Response to the Defence Issues Paper

LNP Defence and Veterans’ Affairs Policy Committee submission
4 November, 2014

Defence White Paper 2015
R1-3-A135
Russell Offices
Department of Defence
PO Box 7901
CANBERRA BC ACT 2610

Re: Response to the Defence Issues Paper

The Liberal National Party (LNP) has pleasure in submitting for consideration our response to the Defence Issues Paper. The LNP Defence and Veterans’ Affairs Policy Committee (the DVAPC) is one of our Policy Committees working for the Members of the LNP.

The enclosed response has been generated from three key sources: broad canvassing of input from LNP members; practical in-depth knowledge of Defence operational needs; and awareness of how Queensland attributes can enhance efficiency, effectiveness and readiness of Defence capability.

Where appropriate the issues raised in the Defence Issues Paper have been addressed with the objective of providing an indication to Defence of community expectations and needs with the intention of informing the framing of the White Paper.

The LNP response is commended to you for consideration.

Yours faithfully

Bruce McIver
President Liberal National Party

Graeme Mickelberg
Chair Defence and Veterans’ Affairs Policy Committee
LNP RESPONSE TO THE DEFENCE ISSUES PAPER

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1. Executive Summary

A comprehensive response to the issues raised by Defence has been prepared by the LNP to assist in the preparation of the Defence White Paper. In particular, the LNP invites Defence to capitalise on Queensland’s assets and geographic proximity to regional areas of potential security in ways that improve capacity, capability and efficiency. At the same time a stronger interface can be built with local communities to enhance support to the ADF when operating from established bases and when conducting training in Queensland.

Australia’s Strategic Environment can best be served by clarity as to our national interests, alliance obligations and commitment objectives, balanced against our understanding of other nations’ culture, history, national priorities, objectives and capabilities. Bi-lateral and multi-lateral training exercises facilitate cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region on matters of surveillance, disaster relief and averting threats.

LNP recommends: The strategic and operational reach of the ADF can be well served by upgrading the RAAF base in Townsville to permit unrestricted operations by KC-30 and P-8 aircraft and basing the C27J Squadron in Townsville, closer to other ADF elements, for ready response in the region.

LNP recommends: Three key steps to improving efficiency and effectiveness:

(i) Locating a major Army unit in Rockhampton, serviced by infrastructure, technical support, housing, employment, port (Gladstone), road and rail links, to achieve significant efficiencies in cost, time and logistics associated with live-fire training at the Shoal Water Bay Training Area;

(ii) Establishing a Defence storage facility in Rockhampton to hold stores and equipment used in training exercises at Shoalwater Bay Training Area, which would circumvent the necessity for moving equipment from other locations in Queensland, other States and Territories and result in considerable cost savings; and

(iii) Establishing a Defence Precinct at Rockhampton Airport, avoiding the significant annual cost and disadvantage, including lack of security, from using general aviation facilities.

The ADF must be resourced such that if given 14 days notice a brigade can be deployed for operations and sustained for up to 6 months before rotation.

United States Alliance remains essential in that if offers access to capabilities, information, intelligence and technologies beyond our capability and is important to Australia’s security and regional stability.

Defence capability should continue to be organized, trained and equipped for high intensity conventional combat, which provides the flexibility to scale down for lower intensity combat and other tasks. The purpose of Reserve forces should be to augment ARA capability. Regional Force Surveillance Units could be used more proactively to engage the local population.

