

## Army—Current and Future Projects

### Hardened and Networked Army

- 5.1 The Hardened and Networked Army (HNA) project was announced in December 2005 with an increase in nearly 1500 soldiers. It is aimed at providing the Army with greater flexibility, adaptability and agility given that the Army must, in the current environment, be highly proficient at:
- ...operating in rapidly changing structures, where joint, coalition and multi-agency operations are a matter of course.<sup>1</sup>
- 5.2 The HNA is based on the philosophy of the combined-arms approach to combat, whereby infantry, armour, artillery, aviation and engineers work together to support and protect each other.<sup>2</sup> The structural changes and personnel increases which are part of the HNA will optimise the capabilities to be delivered from the *Defence White Paper* (and subsequent updates) and the *Defence Capability Plan*.
- 5.3 The effectiveness of this new combined arms approach is evidenced in current Army operations in Afghanistan and Iraq as they have enabled Australia's forces to:

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1 Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2005–06*, p. 119.

2 Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2005–06*, p. 119.

... provide the right level of protection and firepower to support the functions of a team and sustain and rotate those capabilities appropriately over an extended period of time.<sup>3</sup>

## Key outcomes of the HNA

5.4 To realise a hardened and networked Army, the key outcomes of HNA are to:

- increase the survivability of a deployed land force by increasing combat weight, protected mobility and firepower;
- increase the sustainability of a deployed land force by increasing the size of deployable forces;
- optimise the capabilities generated by the Defence Capability Plan by modifying unit structures and adjusting the current plans for some of Army's new vehicles and equipment;
- prepare Army's people for combat in increasingly complex environments through enhanced training, education and doctrine;
- increase land force, joint and coalition interoperability through enhanced networking;
- increase preparedness and utility of the Army Reserve through new roles and tasks;
- enhance readiness by increasing the size of Army and rebalancing capabilities;
- make Army more capable and adaptable over a wider range of likely tasks by moving from battalion groups to combined arms battle groups;
- provide additional organisational depth to Army by enhancing Combat Support and Logistic capabilities;
- optimise Army's base disposition through a long term disposition plan; and
- minimise the long term cost of ownership for Army through disposition changes and a reduction in singular capabilities.<sup>4</sup>

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3 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 35.

4 *The Hardened and Networked Army*,  
<<http://www.defence.gov.au/army/hna/default2.htm>> (Accessed 22 March 2007).

## HNA objectives achieved in 2005–06

- 5.5 To assist the Army in achieving its HNA objectives, the following was achieved during 2005–06:
- procurement of the M1A1 Abrams tank through a Foreign Military Sales arrangement with the United States. Initial deliveries occurred in September 2006, with formal introduction into service occurring in 2007;
  - acceptance of Bushmaster infantry mobility vehicles into the Army, and their successful deployment to support a variety of overseas operations;
  - upgrade of the M113 armoured personnel carrier fleet, planned for introduction into service in 2007;
  - introduction into Army service of the fixed modular bridge system;
  - delivery and acceptance of additional Javelin direct fire guided weapons for the infantry and cavalry force;
  - commencement of operational test and evaluation of simulation enhancements to support the Army's combat training centre;
  - delivery and deployment on operations of land force combat identification equipment; and
  - enhancement of Army's maritime capability by acceptance of the last of six Army Watercraft.<sup>5</sup>

## Enhanced Land Force

- 5.6 The Enhanced Land Force (ELF), which was announced in August 2006, is a major Defence initiative which is aimed at building upon the capabilities being introduced under the HNA. This program will expand the capacity of all three services in the Defence Force; however, as Lieutenant General Leahy advised, the Army stands to gain the largest increases:

There are increases to both the Navy and the Air Force but the Army has the substantial increase, in the order of about 2500.<sup>6</sup>

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5 Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2005-06*, p. 119.

6 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 35.

- 5.7 The enhancement of the land force will involve the formation of two additional infantry battalions. This increase, coupled with the 1500 additional personnel proposed under the HNA will increase the size of the Army by roughly 5,000 over the next decade. This growth is significant given that at present the Army's numbers stand at approximately 25,000.

