

## Executive summary

In this report, the committee considers the key security challenges facing Pacific island states. It identifies the way the region's physical and geographical characteristics combine with limited human and technological capacity to reduce the ability of states to undertake day-to-day policing and respond effectively to large scale breakdowns in law and order. The committee finds that there are many root causes of conflict—unemployment, inter-ethnic tension, land tenure, access to weapons, gender equality and political instability—and that these often interact to bring about rapid deteriorations in law and order. It also identifies how overstretched justice systems are constrained in their ability to prosecute and deter criminal activity.

In the second part of the report, the committee identifies external threats to Pacific security ranging from illegal fishing to forms of transnational crime. The committee finds that just as some states struggle to deal with law and order at a community level, they also find it difficult to respond to complex forms of transnational crime. Pacific island states do not have the capacity to police their vast oceanic borders effectively nor do they have the sophisticated tracking and surveillance capabilities required to address transnational criminal activity.

Finally, the committee examines the security implications of climate change and the effect of natural disasters on the region and finds that, while extremely vulnerable, Pacific states have limited capacity to respond to such threats.

Australia is actively supporting Pacific island states to meet these challenges through an extensive range of security-focused assistance programs. Australia seeks to boost the capacity of these states to enhance policing and respond to breakdowns in law and order through the Pacific Police Development Program (Australian Federal Police) and the Defence Cooperation Program (Department of Defence). It is also engaged in programs that build legislative capacity through work undertaken by the Attorney-General's Department. The Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) and the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service also assist in preventing crime in the region. Australia has also sought to improve its capacity to respond to crises in the region through two important recent initiatives: the Asia Pacific Civil–Military Centre of Excellence and the Deployable Civilian Capacity.

In spite of the assistance provided by Australia, many Pacific island states still struggle to deal adequately with these domestic and external threats to their security. The committee has therefore made a series of recommendations which focus on how Australia could enhance its security-related assistance through: coordinating its security-related initiatives; working with bilateral partners; and complementing the work of regional organisations and international donors.

### **Recommendation 1**

paragraph 3.30

Given the success the Department of Defence has had in improving weapons security in the Pacific, the committee recommends the Australian Government continue to assist Pacific island countries secure their armouries and munition stores.

**Recommendation 2** paragraph 4.40

The committee recommends that the joint training, education and pre-development exercises that are currently used to prepare officers for RAMSI become permanently incorporated into the AFP's Pacific Police Development Program.

**Recommendation 3** paragraph 6.40

The committee notes that the *Defence White Paper 2009* indicates that Australian government departments are developing a framework for enhancing regional maritime security. The committee sees potential for other donors to make a valuable contribution in this area. It therefore recommends that, in developing this framework, these departments consider the advantages of elevating the Pacific Boat Patrol Program into a regional initiative, supported by the Pacific Islands Forum and other donors.

**Recommendation 4** paragraph 6.54

The committee has noted the limited maritime surveillance capability of Pacific island states. It therefore recommends that the Australian Government give specific attention to the way the region could improve information sharing and develop a 'supra-national' enforcement capability through, for example, the proposal for a Regional Maritime Coordination Centre. In so doing, the committee suggests that the government give particular attention to the ability of states to maintain and contribute to such a facility, as well as the importance of avoiding duplication in Australia's security assistance initiatives.

**Recommendation 5** paragraph 7.18

The committee repeats its recommendation from Volume I (recommendation 14) that the Australian Government provide for longer-term funding for projects that are to span a number of years, as distinct from year-to-year funding approvals. This would provide greater certainty for AUSTRAC projects in the region.

**Recommendation 6** paragraph 7.27

The committee recommends that the relevant Australian government agencies (Attorney-General's, AUSTRAC and AFP) investigate ways to eliminate overlap and duplication in delivering their responses to combat transnational crime. In particular, the committee recommends that the Australian Government examine the possibility of integrating existing initiatives to deal with transnational crime, such as the Financial Intelligence Units and Transnational Crime Units.

**Recommendation 7** paragraph 8.21

The committee recommends that the Australian Government, through the Asia Pacific Civil–Military Centre of Excellence and the Deployable Civilian Capacity (DCC) give priority to assisting Pacific island states develop their emergency response capacity. Experts from the Centre of Excellence, and attached to the DCC, could raise awareness of tsunami and cyclone behaviour, assist develop emergency response plans and work with Pacific Islanders to develop more resilient critical infrastructure.

**Recommendation 8**

paragraph 8.22

The committee recommends that as the Asia Pacific Civil–Military Centre for Excellence and the Deployable Civilian Capacity (DCC) develop, the Australian Government take steps to ensure that they operate as an integrated and coordinated whole-of-government and civilian response to conflict and disaster management.

**Recommendation 9**

paragraph 8.52

The committee reiterates the recommendation made in Volume I (recommendation 3), that the Australian Government ensure that environmental matters including climate change be integrated more effectively throughout its aid program to the Pacific.

**Recommendation 10**

paragraph 9.7

The committee recommends that in developing its Pacific Partnerships for Development and Partnerships for Security, the Australian Government ensure that the link between development and security is strong. Moreover, it recommends that close attention be given to developing Partnerships for Security which:

- enhance the level of cooperation, collaboration, coordination and interoperability between Australia's various security-related initiatives;
- work with bilateral partners to develop security assistance that is appropriate to Pacific nations' level of development and commensurate with their technical and material capacity; and
- complement the work of regional organisations and become instrumental in forging much closer cooperation and coordination with other donors to the region.