Defence Industry will continue to source major equipment from overseas suppliers. Industrial capability to supply small arms and munitions, electro-optics, maintenance, food and clothing could be better sourced locally. A streamlined, simplified tender process would make supply more readily
accessible to Australian SMEs.
## 2. Summary of LNP Response to Defence Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defence Issues</th>
<th>LNP Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australia’s Strategic environment:</strong></td>
<td>• Within our region the risk of conventional military conflict is not growing. Risks associated with asymmetric threats, including terrorism, could arise from the use by terrorists of conventional weapons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is the risk of conventional military conflict growing?</td>
<td>• Globally, there is the potential for conventional military conflict, in which Australia might become involved as a result of alliance commitments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does Australia face any immediate military risks?</td>
<td>• No.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What can Australia do to contribute to strengthening peace and stability in our region?</td>
<td>• Continue to work closely with countries in our region by facilitating, where appropriate, a cooperative approach to surveillance to detect potential threats and to maintaining capabilities to permit a rapid response to identified threats.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Where and how should we contemplate using the ADF in support of global and regional security?</td>
<td>• Clarity as to our national interests, our alliance obligations, clearly defined end states and objectives for any Australian commitment.</td>
</tr>
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<td>• In our nearer region, what are the likely missions the ADF might be called on to perform?</td>
<td>• Response to natural disasters. Capacity building for military forces of regional countries. Participating in bi-lateral and multi-lateral training exercises. Surveillance of the sea and air approaches to Australia. Evacuation operations in support of Australian and other designated foreign nationals from countries in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How well placed are we to understand the impact of changing strategic developments?</td>
<td>• Australia is particularly well placed to understand such changes, however in monitoring the region the analysis of information and intelligence should be balanced against our understanding of other nation’s culture, history, national priorities, objectives and capabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What should the ADF be able to do:</strong></td>
<td>• Contribute to domestic security.</td>
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<td>• What are the primary roles for the ADF?</td>
<td>• Contribute to domestic disaster response.</td>
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<td>• Detect armed incursions to Australia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
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| Where should the ADF be expected to be able to operate, and in what circumstances? | • Deter and defeat armed attacks on Australia.  
• Be prepared to contribute to military contingencies in the Indo-Pacific region and in the SW Pacific.  
• Be prepared to contribute to military contingencies related to maintaining global security.  
• Contribute to international humanitarian response to natural disasters.  
• Surveillance of the sea and air approaches to Australia.  
• Contribute to maintaining security and stability in PNG, South Pacific countries and South East Asian countries.  
• Other countries as part of a UN mandated force.  
• Clandestine cyber attacks on information systems and attacks on economic interests (off-shore oil platforms, etc.) and diplomatic missions.  
• Australia should be capable of deploying up to a Brigade sized force.  
• Greater use should be made of the infantry battalions to respond to operational contingencies.  
• With 14 days notice and sustaining a Brigade sized force for periods not exceeding 6 months.  
• Attacks against information systems. |
| What are the potential adversary capabilities against which the ADF should plan (capability)? | United States Alliance and International Engagement  
• How important is the United States to Australia’s current security environment?  
• How important are traditional alliances and partners to our security, both now and in the longer term?  
• To what extent should the Government look to the ADF to promote regional stability through |
| How much of each task should the ADF be able to perform? (capacity) | • The alliance is essential in that it offers access to capabilities, including information, intelligence and technologies that we do not have.  
• Australia’s role as a partner in relationships such as the ABCA framework provide an established foundation upon which to build responses requiring military action.  
• Peacetime cooperation will permit the ADF to stay engaged with the defence forces of other |
<p>| In what time frames should the ADF be ready to deploy (readiness) | |
| Are there contingencies that Defence has not previously prepared for, but should? | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deciding Defence Capabilities:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• What Defence capabilities should the Government invest in now and for the long term?</td>
<td>• Self propelled artillery, air defence protection for fleet assets, including the LHD and a helicopter capability sufficient to deploy organic casualty evacuation as part of any deployed force.</td>
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<td>• What enabling capabilities are critical to support ADF operations and to eliminate hollowness in the force?</td>
<td>• If there is a dependency of the provision of logistic support by contractors the Government must legislate to ensure contractors can be deployed in support of ADF deployments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What military capabilities must we be able to mount and operate ourselves, short of allied assistance?</td>
<td>• The approach to and resourcing of all aspects of training must not under any circumstance be reduced, as the training provided is the single most critical enabler to operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How organized should the ADF be for high intensity conventional combat?</td>
<td>• Mount and sustain a Brigade for operations for a period of up to 6 months.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How important is it to build Defence relationships beyond the Indo-Asia-Pacific region?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Should Defence focus less on preparing for war-like operations and focus more on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations at home and overseas?</td>
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<td>• What can the ADF do to shape Australia’s strategic environment in times of peace?</td>
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</table>

