

SOHQ / R23755273

Chief of Army's Senior Advisory Committee

SUBMISSION 05/15

TITLE: SOCOMD Command Review and Restructure

SPONSORING MEMBER: SOCAUST

SPONSOR'S EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE: To **note** the assessment of systemic vulnerabilities in SOCOMD structure, function and resourcing that have been identified from internal analysis throughout 2015; and to identify internal reforms to address these challenges and articulate a recommended way forward to promote continual improvement.

KEY JUDGEMENTS: The dynamic and evolving security environment demands a regular review of the core functional outputs, structures and manning of SOCOMD. Analysis in 2015 concluded that there is an imperative for both immediate internal action and subsequent force design developments. The evolution of SOCOMD role and tasks alongside the incremental adjustments to SOHQ functions and resourcing over the last 12 years has resulted in a systemic imbalance between the Functional Command and operational command and control outputs. Internal reform to address this imbalance is the most critical action objective, prior to AHQ led analysis in the context of broader Army modernisation objectives to enable comprehensive remediation outcomes. This action is aimed to address critical command, control and administrative capacity shortfalls to promote improved delivery of SO effects and functions. The proposed adjustments must be aligned with current Army Command and Defence Strategic reform efforts, and consistent with the longer term vision for the future ADF Special Operations capability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. CASAC **note** the imperatives for change, design principles and SOCAUST guidance that informed the SOCOMD restructure analysis.
2. CASAC **note** the immediate actions that SOCAUST will apply within next six months in response to identified deficiencies (Phase 1).
3. CASAC **note** the proposed subsequent SOCOMD restructure actions (Phases 2 and 3) requiring AHQ lead informed by Defence level outcomes.
4. CASAC **note** that personnel augmentation to address immediate SOCAUST concerns will be sought via CA, consistent with projected workforce growth to be confirmed by Defence White Paper 2015 (DWP15), Force Structure Review (FSR) and AHQ led Command Review outcomes.

CONSULTATION: The SOCOMD restructure submission is an outcome of four SOHQ led working group forums and activities held throughout 2015. The proposal also incorporates external input from key stakeholders in the Non Service Group and AHQ staff.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: A phased approach is required to evolve the Command over a number of years with each phase subject to financial impact assessment. Phase 1 involves immediate internal reorganisation that in addition to a range of non workforce growth solutions, will seek to address capacity and oversight weaknesses via a moderate workforce growth proposal to address the most critical capacity deficiencies that cannot be adequately accounted for by functional and structural reform. Subsequent Phase 2 initiatives will be based on established Army modernisation mechanisms including proposals for a SOHQ UER led by HMSP-A, the incorporation of DWP15/FSR outcomes and the development of infrastructure costs to consolidate SOHQ in the Russell precinct. Phase 3 involves longer term efforts based on Joint SO effects that are yet to be fully scoped and costed, however are consistent with the SO Strategic Plan.

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Date authorised: 16 October 2015

Reference:

- A. CDF Directive 16/03: Establishment of SOCOMD dated 11 Apr 03
- B. CASC Minutes 12/11: SOCOMD FMR Report dated 1 Sep 11
- C. DCA Directive 01/15 Governance Remediation of SASR dated 25 Mar 15

BACKGROUND

1. The SOCOMD Mission is to provide ready and relevant forces to conduct SO across the operational continuum in a joint, combined and/or interagency environment in support of Australia's national interests.
2. In accordance with reference A, SOCOMD was established in 2003 at Government direction. The establishment of the Command required the transfer of HQSO from LCOMD and SOHQ was subsequently established with an initial workforce of 49 personnel, split between Sydney (HQUEST) and Canberra (R5). Since 2003 there have been periodic reviews of the form and functions of SOHQ with the last SOHQ Unit Establishment Review (UER) and Force Modernisation Review (FMR (ref B) conducted in 2011.
3. Since assuming the appointment, SOCAUST, has undertaken analysis of the form, function and performance of the Command. These efforts extended beyond the normal focus of a Commander in the course of specified and implied responsibilities as a significant range of performance, compliance, governance, behavioural and capability matters had come to light. These matters in combination formed the basis of CA (Morrison) direction to urgently identify the causes and remediate these with minimal impact on capability and readiness.
4. Several internal and independent (DSTO, Noetic, AHQ) reviews conducted since February 2015 identified an extensive range of issues. The initial manifestation of these was most dense in SASR, and attracted due focus. However deeper analysis highlighted that many of the problems reported at SASR were symptomatic of deeper and more complex systemic issues that extended across SOCOMD, and in some cases, into Army.
5. Prior efforts within SOCOMD in 2014 to respond to what appeared to be a steady and escalating stream of behavioural and compliance discrepancies were significant. However, a combination of factors including operational tempo, organisational capacity and limited understanding of causality inhibited the effectiveness (and take up) of early remediation initiatives.
6. Efforts to better understand the source and nature of problems consistently uncovered further issues. Command and staff efforts to act on and retire this growing list of issues increasingly impacted on staff capacity. Concurrent high operational tempo demanded and received priority attention, often at the expense of other functions in the areas of governance, FORGEN and modernisation. Extensive external audits led by AHQ gave little to no indication of many of these problems, and their effectiveness was later to be called into question. Excellent (justified) operational performance by SOCOMD combined with an elevated matched reputation, conveyed a strong external impression that all was well. But it was not.