## Recruitment and Retention

- 5.8 The Committee was informed at the public hearing by the Chief of Army that:

...for the first time in a while, the overall strength, the average funded strength of the Army is increasing. It is modest at this stage but it is increasing. For the first time in quite a while we are seeing increases in the Army reserve in particular.<sup>7</sup>

- 5.9 One of the most significant challenges standing in the way of the creation of the two new battalions is the need for experienced officers and men to staff them. This issue was clearly elucidated by Chief of Army who commented:

I need corporals, sergeants, captains and majors to make two new infantry battalions. I cannot recruit them; I can only make them and they take between six and 10 or 12 years to make.<sup>8</sup>

- 5.10 In relation to recruitment for infantry soldiers, Army advised that it was exceeding its targets. However, a key weakness was identified in the number of tradesmen within the Army. In addressing this shortage Army has undertaken a number of steps including skills retention bonuses in conjunction with bonuses to attract soldiers into this field at the completion of their service (see Chapter 4 for more detail on the bonuses scheme).

## ELF implementation

- 5.11 The ELF is being implemented over two stages. Stage 1 which involved raising the first of the new battalions was approved in December 2006. This step involved de-linking the 5/7RAR Mechanised Battalion into two battalions – the 5RAR Mechanised and

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7 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 38.

8 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 38.

the 7RAR Mechanised. Both battalions will primarily build up to full strength in Darwin prior to 7RAR's move to Adelaide. 5RAR will remain in Darwin.

5.12 Prior to 7RAR shifting to Adelaide, a range of facilities will be built in Edinburgh such as additional married quarters and barracks. The Chief of Army is hopeful 7RAR will commence moving to Adelaide in 2010 or 2011.<sup>9</sup>

5.13 Stage 2 of the process which involves raising the second additional battalion is at present the subject of further Government decision. Chief of Army noted that before this stage can be implemented, certain triggers relating to 5RAR and 7RAR must be met:

If we had achieved certain stages of development of 5 and 7RAR, we would be given authority to raise 8/9RAR, which is the second of the two infantry battalions. We are moving ahead towards these triggers, and I have a degree of confidence that we might be able to achieve the triggers this year, in which case we would be going back to government for further approval.<sup>10</sup>

## Recommendation 2

**The Committee recommends that Defence reports to the Defence Sub Committee on the implementation of the HNA and ELF programs, with a focus on the delivery schedule of the additional battalions.**

## Incorporating lessons learned and new equipment

5.14 The Committee inquired if any lessons had been learned from current operations which will complement the implementation of the HNA. Lieutenant General Leahy responded that the Army is continually reviewing its doctrine, training, and procedures from operational deployments, particularly since March 2003.

5.15 An important, formal process used by Army is operational analysis whereby outcomes have informed the HNA concept. Further, the

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9 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 45.

10 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 36.

Army observes other armies in the field to further improve its conduct of operations – it is a continual cycle.<sup>11</sup>

## Battle grouping

- 5.16 During the 1990's and early 2000's Army conducted significant experimentation at the Land Warfare Development Centre and the Defence Science and Technology Organisation. This process involved 'an enormous amount of experimentation using computers – war gaming and simulations.'<sup>12</sup>
- 5.17 One of the key outcomes which resulted from this period of trialling and research was the importance of battle grouping, which refers to combining various military elements to create more suitable units that are better able to achieve objectives.
- 5.18 In terms of implementing the battle group doctrine, common standard operating procedures have been implemented across the entire Army. Moreover, Army is also supporting this approach by conducting more combined arms training in addition to more joint operation exercises with Navy and Air Force. This also equally applies to coalition operations.

## New Technology

- 5.19 Apart from implementing new tactics and training, the introduction of new equipment has meant soldiers have had to learn to operate devices such as night vision equipment and personal radios. Although not technically difficult to use, the plus side is the soldiers understand it makes 'their job easier and thus they are much more effective.'<sup>13</sup>

## Bushmaster upgrade

- 5.20 One of the major improvements to equipment that Army has made is the introduction of a new remote weapons station to the Bushmaster troop carrier. This new approach incorporates:
- ...a gun on a stick, which sits on top of the vehicle [with an] optical system...that allows it to move in two axes...[whilst] down inside the vehicle, under armoured protection, the

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11 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 37.

12 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 37.

