



Submission No 5

Inquiry into the Economic, Social and Strategic Trends in Australia's region and the consequences for our Defence Requirements

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The Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

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INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S REGIONAL STRATEGIC DEFENCE REQUIREMENTS SUBMISSION BY THE POLICE FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

The Police Federation of Australia (PFA) is the national body for all Australian Federal, State and Territory police unions and associations. In addition to addressing the national aspects of issues related to workplace conditions and industrial matters, an important part of our work relates to the identification and coordination of strategic issues that affect policing in Australia and our region. We work with the major government parties on policing issues, and along with all Australian Police Commissioners, are a member of the Australasian Police Professional Standards Council.

Consequently, the PFA is involved in a range of security issues, both domestic and international. We have close contacts with officers in Canada, Great Britain, and the US; police officers have previously and are currently serving with international deployments in the Pacific region, and with overseas peacekeeping missions; and all police jurisdictions are tasked with addressing terrorism and associated criminal activities.

With reference to the scope of this inquiry, some of the specific issues which we are addressing include: airport and transport security, police resourcing and coordination, roles and responsibilities of security personnel, Pacific region security and governance, community policing, and critical incident implications for policing.

We make this submission on behalf of all Federal, State and Territory Police Associations/Unions, representing 50,000 Australian police officers.

Note: this submission is made after the advertised 30 April deadline with the Committee Secretariat's approval.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade has been directed to inquire into and report on the economic, social and strategic trends in Australia's region and the consequences for defence requirements.

We make this submission from the policing perspective for the following reasons:

- Police are absorbing more and more of what were previously identified as military roles. Increasingly, the Government is aiming to address regional security concerns by taking the "fight off-shore". Whereas ten years ago Government policy was based on meeting security concerns with troops and military hardware, these days police deployments are being sent to off-shore hotspots (such as the Solomon Islands, East Timor, and Papua New Guinea) to undertake preventative peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities like reinstating law and order, and rebuilding governance infrastructure.
- Many issues of concern to defence are also relevant to policing agencies, and vice versa. Issues such as meeting recruiting goals, and work/life balance stressors, are also shared by police, intelligence, protective security, and emergency services agencies. All these agencies have a role to play in supporting the ADF, and wider Australian security and defence activities. At the moment, we believe there are indications that these agencies are in competition for the same slice of the pie.

This submission outlines some issues and implications relating to the role of police in defence requirements, and addresses individual trends.

ROLE OF POLICE IN DEFENCE REQUIREMENTS

In the aftermath of September 11, the Australian Government responded to heightened national security concerns by proposing and implementing a raft of diverse policies and measures, ranging from national awareness-raising campaigns to active participation in the US-lead War on Terror.

There has been a parallel proliferation and expansion of Government agencies now intimately involved in national security intelligence, monitoring, and operational activities. There have also been massive increases in some associated budget allocations - ASIO's budget, for example, has almost trebled.

There is now a complex range of agencies, both at the jurisdictional and federal levels of government, who have been tasked with an intensity of counter-terrorism, security, and related public safety functions, never before experienced in our history.

Australia's police forces are not exempt from this increased level of responsibility, workload, and expectations (from Governments and the community). The Government's stated law enforcement objectives relating to Australia's security preparedness and terrorism prevention capability are to:

- *Strengthen relationships and cooperation between federal, state and territory police;*
- *Consolidate and build on the ability of law enforcement agencies to undertake investigations into transnational crime and terrorist activity;*
- *Ensure that Australia's legal framework supports the ability of law enforcement agencies to carry out their work in the most effective way;*
- *Increase the contribution of the AFP to international law enforcement efforts.*

(Protecting Australia Against Terrorism, Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet website, 11/10/05)

As Des Moore, a member of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute Council, recently noted, Australia's 'security' and Australia's 'defence' differ, but are connected. He relates the notion of security to those decisions and actions made within certain parameters of time and space, which affect geopolitical outcomes. Defence implies a more immediate military response to prevent the violation of a nation's territory. However, the lines between these two institutions are becoming increasingly blurred as the inter-reliance between an expanding range of security players – participants, enforcers, enablers, stakeholders – is becoming more complex.

Whilst the ADF has traditionally been concerned with restricting itself to military tasks, it has become increasingly apparent that its members are, and will continue to be, involved in non-military and non-traditional tasks such as peacekeeping missions, pursuit of illegal fishing boats, disaster-relief, and operations involving illegal immigrants. This 'cross-fertilisation' of roles is being experienced by other agencies, including the police:

Defence is becoming increasingly involved in non-war fighting roles such as civil border protection, while police and public servants are in the front line of security in areas as diverse as Baghdad and Bougainville.