<p>| peacetime cooperation? | countries, providing the opportunity to assess military capability and build relationships that will be of benefit in times of crisis. |</p>
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<tr>
<td>What can international and defence engagement achieve for Australia</td>
<td>flexibility to scale down for lower intensity combat and other tasks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>strategically?</td>
<td>Provides opportunity to gain experience of the planning for and control of complex operations in a multi-lateral and multi-national context.</td>
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<td>What is the optimum use for reserve forces?</td>
<td>Reserve forces should be used to augment regular Army capability and not as a stand-alone capability.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Disband Army Reserve battalions and use the Army Reserve personnel to create an organic Army Reserve capacity within the existing Regular (full-time) battalions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Utilise the Regional Force Surveillance Units (RFSU) more proactively to engage the local population and potentially utilise RFSU full-time cadre staff to undertake training with forces of other nations in our region in the same way as has been done in the past with forces from 51 FNQR provided deployed training teams to Vanuatu.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What Science and Technology capabilities are critical to underpin our</td>
<td>Focus on harnessing science and technology to enhance the protection and survivability of ADF members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>broader Defence capabilities?</td>
<td>The current structure is adequate however greater steps, including the provision of adequate resourcing of the ADF, must be assured by the Government to avoid the potential for ‘hollow’ structures.</td>
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<td>What is the right organizational structure for Defence?</td>
<td>Yes, although the nature of tasks undertaken needs to be carefully monitored.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The current arrangements for Defence Assistance to the Civil Community are adequate.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Networked communications, including secure communications, to enable the ADF to communicate with other Government Agencies.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Where appropriate, common doctrine and the employment of Liaison Officers with the skills to de-conflict competing priorities.</td>
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<td>Should Defence contribute more to domestic counter-terrorism activities?</td>
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<td>What support should Defence offer to local communities?</td>
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<td>What capabilities are critical for Defence to most effectively work with</td>
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<td>other Government Agencies?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defence Industry:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Which industrial capabilities are vital for the</td>
<td>Although the ADF will continue to source</td>
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<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the consequences for Australian industry of international trends in the defence industry sector?</td>
<td>Other major defence industry businesses, who in the main are foreign owned entities, international trends and the ability of Australian defence businesses to contribute to niche opportunities will depend on the willingness of Australian businesses to adapt and to provide products and services that complement international change. The nature and scale of Defence in Australia is such as to militate against Australia having a competitive defence industry. Procurement decisions should not necessarily be driven by Australian industry involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can the Government best encourage the development of an internationally competitive Australian defence industry?</td>
<td>For these support programs to be of use requires more work to encourage SME to better understand and anticipate defence business opportunities and to mount a convincing argument with the primes to secure work in niche areas of much larger defence projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the future of existing industry support programs provided by the Government?</td>
<td>More needs to be done to encourage SME to approach winning Defence business by them proactively approaching the Primes to convince them that SME have particular niche skills and capabilities that will add value. Conversely, Defence could provide a streamlined tender process to allow SMEs more ready access to supply opportunities, driven by a “trade show” of specific needs presented to major regional centres and annual recognition of most innovative responses.</td>
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3. LNP Response Focus

3.1 Australia’s Strategic Environment

Australia’s strategic environment has become increasingly complex and the willingness of Government to get involved in global security matters reflects the realities of that complexity. Compounding that complexity is the asymmetric manner in which many threats are evolving and the potential for threats, which may emanate from countries in the northern hemisphere, manifesting in countries located close to Australia.

The Importance of Alliance Relationships

The dynamic nature of the strategic environment is such as to reinforce the importance of the alliance relationships Australia has. Clearly, the alliance Australia has with the US must continue to underpin the approach taken by Australia to manage its relations with other countries regionally and globally.

Alliance Commitments

Currently there is no apparent threat of conventional military conflict directly relevant to Australia. However, as a result of alliance commitments Australia may be drawn into a conventional military conflict involving other countries. Alliance obligations should however continue to be balanced against Australia’s national interests and any decision to commit military forces will need to take into account the end-state and objectives defined by the Australian Government.

Engagement with the Defence Forces of other Countries

The engagement of the ADF with the defence forces of other countries, particularly of countries in Australia’s region of interest, is important and should continue to be a high priority. Participating in bi-lateral and multi-lateral training exercises and the provision of training teams to conduct capacity building training in other countries should continue to be supported.

