

Department of Defence – Other issues

ADF's preparedness to conduct peacekeeping operations

Introduction

- 5.1 The ADF has been engaged in several demanding and complex peacekeeping missions in recent decades. Australia's involvement in these types of missions will continue in the future and the ADF, in conjunction with other federal agencies and non-government organisations, will be at the forefront of Australia's commitment.
- 5.2 The ADF is well-prepared to conduct and participate effectively in peace keeping operations, and the ADF contributions to peace keeping operations are well sought after. There are a number of reasons for this. The ADF's core warfighting capabilities provide forces that are adaptable to peace operations. Peace operations beyond Australia's region often centre on professional military expertise [for example health, communications and logistics functions], which Australia is well-positioned to provide, rather than formed units. The capabilities and personnel of the ADF are well maintained and well prepared, and therefore, when deployed, are effective. Specific peace keeping training is routinely conducted for individual members and as part of pre-deployment training.¹ Also,

1 Defence submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade *Inquiry into Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations*, key issues paragraph.

the ADF's reputation for professionalism, reliability and resourcefulness, and value on expertise rather than personnel numbers, means that the ADF's contribution is consistently well-regarded.²

- 5.3 A coordinated whole-of-government approach to peace operations has greater potential to address the root causes of conflict, rather than solely relying on a military approach. Defence will often find itself engaged in consultation and planning with a variety of agencies including Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Attorney General's Department, the Australian Agency for International Development, the Australian Electoral Commission and the Australian Federal Police. Engagement with International Organisations and NGOs (Non-Government Organisations) is also increasing, to allow coordination of effort.³
- 5.4 The ADF's peace operations training organisations are the ADF Peacekeeping Centre (ADFPKC) and 39th Personnel Support Battalion (39 PSB) - Sydney. They are complemented by the Asia Pacific Centre for Military Law (APCML).⁴
- The function of the ADFPKC is to develop and manage peace operations doctrine and training. The centre is a repository for peace operations expertise and experience, monitors international peace operations issues, assists in ADF peace operations training, develops doctrine and procedure, and represents the ADF at seminars and conferences where appropriate.⁵
 - 39 PSB is primarily an ADF training facility, which provides personnel with training specific to the mission and area of operations. However, it has trained representatives from the Australian Federal Police, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Customs, the Quarantine Service, and the then-Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.⁶

2 Defence submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade *Inquiry into Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations* para. 9.

3 Defence submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade *Inquiry into Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations* para. 26.

4 Defence submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade *Inquiry into Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations* para. 17.

5 Defence submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade *Inquiry into Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations* para. 19.

6 Defence submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade *Inquiry into Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations* para. 22.

- The APCML is a collaborative initiative of Defence Legal Division and the Melbourne University Law School. The centre aims to promote greater understanding of, and increased respect for, the rule of law aspects of military affairs within the ADF and the region.⁷
- 5.5 The ADF has a strong record of participation in peace keeping operations: since World War Two, the ADF has participated in 39 peace operations under UN command, and 16 non-UN peacekeeping operations (many of which were sanctioned by the UN).
- 5.6 In the Defence Annual Report 2006-2007, the following peace keeping activities were detailed. In Thailand, the peacekeeping exercise Pirap Jabiru was expanded for the first time in August 2006 to include participation by other regional countries. Furthermore, Australia continued to provide peacekeeping assistance to Cambodia. Also, the ADF's cooperation with India included staff college exchanges to develop cooperation in maritime security, counter-terrorism and peacekeeping. Furthermore, steps were made to finalise an Information Sharing Arrangement with India, which was expected to be signed in July 2007.⁸

Review of ADF peacekeeping

- 5.7 The Committee sought an overview of the ADF's current and prospective peacekeeping commitments.

... we identify four elements that make up the category of peace operations. Those are peacemaking activities, peace enforcement activities, peacekeeping activities and peace-building activities ... at the moment [there are] nine operations which fall into one of those four categories of peace operations.⁹

Sudan

- 5.8 The most recent operation that has been declared is Operation Hedgerow in the Darfur region of Sudan. We are about to deploy nine staff officers into Darfur. The committee was advised that as at 10 July 2008 Australia had been asked by the UN to defer that briefly, but at

7 Defence submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade *Inquiry into Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations* para. 18.

