2015 Defence White Paper

Joint Submission by the Australian Council for International Development, the Australian National Committee for UN Women and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

October 2014
1. Executive Summary

Defence should have a pivotal role in creating a regional and global security environment conducive to the enjoyment of human rights and freedoms and the prevention of instability and crisis. Such an enabling environment is critical for Australia’s national security, given the interconnectedness between Australia’s security interests and increasingly complex regional and global threats and challenges. It is also vital for Australia’s reputation, strategic alliances and therefore, ability to exercise influence over global affairs, that Australia be an active contributor to regional and global peace and security.

Drawing upon our experience working alongside Defence in multiple and complex humanitarian situations, and as organisations that champion gender equality, our submission focuses on three key areas we believe should be prioritised within the White Paper to respond to the threats and challenges of the region:

Increased peacekeeping and conflict prevention capacity

We recommend that the Defence White Paper place greater strategic and operational focus on peacekeeping and conflict prevention, as an effective means of bolstering global peace and security.

Our submission recommends Defence develop greater strategic clarity on Australia’s peacekeeping operations, embed peacekeeping and conflict prevention training within Defence and support global and regional peacekeeping capacity. We acknowledge the work of the Australian Civil-Military Centre in fostering civil-military cooperation and coordination, and would like to see this work strengthened.

The Involvement of Women

Despite Australia’s firmly stated commitment to the full implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP), and commitments by senior leaders to greater gender equality in Defence operations, we are disappointed to note the lack of references to gender equality and the NAP in the Defence Issues Paper and the gender imbalance on the Expert Panel. We strongly recommend that Australia’s commitment to the Women, Peace and Security agenda is embedded within the Defence White Paper, and that all policy and operational exercises align with the NAP.

Increasing instability

The effects of climate change, namely more severe and frequent natural disasters, resource scarcity, increased disease and increasing human migration, will present major security challenges globally and regionally in the future. We strongly recommend Defence outlines how it intends to incorporate these considerations into its vision of future threats and responses that will be at the forefront of Australian and regional security.

2. Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Ensure that the Defence White Paper commits to the full implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and the plan is identified as a central planning and implementation document for Defence.
Recommendation 2: That Defence ensure the current NAP and its successor continues to be a strategic foundation for Australia’s Defence community to capture women’s voice and experience in all areas of peace and security.

Recommendation 3: The Australian Government should invest additional resources into the conflict prevention and peacebuilding capabilities of Defence. This should include:

A. Articulating Australia’s strategic commitment to peacekeeping, including through the development of a Peacekeeping White Paper.
B. Ensuring peacekeeping training is an integral and prioritized aspect of training programs within Defence.
C. Establishing and maintaining gender-responsive peacekeeping and community liaison capacity and ensuring that security sector reform assistance is gender sensitive.
D. Ensuring that the mandates of peacekeeping operations in which Australia is involved include specific provisions for the protection of children, and that Australian military deployments include dedicated child protection advisors.

Recommendation 4: The Defence White Paper should outline specific strategies to operationalise relevant UN Security Council Resolutions throughout Defence policy, doctrine and tactical directives.

Recommendation 5: The Defence White Paper should outline the full implications of climate change for Defence, including how it will need to adapt to the future security environment and operational conditions.

Recommendation 6: That the Expert Panel recommends the Minister for Defence immediately appoint a relevant, senior female representative to the Expert Panel.

Recommendation 7: That Defence support the establishment of a female-driven strategic policy advisory board to ensure Defence integrates gender perspectives into its policies and practice.

Recommendation 8: The Australian Government should increase its personnel contribution to UN peace operations.

Recommendation 9: Building on its UNSC work, the Australian Government should continue to actively engage through the UN Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

Recommendation 10: That the Defence White Paper should emphasise Australia’s role in promoting regional capacity and commitment to global peace and security frameworks, in line with human rights principles.

Recommendation 11: Australia should remain committed to civil-military coordination and cooperation, and ensure consistent adherence to civil-military guidelines and best practice.

