



Australian Government

Department of Defence

**Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Defence and Trade - Defence Sub-committee
Inquiry into Australia's Defence relationships
with Pacific Island nations**

Department of Defence

Written Submission

Joint Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade: Inquiry into Australia's Defence Relationships with Pacific Island Nations

Department of Defence Submission (03 March 2020)

Executive Summary

The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade is conducting an inquiry into Defence's relationship with Pacific Island nations (see [Attachment A](#) for Terms of Reference). This submission by the Department of Defence was prepared in consultation with the Office of the Pacific, the Department of Home Affairs and other security-related Australian government agencies and authorities.

The Pacific is our home, and for over forty years the Department of Defence (Defence) has worked with Pacific Island nations to enhance our region's joint security challenges. Offers of assistance from the Pacific during the recent Bushfire emergency is testament to Australia's deep and enduring relationship with the Pacific.

Defence's long-standing relationships with the region has been built through the Defence Cooperation Program (DCP), Pacific Maritime Security Program (PMSP), humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) responses and the Pacific Step-up. These programs of cooperation collectively seek to address the security priorities of our Pacific Island partners identified through ongoing bilateral and multilateral security-related dialogues.

Defence's engagement in the Pacific is not a short-term investment. It is a decades-long commitment that integrates our enduring efforts to build a region that is strategically secure, economically stable and politically sovereign. Defence has been engaging with Pacific Island countries since the 1970s and will continue to increase its investment in international engagement over the coming decades to build cooperation with key partners and improve the coordination of responses to shared security challenges in the region.

The Pacific Step-up is one of Australia's highest foreign policy priorities, highlighted in Australia's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper and 2016 Defence White Paper. It is a multi-billion dollar whole-of-government effort which seeks to deepen Australia's engagement with our Pacific neighbours. This builds on Australia's long history of cooperation with our Pacific partners, across all sectors. The Pacific Step-up was first announced at the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) Leaders' Meeting in September 2016 as a 'step-change' in the way Australia would engage the region. On 8 November 2018, Prime Minister Morrison announced Australia would take our engagement to a new level, launching a 'new chapter in relations with our Pacific family'.

The Office of the Pacific (OTP) in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is responsible for coordination of the Pacific Step-up across Australian government agencies, including initiatives being implemented by DFAT, Defence, Department of Home Affairs, the Attorney-General's Department, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the National Intelligence Community.

Defence's contribution to the Pacific Step-up builds on our enduring commitment to the region outlined in the Defence White Paper 2016. Defence's engagement is driven by the priorities of our Pacific partners. It responds to ongoing dialogue with our regional partners and aligns with the Boe Declaration on Regional Security adopted by Pacific leaders at the 2018 PIF. Defence's contribution to Pacific Step-up includes (i) investing in significant infrastructure projects; (ii) increasing the ADF's regional presence; and (iii) deepening people-to-people links. Defence's activities are specifically designed to support whole-of-government Pacific Step-up outcomes, and also to enhance the security outcomes delivered under the DCP. While the Step-up and the DCP are often referred to as separate activities, they should be seen as a single continuum of Defence's effort to deliver real

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security outcomes for our Pacific partners and build on the relationships that are designed to ensure that Australia is seen as a trusted and dependable security partner.

Key Announcements:

8 November 2018 - Prime Minister Morrison announced the Pacific Step-up, including:

- Redevelopment of the Blackrock Peacekeeping and Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Camp, Fiji;
- Redevelopment of Lombrum Naval Base on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea;
- An annual Joint-Heads of Pacific Security event; and
- new Pacific Guardian-class Patrol Boats.

18 November 2018 – Prime Minister Morrison announced infrastructure upgrades for the Vanuatu Mobile Force and Police barracks.

16 September 2019 – Minister for Defence announced support to design the Fiji Maritime Essential Services Centre

7 October 2019 – Prime Minister Morrison announced support to construct a border and patrol boat outpost in Solomon Islands western province.

Defence Engagement in the Pacific

Defence's efforts are synchronised with the whole-of-government response and delivered under the guidance of, and in cooperation with, the OTP. Australia's engagement in the Pacific is delivered in close consultation with our Pacific partners and has the region's long-term development challenges front of mind.

Defence Cooperation Program (DCP)

The DCP is a long-standing 40 year commitment that supports Australia's strategic interest and defence relationships within the Pacific, as well as Indonesia, South-East Asia, Pakistan and the Middle East. The DCP provides defence assistance to 30 countries, including 12 Pacific Island nations and Timor-Leste. The objective of the DCP is to maximise Australia's security through developing close and enduring links with partners that support their capacity to protect their sovereignty, work effectively with the Australian Defence Force (ADF), and contribute to regional security. Defence tailors DCP engagement to meet the national priorities, capacity considerations and cultural imperatives of our partner-nations through annual officials' level defence talks and in-country Defence Attachè networks.

Defence provides annual DCP support to Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Palau and Vanuatu. Across these countries the DCP is designed to:

- promote the capacity of our Pacific partners in areas such as HADR, peacekeeping, counter-terrorism, maritime security, and governance;
- improve Australia's capacity to work with partners in response to common security challenges; and
- build strong people-to-people links with our partners at the tactical, operational and strategic levels.

The DCP achieves these three objectives through supporting education courses, training, personnel exchanges, capacity building, secondments, strategic dialogues, visits, subject matter expert exchanges, infrastructure support, exercises and operations.

