



Stephen Smith MP
Minister for Defence

M E D I A R E L E A S E

30 January 2012

Defence Force Posture Review Release of Progress Report

Minister for Defence Stephen Smith today released a progress report from the expert panel preparing the Defence Force Posture Review.

The Force Posture Review is addressing the range of present and emerging global, regional and national strategic and security factors which require careful consideration for the future. It is being undertaken by the Department of Defence and overseen by an expert panel comprising two of Australia's leading national security experts, Dr Allan Hawke and Mr Ric Smith, both former Secretaries of the Department of Defence.

These strategic and security factors include:

- the rise of the Asia-Pacific as a region of global strategic significance;
- the rise of the Indian Ocean rim as a region of global strategic significance;
- the growth of military power projection capabilities of countries in the Asia Pacific;
- the growing need for the provision of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief following extreme events in the Asia Pacific region; and
- energy security and security issues associated with expanding offshore resource exploitation in our North West and Northern approaches.

The Force Posture Review report will feed into the 2014 Defence White Paper.

“It is essential that the Australian Defence Force (ADF) is appropriately positioned for the future”, Mr Smith said.

“The progress report offers a range of thoughts and options on how the ADF could be better geographically positioned to respond in a timely way to Australia's strategic and security demands,” said Mr Smith.

The progress report points to the Asia Pacific Century as reinforcing the need for a force posture that can support operations in Australia's Northern and Western approaches, as well as operations with our partners in the wider Asia Pacific region and the Indian Ocean Rim.

The Review Panel identifies Defence's international engagement as a significant strategic asset.

Dr Hawke and Mr Smith point to expanding maritime capabilities as significantly influencing Australia's future force posture. Joint amphibious capability is envisaged as having a transformational effect on Navy, Army and the ADF generally, driving force posture considerations.

The Review Panel examines possible basing options in the North and North West of Australia and the possibility of arrangements that enhance access to commercial ports.

The Review Panel also highlights the potential for greater wharf capacity and support facilities at HMAS Stirling (Fleet Base West) to support major surface combatant capability and operations.

Dr Hawke and Mr Smith also consider the potential for Air Force to upgrade some of its bases to optimise the operational capability of new platforms and for Army to ensure that basing allocations best match our strategic objectives.

These initiatives, like many others discussed in the progress report, are longer term options for consideration. No decisions have been made about individual proposals. Many of these options, including development of any new bases, involve substantial additional investment. No decisions on such options will be made until they have been considered as part of the 2014 White Paper process.

More broadly, the Review is also examining logistics support requirements, training areas for large-scale and joint training exercises, demographic and economic factors, public communications strategies, and engagement with industry, particularly the minerals and petroleum resources industries in Australia's North and West.

The Review's final report will be submitted to the Government at the end of March this year.

"The Government will then closely examine the Force Posture Review, which will form part of the security and strategic considerations for the 2014 White Paper", said Mr Smith.

The progress report is available at: <http://www.defence.gov.au/oscdf/adf-posture-review/>

Media Contacts:

Mr Smith's Office: Ellen Shields – (02) 6277 7800 or 0400 347 473

Sacha Fenton – (02) 6277 7800 or 0467 784 528

Department of Defence: (02) 6127 1999