



Submission No 11

Inquiry into Australia's aid program in the Pacific

Organisation: Department of Defence

Contact Person: Susan Oldroyd
Acting Director
Statutory Reporting and Accountability
Ministerial and Executive Support

Address: Russell Offices
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Australian Government
Department of Defence

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE SUBMISSION

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
DEFENCE AND TRADE
HUMAN RIGHTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

**THE IMPACT OF AUSTRALIAN AID TO THE PACIFIC IN
PROMOTING AND ENHANCING HUMAN RIGHTS AND
SECURITY IN THE REGION**

Department of Defence Submission

**Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Human Rights Sub-Committee**

**Inquiry into the impact of Australian aid to the Pacific in promoting and enhancing
human rights and security in the region**

	Page
<i>Executive Summary</i>	3
<i>Introduction</i>	4
<i>Policy basis for Defence's role in promoting and enhancing human rights and security in the Pacific region</i>	4
<i>Defence's contribution to promoting and enhancing human rights and security in the Pacific Region:</i>	5
<i>a) Strengthening law and justice</i>	6
<i>b) Improving economic management and public accountability institutions</i>	8
<i>c) Maintaining access to basic services (especially health)</i>	8
<i>d) Anti-corruption and good governance measures</i>	8
<i>e) Supporting peace-building and community and national development</i>	9

Inquiry into the impact of Australian aid to the Pacific in promoting and enhancing human rights and security in the region

Executive Summary

- The *Defence Update 2005* noted that many countries in the South West Pacific remain challenged by internal conflict, the need for stable governance, and the need to develop sustainable economies and deliver services to their populations.
- Through our Defence Cooperation Program we are working closely with the security forces of twelve Pacific nations to develop their security related capabilities; to promote respect for democratic institutions; and to provide access to the skills, knowledge and systems necessary to improve governance mechanisms.
- In the Pacific region, our Defence Cooperation Program engages with twelve nations: Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia. The 2006-2007 budget estimate for expenditure on our Defence Cooperation Program with these twelve countries and on the Pacific Patrol Boat program is \$46 million.
- Our Defence Cooperation Program contributes to strengthening law and justice in the Pacific region through three main mechanisms:
 - The Pacific Patrol Boat (PPB) Program;
 - Maritime law enforcement and surveillance; and
 - Managing small arms and improving weapons security.
- Our Defence Cooperation Program contributes to improving economic management and institutional public accountability by assisting regional security forces to build their capacities in corporate and strategic planning; in capability acquisition and management; in strategic logistics and asset management; and in workforce planning and management.
- Our Defence Cooperation Program does not directly target access to basic services, such as health, as a core objective but the PNG, Tonga and Fiji defence forces are regularly invited to participate in Army ATSI Community Assistance Program (AACAP) exercises to develop their practical engineering skills.
- Our Defence Cooperation Program contributes to strengthening anti-corruption and good governance measures through:
 - Providing access to training programs and educational opportunities; and
 - Providing civilian and ADF officers to assist with financial management and overall good governance in the PNG Defence Organisation.
- Our Defence Cooperation Program assists Pacific defence and police forces to make vital contributions to regional peace operations, such as the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) in the Solomon Islands. We also sponsor and coordinate a regular series of bilateral exercises to foster humanitarian assistance and disaster relief planning and skills in the region.

Inquiry into the impact of Australian aid to the Pacific in promoting and enhancing human rights and security in the region

Introduction

1. This submission focuses on those aspects of Defence's role and activities in the Pacific region that relate to the inquiry's Terms of Reference. Through our Defence Cooperation Program we are working closely with the security forces of Pacific nations to develop their security related capabilities, to promote respect for democratic institutions, and to provide access to the skills and systems necessary to improve their governance mechanisms. These efforts are complementary to broader bilateral aid and international development assistance programs in the region, which would be more suitably addressed in the submissions of other Federal government departments.

Policy basis for Defence's role in promoting and enhancing human rights and security in the Pacific region

2. The foundations for Defence's strategic policies in the Pacific region are contained in the Government's White Paper on Defence, *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*. The White Paper recognises that a crisis close to Australia is likely to have a significant impact on our own security. As a consequence, fostering the stability, integrity and cohesion of our immediate neighbourhood is an enduring strategic objective. In reference to our defence relationships with Papua New Guinea and Southwest Pacific nations, extracts from the White Paper state that:

5.51 Australia's enduring strategic interests in the security and stability of Papua New Guinea are evident from our history, and they are embodied in the undertakings contained in the PNG-Australia Joint Declaration of Principles signed in 1987. This reflects the expectation that Australia would be prepared to commit forces to resist external aggression against Papua New Guinea (PNG).