In line with the Pacific Step-up, Defence has increased the resources available to undertake DCP activities. This includes an increase in mentor and training teams and access to training opportunities. Defence, in response to requests from our partners, has also increased the scope of the program to deliver training in the important areas of governance, procurement and capability planning. In 2019-20, Defence has committed over AUD \$116.6 million in DCP assistance to the Pacific, enabling Pacific Island nations to address their security priorities through enhancing people-to-people networks, exercises and operations, sustainment and operation of existing assets, infrastructure and capacity building. See [Attachment B](#) for further details on DCP support by country.

Defence's engagement in PNG (approximately AUD \$42 million), is delivered through 37 Australian Defence personnel posted to PNG to advise and support the PNG Defence Force (PNGDF) and PNG Department of Defence. There were 1,842 discrete Defence engagements in PNG for the 2019 and over 1,000 Australian Defence personnel trained directly with their PNGDF counterparts. On 22 July 2019, Prime Minister Scott Morrison and PNG Prime Minister James Marape announced a new package of initiatives to enhance the existing DCP. Valued at approximately AUD \$20 million the initiatives focus on building a minimum sustainable PNG capability, including in relation to:

- Military aviation capability;
- Expanding our maritime security partnership;
- Building on our infrastructure investment program including continuing our joint work on the Lombrum Naval Base in Manus Province; and
- Continuing to work with Papua New Guinea's future leaders as they build a strong and resilient Defence Force.

The Prime Ministers also agreed to explore opportunities for enhanced capability through infrastructure development and information sharing, including on border security.

The objectives of Defence's cooperation with Fiji are achieved through a focus on senior level engagement, maritime security, HADR, and peacekeeping capabilities. In addition to the gifting of two new Guardian-class Patrol boats under the PMSP, the DCP contributes to ongoing maritime training programs and wharf infrastructure upgrades. Australia is cooperating with Fiji to develop a sovereign hydrographic survey capability. Australia's support for Fiji's peacekeeping capability is underpinned by the joint redevelopment of the Blackrock Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Camp (see below). We have provided strategic airlift support for Fijian troops to contribute to United Nations and Multinational Observer Force missions in Iraq, Syria and Egypt. We also support Fiji's peacekeeping efforts through ongoing training and support to Fiji's Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicles.

Defence's key lines of engagement with **Solomon Islands** include support to the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) in maritime security, explosive ordnance disposal, border security, and regional fisheries surveillance through the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) in Honiara. Following a request from Solomon Islands to support their 2019 general elections, Defence contributed logistics and contingency planning to an Australian whole-of-government response. Our assistance facilitated the delivery of a safe and democratic election process throughout Solomon Islands. In 2019, Defence conducted Operation Render Safe with the RSIPF and New Zealand Defence Force, supporting ongoing ADF efforts to safely dispose of explosive ordnance in the South West Pacific. The trilateral effort represented another opportunity to deepen interoperability between Solomon Islands and likeminded partners, and to enhance the explosive ordnance disposal capability of the RSIPF. Exercise Coastwatchers, Defence's capstone engagement activity with Solomon Islands, focuses on enhancing the RSIPF's capability to plan, conduct and support remote policing activities, and developing core skills in HADR. The 2019 iteration took place at the western border, addressing a key priority of the Solomon Islands Government in enhancing policing in the region. In October 2019, Prime Ministers Sogavare and Morrison jointly announced Australia's

support to build a Border and Patrol Boat Outpost in the western provinces of Solomon Islands to support the country's border security.

In 2019, Defence worked closely with DFAT and AFP to support the Government of **Vanuatu** to meet its security needs. Key lines of engagement with the Vanuatu Police Force (VPF) include infrastructure support, communications upgrades, recruitment training, HADR and maritime security, notably under the PMSP. Notable projects include the redevelopment of Cook and Tiroas Barracks, national communications infrastructure development and support for Vanuatu's Patrol Boat, RVS *Tukoro*. We have enhanced the workforce capability of the VPF through increased training delivered in both Australia and Vanuatu. We work to ensure our support meets Vanuatu's needs through both the DCP Talks, our key strategic dialogue held in November 2019, and DCP Training Talks (inaugural April 2019). Illustrating our increased level of our engagement in Vanuatu, we established a dedicated Defence Adviser (2019) and civilian defence officer (2020) in Port Vila.

Defence aims to advance the security, stability and cohesion of **Tonga** and the wider region by supporting the development of His Majesty's Armed Forces (HMAF) into a small, professional and sustainable military. The DCP focuses on maritime security; HADR; infrastructure works and engineering capability development; and the professional development of HMAF personnel. Australia has also gifted five multi-purpose all-wheel drive trucks, HADR equipment and military stores to support training and operations in HADR. Under Project LALI, Defence is also providing IT and radio equipment support. Defence overhauled the inoperable IT equipment at the three main HMAF bases in 2019, and continues to provide ongoing maintenance and training assistance.

Defence's cooperation with the **Samoa** Police Service is focused on building Samoa's capacity to manage maritime security threats. As such, the DCP focuses on the Guardian-class Patrol Boat *Nafanua II* and includes budget support for: annual DCP Talks; active operations; training and education; and projects related to capacity building and professionalism of the Police Maritime Wing (PMW).

