



THE HON. JOEL FITZGIBBON MP
Minister for Defence

Saturday, 2 May 2009

**NEW FIRE SUPPORT WEAPONS SYSTEM FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN ARMY**

The Minister for Defence, the Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP, today announced that the Government will acquire a range of direct and indirect fire support weapon systems in support of the Army's new combined arms teams.

"The Government will replace the current mortar system, enhance the 84mm anti-armour and 'bunker buster' weapon, and acquire new lightweight automatic grenade launchers," Mr Fitzgibbon said.

The Army combined arms teams gain their combat power by the application of a variety of weapon systems and capabilities. Direct and Indirect Fire Support Weapon Systems are critical to this layered combination of different weapon effects.

Mortars, like artillery, provide intimate offensive fire support to land forces and reduce friendly casualties. Mortars enable land force to suppress or screen enemy positions during contact.

The 84mm Carl Gustaf currently provides the mainstay of Australia's anti-armour and 'bunker buster' weapon at the company level. Army will acquire new modern lightweight Mk3 84mm, Carl Gustaf, equipped with modern night fighting acquisition and engagement capabilities.

The Army will also acquire new lightweight automatic grenade launchers to provide greater range to Infantry Battalions, the RAAF Airfield Defence Guards and Special Forces. This will further enhance the direct fire capability of these units.

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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