(ASPI Strategic Insight 12 – Time for a new Defence White Paper, Feb 2005)

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICING

Much of this workload is shouldered by the Australian Federal Police (AFP), with major functions pertaining to protecting and safe-guarding the Commonwealth's interests (in addition to a comprehensive community policing role for the ACT and External Territories). However, the expectations and level of preparedness required from State and Northern Territory police forces is also significant, with these officers providing first-response and overall coordination functions in their jurisdictions for any security situation or critical incident.

Although the AFP has received budget allocation increases over the past few years, this extra funding has not translated into an associated increase in the numbers of sworn officers able to carry out this additional (and growing) workload. The overall approach to tasking and funding of the AFP is evidence of a lack of consistent, considered, and planned policy making.

AFP officers continue to be tasked with international operations without action being taken to ensure that positions dealing with 'traditional' responsibilities (such as community policing) are being adequately back-filled. If members of the public were

fully aware of the significance of these gaps (including the associated increase of stressors and workload on officers doing their best to fill these gaps with inadequate resources) on the ability of police to service the community, there would be an immediate outcry.

As this submission is being prepared, ACT Policing officers are working overtime to cover 15 officers sent to the Solomon Islands as part of an AFP contingent. Two years ago the ACT Government commissioned an independent review of ACT Policing resources. However, the results of this study have not been released at this stage.

Since September 11, over 600 AFP employees have been diverted from the tasks they were undertaking on September 10, 2001, to new functions. 400 of these now form the International Deployment Group (IDG) and are tasked with meeting these new international roles.

There are two main issues we wish to raise in relation to this situation:

1. A vacuum has formed in the investigation of 'normal' crimes which fall under the provenance of the AFP, and which also produce valuable counter-terrorism intelligence as a by-product. It is well-known that narcotics, identity fraud and money trafficking crimes, for example, are intricately linked with terrorist activities.
2. Whilst the AFP continues to meet its own problems in maintaining an adequate surge capacity by co-opting jurisdictional police officers, this unsustainable approach merely spreads the under-resourcing problem across Australia.

The recent COAG decision to expand policing functions at Australia's 11 Counter Terrorism First Response Airports is a good example. Most of the estimated 350 extra positions are being filled by officers from existing jurisdictional police forces. This *ad hoc* decision was made without thought to appropriate replacement or back-filling mechanisms, or to operational considerations relating to how State and Territory officers would undertake Commonwealth responsibilities. As we noted in a letter to COAG late last year (2005), this 'solution' raises serious police resourcing implications, given the ongoing failure to strategically plan for the capacity of Australian policing to meet emerging challenges.

AFP operations, and related Australian policing issues, are vital to the national interest and to the continued safety of the Australian community. A rigorous and strategic planning process should be undertaken to examine and reconcile these functions with the Australian Government's other security needs and desires.

An Australian Strategic Policy Institute paper released last year (2005) suggests that, in the near future at least, given the recent history of global events, it would make sense to "invest more heavily in the capabilities we need for disaster re-construction and rehabilitation, humanitarian aid delivery, and community policing and stability." Whilst this recommendation refers to ADF activities, it is obvious that much of this statement is highly pertinent to police operations, and is only likely to become more so in the future.

ECONOMIC TRENDS

As previously noted, agencies at the State and Territory level are required to contribute resources to national security functions at all levels of government. Whilst it is evident that a range of Federal agencies have received significant boosts in funding, over extended periods of time, for counter terrorism and associated activities, the level of assistance by the Australian Government to State and Territory agencies, particularly police, has not kept pace with these budgetary increases. A requirement for jurisdictions to share the national security agenda should be supported by an adequate share in Australian Government funding.

SOCIAL TRENDS

Retaining older workers longer

The Australian Government has a policy of encouraging older workers to continue in their jobs rather than opt for early retirement options. Some implications of this policy were outlined in the PFA's submission to the Australian Government in 2005: *Retirement with Dignity for Australia's 50,000 Police. Review of Superannuation Preservation Arrangements as they apply to Police*. Officers may well still find themselves in active operational roles towards the end of their careers, with the effect of increasing the chances of injury to the individual officer, and heightening risks to other officers and members of the public. Although our submission had support from Police Commissioners and Police Ministers, the Australian Government response was lukewarm at best. It did note, however, that police departments should consider "adopting workforce planning policies to ensure the right skill and age mix is available to meet longer term policing requirements".

