



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Defence Sub Committee

Chair: Senator Alan Ferguson
SubComm Chair: Hon. Bruce Scott MP

MEDIA ALERT

Issued: 28 March 2007

Review of the Defence Annual Report 2005-06 **Public hearing in Canberra on 30 March**

Federal parliament's Defence Sub Committee will investigate how the Australian Defence Force is preventing the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the capability of Navy's patrol boats, Army aviation, hardening the Army to respond to ever-changing conditions and reforming pay and conditions at a public hearing in Canberra on Friday 30 March.

The hearing is part of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's review of the Defence Annual Report 2005-2006.

The hearing will be on Friday, 30 March 2007, starting at 10.00am and will be webcast live on <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/> .

The venue is Committee Room 2R2, Parliament House, Canberra.

The Sub Committee chaired by Bruce Scott (Member for Maranoa, QLD) will scrutinise five areas of Defence operations. The topics and the times they will be examined are below:

- **10.00am** Topic 1: Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI);
- **10.40am** Topic 2: Navy's Patrol Boat Capability;
- **11.20am** Topic 3: Remuneration Reform Project (RRP);
- **12.50pm** Topic 4: Hardened and Networked Army;
- **1.30pm** Topic 5: Army Aviation; and
- **2.10pm** Chief of Defence Force and Secretary open session.
- **3.00pm** Adjournment

Topic 1: Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). The Committee will examine matters relating to Australia's involvement in the PSI. The PSI is a global effort that aims to prevent shipments of Weapons of Mass Destruction, their delivery systems and related materials, to and from states and non-state actors of proliferation concern. Australia is one of the principal drivers of the PSI and has attended nearly all exercises and also hosted meetings.

Topic 2: Navy's Patrol Boat Capability. The Committee will review the Navy's transition from the older Fremantle-class Patrol Boats to the Armidale Class Patrol Boats (ACPBs). The ACPB is a modern vessel offering technology and habitability significantly in advance of the Fremantles. Further, the multi-crewing system when applied to the mature fleet will optimise the management of the people resource needed to operate the patrol boats. Areas for specific examination include the fuel system issues and the effectiveness of the ACPBs.

Topic 3: Remuneration Reform Project (RRP). The Committee will review the introduction of the RRP. The aim of the RRP is primarily to transform the officer pay system (common scale, 'all of one company' approach) into a more flexible structure. A new flexible officer pay structure is needed to allow for better recognition of work value, allow for differential pay where required, and allow Service Chiefs to better respond to workforce pressures. This is a very complex program and represents a fundamental cultural shift for officer remuneration.

Topic 4: Hardened and Networked Army. To improve the Army's capability to respond to an increasingly complex and demanding future, significant funds have been allocated to harden and network the Army over the next 10 years to increase its flexibility, adaptability, and agility. The Committee will review the implementation of this increased capability, including an examination of the challenges that lie ahead and how the Army High Readiness Reserve will be integrated into the new environment.

Topic 5: Army Aviation. The Committee will examine matters relating to the introduction into service of new army aviation platforms, in particular the Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopters and the MRH90 Additional Troop-Lift Helicopters.

Finally, the Chief of the Defence Force and the Secretary of Defence will appear at the end of the hearing to respond to a range of questions concerning the Defence Annual Report 2005-06.

For media inquiries, contact the Sub-Committee Chairman, the Hon Bruce Scott MP on 02 6277 4949 or 07 4662 2715.

For all other inquiries, contact the Inquiry Secretary, Margot Kerley, on 02 6277 4629 or visit the committee website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/index.htm> .