Recommendation 12: Defence should continue to ensure women are represented and supported in the Australian Defence Force, in line with the NAP and the recommendations of the Broderick and McGregor Reviews.

Recommendation 13: That Defence should maintain capacity, flexibility and skills to respond to humanitarian disasters, supporting humanitarian actors to provide impartial relief.
3. Introduction
The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), the Australian National Committee for UN Women and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) welcome the opportunity to make this submission to the Expert Panel on the Defence White Paper.

Our agencies have substantial experience working alongside Defence in humanitarian relief and conflict scenarios in multiple settings. Since 2013, we have co-hosted a civil society dialogue on Women, Peace and Security to monitor progress on and commitments to Australia’s National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP). Further, ACFID is a partner to the Australian Civil Military Centre, working to improve Australia’s effectiveness in civil-military collaboration for conflict and disaster management overseas.

We believe that one of the primary roles for Defence should be to contribute to creating a regional and global security environment conducive to the enjoyment of human rights and freedoms, and prevention of instability and crisis. Such an enabling environment is critical for Australia’s national security, given the interconnectedness between Australia’s security interests and increasingly complex regional and global threats and challenges. It is also vital for Australia’s reputation, strategic alliances and therefore, ability to exercise influence over global affairs, that Australia be an active contributor to regional and global peace and security.

Our submission deals with the following themes – strategic policy approach, international relationships, personnel and force structure and preparedness. Drawing upon our experience in humanitarian situations, and as organisations that champion gender equality, we are calling for the Defence White Paper to have a strong focus on peace building and conflict prevention capabilities across the Australian Defence Force (ADF), support for the peace and security of our region and the increased participation of women, in line with the NAP.

4. Strategic Policy Approach

4.1. Fully Integrate the Women, Peace and Security Agenda
Recommendation 1: Ensure that the Defence White Paper commits to the full implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and the plan is identified as a central planning and implementation document for Defence.

Recommendation 2: That Defence should ensure the current NAP and its successor continues to be a strategic foundation for Australia’s Defence community to capture women’s voice and experience in all areas of peace and security.

Women’s roles in situations of conflict are multiple and varied. Alongside men they are combatants, victims and innocent bystanders. Despite the varied roles women play they are overwhelmingly underrepresented in conflict prevention and peace processes. Of the 31 peace processes through the period 1992-2011, only 9% had female negotiators present.1 UNSC Resolution 1325, and subsequent Security Council resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106 and 2122, affirm the

---

1 Jacqui True, Sara Niner, Swati Parashar and Nicole George (2012), ‘Women’s Political Participation in Asia and the Pacific,’ United Nations Department of Political Affairs.
importance of the equal participation and full involvement of women in all areas of work to maintain and promote peace and security.

The Australian government has committed itself to the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 and in doing so, has developed a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Despite this commitment, the Defence Issues Paper has failed to include mention of Australia’s obligations under the NAP. We strongly recommend the Department of Defence and Australian Defence Forces use the NAP as the central planning and implementation document on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, and include explicit commitment to the agenda throughout the Defence White Paper.

Further, when the present NAP expires in 2018, we call on the Defence community to play a leading role in ensuring the successor to the NAP continues to be the strategic foundation for Defence to capture women’s voice and experience in all areas of peace and security.

4.2. Focus on peacebuilding and conflict prevention

Recommendation 3: The Australian Government should invest additional resources into the conflict prevention and peacebuilding capabilities of Defence. This should include:

A. Articulating Australia’s strategic commitment to peacekeeping, including through the development of a Peacekeeping White Paper.
B. Ensuring peacekeeping training is an integral and prioritized aspect of training programs within Defence.
C. Establishing and maintaining gender-responsive peacekeeping and community liaison capacity and ensuring that security sector reform assistance is gender sensitive.
D. Ensuring that the mandates of peacekeeping operations in which Australia is involved include specific provisions for the protection of children, and that Australian military deployments include dedicated child protection advisors.