Defence also conducts exercises with regional security partners to build their capacity and enhance Australia's ability to respond to regional security contingencies. Exercises promote interoperability and familiarity between armed forces. The Indo-Pacific Endeavour (IPE) is an annual Defence exercise designed to enhance security and stability in our region through bilateral and multilateral engagement, training and capacity building. Defence has been engaged in the Indo-Pacific Endeavour since 2017, undertaking activities with partners across the region (Brunei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, PNG, Palau, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Vanuatu and Vietnam). This type of engagement develops shared understanding, trust and capacity to respond to a full spectrum of real world incidents in our region. The IPE utilises the security expertise of Defence, other Australian government agencies, and multinational partners to deliver targeted security and capacity building activities and training that address the security needs of our region. In 2020, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Home Affairs and Australian Border Force are participating in the IPE, contributing to the development and delivery of a rolling multi-agency one week training package. Other nations involved in IPE training and capacity building include France, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US). Engagement is framed by the expanding remit of 'security' as outlined in the Boe Declaration on Regional Security. In 2020, over 1,000 Australian whole-of-government personnel will be involved in IPE20, which will encompass a wide range of activities, spanning disaster assistance planning and military training serial with Pacific partners (Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga and Vanuatu).

Pacific Maritime Security Program (PMSP)





































In addition to our DCP, Defence is supporting the PMSP, a commitment of approximately AUD \$2 billion over 30 years to increase regional maritime security for Pacific Island nationals. The PMSP is the cornerstone of Defence maritime engagement in the Pacific, assisting Pacific nations to



protect maritime resources, and reduce the economic and social costs of illegal activities. The program builds on the success of the Pacific Patrol Boat Program, which gifted 22 steel patrol boats to 12 Pacific Island nations between 1987 and 1997. Together, these programs and our DCP will see an uninterrupted 60 year commitment of deeper-level engagement in the Pacific. The 12 Pacific Islands nations which participated in the previous Patrol Boat Program will receive replacement, new, Guardian-class Patrol Boats over the course of 2018-2023. In addition, Timor-Leste will also receive two vessels.

The PMSP includes three components: the replacement of the Pacific Patrol Boats with new Guardian-class Patrol Boats; integrated region-wide aerial surveillance; and enhancements to regional coordination.

Defence is funding infrastructure upgrades in recipient countries to ensure safe and secure berthing of the larger Guardian-class Patrol Boats. Construction has been completed in PNG, Tonga, Samoa and Tuvalu. Construction is under way in another six nations (Kiribati, Fiji, Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Palau). The program of infrastructure upgrades is scheduled to be completed by 2023.

PMSP Participants:

Cook Islands  	Solomon Islands (Nov 2019)   
Federation States of Micronesia   	Tonga (June 2019)   
Fiji (March 2020)   	Tuvalu (Apr 2019)  
Kiribati  	Vanuatu  
Palau  	Timor-Leste  
Papua New Guinea (Nov 2018)     	Nauru 
Republic of Marshall Islands  	Niue 
Samoa (Aug 2019)  	Tokelau 

Key:
 Received first boat (when)
 Number of boats
 Aerial surveillance

Under the PMSP, Defence has engaged civilian aircraft in the Pacific to provide aerial surveillance services to 15 PIF countries. This component of the PMSP supports targeted, intelligence-driven maritime patrols and enhances the capacity of Pacific Island nations to locate and stamp out illegal activity occurring within their exclusive economic zones and adjacent high seas.

The PMSP also aims to increase regional coordination efforts, particularly improved use and sharing of information already available through existing regional coordination centres and gathered from surveillance patrols. This focuses on increasing the capacity of participating counties to effectively collect, analyse, manage and share maritime security information across national agencies, as well as with neighbouring countries and regional coordination centres such as the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) in Honiara and the Pacific Transnational Crime Coordination Centre in Samoa.

Australia-gifted patrol vessels are a critical capability which enable Pacific Island countries to participate in FFA led maritime surveillance and patrol operations. Operation Rai Balang in March 2019, which included eight FFA members (FSM, Kiribati, Nauru, PNG, RMI, Palau, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu), saw the new Guardian-class Patrol Boat make its operational debut with the *HMPNGS*

Ted Diro delivering an excellent performance with 35 boardings. Operation Kuru Kuru in October 2019, which included all 17 FFA members, was particularly successful. The Operation included 656 contacts sighted, 97 sea boardings and 35 dockside boardings conducted.

Operation Solania is the ADF's contribution to regional security in partnership with Pacific Island countries. It also supports FFA-led Operations Kuru Kuru, Island Chief, Tui Moana and Rai Balang, to detect and deter illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing activity. The ADF aircraft assigned to Operation Solania operates alongside the contracted aerial surveillance delivered under the PMSP. As part of the operation, ADF assets provide maritime surveillance which supports the policing of the Exclusive Economic Zones of Pacific Island nations, including operations under the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement. Operation Solania also contributes to a wider multi-national program to provide maritime surveillance support in the Pacific, coordinated by the Quadrilateral Defence Coordination Group.

Pacific Maritime Security Program: Using the new Guardian-class

Like the Pacific Patrol Boats, the new Guardian-class Patrol Boats are gifted as sovereign assets to the Pacific Island nations and will be utilised for a wide range of activities ranging from patrolling of countries' EEZs targeting illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing to also having the capability to provide HADR. The Guardian-class Patrol Boats represent a significant increase in capability, as demonstrated recently in Samoa during the state of emergency for the measles crisis.

The new Samoan Guardian-class Patrol Boat *Nafanua II*, was tasked by the Samoan Government during the state of emergency to voyage to Pago Pago in American Samoa on three separate trips to transport 96 empty oxygen canisters and return with full oxygen cylinders to assist the national hospital during the measles crisis. This was made possible due to the 16 square metre cargo deck, which can carry nine tonnes of cargo - a new capability on the Guardian-class which can enhance regional responses to HADR crises.

