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Defence Portfolio

## INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 1)

Mr Gavin Pearce MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 27 February 2024:

Mr PEARCE: As to the AEW&Cs platform, the E-7A—I'm trying to establish in my head the two-shop support for that platform. Where's that coming from? Have we got intelligence personnel doing the sanitisation and downloading of that aircraft? Or is that done in support of another country's operation?

Mr Philip: This aircraft is integrated with partners to provide early warning of threats against a multinational gateway that's a vital supply lane for humanitarian and military assistance. In that sense, it is part of a partner effort to protect and support a logistics gateway.

Mr PEARCE: It doesn't perform a two-shop function at all? There's no collection—

Mr Philip: I'd have to take any more detailed questions like that on notice, but it's principally again supporting and providing that AEW&Cs early function against threats that might emerge, and it's something that has been very much welcomed by the United States and other NATO partners and by Ukraine.

Mr PEARCE: I've read anecdotal evidence that it's been effective. Are the operators who sit on the terminals provided by our Defence Force?

Mr Philip: I'd have to take that question on notice.

### **Defence provides the following answer:**

The Royal Australian Air Force's E-7A Wedgetail aircraft provides advanced airspace battle management by combining long-range surveillance radar, secondary radar and tactical/strategic voice and data communications systems to provide airborne early warning and control.

Personnel deployed to Ramstein air base in Germany to operate, maintain and support the E-7A Wedgetail are all Australian Defence Force personnel.

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## INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 2)

Senator the Hon David Fawcett asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 27 February 2024:

Has Defence approached the US regarding gifting M1A1 Abrams main battle tanks to Ukraine?

**Defence provides the following answer:**

Defence is in regular contact with a range of partners, including the United States, about how best to support Ukraine, including via the United States-led Ukraine Defence Contact Group.

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## INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 3)

Senator the Hon David Fawcett asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 27 February 2024:

Has Defence approached the Canadians regarding gifting F/A-18 to Ukraine?

**Defence provides the following answer:**

Defence is in regular contact with a range of partners, including Canada, about how best to support Ukraine.

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# INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 4)

The Hon Shayne Neumann MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 27 February 2024:

Mr NEUMANN: I'm going to change the topic from platforms to people. I went to Southern England at the end of last year to meet with the ADF's men and women who were training Ukraine citizen soldiers. I'm interested in a series of questions arising out of that visit. Firstly, how do we choose the ADF personnel? They seem to come from different parts of Australia. For what duration do they stay there training the Ukrainian soldiers?

**Defence provides the following answer:**

For the ADF training commitment under Operation KUDU, Joint Operations Command (in consultation with Military Strategic Commitments and the Services) designs an Operational Staffing Document to support operational deployments. This is based on the operational design for the mission. It designates the number of personnel required, and the essential and desirable qualifications the personnel deploying to each position should hold. The Services and other Groups are then asked to fill the Operational Staffing Document.

In the case of the training team deployed to the United Kingdom for Operation KUDU, the Army is the task lead. They have chosen to rotate a formed team based on an infantry company through the role. Rotating a formed body ensures personnel are deployed with their teams and it provides excellent exposure and experience for junior soldiers and their junior leaders.

The deployment length is three months for each rotation.

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# INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 5)

Senator the Hon David Fawcett asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 27 February 2024:

Have we asked Thales if they are prepared to support the Hawkei if it were gifted to Ukraine?

**Defence provides the following answer:**

Defence has discussed with Thales the potential to provide and support the Hawkei in Ukraine. However, the capability support system for Hawkei is not mature and the gifting of Hawkei to Ukraine would significantly affect vehicle availability for Australia and further impact on the achievement of Final Operational Capability.

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# INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 6)

The Hon Shayne Neumann MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 27 February 2024:

Are we looking at what other countries are doing in their training to the Ukrainians - is there coordination between the countries?

**Defence provides the following answer:**

Yes. The United Kingdom, as leaders of Operation INTERFLEX, the multi-national effort to train Ukrainian personnel, matches different contingent sizes and capabilities to form the most effective and efficient teams.

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# INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 7)

Mr Andrew Wallace MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 27 February 2024:

Can you indicate quantum of losses of the bushmasters?

**Defence provides the following answer:**

Defence is unable to comment on this issue at the OFFICIAL classification.

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# INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 8)

Mr Andrew Wallace MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 27 February 2024:

Are Bushmasters being used on the front line?

**Defence provides the following answer:**

The Ukrainian Armed Forces are utilising Bushmasters to provide protected mobility based on their own tactical needs.



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# INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 9)

Mr Julian Hill MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 27 February 2024:

What are the barriers to putting a Defence attaché into Kiev? Do they have to be in a DFAT embassy or can they be located somewhere else? Does an Attaché or do ADF personnel have different workplace safety restrictions? Could we clarify the precise legalities etc in relation to Defence roles.

**Defence provides the following answer:**

It is usual Australian Government practice to locate Defence Attachés within Australian diplomatic missions overseas. The Australian Embassy Ukraine continues to operate from Poland, with periodic visits to Kyiv. Questions regarding the location from which the Australian Embassy operates should be directed to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

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## INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 1)

Mr Julian Hill MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 1 March 2024:

Asked Defence to provide reasoning why Defence has been accepting and paying overcharged quotes from health service contractors, what the total amount in overcharges quotes has been paid, and what percent of the contracts does it equate to.