7. In the first quarter of 2015, additional problems came to light which in scale and substance questioned the effectiveness of Command oversight, process compliance, behaviour and culture. These challenged the assumption that SOCOMD retained the capacity to self remediate and culminated in direction to impose a RESET phase on SASR, temporarily withdraw base command responsibility from CO SASR and to request Army to lead a Governance Remediation effort (ref C). Concurrent with this, partnered initiatives to analyse causality of these problems including a significant number of unacceptable behaviour incidents and allegations, highlighted interconnected cultural and attitudinal issues.

8. This paper provides a Commanders overview of contemporary challenges facing SOCOMD, initial lessons learned as a result and desired approaches to enduringly remediate these and set the Command for current and emerging requirements.

The Problem and Contributing Causes

9. SOCOMD is arguably one of the most capable and operationally experienced organisations of its type in the world. Its people, its equipment and its operational record are recognised and respected at home and internationally. The reputation that comes with this is built on a strong and well deserved foundation of achievement established at substantial cost by previous generations. Over the last 12 years, this Command has sustained almost continuously, forces on combat operations concurrent to the sustained maintenance of high readiness forces for domestic CT and Special Recovery operations. This sustained commitment and its associated tempo has come at considerable cost and sacrifice. Today, current and emerging threats give every indication that the requirement for the capabilities represented by SOCOMD will be sustained and may even increase.

10. Despite this, at the outset of 2015, the 'strategic health' of SOCOMD was poor; in some areas to the point of dysfunction. In simple terms, the demands and outputs placed on SOCOMD over an extended period exceeded its capacity to sustain. Operational imperatives by direction were the highest priority and these arguably became the dominant factor influencing SOCOMD for over a decade. Design, staff capacity, processes and force structure were not well aligned to these requirements and imposed a continuous requirement to prioritise effort. At unit level, and especially in SASR this often forced compromises in the Governance and FORGEN arena. Generationally, each leadership team responded to these challenges as they arose and in many cases, pragmatic and understandable compromises resulted. For a time, these resolved the issues of the day. However, with the sustained operational imperative demanding prioritised attention, finite capacity often meant that these compromises were continuously accommodated in the FORGEN and Governance space. OPGEN dominated a Command model that was not by design or capacity, established to sustain this and progressively risks and multi-order effects accumulated.

11. Reflecting in hindsight on the systemic and design shortfalls that underpinned this predicament, if there was any admission of organisational failing, it was that SOCOMD's considerable ability to respond to symptoms, address emerging problems, generate extraordinary staff tempo and sustain such a broad range of outputs unintentionally masked the need for more fundamental organisational review and reform. This was in part exacerbated by a culture within SOCOMD that preferred internal solutions and was oriented in focus towards operations combined with an unconscious neglect by Army, focussed on BEERSHEBA and domestic FORGEN. This unintentional combination was not sustainable.

12. These conditions and cumulative risk factors were broadly known and had been for many years. An historic review of SOCOMD modernisation undertakings demonstrate that in the last 15 years, on at least three previous occasions, SOCAUST led analysis identified with substantial consistency, key forced design, structure and capability shortcomings requiring remediation. On each occasion, the issue wasn't so much identifying the problem and suggesting solutions. It was transitioning from this within Army and Defence to implementation and realisation.

13. For many years, and for a range of reasons, risk factors were managed and the compromises required to sustain this, led to many ad hoc arrangements becoming normalised. In the 2nd half of 2014, the short notice response to Ukraine illustrated these shortfalls and tested the Command almost to breaking point, but remained largely unknown to Army. This event dislocated efforts by the then SOCAUST to reform the Command and address significant cultural and behavioural issues that had come to the attention of CA and CDF. This operational imperative also required significant cross levelling within SOHQ and SASR at the expense of core functions and imposed tempo across the Command that resulted in substantial organisational stressors to its people and outputs.