Enhancing Defence's Security Engagement - Pacific Step-up

Australia is partnering with PNG, Fiji, and Vanuatu on significant infrastructure projects that will enhance the security capacity and economic sustainability of the Pacific. Defence's infrastructure projects are governed and assured by experienced Army engineers, comply with all Commonwealth Procurement Rules, and seek to proactively engage local industry in partner countries to ensure maximum local industry benefit and involvement. Defence is working with PNG, Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands to ensure that project designs and construction address environmental and disaster resilience risks in the Pacific. As these projects reach completion, Defence, at the request of our Pacific partners, will collaborate with other Australian government agencies to identify appropriate technical expertise and economic support to sustain these important security-related investments.

The **Lombrum Joint Initiative in PNG** supports redevelopment of the Lombrum Naval Base on Manus Island. It will build the PNG Defence Force's capability to protect its borders and maritime resources through a broad program of mentoring, training, and infrastructure development. It will improve interoperability between the PNG Defence Force and the ADF. Our support for the redevelopment aligns with PNG Defence Force priorities and is expected to be completed in late-2022.

Defence is redeveloping **Fiji's Blackrock Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Camp**, which will produce a state-of-the-art peacekeeping operations facility and HADR capability for the Pacific region. It will also build stronger interoperability between the ADF and Republic of Fiji Military Forces. Our two nations have worked closely and quickly together to implement this initiative. Construction is under way and progressing well; completion is expected in early 2021. The Blackrock Camp project will create over 500 local construction jobs for Fijian workers, and approximately FJD \$40 million (approximately AUD \$27.4 million) will be spent on local labour and materials during construction.

Australia is supporting significant infrastructure upgrades to **Cook and Tiroas Barracks in Vanuatu**, as well as enhanced training and leadership opportunities for the Vanuatu Police Force. The upgrades will see significant investment in Cook Barracks, Port Vila, including new engineer and vehicle workshops, new accommodation and training facilities, and a new medical centre. Upgrades at Tiroas Barracks, Luganville, will include new medical facilities, an armoury and magazine. Minor works to enhance existing Vanuatu Police Force accommodation buildings, in support of increased recruitment, were completed in April 2019. Main construction is expected to commence in 2020.

Australia is working with Solomon Islands to design and build a new **border and patrol boat outpost in the Solomon Islands Western province**. The new outpost will include a wharf, short-stay barracks accommodation, storage for fuel and general stores, a perimeter fence and services including solar power, rainwater collection and a septic waste system. This will increase the capacity of the RSIPF to conduct remote patrolling and security operations in the western province. Solomon Islands border security organisations and customs agents will utilise the outpost, creating opportunities for Solomon Islands and Australian whole-of-government agencies to collaborate and coordinate support.

People to People ties

Defence enjoys strong people-to-people links with our Pacific partners that have been created through training and exercising together during the conduct of the DCP. We also have strong personal relationships that were established through our interaction on operational deployments and at staff colleges.

As part of the Pacific Step-up, Defence continues to look for additional opportunities to strengthen our people-to-people ties, to foster deep and personal relationships with Pacific leaders, present and emerging, and to enhance cultural linkages. Most recently this has included:

- the Joint Heads of Pacific Security event (inaugural event held in Brisbane 8-10 October 2019);
- expanding ADF sporting engagement with Pacific Island nations;
- reinforcing alumni security networks, to maintain personal connections and deepen relationships; and
- expanding health and medical diagnostic training.

The Joint Heads of Pacific Security (JHoPS), is an annual meeting of Pacific Islands Defence, Police, and Border Security Chiefs. Australia hosted the inaugural meeting on 8-10 October 2019 in Brisbane. In line with the Boe Declaration on Regional Security, JHoPS is an opportunity for security leaders in the Pacific region to consider ways to deepen our collaborative efforts to make our region more stable and secure. This meeting allows security leaders to share perspectives on security challenges, such as HADR, transnational crime, people and drug trafficking and illegal fishing.

Defence supports sports engagement in the region in partnership with Pacific Island communities, Australian national sporting organisations (for example the NRL) and in close consultation with DFAT. This approach ensures complementarity of sports engagements in the region. Over the last year, Defence has collaborated with Pacific Island nations to support six key events:

- The women's Pacific Military Rugby Union Competition, Canberra, 22-26 Oct 2019;
- ADF Rugby League tour of Fiji, Samoa and Tonga, which involved matches and community engagement activities, 8-21 Oct 2019;
- ADF Rugby Union team participated in the Defence Rugby Union World Cup, Japan, 8-24 Sep 2019;
- ADF Rugby League coaching clinic, Fiji and Tonga, 11-17 May 2019;

- Army Rugby Union visited Tonga for games and training camps with their counterparts, as well as other community engagements, such as school clinics, 6-12 May 2019; and
- ADF Rugby League visited Fiji to deliver coaching clinics to primary and secondary school students and an elite program for the Republic of Fiji Military and Fiji Rugby League, 11-15 Mar 2019.

Enhancing ADF Presence in the region

Defence is deploying the Royal Australian Navy into the region more often to increase maritime domain awareness and support Pacific Islands to address their maritime security challenges, such as transnational crime and drug trafficking. It will act as a deterrent to illegal fishing and build on the PMSP. As we increase our engagement we will also improve our interoperability with Pacific Island nations, particularly in areas of HADR, engineering, medical services, communications and maritime surveillance.

Defence is strengthening its alumni networks which will better support continued engagement, relationships, and learning in the region. Hundreds of Pacific Island security forces personnel, both military and police, attend training courses in Australia every year. These courses range from long-term university-level degrees to short-term Army tactical skills training. Defence is reinforcing security alumni networks to maintain these important networks across the Pacific. Defence will coordinate with broader efforts across Government to enhance people-to-people relationships with our partners in the region.