8 Defence Annual Report 2006-2007 Volume 1 pp. 108-109.

9 Commodore Trevor Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 64.

this stage we are still preparing to deploy nine staff officers. One of those staff officers is in fact a colonel under contract to the United Nations. He is going into the position of Deputy Chief Integrated Services Support Logistics, working for the senior representative in that area. We also have another operation in the Sudan, Operation Azure; that is 15 ADF personnel based in Khartoum. Because of the new Hedgerow operation, we are about to increase the Azure commitment by two.¹⁰

Middle East

5.9 The ADF has several 'peacekeeping' commitments across the Middle East. There are 25 personnel committed to Operation Mazurka, which is the ADF contribution to the peacekeeping activity in the Sinai. Similarly, moving further east, we have Operation Paladin, which is in the Middle East and Israel, with the Israel, Lebanon and Syria peacekeeping activity. General Gordon, a two-star Army officer, is also on contract with the United Nations in a leadership capacity. Operation Riverbank, the contribution to the UN mission in Iraq, has two ADF members and Operation Palate in Afghanistan supports the senior UN representative and is based in Kabul.¹¹

5.10 Regarding operations in Afghanistan, the CDF advised:

We have a full suite of available vehicles, and the tactical commanders on the ground obviously have a large number of Bushmasters and ASLAVs available, and a number of other special forces vehicles that are preferred by our special forces. The sort of concept we have got at the moment is to do construction and reconstruction using our Reconstruction Task Force. Very shortly we will be going into an additional mentoring and training role with an Afghan Kandak, an Afghan battalion. Fundamentally, it is all going well.¹²

East Timor

5.11 The ADF has two operations associated with the United Nations in East Timor. Operation Tower has four personnel directly supporting the UN mission, and also the larger ADF International Security Force under Operation Astute, which is part of a technical agreement with

10 Commodore Trevor Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 64.

11 Commodore Trevor Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, pp. 64-65.

12 Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, *Transcript 29 August 2008*, p. 45.

the United Nations to provide security for the mission and other contributing nations to achieve the outcomes they seek.¹³

Solomon Islands

- 5.12 Operation Anode is the ADF contribution to the Regional Assistance Mission for the Solomon Islands. It is not a UN mission, but it is a peacekeeping mission nonetheless.¹⁴

United Nations Headquarters in New York

- 5.13 There are also two defence attachés supporting Ambassador Hill in New York and three other officers working under direct contract to the UN.¹⁵

Australia's capacity to conduct peacekeeping

- 5.14 The Committee was concerned whether the increased rate of operations [particularly in the Middle East] in recent years had presented difficulties in maintaining our peacekeeping role.¹⁶ Defence replied:

No. In fact, because the ADF is force structured around high-end war fighting, the skills that are generated as a consequence of that structure and the preparedness regime that goes around maintaining that force structure mean that we are well prepared to meet the lower order peace operation type activities. The unique thing about most UN requests is that they want niche skills from the ADF, not necessarily those skills that require large numbers such as infantry. They are more concerned about getting the high levels of skills that we have resident in medical staff, engineers, logisticians, military leaders at the mid- to high-seniority levels, campaign planning, mission planning, et cetera.¹⁷

- 5.15 The Committee enquired whether there was any special equipment required for peace-keeping.¹⁸

13 Commodore Trevor Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 65.

14 Commodore Trevor Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 65.

15 Commodore Trevor Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 65.

16 Hon Arch Bevis MP, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 66.

17 Commodore Trevor Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 66.

18 Hon Arch Bevis MP, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 66.

No.... because we are structured for high-end war fighting, most of the equipment we have can be adapted to peace-keeping operations.¹⁹

- 5.16 The Committee inquired into the ADF's capacity to integrate with nations whose forces are largely oriented more around conventional combat rather than peacekeeping. Whether our skillset effectively meshes with theirs and whether we do training exercises with our allies in peacekeeping exercises, like we do in conventional combat exercises.²⁰ Defence replied:

Whilst [the ADF's] force structure [is] shaped around high-end warfighting ... the personnel that man that force still go through the full range of training activities. The ADF continually looks at opportunities to improve its training across the full spectrum of operations, including peace-keeping. There is an arrangement in place, for example, in military and legal circles [with the University of Melbourne's Asia Pacific Centre for Military Law] for us to obtain a better understanding of some of the dimensions of operating in an environment less than a conflict environment.²¹

... [there is also a] a new Asia Pacific Centre for Civil Military Cooperation which is focused upon bringing together ADF elements, government and non-government organisations, so that we improve our ability to manage particularly those transitional phases of operations where you are moving from a security based condition to a nation-building condition where NGOs and government agencies, other than Defence, have a very strong role to play to build good governance, infrastructure, law and order and the like. We [also] have the Australian Defence Warfare Centre near Newcastle at RAAF Williamstown. It not only continues to refine our doctrine on peace operations, but also looks at training opportunities in the joint arena for us to improve those processes.²²

- 5.17 The Committee inquired whether the ADF conducts peacekeeping training exercises with other countries; in particular New Zealand, Britain or America. ²³
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19 Commodore Trevor Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 66.

20 Hon Arch Bevis MP, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 67.

21 Commodore Trevor Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 66.

22 Commodore Trevor Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 67.

23 Hon Arch Bevis MP, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 67.

I do not think we have exercises that we characterise purely as peacekeeping training exercises.....that is invariably because of the nature of the way we exercise our forces in those major exercises. Some of the skill sets we learn in that process are immediately applicable to those peacekeeping scenarios.²⁴

- 5.18 The Committee also asked the ADF to comment on the effectiveness of the ADF Peacekeeping Centre and the 39th Personnel Support Battalion and whether there has been any evaluation work done on ADF members going over and returning from overseas to measure the effectiveness of the training provided.²⁵ Defence replied:

The ability for us to capture lessons learnt is something that we can continually refine. We certainly have a system whereby when personnel return from operations we look at the post-activity reports. They get incorporated into a lessons learnt database and that lessons learnt database is drawn upon not only by military planners in Joint Operations Command, but also by the doctrinal development centres at ADFWC, and they will continually provide that feedback to the Peace Centre in terms of modifying their training.²⁶

- 5.19 The Committee was also concerned that the training given to the ADF, in relation to peacekeeping operations, takes into account the diverse nature of operation partners, such as the African Union and Pakistan or India and the fact that they may not like each other or cooperate well or may have certain cultural differences or sensitivities.²⁷ Defence replied:

We rely heavily, I think, on the feedback we get from our Defence Attaché in the United Nations, firstly to get a sense of what the UN's assessment is of the ADF contribution, as much as our own internal review of our processes ... The beauty of having the Defence Attaché in the UN is that he provides an independent perspective on how the UN and the other contributing members of the UN value the ADF contribution to that.²⁸

24 Commodore Trevor Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 67.

25 Mr Stuart Robert MP, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 67.

26 Commodore Trevor Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 67.

27 Mr Stuart Robert MP, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 68.

28 Commodore Trevor Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 68.

- 5.20 Before forces are deployed overseas they go through what is called a mission readiness evaluation, which includes cultural training, irrespective of whether it is preparation for a peace operation or high-end conflict, such as we have at the moment in Afghanistan or Iraq. That is a fundamental element of the preparation the ADF gives its forces. It has to be, because those very sensitivities, if ignored or not attended to, have a flow-on effect for the force protection of those ADF elements deployed.²⁹
- 5.21 Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations was studied in detail by the Senate Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. Their report was released in August 2008.³⁰

Abrams Tank – Current and future role of armour

Background

- 5.22 The Abrams tank has replaced the Leopard tank in the Australian Defence Force, as part of the LAND 907 Tank Replacement project. The Abrams tank will provide modern, survivable and interoperable tank capability that will be supportable until at least 2020. The project includes the acquisition and through-life support of 59 M1A1 Abrams main battle tanks, seven M88A2 Hercules recovery vehicles, simulators, tank transporters and fuel trucks.³¹
- 5.23 The first 18 M1A1 Abrams tanks and five M88A2 armoured recovery vehicles were delivered on 21 September 2006. The delivery of the remaining 41 tanks and two armoured recovery vehicles was completed in March 2007.³² Deliveries of gunnery and driver simulators, tank transporters, fuel trucks and the ammunition types required to support the M1A1 Abrams battle tank were also transitioned into service in 2006-2007.³³
- 5.24 The Abrams tanks and Hercules recovery vehicles will be operated by the 1st Armoured Regiment (Darwin, Northern Territory), the School

