

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs,  
Defence and Trade

Report into the Defence Annual Report 2006-07

Government Response



### **Recommendation 1**

That subject to national security requirements, the ADF and Government schedule large acquisitions in a sustainable manner over time, to avoid peaks and troughs for Australian industry and to better provide a long-term through-life support capability.

#### **Government Response**

**Agreed In Principle.** While the needs of the ADF must remain our primary consideration, Defence is examining options to better 'level load' demand on Australian industry. This was examined in the context of the 2009 Defence White Paper). As Chapter 16 of the Defence White Paper states, carefully managing local industry growth and capability at a rate commensurate with the ADF's needs is critical to Defence. Defence's aim will be to build greater flexibility into DCP programming to mitigate the adverse capability impacts associated with large expenditure 'peaks and troughs'.

Moreover, as outlined in the Defence Capability Plan 2009, over the next four years the Government sees strong growth in demand for local industry. This is especially pronounced in the maritime and electronics sectors. While there will be peaks and troughs in Defence demand, these are off a high base level of local work.

### **Recommendation 2**

That consideration of Australia's future combat aircraft needs, including the critical air to air combat role, be determined by the paramount strategic importance of this capability, as recognised in the 2000 White Paper. That the decision on future air combat capability be determined by the analysis of available platform capabilities against Australia's strategic reform requirements and not be constrained by a predetermined requirement for a single platform.

#### **Government Response**

**Agreed In Principle.** The Government agrees with the Committee's comments on strategic importance. The 2009 Defence White Paper details the Government's directions for the future of the air combat capability, which are based on rigorous strategic logic, clearly defined strategic priorities and the outcomes of a comprehensive review of the ADF's force structure.

### **Recommendation 3**

Provided by Assistant Treasurer.

#### **Recommendation 4**

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

#### **Government Response**

**Agreed.** Battlefield mobility is identified in the 2009 Defence White Paper as a key capability priority for the Army. The requirement for battlefield mobility assets for Abrams tanks may indicatively be met by combat bridge laying, for gap crossing, or ploughs, rollers, blades for countermine and obstacle clearance. There also exists military off-the-shelf systems for combat bridging that may support the Abrams tanks' battlefield mobility. This will be investigated as part of DCP project LAND 155 – Enhanced Gap Crossing Capability.

#### **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.

#### **Government Response**

**Agreed In Principle.** The 2009 Defence White Paper placed a high priority of Information Superiority, including the area of Command, Control, Communications and Battlespace Management. The White Paper also places a priority on building the networked force and identified the Government's directions to Defence in the achievement of this force.