Defence has established a new, dedicated ADF Pacific Support Team. The Pacific Support Team is engaging with Pacific partners to understand their needs and deliver tailored packages that seek to strengthen capacity, resilience and interoperability in areas such as engineering, medical services, communications, logistics, maritime and planning. To ensure that the Pacific Support Team remains responsive and relevant to the needs of the Pacific, it will continue to evolve as it carries out activities with partner nations.

In addition to the efforts of the Pacific Support Team, the ADF Malaria and Infectious Disease Institute (ADFMIDI) offers medical diagnostic training to the security forces of Pacific nations. Current activities include a vector-borne disease and tuberculosis collaborative research project with the PNG Defence Force; a joint ADFMIDI and US Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit Six capacity building project to accelerate malaria elimination in Guadalcanal Province; and epidemiology and entomological support to a James Cook University/Australian National University funded Lymphatic Filariasis survey in Samoa that is being conducted in collaboration with the Samoan Ministry of Health.

How we determine our Pacific partners' security requirements

Defence continues to evolve its understanding of security cooperation within the Pacific, embracing a wider scope for security cooperation in line with the priorities of our Pacific partners and the intent of the Boe Declaration on Regional Security. Defence listens to the totality of our Pacific partners' security concerns to cooperate in non-traditional areas of security and respond to these requests in close coordination with Australian whole-of-government.

We work closely with our inter-agency partners in the delivery of an Australian Government integrated approach to regional security. In partnership with the OTP, Defence participates in high-level security dialogues and consultations with Pacific partners that are designed to discuss the emerging national security concerns. These engagements include members of parliament, senior executives of government agencies and key leaders from security focused institutions. These meetings provide an important opportunity to identify key security concerns, areas of cooperation and receive feedback on the success of our current security collaboration. The importance of these

engagements cannot be overstated as they provide us the opportunity to create a whole-of-government picture of the priorities for Australian security cooperation in the Pacific.

Subsequent to these high-level consultations, Defence then holds a series of engagements with our Pacific partners' armed forces, police forces or security institutions to discuss the specifics of our previous and planned cooperation. Annual Defence Training and Cooperation talks are designed to tailor the nature of our engagement to meet the needs and requirements of our partners. They provide us an opportunity to explore training opportunities, capacity building activities and capability cooperation. Defence also uses these engagements to receive valuable feedback from our partners on whether our current cooperation is meeting their security needs and requirements.

Annual Defence talks are supported by high-level visits to the Pacific region by ministers and senior Defence personnel. In 2019, there were nine visits to the Pacific by the Prime Minister, Minister for Defence and Assistant Minister for Defence. In addition, these ministerial visits were supported by eight visits by the Chief of the Defence Force and Secretary of Defence.

While these formal avenues of engagement provide insight into the security priorities of our partners, a great deal of feedback comes from the personal relationships between our people and their counterparts in the Pacific. Defence has a significant number of attaché, training and advisory staff stationed across the Pacific who provide us ongoing feedback based on their daily interactions with our partners. This is complemented by professional networks in Canberra across relevant diplomatic missions. See [Attachment B](#) outlining approximate timings of annual Defence talks with individual Pacific Island countries.

These personal relationships created between Defence staff and our partners in the region allow us to be responsive to emerging and time critical changes to security requirements. By using the agreed whole-of-government security framework as their guidance on national intent, our Defence staff are able to use their initiative and authority to tailor on-ground activities to take advantage of changing circumstances and emerging opportunities. Strong people-to-people links are essential to making our engagement meaningful.

In addition to ongoing bilateral engagement, Defence contributes to Australia's participation in the PIF. The annual PIF leaders meeting is an opportunity to work with our Pacific family on practical solutions that deliver on the region's priorities. It is important for PIF Members to come together to talk about the most serious issues affecting our region. In particular, the Boe Declaration on Regional Security provides a clear scope of engagement to address agreed security-related challenges in the region. Defence is contributing to Australian whole-of-government efforts to ensure that this declaration guides the region in responding to emerging security threats, including through an expanded concept of security, promotion of the rules based order and freedom from external interference and coercion. Defence will continue to assist the Australian government's broader efforts to support the annual PIF Leaders Meeting, including logistically.

How we ensure that our Defence effort is integrated with whole-of-government objectives

Defence continues to explore opportunities to build on our coordinated efforts with other Government departments. Australia's ability to rapidly respond to security or humanitarian challenges throughout the region relies on close relationships between the ADF and whole-of-government agencies. In particular, Defence and DFAT have a long history of collaborating in response to humanitarian crises, the complexity of which have called for the full spectrum of Defence skills and capabilities. The increasing use of Defence assets in response to disasters in the Pacific has seen the relationship with DFAT strengthen over recent years. In the Pacific, DFAT and Defence have successfully coordinated in response to a range of crises, including Tropical Cyclones Winston, Pam and Gita; volcanic activity in PNG and Vanuatu; the 2018 earthquake in PNG; and the measles crisis in Samoa. Our ability to rapidly deploy high quality humanitarian assistance – including Defence assets and personnel, humanitarian supplies, expert technical teams, and funding through

humanitarian partners – means we remain the region's partner of choice during times of natural disasters and humanitarian crises.