13 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 37.

soldier can sit [in front of a] screen...and he has a computer joystick...[which enables him to] engage with the weapon.<sup>14</sup>

- 5.21 Army advised that at present it has fitted 43 of the Bushmasters deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan with the new remote weapons station. This new weapons system will provide a distinct battlefield advantage in that:

...instead of having to stand up like you used to do on a truck, you can now sit down inside and fire under cover.<sup>15</sup>

- 5.22 Another upgrade which is currently being examined by Army is armour enhancement. Army advised that it is carefully considering this matter as it is concerned with the impact additional weight could have upon the Bushmaster's performance:

We are concerned with the additional weight. There are two effects. Firstly, it alters the centre of gravity and it might tip over [and] secondly, to put additional weight on it, you have to reduce the payload.<sup>16</sup>

## Army Reserve

- 5.23 Reserve personnel will play an important role in increasing the number of Army personnel available for operations over the coming decade. Ensuring trained reservists can be retained long-term is a challenge the Army is addressing through a number of initiatives.
- 5.24 Under the new HNA Reserve model, the Army Reserve will be provided with clear tasks. These tasks will be directly linked to generating capability for the HNA and also will formalise Peacetime National Tasks and Defence of Australia contributions. In addition, full-time and Army Reserve units will develop habitual relationships to foster, sustain and deploy capabilities.<sup>17</sup>
- 5.25 At present, the Army Reserve is heavily involved in Australia's overseas deployments with 1,000 reservists on continuous full-time

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14 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 43.

15 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 44.

16 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 44.

17 *The Hardened and Networked Army*,  
<<http://www.defence.gov.au/army/hna/default2.htm>> (Accessed 22 March 2007).

service. In relation to current deployments involving reserves, Army advised that:

The second reserve division has full responsibility for the Solomon Islands ... [and a] company each year [is sent] on a rotation to Butterworth.<sup>18</sup>

## Common Induction Training

5.26 Previously, common induction training (CIT) entailed roughly six weeks or 40 days training; however, this approach was beset with a range of problems, namely:

- it was difficult for reservists to receive adequate time off to complete the course;
- it was focused over the Christmas period when people were available;
- six weeks was found to be an inadequate amount of time to properly train a soldier; and
- it posed a number of organisational challenges for the reserves and the regular Army.

5.27 Although the six weeks training could impart many of the technical skills and knowledge required by a soldier, there was insufficient time to instil the Army's ethos, behaviour and values that 'we are demanding of our people operating overseas, particularly working among communities.'<sup>19</sup>

5.28 In light of these problems, CIT has been replaced with a different approach whereby:

- Training for a regular soldier now consists of the original course in addition to an advanced soldier course, which in total comprises roughly 80 days; whilst
- Reservists complete an initial 40 day course, which in conjunction with sufficient additional training as an active reservist, will enable them to qualify for the High Readiness Reserve (discussed in detail in the next section).

5.29 This approach is the preferred training continuum for Army whereby both regular soldiers and reservists graduate from either Kapooka or

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18 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 38.

19 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 42.

Duntroon. This promotes a single sense of identity rather than an “us versus them” environment. As Chief of Army informed the Committee, ‘I can clearly say that CIT has gone, and we are very glad to see the end of it’.<sup>20</sup>

## High Readiness Reserve (HRR)

- 5.30 The High Readiness Reserve (HRR) is a new category of service for members of the Army Reserve. Members of the HRR are trained to the same standard as the regular Army and are eligible for the same sorts of deployments, either as individuals or as collective bodies.
- 5.31 HRR personnel are managed and administered on a routine basis by their regional Army Reserve unit, and are substantively posted to an establishment position within a Regular Army unit.<sup>21</sup>

## HRR Training

- 5.32 Members of the HRR are trained to Regular Army standard and will remain on the same Readiness Notice as their supported Regular Army unit. HRR members undertake one continuous exercise annually with their Regular Army unit (of between 14 and 40 days duration), while also undertaking other ongoing training activities with their Army Reserve unit. Each HRR member undertakes a minimum of 32 and maximum of 50 days of mandated training per annum. This does not preclude members doing more than 50 days per year, however, all training beyond 50 days is undertaken on a voluntary basis.<sup>22</sup>

## HRR Recruitment and Retention

- 5.33 All members of the HRR are required to undertake a two year contract, agreeing to meet all HRR requirements, which includes an

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20 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 42.

21 *Key HNA Reserve Initiatives*,  
<<http://www.defence.gov.au/army/HNA/docs/Key%20Initiative%20Descriptions.pdf>  
> (Accessed 4 May 2007).

22 *Key HNA Reserve Initiatives*,  
<<http://www.defence.gov.au/army/HNA/docs/Key%20Initiative%20Descriptions.pdf>  
> (Accessed 4 May 2007).

undertaking that they will volunteer to undertake continuous full time service should they be required to deploy on operations.<sup>23</sup>

- 5.34 In terms of numbers, Chief of Army advised the Committee that the current year target for the HRR of 400 reservists was close to being achieved:

The Army has recently...put into our records – the positions that we want for the High Readiness reserve. For this year our target is 400. I was told yesterday that it looks like we will achieve 396 of those 400.<sup>24</sup>

- 5.35 The Committee was informed by the Chief of Army that some reservists are hesitant to join the HRR as they are concerned that their employers may consider that this will make them unreliable given that they may be called up for service.

