



THE HON. JOEL FITZGIBBON MP Minister for Defence

Saturday, 2 May 2009

WHAT THE WHITE PAPER MEANS FOR THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

The 2009 Defence White Paper sets out a new capability direction with a significant focus on enhancing our maritime capabilities for the 21st century, the Minister for Defence, the Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP announced today.

Over the next 20 years, the Navy force structure will include new major destroyers and frigates, submarines, amphibious ships, offshore combatant vessels, naval combat helicopters and other advanced enabling capabilities.

“This force will operate closely with air combat and maritime surveillance and response aircraft to establish sea control, and project force across our vast maritime environment,” Mr Fitzgibbon said.

“The ability to establish local sea control is essential to maintaining freedom of navigation in our immediate region, protecting the ships that carry the life blood of our economy, preventing attacks on Australia or its offshore territories and resources, and supporting land forces.

“The White Paper lays out a clear pathway towards the development of a larger and more potent maritime force with improvements across all capabilities,” Mr Fitzgibbon said.

Key capability decisions relevant to this enhanced maritime force include:

- A fleet of 12 new Submarines to replace the current six Collins Class;
- Enhancements to the weapons systems of the three new Air Warfare Destroyers, with consideration of acquiring a fourth vessel in the future;
- A fleet of eight new larger frigates, with an emphasis on Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) to replace the current ANZAC Class frigates;
- Continuation of acquisition of two new Landing Helicopter Dock (LHD) ships that will invigorate the Australian Defence Force’s amphibious capability;
- A new Strategic Sealift ship based on a proven design to strengthen the Navy’s amphibious and transport capability;

A Defence Force for the 21st Century

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- A fleet of at least 24 new naval combat helicopters, equipped with dipping sonars to detect submarines at greater ranges;
- Six new MRH-90 helicopters that will replace the general utility service previously provided by the Sea King fleet;
- 20 new Offshore Combatant Vessels equipped with modular mission systems that will incorporate the capabilities presently provided by the separate patrol boat, hydrographic and mine hunter fleets;
- Six new ocean-going heavy landing craft with greater range and speed than the aging *Balikpapan* class Landing Craft Heavy; and
- Replacement of the Navy's oldest supply ship, HMAS *Success*, with a new replenishment and logistic support ship which will enter service at the end of the next decade.

The Government will also provide additional funding for 700 positions within Navy's workforce structure. This initiative will address the significant workforce challenges presently being experienced by Navy and will meet future requirements associated with the significant capability upgrades foreshadowed by the 2009 Defence White Paper.

Navy has already announced its plan to increase the size of the submarine workforce through a new approach as part of the New Generation Navy strategy. By providing targeted incentives for submariners that include training, adjusting crew numbers and formations, conditions of service, sea-time and other initiatives, Defence will ensure that the current shortfalls are addressed, and that a robust submarine workforce is built for the future. Combined with a range of recruitment and retention initiatives and strategies, this new approach will provide the basis for a larger and more sustainable submarine force.

The New Generation Navy project, which seeks to address these workforce pressures, is the basis for improvement in the retention of Navy personnel through improved leadership, more effective organisational structures, streamlined training procedures and better sharing of the workload across Navy.

These changes will enable Navy in the longer term to reliably and consistently meet its operational commitments and deliver a world-class maritime capability for the nation's security.

The 2009 Defence White Paper represents the most comprehensive statement on Defence ever produced. It affirms the Government's commitment to the defence of Australia, the protection of our sovereign interests and the security and stability of our region.

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