3.2 What Should the ADF be able to do?

Priorities

The first priority for the ADF must be the protection of Australia. Historically this priority has been articulated in the context of conventional threats and the implications arising from how such threats might be expected to manifest relative to mainland Australia. Although there is no direct threat of conventional war to Australia it is apparent that Australia’s participation in military missions as a member of a coalition of countries to maintain global stability may be expected to require the ADF to have and to employ conventional military capabilities against threats, including terrorists, that have not in the past been expected to use conventional tactics or weapons.

Domestic Security

Implicit to the protection of Australia is the need for the ADF to be able to contribute to domestic security. This includes border protection however there is acceptance the ADF will also be required to support law enforcement in carrying out tasks associated with domestic security. These tasks may extend beyond tasks, which have for some time been specifically mandated as part of the national
counter terrorism arrangements may for example include facilitating surveillance within the community. This may necessitate a review of relevant legislation.
Assuring the Security and Stability of other Countries

The security and stability of countries in South East Asia and the South Pacific should continue to be a focus for Australia. Of particular importance is the security and stability of Papua New Guinea and other smaller countries in the South Pacific.

Other Potential Tasks for the ADF

Other potential tasks for the ADF include being ready to respond to natural disasters, the evacuation of Australian citizens from other countries, the protection of offshore oil and gas facilities and responding to threats to Australia’s diplomatic missions around the world.

Credible Defence Spending

In order for the ADF to be able to respond in a timely and effective way requires the Government to ensure Defence spending is maintained at levels that will facilitate a credible response where Australia is required to mount a force on its own or as part of coalition of countries.

Mounting and Sustaining Operations

Capability to Deploy and Sustain a Brigade on Operations: Australia should be capable of mounting and sustaining a brigade sized force at fourteen days notice to deploy and of sustaining its operations for 6 months before then rotating the force. This is not an unreasonable expectation as the ADF is currently organized with three regular brigades. Sustaining a brigade will also require sufficient logistic elements to support combat operations, including an organic capability to evacuate and treat casualties.

Provision of an Organic Casualty Evacuation Capability: During the period of operations conducted in Afghanistan Australian forces had to depend on air support from other countries to evacuate Australian casualties. Given the investment in Defence, particularly in relation to rotary wing aircraft, it is not unreasonable for ADF members and indeed the wider Australian community to expect that future ADF deployments include an organic casualty evacuation capability.

Greater use of Infantry Battalions: The approach taken to the employment of Special Forces in Afghanistan on tasks, many of which, could have been undertaken by infantry battalions is not sustainable and has potentially adverse implications for the Special Forces soldiers required to fulfill a significant number of rotations and also has implications for sustaining on-going readiness and operational capabilities. Future ADF deployments should make greater use of infantry battalions to undertake operational tasks.

3.3 The Alliance with the United States and International Engagement

The alliance Australia has with the United State is essential in that it offers access to capabilities, including those technologies involved with the collection and analysis of information and intelligence. This access enhances Australia’s strategic awareness and is critical to understanding and managing threats as they evolve and during any response to those threats.
The ABCA Framework

At the professional level within the ADF, Australia’s role as a member of the ABCA (America, Britain, Canada and Australia) framework provides an established foundation upon which to build responses requiring military action. Such responses are enhanced by ABCA standards that are designed to facilitate interoperability between the defence forces of the member countries.

The Presence of US Forces in Northern Australia

The deployment of United States Marine Corps personnel and equipment to northern Australia will continue to be a sensitive matter and as the number of personnel increases along with the equipment deployed this US presence will be an important area of concern for some countries, particularly China.

The maintenance of the alliance with the US will need to be balanced against the need for Australia to maintain and build relationships with other countries. Initiatives involving bilateral defence engagement with China and Japan are positive and will contribute to Australia’s broader international engagement strategy and to developing the understanding of the military capabilities and philosophies of both countries’ defence forces and their senior commanders.

The Defence Cooperation Program

The Defence Cooperation Program has been a successful vehicle to facilitate international engagement and to build the capacity of regional defence forces.

Initiatives that foster peacetime cooperation permit the ADF to stay engaged with the defence forces of other countries, providing the opportunity to assess military capability and build relationships that will be of benefit in times of crisis.

