



Australian Government
Department of Defence

Submission

For information
PDMS Ref. Number MB21-000908
Date of Clearance: 29 June 2021

To Minister for Defence

For Info Assistant Minister for Defence

Subject Army reforms to Special Operations

Timing At your convenience.

Recommendations

That you:

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4. **note** Chief of Army's intention to continue with extant arrangements for unit-centric Special Forces selection until further analysis is complete.

noted / please discuss

Minister for Defence

Signature.....

Date:...../...../2021

Minister's Comments				
Rejected Yes/No	Timely Yes/No	Relevance <input type="checkbox"/> Highly relevant <input type="checkbox"/> Significantly relevant <input type="checkbox"/> Not relevant	Length <input type="checkbox"/> Too long <input type="checkbox"/> Right length <input type="checkbox"/> Too brief	Quality Poor 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Excellent Comments:

Key Issues

1. Since 2015, following sustained and continuous operational commitment, Special Operations Command (SOCOMD) has been subject to significant review and reform to reconstitute capability, strengthen governance and prepare for a rapidly changing strategic environment.
2. Central to these reforms were more clearly defined roles, transformation of the Special Forces selection and training continuum, integration and management of specialised workforce and workforce mobility.

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Background

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Organisational review

7. I am also directing further work to clearly define the roles, capabilities and tasks of SOCOMD units and headquarters to ensure they can meet the demands of the future operating environment. This analysis will inform the organisational, training and individual attributes that underpin future Special Operations capabilities. Until this analysis is complete and a comprehensive plan developed, the existing unit-centric Commando and Special Air Service Regiment selection courses will continue (in the same manner as in 2021). Both selection courses will be supervised by the Defence Special Operations Training and Education Centre and Commander Special Forces Group (a Brigadier).
8. More broadly the Australian Army has been undertaking substantial reform to ensure it is "future ready." The most notable of these is the *Army Objective Force* which describes the organisational, equipment, infrastructure and posture options for Defence to deliver the land capabilities described in the *2020 Force Structure Plan*. *Army's Future Ready Workforce* and *Training Transformation* initiatives direct complementary reforms to workforce and training systems. Analysis of future skills, qualifications and training for Special Forces and those that directly support them are being considered as part of these wider Army initiatives. In this context, the intellectual, conceptual and organisational efforts to assure unique Special Operations capabilities will be well nested.

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10. While maintaining operational capability, I am conscious of the demands and stresses on the workforce and I continue to direct organisation tempo and priorities to manage risk and ensure the health and wellbeing of our people.
11. I would welcome the opportunity to provide a verbal brief if considered helpful.

Consultation – internal/external

12. Nil.

Consultation – Secretary/CDF

13. On 25 June 2021, I briefed CDF on these initiatives.

Sensitivities

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15. Special Forces selection courses generate a strong sense of unit identity for those selected. Changes to the selection course for the Special Air Service Regiment is a sensitive issue, particularly for ex serving members.

Financial/systems/legislation/deregulation/media implications

16. Nil.

Authorising Officer
Cleared by:
Lieutenant General Rick Burr Chief of Army Army Headquarters
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Through:

SEC  CDF  Asc 29/6.

CC:

Secretary, CDF, Assoc Sec, VCDF, FASMECC