14. Immediately following this period, a further range of incidents emerged in governance, compliance and behaviour which for a period of months, were of sufficient scale and significance to attract the concern of CA as to the potential negative impact this might have on the hard earned reputation of the Command.

15. A review of causality, beyond the observations already offered highlighted deficiencies in a range of areas. Given the role and responsibilities of SOCOMD, these demanded urgent attention and the adoption of an approach that sought decisive action without impact on high readiness contingency forces. The more significant of these included:

16. **Accountability, Responsibility and Tempo.** SOCOMD, an organisation of approximately 2350 people, holds ██████████ responsibilities resulting in over 60% of its force being held at any one time at less than 7 days NTM. This is sustained in addition to deployed force operations. Its HQ which currently consists of 88 personnel performs the RTS responsibilities of a Functional Command ██████████ the CLM, training and preparedness functions of a Bde HQ ██████████; the Op readiness and OPGEN functions of HQ 1 Div ██████████ many of the operational oversight and Planning functions of HQ JOC and a significant range of engagements, advisory and representational functions at the strategic level including Defence, the AIC and the IA environment. Its annual budget is ██████████ and it maintains the largest IE program within Army, and by overall program value per capita, in Defence. Its individual and collective training schedule involves over 180 courses and 60 collective training exercises not including OPGEN/CERTEX activities. The scale of this tempo is illustrated in the transactions in one unit (SASR) magazine where in a 3-4 month period, the number equated to the equivalent of a Combat Bde (Readying) yearly number of transactions. It has ██████████ operational liaison and embed positions overseas at any one time, and in the last 10 months alone in addition to major operational commitments, has deployed over 90 individuals. These figures do not include the considerable tempo, complexity and ongoing employment of elements committed to Unconventional Operations.

17. **Capacity of the HQ.** SOHQ is attempting to be a Functional Command, a standing component of JOC for operations and a substantial contributor in the strategic domain. In

attempting to undertake all these tasks it has had to prioritise the immediate and urgent often at the expense of the important and longer term. It is too flat and in capacity terms, too small for its purpose and the sustained tempo it oversees. This has perhaps been the most significant risk factor contributing to failures to identify, act and remediate the multiple transgressions of governance, accountability and behaviour witnessed over the last 2 years. A fundamental rethink is required to identify its role and responsibilities so as to inform design in the execution of these. From the outset of SOCOMD being established, the structure, functions and processes within SOHQ and thereby reflected across the Command, have been directly shaped by operational imperatives. This domination by operational commitments and associated OPGEN outputs has resulted in pragmatic compromises to broader FORGEN and governance functions. The net result of this priority of effort has manifested in both functional and cultural factors that places Functional Command and Unit responsibilities for governance in particular to a lower order than the focus on operational outputs, resulting in outcomes that are inconsistent with Army's mandated accountabilities.

18. **Operational Imperative.** This dominant focus on operational factors over a sustained period of time has further eroded broader Command functions by promoting the primacy of Unit identities and cultures that have devalued a sense of unified SOCOMD effort. The potency of association with Unit brands resulted in attitudes and expectations that were sometimes inconsistent with Army Values and have inhibited more comprehensive modernisation themes. While the operational performance of SOCOMD Units in contemporary operations has been acclaimed and rightly celebrated, the negative impacts of this sometimes overwhelming and unbalanced effort towards operational imperatives has resulted in numerous governance and cultural vulnerabilities.

19. **Collective Training.** A further area of concern related to SOHQ capacity has been identified with the limitations currently experienced in the quality and consistency of collective training outputs at the Command level. Despite the world class nature of SO individual training, the ability of SOCOMD to direct and develop collective training frameworks directly linked to validation and certification actions, is constrained by the staff capacity to adequately replicate training management functions of the quality exhibited within Forces Command. This further impedes the evolution from a Unit focused culture to a Command led unity of purpose that seeks to combine SO effects and resources to more effectively meet the challenges of the contemporary security environment.