Strategic approach to Peacekeeping

The 2008 Inquiry into Australia’s involvement in peacekeeping operations recommended that Australia produce a white paper on its engagement in peacekeeping activities to allow a clearer articulation and more informed public scrutiny of this important area. While agreeing in principle with this recommendation and the importance of whole-of-government policy on peacekeeping, successive governments have failed to take this step. While peacekeeping has been incorporated into successive Defence White Papers, it has done so in an ambiguous and superficial way.

The 2015 Defence White Paper should articulate with greater clarity Australia’s strategic commitment to UN peacekeeping as an important contribution to the international peace and security architecture that Australia has helped to build. Linked to such a commitment, we recommend that the Government develop a whole-of-government Peacekeeping White Paper which

---

would set Australia’s policy frameworks for the creation of regional missions, such as RAMSI, and for supporting UN peace operations.

**Peacekeeping Training**

Peacekeeping and conflict prevention should be an integral aspect of Defence training to fully equip the ADF to constructively transform conflicts and create a sustainable peace environment. Training programs should be in line with Australia’s commitments under UNSCR 1325 and accurately reflect the central role of women, both abroad and in Australia, in preventing conflict or the recurrence of conflict. Training should include specific guidance on protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse\(^5\) and the Analytical Inventory of Peacekeeping for Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence.\(^6\)

It is also important to ensure specialist training on child protection. In line with UNSC Resolution 1261, Defence training programs should also include specialist training on the protection, rights and welfare of children.

Training programs should go beyond the content of Australia’s international obligations and focus on how they affect standard operating procedures on the ground for Defence personnel.

**Gender-sensitive Peacekeeping Capacity**

International peacekeeping missions are one of the greatest opportunities Australia has to contribute to the Women, Peace and Security agenda. It is important that UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions not be seen solely as tactical tools to further military goals, but are deployed as part of a long-term peace building process after formal military operations have ceased. Failure to take this approach can lead to a backlash against local female community members once the foreign forces have left. The WPS Agenda focuses on empowering women within their communities through protecting their rights, preventing conflict or the recurrence of conflict, promoting the participation of women at all stages of peace making and peacekeeping processes, and incorporating a gender perspective in all relief and recovery operations.\(^7\)

We recommend Defence focus on building up its female peacekeeping and community liaison personnel to engage with the specific threats and vulnerabilities of women in conflict and post conflict environments. Further, we recommend Defence ensures that gender sensitive Security Sector Reform assistance is an integral part of Defence cooperation and a vital part of any exit strategy from peacekeeping or stabilisation missions. To support this, Defence should develop doctrine on gender-sensitive security sector reform, drawing on lessons from previous experience in Timor-Leste, Afghanistan and elsewhere, to guide appropriate interventions.

**Protecting Children in Armed Conflict**

Despite increased international attention to the plight of children affected by armed conflict over the past decade, conflict continues to have a disproportionate impact on children. The last Annual

---


Report of the Secretary General on children and armed conflict highlighted horrific violations of children’s rights in 23 conflict situations around the world.\(^8\)

Of particular concern is the fact that armed forces and armed groups, who are often the only ones with access to hard-to-reach conflict areas, are themselves violators of children’s rights. Defence can play a role in addressing this problem by ensuring that the mandates of peacekeeping operations to which Australia contributes include specific provisions for the protection of children, and that Australia’s military deployments include dedicated child protection advisors. This recommendation is in line with UNSCR 1261, in which the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to ensure that ‘personnel involved in UN peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building activities have appropriate training on the protection, rights and welfare of children’, and urged States to ensure that appropriate training was included in their own programs.\(^9\)

4.3. Policy coherence on Security Council Resolutions

**Recommendation 4:** The Defence White Paper should outline specific strategies to operationalise relevant UN Security Council Resolutions throughout Defence policy, doctrine and tactical directives.

Defence must ensure policy coherence with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and should prioritise commitment to implementing vital resolutions on Women Peace and Security; the Protection of Civilians; and Children in Armed Conflict. The Defence White Paper should include a clear and unambiguous commitment to these resolutions, as well as an endorsement of the NAP and its full implementation across Defence.

