



THE HON. JOEL FITZGIBBON MP Minister for Defence

Saturday, 2 May 2009

A BALANCED AND FLEXIBLE ARMY

As part of the 2009 Defence White Paper, the Minister for Defence, the Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP, announced that the Australian Army will be able to combine its combat and combat support units to generate ten battalion sized 'battlegroups' tailored for a wide range of operations.

"The Government remains committed to the ongoing implementation of the Enhanced Land Force initiative which will see the Australian Defence Forces conventional land forces continue to be based on three combat brigades (of around 4000 troops each) consisting of multiple battalion-sized units," Mr Fitzgibbon said.

The growth of the Australian Army through the Enhanced Land Force initiative will be complemented by further reform under the Adaptive Army Initiative. The Adaptive Army Initiative seeks to better position the Army to conduct the generation and preparation of land forces for current operations and other contingencies as directed by the Government.

The initiative includes the formation of Forces Command which will be located in Sydney and responsible for all individual and group training, as well as the logistics organisations required to support to this.

The Australian Army will complement this growth and strategic reform by developing a detailed plan for 're-balancing' the Army. This plan will be ready to be considered by the Government by the end of the year with an expected implementation period of 2011-14. This will improve the Army's long-term capacity to sustain prolonged operational deployments and to flexibly surge in response to changing strategic circumstances, with particular reference to the capability contributions of the Reserve component of the land force.

"Rebalancing the Army will deliver the right balance, in terms of the number, types and mix of land force capabilities and units. This will ensure that we have the depth to sustain operations on a prolonged basis and are able to surge latent capacity should the need arise," Mr Fitzgibbon said.

Efforts to rebalance the Army will determine those capabilities that can be more efficiently provided by the Army Reserve or are a lesser priority in support of White Paper Strategic Guidance. Where it is determined that a

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current capability should be reduced, the relevant Army personnel will be diverted to higher priority requirements, allowing better management of Army capability against strategic priorities.

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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