**Defence provides the following answer:**

Defence does not accept and pay overcharged quotes. All quotes requested for services not specified in the ADF Health Services Contract (ADFHSC) undergo a value for money assessment. Defence does accept invoices from health providers for services that are provided under the ADFHSC.

The ADFHSC operates with fixed prices for each instance of health care as negotiated between Defence and its prime contractor, Bupa Health Services (Bupa), at commencement of the contract. The range of fixed prices is comprehensive across all elements of the ADFHSC and covers health services provided to ADF members. Price indexation in accordance with Australian Bureau of Statistics occurs annually. Contract prices may also vary in accordance with Medicare price changes issued by the Department of Health and Aged Care.

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# INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 2)

Mr Julian Hill MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 1 March 2024:

Asked for the dollar amount of performance payments that have been given to defence's contracted health services.

**Defence provides the following answer:**

Joint Health Command initially paid its health contractor Bupa a total of \$7,122,458 for performance payments for the period 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2023. The payments were made in error due to an oversight associated with a performance clause in the Contract between Joint Health Command and Bupa. The ANAO audit into the management of the ADF Health Services Contracts also confirmed this error.

As at February 2024, Bupa has repaid \$6,015,873. There is ongoing work to recover the balance of \$1,106,585. At the conclusion of these activities, Defence expects the net position to be that no incentive payments will have been paid to Bupa.

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## INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 3)

Mr Andrew Wallace MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 1 March 2024:

Are the KPIs of 600 health assessments being completed daily for ADF recruiting being adjusted for Defence's increased recruiting goals?

**Defence provides the following answer:**

The target of 600 assessments is based on weekly, not daily targets. There is a modest increase in ADF recruiting targets from 2023-24 to 2024-25. Based on expected recruitment in 2024-25, Defence does not anticipate a significant change in weekly health assessment requirements.

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## INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 4)

Mr Julian Hill MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 1 March 2024:

What medical standards are being reformed to recruit medical specialists?

**Defence provides the following answer:**

The medical standards for ADF entry are being reviewed as part of the Medical Entry Requirements Reform Project to facilitate recruitment. This involves a review of the medical standards, as well as the associated medical assessments and administrative processes.

This is to establish an occupationally-based approach to the application of medical entry standards that articulates an individual's medical risk in their job role and operating environment. This will better align entry standards with serving standards and improve suitability decisions.

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# INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 5)

Mr Julian Hill MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 1 March 2024:

Is the upcoming contract to provide Defence health knowledge management on track?

**Defence provides the following answer:**

Yes, the upcoming contract to provide Defence Health Knowledge Management is on track for delivery in accordance with the agreed timeframes.

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## INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 6)

Mr Julian Hill MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 1 March 2024:

What percentage of patients at garrison health services are walk-ins and have there been any trends regarding this amount?

**Defence provides the following answer:**

For 2022-23, approximately 40 per cent of patients who accessed garrison health services were walk-ins. There were no discernible trends in the monthly percentages, which fluctuated around the annual percentage of 40 per cent.

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# INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 7)

Mr Julian Hill MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 1 March 2024:

What are the trends in ADF personnel taking sick leave without medical certification?

**Defence provides the following answer:**

For 2022-23, the percentage of ADF personnel taking sick leave without medical certification was 9.7 per cent (annual average). There was no trend observed during the reported period.



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## INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 8)

Mr Julian Hill MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 1 March 2024:

What is Defence's risk tolerance regarding support to Ukraine?

**Defence provides the following answer:**

Australia's military assistance to Ukraine is balanced against other Defence policy and operational priorities and considerations. Foremost among these are the Australian Defence Force's own preparedness requirements. All exports of gifted military equipment have been subject to Australia's export control legislation, including consideration of our international obligations. Australia remains focussed on providing military assistance that is safe, meaningful, sustainable, and aligned with Ukraine's priority needs.

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## INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 9)

Mr Julian Hill MP asked the Department of Defence the following question, upon notice, on 1 March 2024:

Can you summarise how Defence identifies and assesses its health capabilities?

**Defence provides the following answer:**

The Defence Preparedness Directive requirements guide the development of health capabilities. These requirements are informed by exercise activity, joint experimentation outcomes, work force analysis and, more broadly, the continuous improvement in the conduct of austere medical care.

The Defence Health System enables Defence capability through the delivery and assurance of a health care continuum that encompasses garrison services, inclusive of off-base specialist services, and the employment of deployable health capabilities.

The Commander Joint Health Command has a Charter for Command of the designated National Support Base Garrison functions and the Surgeon General ADF is responsible for the regulation, governance and assurance of the Defence Health System. Clinical assurance of Defence health capabilities occurs at all levels of the system and is reported through the ADF Health Quality and Safety Board.

The ADF Health Select Committee focuses specifically on the alignment and performance of the Defence Health System, including mental health, and sets the direction for the Defence Health System as per the capability requirements of the ADF. This committee is co-chaired by the Chief of Personnel and the Deputy Secretary Defence People and includes the Commander Joint Health Command, the Chief Medical Officer Department of Veterans' Affairs and representatives from the Services and Groups.

Deployable Defence health capabilities are part of an integrated asset or force posture. The performance of health capability is assessed as part of the overall force in being through exercise activity, formal certification and worthiness boards. Defence has a robust safety and reporting management system for health material.

The Joint Health Command, in consultation with Joint Operations Command and the Services, is in the process of defining the total health effect requirement informed by the Defence Strategic Review.

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