

Defence International Cooperation

Background

- 6.1 In 2002-03 Australia provided \$62.6 million in defence cooperation funding to Papua New Guinea, countries in the South Pacific region, and countries in South East Asia. Table 6.1 provides details of the countries that received funding.
- 6.2 The aims and objectives of the Defence Cooperation Program (DCP) are to support the Government's strategic objectives by:
- contributing to the maintenance of regional security;
 - working with allies, regional partners and others to shape the global and regional environment in a way favourable to Australia and the ADF;
 - consolidating acceptance of Australia as an obvious and legitimate participant in deliberations on issues that affect regional security; and
 - encouraging and assisting with the development of the defence self-reliance of regional countries.¹
- 6.3 Defence reported that these activities 'encompass assistance to regional security forces in the areas of strategic planning, command and control, infrastructure, communications and logistics support.' A key part of the DCP is the Pacific Patrol Boat Program (PPBP) which is designed to help the Pacific island countries to enhance the policing of their maritime zones.

1 Portfolio Budget Statement 2003-04, Defence Portfolio, 2003, p. 106.

6.4 Some of the tasks performed by the Patrol Boats include ‘disaster relief, search and rescue, and some general police work.’² Defence noted, for example, that Tonga’s three patrol boats ‘are used routinely in surveillance for a very large EEZ’.³ Defence indicated that the patrol boat program ‘is continuing and it is in its half-life extension phase.’⁴ Defence reported that some of the benefits arising from the PPBP include:

- **maritime surveillance capability:** ‘It provides a level of self-reliance for many small nations to protect and enforce their sovereignty within their exclusive economic zone. This in turn reduces the Pacific’s vulnerability to people smuggling, piracy, illegal fishing of territorial waters, transnational crime and other asymmetric threats to the region’.
- **nation building:** ‘Twelve participating countries utilise 22 patrol boats to conduct surveillance, search and rescue operations, quarantine, disaster relief, medical evacuation, hydrographic survey and general police/security work. The Pacific Patrol Boat program provides an important asset for responding to natural disasters and emergencies, responsibility for which would otherwise fall to Australia and other countries.’
- **maritime training:** ‘Training received through Defence Cooperation provides an accumulating body of experience in each country participating in the Pacific Patrol Boat program. For example, all Pacific Patrol Boat crew training is conducted through the Australian Maritime College in Launceston, Tasmania. The Defence Cooperation Program also provides post-basic naval skills, leadership and management training through crew attendance on ADF courses.’
- **accruing benefits for the region:** ‘In addition to the benefits for regional security, economic benefits accrue from the ship registration, licensing and fines that result from the credible enforcement capability provided by the patrol boats. Environmental protection mechanisms, for instance the prevention of illegal and unsustainable fishing, are also improved by trained police or defence force personnel patrolling waters, coastal access and entry points, policing shore establishments such as wharfs and marine warehouses, and maintaining communications between main and outer islands.’⁵

6.5 The PPBP comprises 22 vessels for the following 12 countries:

- Papua New Guinea 4

2 Ms Myra Rowling, First Assistant Secretary, Department of Defence, *Transcript*, p. 67.

3 Vice Admiral Russ Shalders, Vice Chief of Defence Force, Department of Defence, *Transcript*, p. 67.

4 Mr Shane Carmody, Deputy Secretary, Department of Defence, *Transcript*, p. 66.

5 Department of Defence, *Submission 1, Question 14*.

■ Fiji	3
■ Federated States of Micronesia	3
■ Tonga	3
■ Solomon Islands	2
■ Cook Islands	1
■ Kiribati	1
■ Marshall Islands	1
■ Palau	1
■ Western Samoa	1
■ Tuvalu	1
■ Vanuatu	1 ⁶

6.6 A further objective of the DCP is the conduct of combined exercises ‘to improve the ability of regional countries to contribute to regional security.’⁷

6.7 The 2002-03 Defence Annual Report, between pages 170 and 179, provides a performance summary for each country receiving Defence funding. The summaries below, taken directly from the Annual Report, detail the nature of assistance, and some of the key outcomes. Some of the relevant performance statements include:

- **Papua New Guinea:** The aim of Australia’s defence assistance is to ‘achieve stability in the force by making it smaller, more affordable and better managed.’
- ‘The Defence Cooperation Program with Papua New Guinea focused on training, technical advice, infrastructure development and logistics support. Training was provided to the Papua New Guinea Defence Force maritime element, infantry and engineers, and the Papua New Guinea Defence College.’
- **South Pacific Region:** ‘The Defence Cooperation Program in the South Pacific region grew in 2002-03 by \$5m. This was mainly as a result of Australia’s re-engagement with Fiji, cooperation projects in Tonga and the commencement in earnest of the Pacific patrol boat program’s life extension program. Increased ADF operational commitments had limited impact on Australia’s bilateral relationships in the region, with the exception of the continued unavailability of Air Force surveillance flights over the Pacific.’

