

3 December 2025

Chair, Senators,

I will provide a short update on Defence developments since we last appeared two months ago.

The Government launched the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator on 1 November, meeting a key milestone in the delivery of Australia's conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines. This new statutory Agency is responsible for the effective regulatory oversight of Australia's naval nuclear propulsion capabilities, providing independent assurance that the highest standards of nuclear safety and radiological protection are upheld. The agency has launched with over 70 staff and will expand over the coming years.

November also marked the one-year anniversary of the Australian Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance (GWEO) Plan. There have been a number of milestones achieved over the last year, including the opening of an office dedicated to the \$850 million missile manufacturing partnership with Kongsberg. This factory will be only the second in the world to produce the Joint Strike Missile and Naval Strike Missile.

The Government signed a Joint Statement of Intent with the United States and Lockheed Martin for the co-development and production of guided weapons. This Statement of Intent is a shared commitment to the development of a resilient and interoperable sovereign capability.

We continue to maintain a high tempo of engagement in the region through key multilateral forums.

In October, the Deputy Prime Minister travelled to Chile for the 2025 South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting. This forum brought together 10 nations to discuss Pacific-led responses to regional security challenges. This included discussion on the first year of operations of the Pacific Response Group and steps to improve our ability to collectively respond to disasters.

The Government hosted the 31st Australia-Papua New Guinea Ministerial Forum on 20 October. This Forum marked an important step in advancing our shared goals and initiatives following the historic signing of the Mutual Defence Treaty. The Deputy Prime Minister and his counterpart committed to establishing a bilateral taskforce to oversee the development of a recruitment pathway to enable citizens of Papua New Guinea to join the Australian Defence Force. This work is underway, and we will continue to work closely with Papua New Guinea to implement the Treaty.

The Deputy Prime Minister also attended the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus where he held a series of bilateral and multilateral engagements. This included a multilateral meeting with Japan, the Philippines and the United States, reaffirming joint efforts on deterrence and operational readiness.

Defence is continuing to develop new capabilities and strengthen our international and industry partnerships. On Monday, the Government announced a significant step towards ensuring the delivery of Defence capabilities, skills and workforce, through the creation of the Defence Delivery Agency. Design and development of the new agency, along with other reforms, will be undertaken by a whole-of-government taskforce over the coming months.

I thank the Committee for your time and will now pass over to the CDF.

ENDS