29 Commodore Trevor Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 68.

30 Senate Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Report "*Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations*" dated August 2008

31 Defence Annual Report 2006-2007 Volume 2 p. 42.

32 Defence Annual Report 2006-2007 Volume 2 p. 7.

33 Defence Annual Report 2006-2007 Volume 2 p. 42.

of Armour (Puckapunyal, Victoria) and the Army Logistics Training Centre (Bandiana, Victoria).³⁴

Progress of the Abrams tank project

- 5.25 The Committee sought and received confirmation that the Army has taken delivery of the full complement of Abrams tanks, including heavy lift transporters and recovery vehicles.³⁵
- 5.26 Defence advised that the Abrams tanks have been progressively coming into service for the last couple of years. For example, the tank transporters came in prior to the arrival of the first tank. Some of the tank transporters have arrived but are not necessarily synchronised with the arrival of the tanks. However, currently Defence have the tanks, have the Hercules armoured recovery vehicles, and have transportation for those vehicles.³⁶
- 5.27 The Committee also sought information on ancillary equipment, such as camouflage skirts. In response, Defence discussed the “TUSK” program:
- TUSK is a survivability kit with a number of enhancements and is part of an ongoing program between DMO and Army to continually improve the survivability and situational awareness of the tank and its crew. The areas that are being acquired progressively from now include the loader’s armoured gun shield, the loader’s safety shields, the 50 cal remote thermal site and the Abrams reactive armour tile. Then there are a number of developmental parts to this that we also hope will come in under this program in the future.³⁷
- 5.28 The Committee expressed concern that the Abrams did not match the capability of its predecessor the Leopard tank, particularly in terms of bridge-laying capability.³⁸

That is correct ...the Leopard tank had a bridge-laying capability which served us very well for many years, but it is

34 Defence Annual Report 2006-2007 Volume 2 p. 42.

35 Mr Stuart Robert MP, Hansard, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 42.

36 Brigadier Symon, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 42.

37 Brigadier Symon, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 43.

38 Hon Arch Bevis MP, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 47.

unable to be used for the Abrams tank. It is an area that Army is looking [at].³⁹

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Government consider the acquisition of battlefield mobility assets for the Abrams tank, such as a bridge-laying capability.

Interoperability of the Abrams tank

- 5.29 Some concerns surrounding the compatibility of the Abrams Tank with existing communications platforms were also expressed by the Committee.⁴⁰ The Committee sought confirmation that the Abrams Tank was not actually compatible with the wider communications architecture between sub-units and their commander on the battlefield.

That is correct. The complexity of communications is hard to deal with. You have actually got to break it down to all of the component parts, but to keep it as strategic as your discussion with Commander 1 Brigade, under a number of projects, but primarily JP2072, we are seeking to resolve that particular issue as quickly as possible. I think you would appreciate that the level of situational awareness and the bandwidth in communications that goes into an Abrams tank today is considerably more than anything we had on the old Leopard tank. It is not totally surprising with the complexity of the communications suites and the situational awareness that you have on board, it was not possible to synchronise completely the communications and situation awareness to give it its full capability. It is a very high [priority] project for DMO and for the Chief of Army right now.⁴¹

39 Brigadier Paul Symon, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 47.

40 Mr Stuart Robert MP, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 43.

41 Brigadier Paul Symon, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 43-44.

- 5.30 Providing additional comment, the ADF's Chief Information Officer stated:

The SINGARS radio used in [the Abrams] tank ... can still talk to the existing communications equipment. The real issue with the tank is not actually the communications bit; it is the interface between the FBCB2 Blue Force Tracker (the battle management system) and BCSS (the battlefield command support system) and the ability to pass data across there.⁴²

- 5.31 The Committee notes the advice provided by Defence that the communications project to integrate the ADF's communications and battle management systems is a high priority.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Government expedite a solution to upgrade communications suites to ensure integration of all battle management systems to create a modern and effective Network Centric Warfare capability.

