The island is a cashless economy.

It is the type of place where you eat what you grow.

So this has dire consequences — no shelter, no food.

It is part of the reason some locals are choosing to relocate.¹³

What we might see across the Pacific is islands becoming uninhabited by people *before* they are inundated by water.

This has implications for sovereignty.

Because people are part of the definition of sovereignty.

If other states see an opportunity to occupy these uninhabited spaces, it could introduce new tensions in our region.

¹³ [Lauren Beldi, Carteret Island climate refugees make a new home, ABC News, 7 August 2016.](#)

Especially when you consider how climate change may impact food sources, access to tuna fishing grounds and sea bed resources – and how competition for these may increase.

States and regions will require strong governance and institutions to deal with such issues.

Which brings me to my next point: How Defence is responding to climate change.

Defence is not a main actor in Australia's response to climate change.

The Department of Environment and Energy is the lead agency on climate change policy.

The policy is based on the Government's commitment to the Paris Agreement.

A commitment to limit global warming to 'well below' 2°C.

And the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is the lead agency on international engagement on climate change and overseas disaster responses.

Defence is closely engaged with both departments — as well as the Department of Home Affairs, which coordinates domestic disaster responses — as part of a Whole of Government approach to the issue.

But our latest Defence White Paper *does* identify climate change as impacting our security environment over the next 15 years.

Climate change is part of our strategic thinking and planning.

Defence plans of the long-term.

We are already preparing for our future security environment.

And we have been preparing for the impacts of climate change for a number of years now.

Preparing for its impacts on operations, preparedness and capability.

Defence is also a key contributor to Australia's soft power.

We provide important leadership and support in engaging the region.

The Government is currently investing in the Pacific to support climate and disaster resilience, spending \$300 million over four years.

We are working with our neighbours to help them address the security impacts of climate change, and to better understand how our security environment is likely to evolve.

Defence is a key contributor to the Pacific Environment Security Forum which was held in Wellington last month and attended by 36 nations from around the Indo-Pacific region.

This non-binding partnership is the only civilian /military forum dealing with regional environmental security issues and furthers dialogue and discussion on environmental security with our Pacific neighbours and INDOPACOM.

Last month was also the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting.

We were there.

New Zealand was there.

Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Chile and Fiji were also there.

Together, we agreed to a number of recommendations relating to climate change.

Defence also has its part to play in reducing our carbon footprint.

Compared to the rest of government, ours is a large footprint.

We account for 70 per cent of government emissions.¹⁴

¹⁴ Estate and Infrastructure Group 20190606

There is good reason why.

Our capability is currently underpinned by energy intensive platforms and capabilities.

If operational requirements go up, so too our emissions.

This is a challenge for us.

We have to find a way to contribute to carbon emission reduction while maintaining our capability and tempo.

We have installed solar Photovoltaics across 20 sites — with more sites planned.¹⁵

We have committed to a multi-million dollar Renewable Energy and Energy Security Program.

We are looking at our building designs to see if we can make them more energy efficient.

The Royal Australian Navy is investigating the use of alternative fuels on Navy ships.

And in line with COAG agreeing that hydrogen has a key role in Australia's future, Defence will look at hydrogen as part of the suite of alternative and renewable energy sources we may use in the future.

¹⁵ Estate and Infrastructure Group 20190606

I'd like to finish with a comment made by a friend of mine, the Fijian Chief of Defence, Admiral Naupoto, at the recent Shangri-La Dialogue.

He noted that three strategic competitors were currently vying for attention in Suva: the United States, a well-intentioned old friend, the Peoples Republic of China, a rich new friend, and climate change.

So far he said, climate change is winning.

Over the years, Defence has developed some pretty impressive capability.

But we're still unable to predict the future.

We don't exactly know how climate change will impact security.

We don't know how the impacts will cascade.

But today we accept that climate change is a threat to our security and we prepare for its impacts, just as we prepare for the impacts of other strategic threats to our security, and our national interests.

Thank you.