Staying engaged permits the opportunity to maintain relationships with key commanders of the defence forces of regional countries, which can be useful in future contingencies (as it was in Timor Leste).

3.4 Deciding Defence Capabilities

High Intensity v Low Intensity Tasks

The ADF should continue to be organised, trained and equipped for high intensity conventional combat as this provides the flexibility to scale down for lower intensity combat and other tasks.

The ADF should be capable of deploying a Brigade within 14 days of notice to deploy and be capable of sustaining operations for up to six months after which it would be rotated. This would require sufficient logistics capabilities and the capacity to protect the force from surface and sub surface attack and air attack. Currently, the ADF lacks sufficient air defence capability for the fleet. Given the large number of personnel that may be embarked on the recently acquired LHDs, providing the necessary air defence protection should be a high priority.
Other capabilities required include self-propelled artillery, which will enhance the capacity of the land-force to protect itself and provide added combat power.

**Providing Deployed Forces with a Casualty Evacuation Capability**

That Australia was unable to deploy sufficient helicopters to provide an organic casualty evacuation capability as part of the ADF deployment in Afghanistan is surprising, particular given the Army has an aviation brigade. The costs incurred by the Australian taxpayer to acquire helicopters for the Army have been very significant and it is not unreasonable to expect that any future ADF contingent deployed on operations has sufficient helicopters to evacuate ADF casualties.

**Facilitating the Employment of Civilian Contractors to Support Operations**

If there is a dependency for the provision of logistic support by contractors to sustain a deployed force the Government should consider legislation to ensure contractors are practically able to operate in support of any force deployed by the ADF. Particular contracts may be developed and implemented that provide contractors with prior military experience to ensure they are garrison ready, as required. A two-way arrangement could be designed to enable Defence personnel to gain experience in the private sphere, gaining exposure to other kinds of efficiencies.

**The Army Reserve**

Identifying a credible role for the Army Reserve has continued to be a problem. The investment expended in maintaining the Army Reserve is such that this matter should be accorded higher priority. It may be that consideration needs to be given to acknowledging that the Army Reserve cannot and should not be sustained as a stand-alone capability with the personnel in Army Reserve battalions being used to create an organic Army Reserve capacity within the existing Regular (full-time) battalions.

Consideration should be given to utilising the Regional Force Surveillance Units (RFSU) more proactively to engage the local population. RFSU full-time cadre staff should also be tasked to undertake training with forces of other nations in Australia’s region in the same way as has been done in the past where elements from 51 FNQR provided deployed training teams to Vanuatu.

**Enhancing ADF capability to Operate with Other Government Agencies**

Networked communications, including secure communications, need to be available to enable the ADF to communicate with other Government Agencies (OGA). This capability is particularly relevant where the ADF is employed in tasks in support OGA, including responding to natural disasters and in counter-terrorism. The provision of common doctrine and the employment of Liaison Officers with the skills to deconflict competing priorities will also make a positive impact on ADF operations with OGA.

**3.5 Defence Industry**

Although the ADF will continue to source major equipment, particularly large platforms such as ships, from overseas suppliers, industrial capabilities to clothe and feed the ADF will remain critical. Other capabilities such as electro-optics, small arms and munitions manufacture and the ability to repair and maintain equipment will remain important.
The Limited Nature of Australian Defence Industry

The nature and scale of Defence in Australia is such as to militate against Australia having a competitive defence industry. Government procurement decisions should not necessarily be driven by Australian industry involvement.

Other than major Defence industry businesses, which, in Australia, are largely foreign owned entities, the ability of Australian defence businesses to contribute will continue to be limited to niche opportunities. The willingness of Australian businesses to adapt and to provide products and services that complement international trends will be a limiting factor.

Government Support Programs for Defence Industry

Although support programs provided by the Government are beneficial for such programs to be of use requires more work to encourage SME to better understand and anticipate defence business opportunities and to mount a convincing argument with major defence businesses to secure work in niche areas of much larger Defence projects. A streamlined tender process, comprising more simplified approach to articulating the Statement of Requirements and a standard Contract format would be of value, especially if underpinned by a roadshow to major centres, allowing potential SME candidates to engage directly with Defence personnel on specific areas of interest. A similar process has been used to good effect in the USA, which has also included rewarding the ten most innovative suppliers with lunch with the US President, promotion through attendant publicity and access to wider industry support (technical and financial).