Deployability of the Abrams tank

- 5.32 With regard to questioning by the Committee on the deployability of the new tank capability, Defence advised that they could meet their obligation of providing a tank squadron and that the Abrams tank can be deployed by airlift (on the C17 aircraft) or by sea.

The Australian Army is very, very proud and pleased to be operating the Abrams tank. It is the world's best and that is the view of the Australian Army.⁴³

- 5.33 At the time of the public hearing, the airportability of the Abrams tank on an Australian C-17 aircraft had yet to be trialled. The Committee is aware that trial loading exercises were carried out in October 2008 and the ability to deploy the Abrams on an Australian C-17 aircraft has now been confirmed and approved.

42 Rear Admiral Peter Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 52.

43 Brigadier Paul Symon, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 45.

- 5.34 The Committee was also concerned about skills shortages within the Army to service Abrams tanks.⁴⁴

The challenge..... is that we have had the win with the easier part of being ahead of schedule in the personnel area. Army is very, very conscious that the harder part, which is the specialist trades, is ahead of us. In terms of our plan, the rubber starts to hit the road on that next year.⁴⁵

In relation specifically to the Abrams tank and the serviceability issue, we have surged tradesmen up to Darwin.... to assist with some serviceability issues.⁴⁶

- 5.35 DMO has contracted with civilian tradespeople to address the serviceability issue associated with the Abrams tank. In addition the Army has commenced some trade transfer initiatives; for example, to better utilise those people previously in the infantry who want to take on new specialist trades in the Army. The Army is also moving experienced warrant officers into the regions; this is aimed at encouraging them to learn a new specialist trade rather than leave the Army altogether.⁴⁷

Communications – lack of interoperability of new and legacy communications equipment

Summary of current interoperability challenges

- 5.36 Industry and commercial pressures have impacted on interoperability over a period of time in Australia and particularly overseas. Another key influence on interoperability has been the technological advances of coalition partners and traditional allies and the rapid increase in the frequency and scale of combined or joint coalition exercises.⁴⁸

Network centric warfare capability

- 5.37 Defence highlighted network centric warfare as an interoperability issue. This is because network centric warfare requires data
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44 Mr Damian Hale MP, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 47.

45 Brigadier Paul Symon, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 46.

46 Brigadier Paul Symon, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 47-48.

47 Brigadier Paul Symon, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 48.

48 Rear Admiral Peter Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 51.

movement rather than traditional voice in communications equipment. Due to this, it was identified that it is a challenge for some of the older systems to be able to host the data. This has necessitated a move to more modern equipment. As already mentioned in relation to the Abrams tank, Defence stated:

The real issue with the tank is not actually the communications bit; it is the interface between the FBCB2 Blue Force Tracker, the battle management system, the BCSS, the battlefield command support system, and the ability to pass data across there....slightly different issue but it has an interoperability component.⁴⁹

5.38 In terms of delivering network centric warfare capability, Defence indicated that in the maritime environment this capability is most advanced and has been for some time. The Hardened Network Army initiative has also seen more networked capability coming into place. However, Defence indicated that integration of this networked capability was still quite limited.⁵⁰

5.39 Defence stated that in 2005, to address this integration issue, it created the Network Centric Warfare Program Office to develop the battlespace architecture to ensure that any new projects have the requisite interoperability already in place. This Program Office has since developed an interim architecture to enable any new projects to have the requisite interoperability. The interoperability of projects that pre-date the establishment of the Program Office have been subject to some time delays.⁵¹

5.40 To enhance its interoperability capability, Defence also stated that it had paved the way for the appointment of a Chief Technical Officer within the Chief Information Officer Group:

One of the key deliverables that the Chief Technical Officer will have to deliver is a coherent architecture for the Defence network—a comprehensive suite of technical standards.⁵²

49 Rear Admiral Peter Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 52.

50 Rear Admiral Peter Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 52.

51 Rear Admiral Peter Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 52.

52 Rear Admiral Peter Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, pp. 52–53.

Coalition interoperability challenges

- 5.41 The Committee indicated its concerns with regard to interoperability between battlefield systems. The Committee heard evidence that a key aspect of enhancing interoperability is managing and integrating any advances or changes in technology of Australia's traditional and non-traditional international partners.⁵³ An example of how this has been managed is through Australia's representation on the Communications Electronic Board of Five Nations:

Its key role is ensuring that we have interoperability standards between the five nations and that we feed those back into our national armed force. That is, if you like, trying to make sure that we are in lockstep with our traditional partners.⁵⁴

- 5.42 In the deployment of forces to Iraq and Afghanistan, interoperability was found to be generally satisfactory. However, Defence stated that there were incidents in which interoperability were an issue:

A case in point is the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the Australian led coalition maritime interception force. That force was looking to have a common secure radio for all boarding parties, for helicopters, ships and boats to use. When you looked across the armed forces of Poland, Britain, the US, the UK and ourselves there was not one common radio. The ADF in fact resolved that interoperability issue by sending 40 Wagtail radios and issuing them to the forces of the four countries.⁵⁵

- 5.43 Indicating that interoperability is an issue that extends beyond the ADF to all coalition forces involved in combined or joint exercises, Defence stated:

Twenty years ago it was not uncommon for individual services to be able to conduct an operation without a large amount of interaction with the other services, and that was particularly the case in the large armed forces like the United States ... but of course times have changed dramatically and it is a much more joint and combined environment.⁵⁶

53 Hon Arch Bevis MP, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p. 52.

54 Rear Admiral Peter Jones, *Transcript 10 July 2008*, p 53.

55 Rear Admiral Peter Jones, *Transcript 10 Jul 2008*, p. 53.

56 Rear Admiral Peter Jones, *Transcript 10 Jul 2008*, p. 53.

- 5.44 The importance of effective interoperability amongst coalition forces has lead to the ADF representing Australia on:

the steering board of an international body that looks at communication standards and tries to promote standards across the board in the ICT environment, so that when it comes to newer platforms, there is much more chance of having, at the very inception, some common standards.⁵⁷

Other technical issues

Cryptographic equipment

- 5.45 Technological changes associated with cryptographic equipment have also been an issue contributing to the maintenance of interoperability. The relationship with Coalition partners has required a shift to newer crypto technologies.⁵⁸

Backward capability

- 5.46 The ADF has attempted to ensure that any new equipment purchased has backward capability so it can be used with older communications equipment.

The SINGARS radio used in [the Abrams] tank does have backward capability; it can still talk with existing communications equipment.⁵⁹

High Frequency Communications System

- 5.47 Whilst examining interoperability, the Committee also noted the contractual delays associated with the delivery of a High Frequency (HF) communications system from Boeing. Referencing a recent ANAO Report⁶⁰, the Committee made it clear that the delays, contractual alterations, expenditure levels and unforeseen technical difficulties associated with the Boeing contract for providing the HF capability was of concern. It also expressed concern that whilst the original contract with Boeing had been to provide a multi-platform

57 Rear Admiral Peter Jones, *Transcript 10 Jul 2008*, p. 53.

58 Rear Admiral Peter Jones, *Transcript 10 Jul 2008*, pp. 51-52.

59 Rear Admiral Peter Jones, *Transcript 10 Jul 2008*, p. 52.

60 Australian National Audit Office, *Audit Report No. 34 2006-2007, High Frequency Communication System Modernisation Project*, dated May 2007.

HF communications system, which had not been delivered.⁶¹ Defence updated the Committee:

The core system that basically establishes the HF communications network was introduced into service in 2004. It is now operational and it is providing communications links to platforms with HF radios in them. The next part of the project is to move from the core system to a final system. We are enhancing the core system to provide improved automatic link establishment and other enhancements, including email over HF and the like. That was due to be completed by November last year. Boeing were unable to achieve that date and has now sought for a schedule extension to deliver the final capability incrementally.⁶²

The project still includes the platforms as approved by government, and they are still part of the scope of the project. In order to demonstrate the terminal equipment, if you like, that will work in the platforms, we agreed with Boeing to develop a generic mobile system and we were going to demonstrate that on Chinooks. Once we had proven the design of that generic mobile system we were then going to move to integrating it into the platforms that are within the scope of the project. [The generic mobile system] is due for delivery from Boeing between now and 2011.⁶³