5.53 Australia will continue to offer substantial support to PNG defence reform. [A] key aspect of defence reform will be restructuring the PNGDF so that it can perform effectively within the necessarily limited resources available to it. Recent events elsewhere in the South Pacific have underlined the importance of a PNGDF that is disciplined and responsive to political control.

5.54 In the Southwest Pacific, as in Papua New Guinea, our aim is to maintain our position as the key strategic partner. Australian interests in a stable and secure Southwest Pacific are matched by significant responsibilities as leader and regional power. We would be very likely to provide substantial support in the unlikely event that any country in the Southwest Pacific faced substantial external aggression.

5.56 The Pacific Patrol Boat Project, which provides assistance for patrol and protection of the large maritime zones of Pacific Islands, is at the core of our Defence Cooperation Program in the South Pacific. . . We are also active in the Southwest Pacific in providing help in appropriate ways to their police forces.

3. These themes were reinforced and developed in the *Defence Update 2005* policy paper, which reviewed Australia's strategic environment and defence posture in light of global developments that occurred since the release of the White Paper in 2000 and the subsequent *Defence Update 2003*. Relevant parts of the Defence Update 2005 state that:

The security of the global community is best served by effective governance, the rule of law and economic development at national, regional and international levels.

Many countries in the South West Pacific remain challenged by internal conflict, the need for stable governance, and the need to develop sustainable economies and deliver services to their populations. The ability to manage and enforce sovereignty is an abiding concern. In the absence of long-term solutions to these issues, these countries remain vulnerable. The nature of existing and emerging threats such as terrorism, drug trafficking and international crime is such that a problem for one state is likely to be a problem for many others. The security needs of Papua New Guinea are a particular concern.

Security in the region is strengthened when countries of the South West Pacific recognize that they share a common environment with common challenges that can be dealt with more effectively through coordinated responses. Australia uses the Defence Cooperation Program to support this agenda by emphasising activities that promote a shared perspective. The program provides assistance and expertise in governance, administration and security studies to support training and education of defence and other security and government personnel for Pacific Island countries. We intend to further increase our focus on dealing with the unique governance and security challenges faced by the island states of the Pacific. Australia will also provide support for infrastructure development and humanitarian assistance when necessary.

Defence's contribution to promoting and enhancing human rights and security in the Pacific region:

4. Defence implements the policies articulated in the White Paper and the *Defence Update 2005* relating to Papua New Guinea and Southwest Pacific nations primarily through our Defence Cooperation Program. The Defence Cooperation Program furthers Australia's strategic objectives by helping neighbouring Pacific nations to support their own security needs, and to make a positive contribution to national and regional stability. The Defence Cooperation Program assists regional defence forces to develop and maintain modest, sustainable capabilities appropriate to their national needs, strategic circumstances and financial means.

5. In the Pacific region, our Defence Cooperation Program engages with twelve nations: Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia. Of these countries, only PNG, Fiji and Tonga have national defence forces. The 2006-2007 budget estimate for expenditure on our Defence Cooperation Program with these twelve countries and on the Pacific Patrol Boat program is \$46 million (see Defence Portfolio Budget Statements 2006-2007, page 167).

6. In those Pacific island countries without military forces, the Defence Cooperation Program engages with national police forces (primarily their maritime wings) through the Pacific Patrol Boat Program. In Vanuatu, and in addition assistance through the Pacific Patrol Boat Program, we also provide ADF advisory support to the Police Mobile Force, and broader police communications and joint operations units.

7. For the purpose of this submission we will focus on those aspects of our Defence Cooperation Program that relates to promoting and enhancing human rights and security in the Pacific region. But it is worth noting that there have been occasions in the last decade, in both Bougainville and in the Solomon Islands, when national mechanisms for providing internal stability and security were weakened or unable to respond to security threats. In these cases the Government of Australia, at the request of these nations, tasked the Australian Defence Force in partnership with personnel from other Pacific Island Forum countries to directly assist in the restoration of a stable security environment.

