



Supplementary Submission No 35

Inquiry into Australia's Maritime Strategy

Organisation: Department of Defence

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Question 1

Member: Mr G. Nairn, MP

HANSARD: Page 19

Please provide details of the compatibility and availability of geographic and other physical information used for operational purposes.

RESPONSE

The Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation (DIGO) has established cooperative arrangements with Geoscience Australia, an agency of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources. This cooperation includes Geoscience Australia managing the outsourcing of Defence's geospatial production requirements over mainland Australia to an industry panel, while the two agencies also work closely on other matters of mutual interest, such as geospatial standards and specifications.

Defence, other Commonwealth Departments, State Governments and international partners all recognise the need for the seamless exchange of geospatial data. At present there are a number of impediments to this exchange, including the diverse range of data formats in use between different Australian agencies. All agencies are working towards using published and emerging Open GIS Consortium (OGC) and International Standards Organisation (ISO) standards, but current non-standard data holdings cannot easily or quickly be fully converted to these standards.

In terms of the interoperability of data concerning Australian mainland services and assets, there are acknowledged shortfalls. These have evolved over time, largely caused by different jurisdictions within Australia adopting disparate proprietary tools for the collection of their data. Steps have been taken in recent times to address this, and in terms of the Commonwealth Government, the cooperative arrangement between DIGO and Geoscience Australia demonstrates significant progress. This arrangement has the responsibility for collection and maintenance of national geospatial data, including data formats and specifications, transitioning to Geoscience Australia.

The Australia New Zealand Land Information Council (ANZLIC) is the overarching geospatial body and it has representation from all relevant agencies, including from the Commonwealth and State Governments. Under ANZLIC are a number of sub committees coordinating progress on a wide range of geospatial activities. The Inter-Government Committee on Surveying and Mapping has established a harmonised data model which enables the translation of varying data formats while the Public Sector Mapping Agency is driving the need to produce national geospatial products in a standard format. Finally, the development of the Australian Spatial Data Infrastructure will ultimately provide the means for dissemination of Australian geospatial data via the internet, utilising OGC/ISO standards. Defence, either directly or in partnership with Geoscience Australia, is involved on all relevant bodies.

DIGO, through various commercial arrangements and agreements, is able to access a wide range of geospatial data holdings to support the Defence mission.