



THE HON. JOEL FITZGIBBON MP Minister for Defence

Saturday, 2 May 2009

NEW ARTILLERY SYSTEMS FOR THE ARMY

The Minister for Defence, the Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP, has confirmed today that the Government will further enhance the Australian Defence Force's capability to deliver and coordinate artillery, offensive air support and naval surface fire support to land operations.

"The Government will deliver an enhanced artillery capability to the Australian Defence Force through the procurement of an integrated system of digital command and control and target acquisition systems, new 155mm artillery gun platforms and improved artillery ammunition systems," Mr Fitzgibbon said.

The acquisition of an integrated 155mm networked artillery system will enable longer range precision fire and high rates of fire. The system is planned to include four batteries of 155 mm lightweight guns and two batteries of 155mm self propelled howitzer.

The 155mm light weight guns will be able to be towed by protected support vehicles or transported under CH-47 Chinook helicopters into remote areas.

The 155mm self propelled howitzer provides higher rates of fire and extended engagement ranges. Most importantly, their integral mobility and armoured crew protection will enhance crew survivability and increase Army's ability to provide fire support to its mobile forces.

"The mix of light weight towed and self propelled 155mm guns will provide flexibility in supporting the Army within the range of contemporary and future operating environments. This acquisition will significantly increase the Army's ability to provide fire support to mobile forces," Mr Fitzgibbon said.

The acquisition of terminally guided precision artillery munitions will provide the Army with a significantly increased capability to precisely engage targets whilst reducing the risk of collateral damage.

Included in these projects are the necessary target acquisition, handoff and networked fire capabilities required to increase the speed of engagement, provide precision fire and to operate within a modern joint and coalition environment that includes air and sea delivery systems.

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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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