Synergies across Defence, DFAT, Department of Home Affairs and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AMFA) in the maritime security and fisheries domain present further opportunities to deepen our existing cooperation as the PMSP program rolls out. The Department of Home Affairs delivers the Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness Workshop, where emerging maritime issues are discussed and scenario exercises integrate Defence-led capabilities such as the Guardian-class Patrol Boats and civilian aerial surveillance. Defence is working closely with Home Affairs and other agencies to bolster the capabilities and use of the Guardian-class Patrol Boats under the PMSP. Cross-agency collaboration could diversify these vessels' use to achieve better maritime domain awareness, reduced criminal activity at sea, improved policing efforts and management of irregular people movements in the region. There are additional opportunities for greater interagency cooperation where exercises and training (such as the Department of Home Affairs small vessel search courses) could take place alongside Defence port visits or handover of the Guardian-class Patrol Boats.

Defence is also working with DFAT to identify complementarities between PMSP and DFAT's investment in sustainable fisheries in the Pacific (approximately AUD \$59 million). Defence's coordination with the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment and with DFAT is critical to Australia's work with the Pacific Islands FFA, particularly on joint operations to reduce illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing and the PMSP aerial surveillance program.

The Australian Fisheries Management Agency (AFMA) delivers a range of activities to the Pacific under a four year DFAT-funded program, in conjunction with the Australian Attorney General's Department and the FFA Secretariat. AFMA works with Pacific countries to improve governance and develop responses to threats to fisheries resources. This work seeks to improve the regional monitoring, control and surveillance framework by providing assistance to Pacific island countries to ratify and implement the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement (NTSA). AFMA participates in multilateral Pacific fisheries, including FFA-led operations (Operations Rai Balang, Tui Moana, Island Chief and Kuru Kuru). During these operations, AFMA officers are embarked on-board Pacific patrol assets as sea-riders and in the FFA, providing training, technical advice and investigation support. Recently, AFMA requested three NTSA surveillance activities with Tuvalu, Tonga and Samoa utilising Guardian-class Patrol Boats gifted under the PMSP. Australia requested these assisting Parties to report sightings of foreign fishing vessels whilst transiting Australian waters. These three activities resulted in valuable additional surveillance of Australia's northern waters, including known areas of high foreign fishing activity.

Defence works in close consultation with DFAT and other security related government agencies in specific Pacific Island nations. In Vanuatu, Defence worked closely with DFAT and the AFP on opportunities to enhance engagement with the Vanuatu Police Force, focusing on infrastructure support, communications upgrades, recruitment training, HADR and support under the PMSP. In the Solomon Islands, Defence is working closely with DFAT on opportunities to enhance engagement in line with the whole-of-government package of support post-RAMSI. This includes construction of the western province border and patrol boat outpost, which will provide opportunities to enhance the efforts of Australian whole-of-government agencies working with Solomon Island border security organisations and customs agents. Defence is also strengthening alignment of whole-of-government activities in PNG. In July 2019, Prime Ministers Morrison and Marape agreed to start negotiations towards a Comprehensive Strategic and Economic Partnership and Bilateral Security Treaty. These arrangements will codify bilateral security cooperation, trade and investment, governance, people-to-people and institutional links, as well as a visible development program and regional cooperation. Defence is working on these arrangements across Government, most notably with DFAT, Home Affairs (including the AFP), the Department of Finance, and others.

How we coordinate our activities with our international partners

Pacific Island nations cooperate with a range of development partners to address their security challenges. We want the Pacific to have quality choices available to them to advance their priorities. We encourage any development partner to respect the region's collective security interests, ensure its investments support sustainable growth, are delivered transparently, respond to core priorities of Pacific Island governments, do not impose heavy debt burdens and include appropriate provisions for ongoing operation and maintenance.

Defence is working with our Pacific partners and other countries - such as France, Japan, New Zealand, the UK and the US – to identify opportunities for collaboration on security-related engagement and approaches to HADR in the region. For example, as security-related infrastructure projects supported by Defence approach completion, if requested by our Pacific partners, we will assist those countries to draw on technical capacity-building expertise (i.e engineers) offered by other nations to utilise, manage and sustain these important security-related investments. Defence will continue to support Australian whole-of-government efforts to coordinate with Pacific Island countries and other donors to meet the needs of the region. Defence's approach is aligned with Australia's commitments to implement the reforms arising from the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in 2016. These include recognising the central importance of local actors, respecting leadership by the affected state, protecting the most vulnerable and enhancing gender and disability inclusiveness.

On an annual basis Australia participates in a number of security-related international and regional meetings at ministerial and officials level. These opportunities reiterate support for regional challenges and identify how best to collaborate and coordinate our efforts with other nations. For example the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting, Shangri-La Dialogue, Pacific Chiefs of Defence, and Joint Heads of Pacific Security. A longstanding example of Defence's multilateral engagement in the Pacific is the Quadrilateral Defence Coordination Group, which includes Australia, New Zealand, France and the US. This group, drawing on input from our Pacific partners, helps us better coordinate our commitments in the region, particularly in joint FFA-led operations.

Conclusion

Since 2018, Defence has become more active and expanded our approach to security-related engagement in response to the Pacific Step-up and the Boe Declaration on Regional Security. Under the strategic leadership of the OTP, we have committed to an ambitious agenda to build a region that is strategically secure, economically stable and where states are politically sovereign. With OTP guidance, our approach continues to focus on delivering support that enhances whole-of-government coordination and consistent with the priorities of Pacific countries.

Over the coming decades we will increase our investment in the region. We will work with the OTP and, learning from our experiences, continue to evolve our approach to security-related engagement in the region. We will continue to invest in our extensive formal and personal relationships to ensure that our engagement is responsive, relevant and meets the security needs of our Pacific partners. This is vital in light of the complex drivers of change converging in our region.