20. **Capability Gaps.** A review in concert with CJOPS of related full mission profile level collective training events, particularly within Special Recovery and Counter Terrorism operational scenarios, has identified a series of capability gaps and issues for remediation that remain to be addressed. While the status of extant capability remains credible relative to the directed preparedness directives, the ability to develop capability solutions to identified deficiencies and desired enhancements has not been realised. This is primarily due to the constraints of staff capacity to progress these developments and influence the broader Army and Joint capability development processes. This situation further impedes the tempo and confidence in which SOCOMD can adapt and evolve capability that better reflects contemporary and emerging security challenges.

21. **Workforce Management and Professional Development.** SOCOMD by request has largely retained a significant degree of oversight of the professional development and career management of its people. This function and the expectations that come with it are not

matched with a capacity to do so within SOCOMD. Strategic workforce mechanisms to support Special Operations organisational requirements are poor, operational imperatives have imposed a range of posting and career decisions that translate into career narrowness and a combination of factors including unit oriented Selection processes and a sustained large number of overseas LO and embed positions now make it difficult for the Command to fill key appointments with candidates of sufficient quality and experience.

22. **Inconsistent Modernisation Effort.** Due to the focus on current operations the majority of SOCOMD'S effort has been in support of these. While no one would argue the necessity to support operations, this has come at the expense of modernisation. As a consequence, there has been a lack of 'intellectual' investment in the future of SOCOMD which has meant that modernisation has been 'ad hoc' and not well thought through. Additionally, there has been a reticence to report deficiencies in capability and to make do with what is in place. SOCOMD has also developed an isolationist approach to modernisation by not effectively integrating its approach and personnel with Army through HMSP-A. This has resulted in missed opportunities to leverage Army's modernisation efforts with the needs of SOCOMD. As such, the capability to undertake SO has slowly diminished over time.

23. **Better integration with Defence and Army** SOCOMD was in many ways isolated (principally by its own doing) from the rest of Army and Defence and often undertakes functions that replicate what is already in place. This plays out in SOCOMD by not having a collaborative working relationship with Army as say FORCOMD. Consideration needs to be given to where structures and capabilities already exist that SOCOMD should utilise (e.g. using the current OPGEN mechanism in place for Certification, leveraging HMSP-A in modernising the Command, etc..). Additionally, consideration is required as to where SOCOMD staff should be embedded across Army and Defence to provide an informed SO perspective 'at the source' of policy; concept development and experimentation; force options testing; and capability development, acquisition and sustainment. Functions and support already available in other parts of Army and Defence, need to be better used by SOCOMD to alleviate capacity shortfalls.

24. **Capacity of SASR to concurrently FORGEN and OPGEN.** SASR is a Regiment commanded by a LTCOL. As impressive as this unit and its people are, they are continually called on to oversee a range, tempo and complexity of functions, accountabilities and outputs which are closer to that of a conventional Brigade. This cannot be uniformly achieved to required standards without compromise. The responsibilities placed on a single CO to both Command a very busy base, FORGEN and largely OPGEN what is arguably the most complex unit in Army while also remaining a high readiness JTF commander for SRO and DCT response in the West imposes a standing contradiction for this appointment that is not reconcilable within the resources of authorities of the appointment. This is not unique to SASR with the same factors of scale, complexity and tempo applying for 2 Cdo Regiment. Although not intended to be interpreted literally, both SASR and 2 Cdo undertake a rate, tempo and complexity of activity on an annual basis without a rest FGC far more analogous to a Bde, than a unit structure.

25. To this point, a wide range of deficiencies, gaps and metrics have been discussed which convey a theme of a very busy Command not fully fit for purpose and displaying an extensive range of risks which, given the importance of the contingencies maintained, demand urgent attention. From this, one should be drawn in any inquiry of causality to ask how can

an organisation of this status, reputation and manned by such high quality individuals, have found itself in this predicament? This is as much a question (and responsibility?) for Army and the ADF, as it is for SOCOMD. Any solution, must involve all three. Significant factors worthy of deeper consideration are the cultural, attitudinal and behavioural outlooks and how these nest, or in some cases, contribute to the challenge.

Culture, Attitude and Behaviour.

26. The following section explains an extensive range of culture, attitude and behaviour insights identified within SOCOMD as a result of analysis into the causes and contributing factors of existing problems. The issues themselves are provided for context and insight only, as all have or are being dealt with through agreed mechanisms. One key insight is that lapses in this area does have unintended consequences which, if unchecked, can have strategic implications across an organisation.

