



THE HON. JOEL FITZGIBBON MP
Minister for Defence

Saturday, 2 May 2009

MORE LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR DEFENCE
OPERATING IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

As part of the 2009 Defence White Paper, the Government will establish a more robust and sustainable Languages Other Than English (LOTE) capability within the Australian Defence Force at a cost of \$20 million across the next four years.

The Minister for Defence, the Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP, said Defence will broaden the delivery of foreign language training, through the Melbourne based Defence School of Languages and new regionally based training facilities.

Language skills are a key capability in developing, understanding and building trust with local populations in areas where the Australian Defence Force are deployed.

“The Australian Defence Force’s operational effectiveness is enhanced through an understanding of history, culture, religion and socio-economic structure. In this respect, language skills and cultural awareness form the foundation of relationship building,” Mr Fitzgibbon said.

Skills in foreign languages make a key contribution to the success of the Army mission in operational deployments, peacekeeping and humanitarian missions, Defence cooperation programs and international engagement activities.

Defence has identified linguists as a key shortfall in their workforce. Skills maintenance in foreign languages is critical to sustain the pool of foreign-language experts within Defence.

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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A Defence Force for the 21st Century

Issued by Ministerial Support and Public Affairs, Department of Defence, Canberra, ACT
Phone: 02 6265 3343, Fax: 02 62656946

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