



## **THE HON. JOEL FITZGIBBON MP Minister for Defence**

Saturday, 2 May 2009

### **NEW AIRLIFT CAPABILITIES FOR AIR FORCE**

The 2009 Defence White Paper, released today, delivers an Air Force for the 21st century that will be better equipped, fully networked and better prepared to meet Australia's air power requirements.

The Minister for Defence, the Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP, today unveiled the Government's plans to strengthen and rebalance the Air Force's airlift capability through the acquisition of a total of 12 new aircraft.

"Large transport aircraft, such as the C-130 Hercules, have a crucial role in providing the capability to lift, deploy, and sustain our forces, as operations in the Middle East have shown. The C-130 is a versatile aircraft which can also conduct humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and aero-medical evacuation operations." Mr Fitzgibbon said.

Two new C-130Js will be acquired to complement the current air transport fleet of four C-17 and twelve C-130J aircraft. The additional C-130Js will join the rest of the fleet as the older Hercules model, the C-130H is retired. Operating and sustaining a single C-130 aircraft type will result in greater efficiencies and reduce unnecessary duplication.

"We also plan to bring ten new tactical lift aircraft into service to replace the capability presently provided by the soon to be retired DHC-4 Caribou aircraft. These new aircraft will have significantly greater range, speed and payload than the Caribou."

"These new Battlefield Airlifters will carry a range of self-protection measures to counter threats in the modern battlespace, which will also expand their utility for future deployments" Mr Fitzgibbon said.

"Additional airlift capability will also be provided by the five KC-30A Multirole Tanker Transport aircraft that will begin to enter service in late 2010. Each of these aircraft will be able to deploy around 270 troops and significant quantities of stores over strategic distances," Mr Fitzgibbon said.

This airlift capability will be further augmented by plans to replace the Army's current CH-47D Chinook helicopters with an advanced new fleet of seven CH-47F.

### **A Defence Force for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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“The Chinook’s will be capable of operating from the Navy’s new amphibious helicopter vessels and will be able to deploy into areas of rugged terrain, heavy vegetation and challenging roads and airfields,”

“The layered approach taken to the Australian Defence Force’s future airlift requirements provides Defence planners with much greater versatility, with a greater range of aircraft able to operate independently or jointly to move vital stores, personnel and equipment over longer ranges and at higher speeds than has been the case in the past,” Mr Fitzgibbon said.

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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