27. On top of an already extensive list of standing unacceptable behaviour matters then being addressed by SOCOMD, early in 2015, a report was provided to CDF citing [REDACTED] allegations of unacceptable behaviour of members of SASR while deployed on operations in Afghanistan over a period of seven years commencing from 2007. From this, it was clear that practically and cumulatively, the quantity and nature of the total standing allegations and known acts of unacceptable behaviour and other various failure to comply issues had grown too large to meaningfully manage through formal processes of administrative and disciplinary action. Further, it was apparent that the sum of these incidents significantly contradicted the public and Defence view of the quality and performance of special operations. Simply reacting to these events as had been done in the past had created a vicious cycle of actions that generated destructive secondary effects across and within the organisation. As Commander, SOCAUST sought an approach that targeted the causes of the issues identified at the unit level and that avoided the unsuccessful approaches of the past. In essence, it was determined that causality in this case was a deficit of trust borne of incrementally compromised standards across parts of the SOCOMD hierarchy and complicated by a period of extended operational deployment and concomitant sacrifice which through a mindset of exceptionalism, had for some, become a confected justification for behaviours and outlooks, unacceptable elsewhere in Defence.

28. SOCAUST was strongly informed by the knowledge that prior valiant attempts by his predecessor to address this and wider cultural issues across SOCOMD had resulted in mixed outcomes. Strong evidence existed that negative unit, cultural and organisational attitudes had become entrenched and to a degree, was resilient to efforts to reform given how entwined they were with the positive behaviours that were so frequently and publically applauded. Clearly something new was required.

29. SOCAUST was also informed by candid feedback from FVEY SOF counterparts, [REDACTED] This was felt to be relevant as many of the challenges and operational tempo experiences in sustained combat against AQI, the Taliban and Daech were broadly similar amongst the FVEY SOF community. This feedback illustrated that SOCOMD were not alone when it came to experiencing cultural, behavioural and attitudinal challenges from sustained high tempo combat operations against a resilient adversary often not bound by the same rules and ethics as Western forces. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

30. As a result and as part of a more comprehensive approach, SOCAUST invited each and every member to contact and advise him of any unacceptable behaviour they had witnessed or conducted since joining the Command. The response was significant.

31. From this feedback, it was learned that drinking on operations, tacitly endorsed by the leadership, had over years resulted in an inherited culture that was endemic across deployed SOCOMD forces and had become normalised. The extended period over which this applied, translated into generational behaviours which involved all ranks including COs, RSMs and higher. Many involved subsequently migrated to higher ranks, more demanding appointments or to higher HQ. Over time, the entire command became infused with a degree of organisational blindness to these practices and carried forward with them the attitudinal outlook that the operational end and the sacrifice made on the battlefield, was a partial justification.

32. SOCAUST concluded that overall, this was not about alcohol. Unauthorised consumption of alcohol was a symptom and a contributing factor to risks and behaviours that went well beyond the alcohol question.

33. This behaviour was encouraged through the eventual establishment of a drinking facility called the 'Fat Ladies Arms' which allowed for easy access to quantities of alcohol and was so extensively used that it is difficult not to conclude that many in the SOCOMD chain of command were aware of this.

"I have seen alcohol consumed on every operation since 1999 by every rank up to and including JTF and Unit commanders..." SGT Z, 10 operational tours

34. The extensive consumption of alcohol over time, in many cases, translated into risky or unacceptable behaviour with 2nd and 3rd order implications across the organisation. The enduring implications more concerningly manifested in Command, Leadership, management and cultural terms. These manifestations of unacceptable behaviour were incremental and across years and rotations, became generationally normalised. At some point, this normalisation became so extensive and pervasive that the deployed Chain of Command became actually or wilfully blind to this.

*"I condoned and was directly involved with facilitating the approved supply of Alcohol to [REDACTED]. I was also tasked with and supplied the CO and RSM SOTG with bottles of 15 yr old Scotch."
SGT Y, 12 operational tours*

35. Almost everyone concerned, appeared genuine in their belief that the use of alcohol on operations was as a coping mechanism for stress, grief and high tempo and while all acknowledged it was technically wrong, almost all agreed that under the circumstances, this was a reasonable method of dealing with the challenges that SOCOMD face as a result of extended high intensity operations. The fact that alcohol consumption is a known risk factor for those exhibiting mental health symptoms, rather than a treatment, appears to have been extensively ignored.

36. Most had formed a mindset that their sacrifice and sustained operational tempo warranted their actions, and in some degree excused lapses or variations on standards because the operational imperatives and their seriousness were judged to be so significant. This outlook was shared even at more senior ranks.