4.4. Address Climate Change

**Recommendation 5:** The Defence White Paper should outline the full implications of climate change for Defence, including how it will need to adapt to the future security environment and operational conditions.

The effects of climate change, namely more severe and frequent natural disasters, resource scarcity, increased disease and increasing human migration, will present major security challenges in the future. The US Department of Defense, in its 2010 Quadrennial Defence Review, found that climate change is a “threat multiplier that will aggravate stressors abroad such as poverty, environmental degradation, political instability, and social tensions – conditions that can enable terrorist activity and other forms of violence.”\(^10\)

Despite this, climate change and its effects are not specifically mentioned in the 2014 Defence Issues Paper. The Asia Pacific region is on the frontline of climate change, with rising sea levels and an increasing number and intensity of severe weather events. The UN has identified 51 “at-risk” Small Island Development States, of which 20 are in the Pacific region.\(^11\) Climate change will

---

\(^9\) UNSC Resolution 1261, article 19.
disproportionately affect poorer countries, with their economics predominantly based on natural resources and related economic sectors. Women are especially vulnerable to the impact of climate change given they constitute the majority of the world’s poor and face social, economic and political barriers that limit their ability to adapt.

As the impacts of climate change threaten to cause instability it is important Defence clearly outlines how it intends to incorporate these considerations into its vision for the types of threats and responses for Australia, and regional security, in the future.

4.5. Participation of women

Recommendation 6: That the Expert Panel recommends the Minister for Defence immediately appoint a relevant, senior female representative to the Expert Panel

Recommendation 7: That Defence supports the establishment of a female-driven strategic policy advisory board to ensure Defence integrates gender perspectives into its policies and practice.

The Australian Government has recognised the importance of ensuring women’s participation in peace and security efforts through its commitment to the UNSCR 1325 and the implementation of the NAP. The NAP envisages a ‘coordinated, whole of government approach’ to ensuring a ‘gender perspective is considered in peace and security processes both domestically and overseas.’

Given the above, we are disappointed to note that the Expert Panel, appointed by the Minister for Defence to support the development of the White Paper and to oversee the public consultation process, has no female experts. This is despite the stated intention of Defence in its 2014 Defence Issues Paper to attract a more diverse array of recruits to achieve a better gender balance and greater ethnic diversity across all three Services. We recommend the immediate appointment of relevant women to the Expert Panel to ensure gender balance and proper consideration of gender related issues in the final outputs of the Panel.

More broadly, we believe the lack of female representation on the Expert Panel underscores the difficulty Defence faces in accessing the perspectives of women across its decision-making processes. As Defence has acknowledged, women are currently disproportionately under-represented in the Australian military. This is particularly true at the senior management level within the Defence Force. While Defence has committed to increasing female representation in its ranks, the upward progression of women will take time. Given this, it is critical that Defence takes steps to ensure the perspectives of women are incorporated into its decision-making in the interim.

We recommend Defence establish a circuit breaker of under-representation by supporting the establishment of a female-driven advisory board or think tank that will inform senior Defence Force management on gender perspectives when making high level strategic or policy decisions. The think tank would provide advice to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated within the full range of defence policy until there is a greater representation of women at the senior level within Defence. We believe this will go some way to ensure the vital perspectives of women are embedded in Australia’s peace and security efforts at the highest level while Defence simultaneously commits itself to continuing its efforts to increase women’s progression to senior levels within the military.

We acknowledge the role of the Gender Equality Advisory Board in providing guidance on gender equality issues within the Defence workforce. However, the policy advisory board would be distinct from, but complementary to the Advisory Board, in that it would advise on issues of operational and strategic importance.

5. International Relationships

5.1. Supporting UN Peace Operations

Recommendation 8: The Australian Government should increase its personnel contribution to UN peace operations.