8. The most recent example of this type of ‘operational’ peace-building in the Pacific region is the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). RAMSI commenced on 24 July 2003, in response to a request from the Solomon Islands' Prime Minister Kemakeza, and with the agreement of nations of the Pacific Islands Forum. The mission was led by Australia, and designed to provide a comprehensive package of development and security assistance. The Australian Defence Force played a supporting role to enable the Australian Federal Police, and police from other Pacific Island Forum nations, to restore law and order, and to provide the stable security environment necessary for other agencies to restore basic government functions and services.

Strengthening Law and Justice

9. Our Defence Cooperation Program contributes to strengthening law and justice in the Pacific region through three main mechanisms:

- The Pacific Patrol Boat (PPB) Program;
- Maritime law enforcement and surveillance; and
- Managing small arms and improving weapons security.

The Pacific Patrol Boat Program

10. The Pacific Patrol Boat (PPB) Program is the centrepiece of Australia’s Defence engagement in the Pacific. Between 1987 and 1997, 22 patrol boats were provided to the 12 participating nations. The Program now encompasses: ongoing maintenance and logistic support; training for patrol boat crews in Australia; the maintenance of 33 in-country RAN maritime surveillance and technical advisers; and support for the multilateral, Honiara-based Forum Fisheries Agency through the attachment of an Australian Navy Surveillance Operations Officer. The patrol boats provide participating countries with a credible maritime surveillance capability, enabling them to more effectively monitor the maritime resources in their Exclusive Economic Zones. They are also used frequently by Pacific countries for national tasks such as quarantine enforcement, search and rescue operations, disaster relief, medical evacuations and general police work.

Maritime Law Enforcement and Surveillance

11. The Defence Cooperation Program adopts a comprehensive approach to building the maritime law enforcement capabilities in Pacific Island countries. The Defence Cooperation Program sponsors a number of training programs and exercises to give Pacific nations access to skills and knowledge that would otherwise be unavailable to them. These training programs include:

- An annual Maritime Law and Security Seminar for regional participants;
- Core mariner and technical skills training through the Australian Maritime College in Launceston;
- Use of force escalation tactics for patrol boat boarding parties; and
- Officer and leadership training.

12. The Defence Cooperation Program also sponsors a number of major multilateral maritime surveillance operations, such as Operations Big Eye, Island Chief and Kuru Kuru. These operations have been highly successful in building the capacities of Pacific nations to operate together and to improve their abilities to detect and intercept illegal fishing vessels and other illegal operators in the maritime environment.

13. Our Forum Fisheries Agency Surveillance Operations Officer and our twelve Maritime Surveillance Advisers are also working on a daily basis with regional security forces to implement and extend the bilateral and multilateral Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreements. These Agreements enable countries to conduct maritime interception and enforcement operations in the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of participating neighbouring nations, and facilitate the sharing of maritime security information amongst regional maritime forces.

Managing small arms and improving weapons security

14. Defence supports broader national strategic objectives to help manage small arms and improve weapons security in the Pacific. Throughout the region the Defence Cooperation Program has improved the secure storage of small arms and weapons through the construction and upgrade of armouries and magazines and the provision of small arms management training.

15. In Papua New Guinea the Defence Cooperation Program has funded the construction and/or upgrading of armouries and magazines on most PNG Defence Force bases. This has helped restrict the incidence of weapon theft from bases, reducing the risk of high-powered weapons being circulated throughout the PNG community. ADF officers deployed in line positions in the PNGDF are also assisting with a stocktake of weapons in the PNGDF inventory. In Fiji, Defence has provided substantial recent assistance with the hardening of existing armouries and the construction of new armouries in Suva, Lautoka and Labasa. In Samoa, the Defence Cooperation Program is funding the construction of a new police armoury and magazine in conjunction with AusAID's construction of a new national police headquarters. Similar projects have been successful in improving weapons security in Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Kiribati.

Improving economic management and public accountability institutions

16. The Defence Cooperation Program assists regional security forces to build their capacities in corporate and strategic planning; capability acquisition and management; strategic logistics and asset management and workforce planning and management. This assistance is provided either through on-the-job training or structured training programs. For example, the Defence Cooperation Program provides financial management training for PNG Department of Defence civilians in Australia, and scholarships for selected candidates to attain post-graduate qualifications. Defence has also helped to build the internal audit capacity of the PNG Defence Department by sponsoring a locally-engaged contractor. Defence Cooperation Program advisers also play a role in mentoring middle and senior managers in regional defence organisations, and promote an awareness of appropriate accountability mechanisms and workplace ethics. Defence also has one official deployed in the finance section of the PNG Department of Defence under the auspices of Australia's Enhanced Cooperation Program (ECP) with PNG. This assistance has improved the transparency and accountability of the PNG Defence Organisation, and has tightened public procurement processes.