37. Many believed that 'outsiders' didn't fully appreciate the challenges and sacrifice being made by the Command over so many years, and were deeply concerned that the unique SOF context was not appreciated. This context in turn, became for some, a logic for exceptionalism warranting the application of different rules and behaviours to those applied to other ADF members. In some cases, this unique context, 'drinking culture' and operational sacrifice was used as an excuse in mitigation by those who were being formally disciplined for known transgressions of directed behaviour by CJTF633 or within SOCOMD.

"I consumed alcohol with the CO and RSM of SOTG along with the rest of the TG from 1300 throughout the remainder of the day and into the evening....I personally drank alcohol with [REDACTED] and on the same deployment I saw a SASR Brigadier intoxicated in Kabul." CPL X

38. In many recent cases where individuals or groups were being disciplined for unacceptable behaviour linked to alcohol, the attitude within parts of SOCOMD appeared to be closer to "the crime is actually being caught." Whereas, for every individual caught and disciplined, it became in their eyes a case of double standards because they were being prosecuted for behaviour that they saw as sanctioned by their immediate SOF leadership and tacitly endorsed at higher levels. This led to conditions and attitudes which increasingly questioned the consistency of the Chain of Command, its courage to act in the face of these problems and the suggestion that many in appointments of authority had become compromised. Almost every letter from a SNCO and Officer admitted to this and from this I conclude a degree of learned helplessness prevailed within several areas of SOCOMD when it came to dealing with a range of 'difficult' issues.

"The tacit approval from the hierarchy of the SOTG caused a number of secondary effects in the command relationship....this created double standards that was apparent during the rotation and did not facilitate a healthy working dynamic....social activities between [REDACTED] senior ADF members, [REDACTED] and Special forces groups where alcohol was consumed were common place." CAPT Y

39. That these behaviours appear to have been duplicated within [REDACTED] and also other [REDACTED] units deployed in the MER was a contributing factor which did not excuse these behaviours, but does provide some insight into risk and behavioural challenges across the [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] who rendered extensive and sustained operational service.

40. These behaviours were not confined to SASR personnel, and appear to equally involve 2 Cdo Regiment and other SOCOMD personnel. There is evidence to suggest that heavy consumption of alcohol may still be a concerning behaviour and risk factor with many in SOCOMD today. Action to address this is being progressed under existing programs supported by Defence, Army and SOCOMD through Plan SALUS.

41. These observations are not provided to invite criticism or derision of a Command and a group of people who have undertaken, achieved and sacrificed so much over more than a decade. For a group that constitute less than 5% of the ADF, average 7 combat deployments and have sustained almost 50% of the casualties, the unparalleled candour of this report is offered as a basis for insight, understanding and shared senior leader purpose towards remediating the most serious issues identified.

The Solution

42. With the agreement of CA, two key areas of focus for the Command were pursued; remediating the then serious endemic problems that were plaguing SOCOMD and building the future capability that SOCOMD needs to successfully undertake directed missions. These needed to occur in parallel if both the symptoms and the causes were to be addressed.

43. A significant number of initiatives at Command and unit level are now in place that apply lessons from this and attempt to prevent a recurrence. These heavily emphasise personal and shared accountability, mature acceptance of the importance and application of standards, an organisation culture of learning from mistakes as an essential basis for agility, innovation and relevance and finally, a transparent and consistent Command approach to those who make errors of judgment where their attitude and character are not in doubt and where reform, redemption and return to normal duties is the over-riding goal.

44. In a unit and a Command where 9 months ago the number and nature of incidents being addressed almost threatened to overwhelm the capacity of the Command to resolve, there has now been a period of almost 6 months where nil major incidents have been reported from SASR and the overall number across the command has reduced substantially. While the initial effort to challenge and change the Command and the associated Command climate in light of all these difficulties was admittedly confronting, painful and stressful, the eventual response of the Command to the imperative it faced, has in the judgement of SOCAUST, been remarkable and positive. But it is not yet resolved or irreversible.

45. Changing attitude and behaviour alone is not a solution to the range of wider challenges confronting SOCOMD just now. It was however the most critical first step and an enduring essential condition. Wider causal factors in the structure and design of SOCOMD remain unresolved and if not remediated, may contribute to a recurrence of similar problems and behaviours at some future point. This action does however, go a long way to setting more positive conditions for meaningful reform to now proceed.