Importantly, we will seek to collectively strengthen the results of our engagement through working collaboratively with Australian whole-of-government partners. As our engagements in PMSP and infrastructure projects enter subsequent stages of implementation, there will be new opportunities for collaboration and to leverage the full benefits of Australia's commitment to the region. In this spirit, and in consultation with our Pacific partners, we will also continue to ensure our engagements are designed and delivered to closely support possible collaborative efforts with other nations.

Attachment A: Terms of Reference

Inquiry into Australia's Defence relationships with Pacific Island nations

On Wednesday, 4 December 2019, the Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC, asked the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade - Defence Sub-committee to inquire into and report into Australia's defence relationships with Pacific island nations.

The Committee invites submissions addressing any or all of the terms of reference for the inquiry; Submissions are requested by **Monday, 16 March 2020**

With respect to the inquiry into Australia's defence relationships with Pacific island nations, we ask that the JSCFADT, in particular the Defence Sub-Committee give particular regard to:

1. Current activities and outcomes undertaken by Defence in the South West Pacific, including the relationship between Defence's longstanding Cooperation Program and its Step-Up activities;
2. How Australia's Defence Cooperation programs and Pacific Step up activities correspond to the needs, requests and feedback from partner nations in the Pacific (including consultation with civil society, parliaments and executive governments);
3. Opportunities for closer coordination and collaboration between Defence and other Government departments on Australian programs and activities across the South West Pacific;
4. Opportunities for closer coordination and collaboration between other nations seeking to invest and engage in the South West Pacific, including planning and execution of joint activities and preparation for HADR;
5. Any related matters

Attachment B: Defence's country specific engagement 2019-2020

Country	Total DCP 2019-2020	Key Lines of Effort/What are we doing	Defence Cooperation Program Talks	High level engagement to Pacific country	High level engagement to Australia
PNG	\$42 million	<p>Security Architecture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-level dialogues and visits <p>Enhanced Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance aviation partnership • More education and training opportunities to professionalise the PNG Defence enterprise • Support for women in leadership • Health support • Infrastructure Development program to support nation building • Capability development <p>Enhanced Regional Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lombrum Joint Initiative <p>Maritime Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased maritime presence • HADR • Pacific Maritime Security Program 	<p>Held annually in Q3/4.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister of Defence, Senator Linda Reynolds (Aug 19) • Assistant Defence Minister and Minister for International Development and the Pacific (Aug 19) • CDF, GEN Angus Campbell (Feb, Jul 19) • Chief Joint Capability, AIRMSHL Warren McDonald (Jul 19) • Commander Joint Health, AVM Tracy Smart (Jul 19) • Chief of Army, GEN Rick Burr (Apr 19) • Commander 1st Division, MAJGEN Elwood (Mar 19) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defence Minister, the Hon. Saki Soloma, CDF MAJGEN Gilbert (Feb 20) • Defence Minister, the Hon. Saki Soloma, CDF MAJGEN Gilbert Toropo, Secretary Akiye (Jul, Oct 19) • A/Secretary DoD, Trevor Meauri (Mar 19) • CDF MAJGEN Gilbert Toropo (Mar 19)
Fiji	\$3.61 million	<p>Maritime Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and maintenance support to the remaining Pacific Patrol Boat (RFNS Kikau) and the first Guardian-class Patrol Boat (RFNS Kula to be gifted in Mar 2020). • RFNS Kikau will be replaced to a Guardian-class Patrol Boat in April 2023. • Australia is working with Fiji to develop design plans for Fiji's Maritime Essential Services Centre. <p>Peacekeeping</p>	<p>Held annually in October</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDF South West Pacific Tour (Jan 20) • Prime Minister Morrison and Minister Hawke (11 Oct 19) • Commander 1st Division – MAJGEN Jake Elwood (2-3 Jul 19) • CDF (8-10 May 19) • Secretary of Defence (8-10 May 19) • CDF (23 Jan 19) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister Seruiratu and CRFMF Naupoto visit to Australia for Op BUSHFIRE ASSIST (Feb 20) • Minister Seruiratu visit for the Defence Ministers Meeting (Dec 19) • Chief of Fiji Navy, RFMF Chief of Staff & DEPSEC Ministry of Defence and National Security (Oct 19)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defence provides ongoing maintenance training and support to Fiji's Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicles. Defence has also provided strategic airlift support to Fijian Peacekeeping forces deploying to UN mission in Egypt, Iraq and Syria. Fiji has embedded a training officer at the Peace Operations Training Centre in Australia. HADR Australia is supporting Fiji with the redevelopment of the Blackrock Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Camp. Provide dedicated HADR Exercise Longreach to Fiji. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prime Minister Morrison (17-18 Jan 19) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prime Minister Bainimarama (Sep 19)
Solomon Islands	\$1 million	<p>Maritime Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to the remaining Pacific Patrol Boat (RSIPV Auki, gifted 1991), the first Guardian-class Patrol Boat (gifted in Nov 2019) and delivery of second Guardian-class Patrol Boat in May 2021. <p>Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Relief</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting RSIPF to build capacity to conduct HADR and remote policing in the outer islands. <p>Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to EOD efforts in Solomon Islands through capacity building of the RSIPF EOD Unit. This focuses on the provision of specialist equipment, training, and support to the RSIPF EOD facility at Hells Point, including through the recent establishment of an ADF EOD mentor. 	Held annually in May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDF (Jan 20) Head Navy Engineering (Dec 19) Minister for Defence (Aug 19) Prime Minister Morrison, Assistant Minister for Defence (Jun 19). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, Minister of Police, National Security and Correctional Services, Deputy RSIPF Commissioner (Nov 19) Minister and Permanent Secretary Police, National Security & Correctional Services (Aug 19).
Vanuatu	1.358 million	<p>Maritime Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to the Pacific Patrol Boat (RVS Tukoro gifted in 1987) and roll out of the Pacific Maritime Security Program, with the delivery of Vanuatu's replacement vessel expected in 2021. <p>Infrastructure</p>	DCP talks November. DCP Training Talks April.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistant Defence Minister and Minister for International Development and the Pacific (Aug 19) DGLAND (Jul 19) Secretary of Defence (May 19) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister for Internal Affairs (Nov 19) a/COMPOL (Sep, Oct, Nov 19)