3.6 Defence and the Community

The ADF contribution to responding to natural disasters, border protection and counter terrorism are not well understood by the broader community. This is particularly true in that the way in which the ADF is trained and equipped permits Government considerable flexibility to respond to these tasks with minimal notice.

Communicating the Positive Benefits of Defence Spending

Government must continue to provide the three services with the resources and policies to permit them to train for likely tasks and take every opportunity to communicate the positive benefits of Defence to all sections of the Australian community.

A particular vulnerability is the temptation on the part of Government to cut Defence spending at time when the threat environment is benign.

The messaging used by the Government and by the three services should give greater emphasis on service to the nation and the contribution the ADF can and does make to domestic security and regional stability.

Wider engagement with local SME suppliers provides a further opportunity to contribute significantly to regional development, especially where SME experiences are positive.
Facilitating Regional Development

The Government should consider more closely the benefits to regional development by basing Defence units at regional locations. The establishment a large concentration of ADF units in Darwin is very good example of the positive benefits of Defence policy in the context of regional development. Many of the technical capabilities required to maintain Defence equipment are also relevant to other industry sectors, which will also serve to attract other industries to particular parts of Australia.

Connecting with Regional Communities

The proactive approach taken by the Regional Force Surveillance Units to engaging with communities in northern Australia has proven very successful and offers a model worthy of consideration for other ADF units, including those who deploy from their bases to train in other locations across Australia.

4. Defence Opportunities in Queensland

Upgrading of RAAF Base Townsville

RAAF Base Townsville should be upgraded to permit unrestricted operations by KC-30 and P-8 aircraft. This would assist in facilitating strategic and operational reach of the ADF.

Basing the C27J Squadron at RAAF Base Townsville

Consideration should be given to basing the newly acquired C27J aircraft at RAAF Base Townsville, which would position the aircraft closer to ADF elements located in northern Australia, able to respond in a timely manner in support of any ADF response to contingencies, including natural disasters in the north of Australia and for tasks in other countries to the north of Australia and in the South West Pacific.

Locating a Major Army Unit in Rockhampton

Consideration should be given to locating a major Army unit in Rockhampton, which has the infrastructure, access to technical support, housing and employment opportunities necessary to support a major unit and to support the families of unit members.

The benefits of locating a major Army unit in Rockhampton include:

- Close proximity to Shoalwater Bay Training Area (SWBTA), which offers live-fire and manoeuvre on a scale not accessible in any other training areas in Queensland;
- Consequent savings in operating costs incurred with deploying major units, particularly armoured units from Brisbane to SWBTA;
- Access to an airport capable of C17 operations;
- Access to the Port of Gladstone;
- Close proximity to established road and rail links; and
- Access to store ammunition and explosives at the Bajool Explosives Depot.
Establishing a Defence Storage Facility in Rockhampton

Currently, each time an ADF unit conducts training at SWBTA large amounts of stores and equipment are moved from locations within Queensland and from other States and Territories.

Consideration should be given to establishing a Defence storage facility in Rockhampton to permit stores and equipment for use by ADF units when training in SWBTA.

The benefits of locating Defence storage facility in Rockhampton include:

- Significant savings in operating costs incurred with transporting stores and equipment to and from Rockhampton to support training conducted at SWBTA;
- Access to an airport capable of C17 operations;
- Access to the Port of Gladstone; and
- Close proximity to established road and rail links.

Establish a Defence Precinct at Rockhampton Airport

The ADF and other users who conduct training in SWBTA regularly operate aircraft from the general aviation area at Rockhampton Airport. This arrangement, which comes at a significant annual cost to Defence, presents disadvantages, including lack of sufficient security to protect Defence aircraft, increased burden on Airport services and traffic control on the Airport apron.

Consideration should be given to establishing a Defence precinct at the Airport located within the Airport but separate to the general aviation area.

The benefits of establishing a Defence precinct at Rockhampton include:

- It would permit Defence to provide security to meet Defence security standards;
- Mitigate against the potential for accidents involving persons and aircraft operating in the general aviation area of the Airport; and
- Save costs incurred each year by Defence to lease access to areas of the Airport apron and associated Airport infrastructure.