Recommendation 9: Building on its UNSC work, the Australian Government should continue to actively engage through the UN Committee on Peacekeeping Operations

While on the UN Security Council, Australia has played a key role in negotiating and improving UN peacekeeping mandates, in particular to ensure they fully integrate women, peace and security elements and are focussed on core priorities such as the protection of civilians and the protection of children. However, there often remains a wide gulf between these carefully worded mandates and the capacity and willingness of peacekeeping missions to provide adequate and inclusive protection on the ground. The increasing demand for peace operations has been unmatched by increased personnel – in 2010 there were more than 124,000 military, police and civilian staff in UN missions, now there are 104,184 across 16 peace operations.

Australia has a long and proud history of peacekeeping, and Australia’s major contributions to operations in Timor-Leste, Solomon Islands and elsewhere is highly regarded. Nevertheless in recent years, Australia’s contribution to UN peacekeeping has dropped significantly. While Australia is the 13th largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget, it is ranked 76th for troop and police contributions.

Well trained, highly equipped and disciplined militaries like Australia cannot stay on the sidelines. Australia needs to resume its active participation and leadership in peacekeeping operations, which would both contribute to improving the effectiveness of UN peace operations in line with their mandates, and give Defence opportunities for on-the-ground experience that is transferable to other contexts.

The Australian Government also has an important role to address this implementation gap by promoting peacekeeping reforms through the UN General Assembly Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (also known as the “C34”), where it has developed a good reputation. Australia can also work with other Security Council members, such as New Zealand, to ensure that its legacy on promoting effective UN peacekeeping mandates is maintained.

---

5.2. Peace and Security in the Asia-Pacific Region

Recommendation 10: That the Defence White Paper should emphasise Australia’s role in promoting regional capacity and commitment to global peace and security frameworks, in line with human rights principles.

Australia’s strong links in Asia and the Pacific as well as the West, increasing depth of experience in multilateral fora such as the UN Security Council and G20, and substantial experience in peacekeeping and arms control endeavours gives it the ability and legitimacy to connect and strengthen global peace and security efforts to the Asia-Pacific context.

To build on this opportunity, Australia, through both the ADF and DFAT, should invest more in the promotion of regional capacity and commitment to global peace and security frameworks and laws such as the Arms Trade Treaty, UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. We refer the panel to the submission made by the Pacific Small Arms Action Group to the present consultation and point to their recommendation for the Defence White Paper to: Outline how Australia will work with the Pacific Islands Forum, and bilaterally to support its neighbouring governments in the Pacific to implement strong arms control standards in line with international and regional best practice.16

Australia should also increase investment in building regional commitment to international human rights principals and the three critical global agendas: the protection of civilians in armed conflict, the protection of children in armed conflict and the women, peace and security agenda. This can be achieved through direct diplomacy, fostering regional dialogue including with civil society networks,17 supporting regional common positions, and the provision of technical assistance and capacity building across governments and security sector agencies.

These efforts should be closely coordinated and linked in with relevant regional organisations such as the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and Association for South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

5.3. Investing in civil military cooperation and coordination

Recommendation 11: Australia should remain committed to civil-military coordination and cooperation, and ensure consistent adherence to civil-military guidelines and best practice.

Australia has made critical contributions to improving civil-military coordination practice in the region in recent years. This has been done in recognition of the growing complexity of actors and organisations that respond in crisis situations, each with ‘different mandates, cultures, responsibilities, modes of operation and objectives’.18 These efforts have included the establishment of the Australian Civil-Military Centre (formerly the Asia Pacific Civil-Military Centre of Excellence) in 2008, increasing engagement with ACFID and operational humanitarian agencies to inform

---

17 For example, the Pacific Small Arms Action Group (PSAAG) and the Global Partnership for Prevention of Armed Conflict in the Pacific
government security and disaster management policies, and support to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to deliver on its civil-military coordination function in the Asia-Pacific region.