- 5.36 In terms of resolving this issue, it was noted that employer support payments for reservists are helping to some degree. However, anecdotal evidence was presented which suggested that more needs to be done to publicise and encourage employer support:

The CO from 41 Battalion in Lismore said, 'We tell the soldiers that all these bonuses are available and they say. "Bugger the boss. Why would I give him anything? I don't want him to know I am in the reserves."' <sup>25</sup>

## Employer Support for Army Reserve

- 5.37 In terms of support, larger employers such as banks, large corporations and governments have been quite accommodating of the Army Reserve. Support from smaller employers, however, requires greater attention as many young reservists are reluctant to declare their status as a reservist. The reason behind this reluctance was addressed by Chief of Army who commented that:

...we are seeing it in changes in job patterns as well, in that young people are moving on very quickly. They are not making careers. They might be with one bloke for one, two or three years. In that short period of time they have not

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23 *Key HNA Reserve Initiatives*,  
<<http://www.defence.gov.au/army/HNA/docs/Key%20Initiative%20Descriptions.pdf>  
> (Accessed 4 May 2007).

24 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 39.

25 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 40.

developed a sense of confidence and trust with each other and they are reluctant to declare.<sup>26</sup>

- 5.38 In addressing the issue of employer support for the reserves, Army advised that financial assistance is provided to employers who have staff absent from work for periods of two or more weeks. It was noted that this payment, which requires the completion of an application, is designed to enable employers to replace Army Reserve staff during the period of their service. In terms of publicity, Army informed the Committee that it is attempting to advertise this support system for business in a number of ways, including:
- publishing and distributing flyers and pamphlets;
  - informing Army Reservists; and
  - using the Defence Reserve Support Council (DRSC) as an information conduit.

## Reserve remuneration incentive initiatives

- 5.39 In addressing the challenges of recruiting and retaining HRR personnel, the Government announced on 9 May 2006 the following Reserve remuneration incentive initiatives as part of the Federal Budget:
- Revised pay scales to align with work value. This will result in a pay rise for nominated Reservists who possess the full suite of Regular Army competencies;
  - Payment of a Reserve service allowance of up to \$10 per day for all Active Reservists and High Readiness Reservists;
  - \$600 annual health support allowance for all Active Reservists;
  - \$10,000 bonus for personnel who successfully complete two years of High Readiness Reserve service; and
  - \$2500 annual health support allowance for all High Readiness Reservists.<sup>27</sup>

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26 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 40.

27 Minister for Defence Budget 2006–07 Media Release 060/2006, *\$181.6 Million for a More Capable Reserve*, 9 May 2006.

## HRR Deployment

5.40 When asked by the Committee if there was an expectation for HRR personnel to deploy as a standalone formed unit, Chief of Army replied that with a target of only 400 personnel this year, this was not a short-term option. However, with the changing nature of the infantry battalions there is:

...the potential for a High Readiness Reserve company from a battalion to be the fourth rifle company for a battalion ... so that...after a period of work-up training, the reserve rifle company could deploy.<sup>28</sup>

5.41 Chief of Army informed the Committee that there were still a lot of issues to work through and whilst not a short-term objective:

I think we are probably five to 10 years from that sort of thing, but if things keep going the way they are going I think it is very achievable.<sup>29</sup>

## Conclusion

5.42 Current Government planning will see a 20 per cent increase in Army's funded strength over the coming decade. The recruitment and retention of sufficient personnel is not without it challenges. However, Army's leadership are aware of the issues and are taking proactive steps to ensure the HNA and ELF programs can be implemented.

5.43 The Committee is acutely aware of the high operational tempo experienced by the Army over recent years and is heartened by the significant effort being undertaken to make our soldiers more effective when on deployment. Whether it be improvements to equipment or tactics, it is essential lessons learned are fed back into the system to make our soldiers as safe as possible – this was certainly the impression the Committee observed during the public hearing.

5.44 The remuneration initiatives announced by Government and the standing up of the High Readiness Reserve offers much potential. The changes to the training continuum and the employer support

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28 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 45.

29 Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, *Transcript 30 March 2007*, p. 46.

program will hopefully allow Army to have highly trained – and available – reservists to support regular soldiers on operations.