46. Meaningful reform that addresses causes and prevents the recurrence of the issues already discussed require a range of wider supporting actions that involve both internal reform that has already been initiated by SOCAUST and remediation and development issues that are beyond the capacity of SOCOMD. The key conclusions are:

- a. The scale of challenges faced by SOCOMD and the causal factors require urgent attention to improve the capacity and consistency in command, control and administration functions to support the full range of SO capability effects;
- b. SOCOMD internal reform that is within SOCAUST extant authorities and resources needs to address the most critical identified shortfalls for immediate action, focused on functional design of the Command;
- c. Functional design issues for immediate action involving factors beyond the remit and resources of SOCOMD will require further AHQ led development and resourcing initiatives; and
- d. Deeper reform to appropriately balance the breadth of Functional Command and global operational responsibilities will be required as DWP15, FSR and AHQ led Command Review outcomes are developed

Restructure Principles

47. The scope of immediate actions that will be initiated by SOCAUST have been developed consistent with the following restructure principles that are assessed in consultation with DG SP-A to have utility for longer term modernisation outcomes:

- a. Current [REDACTED] directed tasks for SOCOMD were used as the basis for non discretionary outputs.
- b. The current SOCOMD and SOHQ mission statements are the basis for functional outputs.
- c. The structure, capacity and functions of SOHQ need to evolve to promote the following outcomes:
 - (1) SOCAUST ability to represent the ADF SO capability at the strategic level.
 - (2) Maintain a capacity for management of constant Operations, while complementing but not duplicating functions that are HQJOC responsibilities.
 - (3) Deliver balanced and sustainable FORGEN and OPGEN capacity that is not compromised by fluctuations in operational tempo. Restructure should improve SOCOMD capacity to integrate, train and certify high readiness SO JTF particularly with joint capability enablers not organic to SOCOMD.
 - (4) Divesting specified capability development functions to VCDF Group or CASG should be considered where consistent with First Principles Review (FPR) outcomes.

- (5) A more balanced and skill focused blend of SF qualified and non qualified (SFSS) personnel are required across SOHQ and the Command to enable sustainable functions and structures. Reducing the dependency on SF Reserve staff to fill critical roles within SOHQ is a supporting effort.
- d. Proposed restructure will be aligned with a longer term vision of the ADF SO capability and consistent with FPR, DWP15 and FSR.
- e. Adoption of a phased approach to the SOCOMD restructure that addresses immediate action (Phase 1 - short term six month time frame); immediate action requiring AHQ led development and Defence level outcomes (Phase 2 - medium term three year time frame); and longer term reforms beyond three years (Phase 3).

Recommendation 1: CASAC note the imperatives for change, design principles and SOCAUST guidance that informed the SOCOMD restructure analysis.

SOCOMD RESTRUCTURE PHASE 1 – IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

48. Phase 1 (graphical representation at enclosure 1), changes reflect specific effects that address identified deficiencies and will be achieved by the accompanying actions:
- a. Line of Effort 1 – Enhanced command focus to manage FORGEN outcomes and related governance and administrative responsibilities.
 - (1) Assign 1 Star officer with Formation Command authorities for command and control of SOCOMD Units.
 - (2) Adjust extant SOHQ staff allocation to reflect Formation level FORGEN role and responsibilities, noting lack of depth in critical functions cannot be addressed with extant resources.
 - (3) Assign O5 base commander for Campbell Barracks to address contradiction of CO SASR as standing JTF commander and base command responsibilities, noting this will require external augmentation.
 - (4) Assign O5/O6 base commander for Special Operations Working Area (SOWA), Holsworthy to address contradiction of CO 2 CDO as standing JTF commander and base command responsibilities, noting intent that this role will be allocated to CO SFTC/SO Training Authority.
 - b. Line of Effort 2 – Enhanced command focus to manage Functional Command responsibilities.
 - (1) Assign 1 Star officer as Chief of Staff responsible for primary interface with AHQ, other Functional Commands and the Joint and Departmental environment to manage capability development, capability management, personnel management, Chief Information Officer and strategic planning outputs.

- (2) Adjust extant SOHQ staff allocation to provide capacity for these functions, noting lack of depth in critical functions cannot be addressed with extant resources.
- c. Line of Effort 3 – Stabilise competing demands of concurrent FORGEN and OPGEN outputs.
 - (1) Assign O6 SF officer with J3 and J2 staff (based on extant DSOP function) with responsibilities for control and management of direct command, component command and TECHCON related missions.
 - (2) Assign primary role to 1 CDO REGT as core of deployable CJSOTF capability.
 - (3) Assign O6 SF officer as SO Training Authority for command and management of SFTC and PTS and to develop and manage SO Training Management Framework to ensure alignment of collective training to certification action consistent with preparedness directives.
- d. Line of Effort 4 – Enhance SOCAUST ability to represent ADF SO capability at the strategic level.
 - (1) Establishment of a Commander's Advisory Group with increased capacity for strategic stakeholder engagement based on extant POLAD and J5 staff.
 - (2) Assign O6 SF officer as DJIALO to support SOCAUST – completed and resourced.