Medical retirements and stress

A recent Police Association of NSW submission to the NSW Government (*Submission Regarding Staffing Issues in the NSW Police, January 2006*) noted that medical discharges (for both psychological and physical injuries) in the NSW Police are at record levels. Ongoing unavailability of officers obviously affects the standard of service delivery to the community.

Officers in their 30s are being medically retired, just when this cohort (and the wider community) would normally be benefiting from their long years of training. New recruits are missing out on the valuable mentoring support provided by their seniors (37% of NSW Police have less than five years experience, 55% have less than ten years experience).

Competition with other agencies

Policing recognises that it is in competition with other agencies and sectors for the most able recruits. Defence has not met its recruiting targets for the last six years, and the implications of this are shown by the new Minister for Defence, Brendan Nelson, personally taking charge of recruiting and human resource matters. The military personnel resignation rate has reached 14% (Army), rising to 25% for skilled trades.

Defence is attempting to fill these gaps with Australian Government funding for 1,485 extra Army personnel over 10 years; by bolstering reservist training and

expanding reservist roles; and with targeted bonuses like a \$10,000 handshake to encourage specialist sailors to stay in the Navy. Defence is also reassessing recruitment standards, including health tests. Depending on the final outcome, there may well be ramifications for police recruiting standards.

The Canadian Government has recently provided over CAD\$1.1 million to support the development of Canada's skilled workforce in their policing sector. The Police Sector Council was created to explore and address emerging human resources issues, and to help police leaders identify and implement human resource strategies to ensure there is an adequate and skilled labour force available to the sector.

Whilst a similar injection of funds and level of support from the Australian Government would be warmly welcomed by the policing sector in Australia, the PFA also recognizes the need to examine these kinds of issues across the broader national security sector, and believes much more could be done to facilitate this at governmental levels.

Workforce planning

In order to maintain the current level of services being provided by around 50,000 police officers in Australia, we believe that over 15,000 officers need to be recruited during the next four years.

The following table shows these figures on a jurisdictional basis.

Recruitment required 2006 – 2009 (4 years) *

JURISDICTION		TOTAL
Qld	1,600 additional + 1,200 attrition	2,800
NSW	3,000 election commitment sought + 2,400 attrition	5,400
AFP	700 additional + 800 attrition	1,500
Vic	1,200 additional + 1,200 attrition	2,400
Tas	50 additional + 80 attrition	130
SA	400 additional + 600 attrition	1,000
NT	150 additional + 320 attrition	470
WA	350 additional + 1,200 attrition	1,550
TOTAL AUSTRALIA		15,250
NZ	1,000 additional + 1,500 attrition	2,500

* The above figures are estimates based on historical attrition rates and projected recruitment.

Policing in Australia is also still very much a male Anglo-Saxon dominated profession and culture, and we believe that more work could be done on identifying incentives to attract women, and recruits from non-Anglo-Saxon ethnic groups. The ADF would also benefit from similar strategies.

The PFA has outlined a proposal for a national police workforce planning study to address these, and other resourcing issues. This proposal was recently provided to the Australian Government for comment, and will be discussed by Police Commissioners at their national meeting on 4 May, 2006.

STRATEGIC TRENDS

Government policies focusing on peacebuilding and good governance, and pre-emptive and early intervention strategies, are placing less reliance on traditional military skills and personnel, and more emphasis on skills provided by police officers. Domestic measures building our resilience to, and protecting from, terrorist threats (such as enhanced airport security), also require significant policing resources.

The UN Commission on Human Security report 2003 notes that policies and institutions must respond to security challenges in stronger and more integrated ways. It notes that although the state retains primary responsibility for security, a paradigm shift is needed as these security challenges become more "complex and various new actors attempt to play a role."

On a similar theme, Ross Babbage of the Kokoda Foundation comments that "there would be vast benefits for Australian security were Defence and associated departments and agencies to embrace more enthusiastically the opportunities now provided by network-enabled operations and the revolution in national security affairs."

CONCLUSION

Australia's security and defence requirements are currently being met by a mélange of agencies, with competing priorities and interests, yet with the same object in view. The PFA strongly recommends measures to increase the capacity of all agencies involved in security matters to cooperatively address the range of common and cross-sector issues, whilst retaining their ability to maintain their specific areas of expertise.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these issues. We are happy to expand upon our submission if required.

Yours sincerely



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