Australia’s leadership in the development and dissemination of Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines for the Use of Foreign Military Assets in National Disaster Response Operations, which have just been finalised in 2014 after several years of drafting, is particularly welcome. The guidelines were developed in cooperation with over 30 regional countries and organizations in the Asia-Pacific Conferences on Military Assistance to Disaster Relief Operations (APC MADRO) co-hosted by Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, the United States of America and Thailand. According to UN OCHA, Australia played a crucial role throughout the consultative and drafting processes, with AusAID (now DFAT) a notable supporter and vocal advocate, as well as the AMC and the ADF all lending critical support at various stages.

In a region where military forces are regularly involved in disaster relief activities, these efforts are critical for promoting peace and security as well as regional alignment with humanitarian principles and standards. As such we recommend Australia continue to retain civil-military engagement as a strategic priority both for defence capability and regional defence cooperation and diplomacy.

6. Personnel

6.1. Participation of women

 Recommendation 12: Defence should continue to ensure women are represented and supported in the Australian Defence Force, in line with the National Action Plan and the recommendations of the Broderick and McGregor Reviews.

Under Australia’s NAP, the Australian Government has committed to increasing the participation of women in the ADF and AFP. We strongly recommend that the 2015 Defence White Paper reflect this commitment by providing clear strategies to support the recruitment and retention of women in the ADF and AFP. These strategies should draw from the NAP and the recommendations outlined in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Broderick Review and the McGregor Review.

7. Force Structure and Preparedness

7.1. Humanitarian response preparedness

 Recommendation 13: That Defence should maintain capacity, flexibility and skills to respond to humanitarian disasters, supporting humanitarian actors to provide impartial relief.

Defence must maintain capacity and flexibility to respond to complex threats, in collaboration with multinational alliances, both in our immediate region and further afar where it is strategic to do so. Rather than a rigid geographic focus on the Asia-Pacific region, which may obscure other strategic

---

20 Correspondence with OCHA Regional Office in Bangkok, 11 April 2014.
issues of concern, Defence should be nimble and flexible to respond to a diverse range of threats. In this context, Defence should focus on its support role and ensuring, to the extent possible, it is able to facilitate humanitarian actors to provide relief impartially.

In humanitarian situations, the role of Defence is to provide high-impact, short-duration assistance and relief efforts to establish conditions conducive to delivering effective ongoing relief provisions by specialist government and non-government providers.\(^{22}\) In complex emergency situations, there is a heightened need for military forces to gain a detailed understanding of the political dynamics within their operating area, focusing on the population, not just terrain or adversaries.\(^{23}\)

Defence should continue to build capabilities on preparedness and contingency planning for the provision of logistical support in response to humanitarian crises where Australia has strategic advantage and capability. This planning should be done in consultation and partnership with other government and non-government agencies involved in the provision of humanitarian relief. Further, the recent Ebola Virus Outbreak in West Africa has highlighted the increasingly complex humanitarian situations Defence may be drawn into in the future. Planning and preparedness for such situations should be integrated into Defence training rosters.

It is of vital importance that Defence ensure gender-sensitive training is provided to all ADF personnel when deployed to support humanitarian assistance.

8. Conclusion
The development of the 2015 Defence White Paper presents Australia’s Defence Community with an important opportunity to further Australia’s leadership and capabilities to promote regional peace and security and further the involvement of women in all levels of Defence operation. Defence should build on its leadership and commitment to the Women, Peace and Security agenda and further embed the current NAP, and its successor plan, into Defence policy and practice.

Further, Australia should invest in, and scale-up, its peacekeeping capacities to ensure that Australia is a professional peacekeeping and conflict prevention defence force. While senior leaders within the Defence Community have reiterated their commitment to gender equality, the Defence White Paper provides Defence an important opportunity to embed these prior commitments into its strategic outlook.

Finally, the white paper should address the changing nature of threats and insecurity, most pressing among these, the prospects of increasing insecurity related to climate change. The White Paper process gives Defence the opportunity to set out a vision for preventing instability and crisis and contributing to the creation of global and regional security environments conducive to the enjoyment of human rights and freedoms.

---

\(^{22}\) ACMC and ACFID, ‘Same Space Different Mandate,’ p.23.