Recommendation 2: CASAC note the immediate actions that SOCAUST will apply within the next 6 months in response to identified deficiencies (Phase 1).

SOCOMD RESTRUCTURE PHASES 2 AND 3

49. The subsequent restructure actions are aimed to deepen the reforms already commenced within SOCOMD to address a range of deficiencies, but are beyond the resources and/or authorities of SOCOMD to progress and require the outcomes of Army and Defence level programs including DWP15, FSR and AHQ led Command review. Therefore a phased approach has been adopted to calibrate the tempo of change to these strategic drivers.

- a. Phase 2 - Medium Term. This primarily involves proposed HMSP-A led analysis of SOCOMD design in the context of FSR and FPR outcomes, through an SOHQ UER in 2016. Supporting efforts include the progression of SOHQ collocation within Russell precinct and the achievement of incremental staff augmentation in critical functions that have insufficient capacity and depth.
- b. Phase 3 - Longer Term. Developing SOCOMD Joint and Strategic capacity commensurate with SO Strategic Plan.

Recommendation 3: CASAC note the proposed subsequent SOCOMD restructure actions (Phases 2 and 3) requiring AHQ lead and informed by Defence level outcomes.

RESOURCES

50. The Phase 1 restructure is designed to enhance the effectiveness of command, control and administration within SOCOMD by providing greater clarity and alignment of responsibilities. While the key enhancements can be achieved by functional restructure, the limited extant staff capacity cannot address the lack of depth within critical functions. Without some incremental augmentation, the effectiveness of these enhancements will be constrained.

51. Internal analysis has identified 25 additional positions that would substantially enhance the effectiveness of SOCOMD command, control and administration by addressing the constraint of limited staff capacity that has led to a lack of appropriate prioritisation of key functions (at enclosure 2). Pending confirmation of FSR outcomes and projected personnel growth, SOCAUST intends to seek CA approval for early growth by STPP for a fixed period of two years that will be synchronised with FSR workforce guidance planning. In addition, SOCAUST seeks HMSP-A assessment from the planned 2016 Command UER to validate this assessment and identify emergent opportunities to provide augmentation for these functions where practicable.

52. Additional financial resources are also forecast to progress SOHQ collocation objectives. The factors that determined the location of SOHQ with HQJOC while appropriate to the time are now inconsistent with the strategic role and focus of SOHQ. While the retention of a SO OPGEN capacity within HQJOC is expected, the bulk of SOHQ is assessed to be more effective if both collocated as an entity and situated within the Russell precinct. In order to progress the proposal, an Estate Investment Requirement (EIR) has been raised to develop costed options for consolidating SOHQ in the Russell precinct. The feasibility of the proposal and subsequent resource requirements remain subject to further analysis and development within Phase 2.

Recommendation 4: CASAC note that personnel augmentation will be sought via CA, consistent with projected workforce growth to be confirmed by Defence White Paper 2015 (DWP15), Force Structure Review (FSR) and AHQ led Command Review outcomes.

CONCLUSION

53. SOCOMD has conducted extensive administrative remediation and modernisation analysis and planning over the last 12 months to address a range of significant challenges within the Command's Command, Leadership, Governance and Accountability functions. The assessment outlined in this submission is a transparent view of the current shortcomings of SOCOMD to function effectively due to these cumulative and systemic shortcomings that have manifested over some time into administrative and governance vulnerabilities. These issues detracted from the quality of operational capability and reputation to the extent that the level of intervention required a significant recalibration of governance, capability management, force generation and cultural factors that remains ongoing.

54. The key outcome leading from this assessment is the modernisation of command and control functions to institutionalise the remediation effects and position SOCOMD to more effectively function as the Defence capability with responsibility for undertaking Special Operations in support of Australia's national interests. This submission outlines the immediate actions that SOCAUST will implement, involving internal reform and redistribution of extant resources to be actioned before the end of 2015. It is however assessed that this initiative will be constrained by limited capacity without a degree of augmentation from Army resources. While it is acknowledged that personnel growth has been forecast as a potential DWP15 outcome, increasing the capacity of the most critical functions before this determination is assessed as central to the Command's modernisation objectives.