6 Department of Defence, *2002-2003 Defence Annual Report*, 2003, p. 174.

7 Portfolio Budget Statement 2003-04, Defence Portfolio, 2003, p. 106.

- ‘The defence relationship with Fiji has largely been rebuilt since the lifting of Australian Government sanctions in October 2001. Australia continued to focus on enhancing the professional ethos of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces and encouraging the development of healthy civil-military relations. Four ADF adviser positions, which were withdrawn in 2000 following the attempted coup, were reinstated.’
- ‘Relationships with Samoa, Kiribati, Tuvalu, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Cook Islands continued to focus on support to maritime surveillance capabilities. Australia has provided a Pacific patrol boat to each of these countries (the Federated States of Micronesia has three) and continues to provide logistics, fuel, maintenance and training. An ADF advisory team, posted to each of these countries, assisted in developing sustainable national maritime surveillance capabilities.’
- ‘In August 2002, Defence supported the planning and operation of Operation Island Chief 2002, a tri-nation maritime surveillance operation, involving five Pacific patrol boats from the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and the Marshall Islands. The operation enabled the nations to carry out surveillance and law enforcement cooperatively in each respective country’s waters based on applicable law, rules and regulations.’
- **Solomon Islands:** ‘Defence Cooperation with the Solomon Islands was curtailed following the 2000 coup. In 2002, Defence commenced phased re-engagement to support whole-of-government efforts to promote law and order in the Solomon Islands. Training for the patrol boat crews recommenced and, towards the end of 2002, a half-life refit was conducted on one of two Pacific patrol boats.’
- **South East Asia:** ‘The Defence Cooperation Program in the South East Asia region fell in 2002-03 by nearly \$4m. This was primarily due to the impact of unexpected world events, such as the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome outbreak, and increased operational tempo, including the war in Iraq, which restricted ADF participation in a number of Defence Cooperation activities.’
- ‘Australia continued to provide substantial support to the development of the **East Timor** Defence Force and Defence Secretariat. Defence continued to provide advisory support, professional skills training and English-language training in-country.’ Defence confirmed during the hearing that in the last few years it has significantly increased defence cooperation expenditure on East Timor.⁸

8 Mr Shane Carmody, Deputy Secretary, Department of Defence, *Transcript*, p. 70.

- 'Australia and **Indonesia** made progress in developing a mutually beneficial defence relationship, at a pace agreeable to both governments. This focused on expanding bilateral dialogue and building a more substantial program of non-combat-related training, in addition to pursuing new initiatives under the Memorandum of Understanding on Combating International Terrorism.' Defence confirmed that defence related training with Indonesia ceased in 1999 and, Defence has 'not sought to resume combat related training.'⁹
- 'Longstanding and strong defence relationships with **Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines** were characterised by broad-based programs of dialogue, training and joint projects in the fields of logistics, science and materiel. Increased operational commitments saw a reduction in the ongoing exercise program, particularly with Malaysia, but with no significant effect on the continuing defence relationship.'
- 'Defence Cooperation with **Vietnam** continued to grow through attendance at the Australian Defence College and postgraduate courses and an expanding dialogue. Joint in-country activities in English-language training and malaria research were maintained. The relatively new defence relationships with Cambodia, Brunei and Laos developed to a modest level.'
- **India:** 'Defence Cooperation with India included staff college exchanges and senior visits to and from India. The inaugural Defence Joint Working Group meeting with India held in March 2003 and was a significant factor in enhancing strategic dialogue with this major regional power.'
- **Pakistan:** 'Defence Cooperation with Pakistan was resumed in September 2001. The focus of activities in 2002-03 was to regain previous levels of defence engagement through re-establishing staff college exchanges, training activities and senior visits.'
- **Bangladesh:** 'The relationship with Bangladesh has continued at a very modest level. Defence Cooperation with Bangladesh in 2002-03 included sponsored training in emergency management, which was held in Australia.'¹⁰

9 Mr Shane Carmody, Deputy Secretary, Department of Defence, *Transcript*, p. 73.

10 Department of Defence, *2002-2003 Defence Annual Report*, 2003, pp. 170-179.

Table 6.1 Defence Cooperation Funding

	Result	Budget Estimate
	2002-03	2003-04
	\$'000	\$'000
Papua New Guinea	9,434	9,083
South Pacific		
Vanuatu	1,900	1,638
Solomon Islands	537	606
Tonga	2,407	2,435
Western Samoa	528	656
Cook Islands	316	403
Fiji	2,662	3,164
Republic of the Marshal Islands	952	1,020
Federated States of Micronesia	848	1,026
Tuvalu	415	694
Kiribati	916	961
Palua	647	856
Multilateral General Assistance	10,350	11,240
Sub-Total	22,478	24,699
South East Asia		
Singapore	254	428
Philippines	3,047	3,424
Thailand	3,478	3,796
Malaysia	4,483	4,881
Indonesia	4,583	5,329
East Timor	7,504	6,864
Vietnam	1,421	2,161
Cambodia and Laos	1,017	1,059
Brunei	44	100
Sub-total	25,831	28,042
Other regional activities	4,907	5,907
Total	62,648	67,731

Source Department of Defence, *2002-2003 Defence Annual Report*, 2003, p. 92.

Conclusions

- 6.8 The Defence International Cooperation program has positive objectives in seeking to promote regional security and encouraging and assisting in the development of self reliance of regional countries.
- 6.9 In particular, the committee notes the positive aims of the Pacific Patrol Boat Program which is designed to help the policing of the regions' maritime zones.

Senator Alan Ferguson
Chairman
4 August 2004