Maintaining access to basic services (especially health)

17. Our Defence Cooperation Program does not directly target access to basic services, such as health, as a core objective, but it has contributed to developing skills in health-related engineering construction tasks through the Army ATSI Community Assistance Program (AACAP). Elements from the PNG, Tonga and Fiji defence forces are regularly invited to participate in AACAP exercises and to work with the ADF on practical construction projects to improve local infrastructure and environmental health conditions in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. AACAP builds core practical engineering skills which the Pacific Island forces can then draw upon to assist their own communities, as tasked by their governments.

18. Defence's ongoing operational support to the Pacific Patrol Boats, including the subsidisation of fuel costs for patrolling, and other materiel, technical and advisory support, also plays an important role in assisting countries with disaster relief and other medical emergencies. The Pacific Patrol Boats are a key national transportation asset and play a vital role in emergencies such as cyclone relief operations, assisting with the transportation of critical supplies and delivering medical aid to remote communities.

Anti-corruption and good governance measures

19. Our Defence Cooperation Program contributes to strengthening anti-corruption and good governance measures through:

- Providing civilian and ADF officers to assist with financial management and overall good governance in the PNG Defence Organisation; and
- Providing access to training programs and educational opportunities.

20. The Defence Cooperation Program promotes the development of good governance and leadership by sponsoring regional defence personnel to participate in training and education programs. We provide members of regional nations' security

forces with places on the Defence Management Seminar held twice a year in Australia. We also provide year-long places on the Australian Command and Staff College and the Defence and Strategic Studies Courses; and both these courses have strong leadership and management components. In addition, we sponsor the in-country delivery of a General Management course to Pacific security forces, through the Australian Maritime College. This General Management course is also open to other government agencies including those authorities responsible for fisheries, customs and health.

21. The revised Enhanced Cooperation Program (ECP) with PNG is focused on helping PNG address its development challenges, with a particular emphasis on improving governance. As part of the ECP, Defence has placed a civilian finance officer to assist with financial management and overall good governance in the PNG Defence Organisation, improving the transparency and accountability of this organisation. The adviser has helped implement policies aimed at eliminating weaknesses in the civil service payroll, particularly by eliminating 'ghost' and other illegal payments and enforcing budgetary control over the payroll.

22. Through the Defence Cooperation Program, in-line ADF officers have assisted with a substantial renewal of the PNG Defence Organisation's governance arrangements. A senior defence committee system has been re-established which has greatly improved transparency in the organisation. ADF in-line officers have also assisted the PNGDF to develop a corporate plan, and in 2006 assisted with the preparation and publication of PNG Defence Organisation's first annual report to government since 1991.

Supporting peace-building and community and civil society development

23. The Defence Cooperation Program assists Pacific defence and police forces to make vital contributions to regional peace-building operations and missions, such as the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) and, until recently, in Bougainville. The input of Pacific forces to peace-building operations in their neighbourhood is particularly valued, as they contribute experience and skills that are well suited to these types of operations. By representing their country internationally and through broadening their skill base, Pacific nations participating in peace-building missions gain confidence and skill-sets that are of enduring value to their own nation's security and development. We have regularly provided pre-deployment training and assistance to Pacific forces deploying on peace-building missions.

24. Our Defence Cooperation Program contributes to peace-building and civil society development measures through specific training in this area including:

- The International Peace Operations Seminar, conducted by the ADF Peacekeeping Centre;
- The Army ATSI Community Assistance Program (see paragraph 17); and
- Providing training programs in civil-military cooperation and emergency management skills.

25. The Defence Cooperation Program also sponsors and coordinates a regular series of bilateral exercises, known as Exercise Longreach, to foster humanitarian assistance and disaster relief planning and skills in the region. Exercise Longreach teaches regional security forces and responsible civil agencies planning techniques, and reinforces training

and skills acquired through other Defence Cooperation Program activities. In recent years Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, PNG and the Solomon Islands have all participated in the Exercise Longreach program.