Tonga	\$3.5 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quick infrastructure support at Cook Barracks, Mala Base and Tiroas Barracks under DCP. Defence is progressing larger-scale infrastructure upgrades to Cook and Tiroas Barracks (as announced in January 2019). Inter-island communications upgrades. <p>Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily provided through Exercise Vanuatu Alliance – Army-led HADR exercise. In 2019, Defence deployed a Landing Craft in support of Vanuatu Police Force remove policing activities. <p>Training for the Vanuatu Police Force;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing training support for the mobile force, police force and maritime wing. <p>Maritime Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maritime security support including training and maintenance support to the remaining Pacific Patrol Boat (VOEA Neiafau), the first Guardian-class Patrol Boat (VOEA Savea gifted in May 2019) VOEA Neiafau will be replaced to a Guardian-class Patrol Boat in October 2020. Equipment and fuel subsidies. Maintenance support to Australian-gifted Landing Craft Medium. Infrastructure upgrades to Nuku'alofa wharf. Upgrade of HMAF Navy's Masefield Base. <p>Communications Infrastructure Upgrades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing provision of terrestrial radio communication equipment and upgrades to ICT infrastructure at the three major HMAF bases under Project LALI. Project LALI also encompasses ongoing Australian funded training both in Australia and through Mobile Training Teams deployed to Tonga. 	Help annually in June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDF, Australian Federal Police Commissioner, Border Force Commissioner (Jan 19) Prime Minister (Jan 19) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, CAPT Sione Ulakai (Sep 19) Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Jun 19) Chief of Defence Staff, Austal (GPB construction) and 7BDE visit (Feb 19)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head Navy Engineering (Oct 19) Chief of Army (Aug 19) Commander 1 DIV (Jul 19) CDF (Jan 19) 		

Kiribati	470,000	<p>Workforce Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile training teams deployed to Tonga to undertake workforce planning and women peace and security training with the HMAF. Ongoing program about to undertake its third phase. <p>Maritime Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery and handover of Guardian-class Patrol Boat. Fuel funding for RKS Teanoai. In-country crew training including English Language training. Aerial surveillance activities (PMSP/OP Solania). <p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wharf upgrade in Q1/Q2 2020 in preparation for Guardian class Patrol Boat. PPB and Police HQ Infrastructure projects. Support to Operations and exercises. 	Held annually in May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Pacific Island and Maritime Security (May 19). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner of Police and Head of the Police Maritime Unit. (Oct 19).
Marshall Islands	\$481,000	<p>Maritime Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to the Pacific Patrol Boats (RMIS <i>Lomor</i>) including funding for fuel, support to participation in operations and other support costs for maintenance and sustainment. RMI will receive a replacement Guardian-class Patrol Boats in 2022. Crew training in RMI and Australia. <p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majuro Wharf upgrade 	Maritime Security Cooperation Talks held annually in September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDR-P Maritime Security Talks (Sep 19) AD Maritime Security (Mar 18) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister of Justice, Chief of Police (Oct 19)
Palau	\$437,000	<p>Maritime Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to the Pacific Patrol Boats (PSS <i>President H. I. Remeliik</i>) including funding for fuel, support to participation in operations and other support costs for maintenance and sustainment. Palau will receive a replacement Guardian-class Patrol Boats in Q2 2020. Crew training in Palau and Australia. <p>Infrastructure</p>	Held annually in May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Pacific Island and Maritime Security (May 19). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief of Staff for Minister for Justice (Oct 19) Vice President and A/Director Division Marine Law (Feb 20)

Samoa	\$609,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine Law Wharf upgrade (commence Q2 2020) • Support to development of operations centre <p>Maritime Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to the Guardian-class Patrol Boat (SPB Nafanua) including funding for fuel, support to the Samoa's participation in operations and other support costs for vessel. • Provided upgrades to the Nafanua Wharf. <p>Support for Samoan Police Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defence cooperation with Samoan Police Service includes funding for training in Australia and in-country mobile training based on their request, and provision of equipment. 	Held annually in March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AD Pacific Islands for DCP Talks (Mar 19) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner of Police (Oct 19) • Deputy Prime Minister and Commissioner of Police (Aug 19)
Tuvalu	\$350,000	<p>Maritime Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maritime security support including training and maintenance support to Australian-gifted Guardian-class Patrol Boat • Provision of boarding party equipment and fuel subsidies. • Training and education, including alcohol awareness. <p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure upgrades and repairs to Police Maritime Wing workshop and National Coordination Centre. 	Held annually in October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Secretary SEA and Pacific (Feb 20). • Prime Minister and Assistant Defence Minister and Minister for International Development and the Pacific attended the PIF (Aug 19). • AVM Stephen Meredith (GPB Ceremony – Jun 19). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Minister of Tuvalu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Tourism, Environment and Labour, Minister of Natural Resources, and Police Commissioner (Guardian-class Patrol Boat handover - Apr 19).