Looking at Boeing's reluctance to contractually commit to earlier dates, we asked: do we have a fundamental problem here and why is it taking so long to get through integration and test? Hence, we agreed to a technical review to determine whether there is a problem that they are not aware of.⁶⁴

The schedule for final delivery that Boeing offered us and was prepared to sign up to was March 2011. We were negotiating a commercial settlement with them but decided that that length of time, given the compensation they were offering, probably did not represent value for money. We have now instructed Boeing to work to the contract [that] was rebaselined in 2004.⁶⁵

61 Senator Mark Bishop, *Transcript 10 Jul 2008*, pp. 54-55.

62 Mrs Shireane McKinnie, *Transcript 10 Jul 2008*, p. 54.

63 Mrs Shireane McKinnie, *Transcript 10 Jul 2008*, p. 54-55.

64 Mrs Shireane McKinnie, *Transcript 10 Jul 2008*, p. 54.

65 Mrs Shireane McKinnie, *Transcript 10 Jul 2008*, pp. 54-55

Although there is still some way to go and probably around half of the total project funds are yet to be committed, we have delivered the core system, which is providing essential capability to the ADF.⁶⁶

- 5.48 The Committee expressed concern that once this generic mobilisation system is in place by 2011, there is still the issue of transferring it from single platform to multi-platform usage, as by this point Boeing will no longer be contracted to provide this.

But half the funds have been expended, the implementation date for one platform is now suggested to be March of 2011 ... and then we have to do all the work to make it multi.⁶⁷

The Hardened and Networked Army

- 5.49 The Committee sought an update on the Hardened and Networked Army (HNA) and the Enhanced Land Force (ELF) initiatives.⁶⁸ Defence stated:

... it is easier [to discuss both initiatives] together, because the two programs, whilst they are discrete decisions of government, all speak to one issue, which is that Army is growing by over 20 per cent over a ten-year period and clearly bringing in a number of capabilities. Firstly, inside Army we have been doing a lot of work over the 12 months building an Army plan that synchronises the key ingredients to this growth and synchronising it over the next ten years. You would be aware that 7 RAR and 8/9 RAR are key elements to the growth of Army. Currently, 7 RAR is ahead of its scheduled path for growth and for development. 8/9 RAR is [also] on schedule. The real challenge lies ahead next year and the years after. The early growth that we had planned with the battalions was very much in the infantrymen, which are the easier-to-get trades. Army is very conscious that from next year onwards, some of those more difficult trades and specialists need to start coming on board into both the battalions, as well as some of the other elements that we are gaining through HNA and ELF. There are a number of

66 Mrs Shireane McKinnie, *Transcript 10 Jul 2008*, p. 56.

67 Senator Mark Bishop, *Transcript 10 Jul 2008*, p. 56.

68 Hon Arch Bevis MP, *Transcript 10 Jul 2008*, p. 45.

initiatives underway to try and help us with those specialist trades in order to get better balance across the Army. That will be a real challenge for the HNA and ELF programs next year and beyond.

A big component of the resourcing for HNA and ELF is for the equipment that goes with both the battalions, but also other elements that are growing under HNA and ELF. Obviously we have a support agreement with DMO on the provision of those equipments and we are now about 90 per cent of our way through actually articulating, spanner by spanner and hammer by hammer, exactly what is required. This has been a big body of work in its own right over the last 12 months. Finally, with regard to facilities, the interim facilities are in the process of being delivered for 7 RAR now. There are four training command facilities that are being enhanced: Kapooka, Singleton, Liverpool and Puckapunyal. Most of that work is already complete. It will be completed by the end of next month [August]. As to HNA facilities in Adelaide, the permanent facilities for 7 RAR in Adelaide have now been endorsed through the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works. The PW submission for 8/9 RAR's facilities in south-east Queensland will be taken to the PWC in 2009.⁶⁹

- 5.50 The Committee is pleased with the progress of both initiatives to date; however, notes that the future success of HNA and ELF will depend upon the more difficult task of recruiting personnel for specialist trades and the finalisation of facilities development and equipment acquisition. The Committee will continue to monitor the progress of HNA and ELF in 2009.

69 Brigadier Paul Symon, *Transcript 10 Jul 2008*, pp. 45-46.