

... in modern war there is no failure like success and no success like failure.¹

Report Rationale and Structure

Introduction

- 1.1 On the 4th September 2000, this committee tabled a report on the Australian Army entitled, *From Phantom to Force: Towards a More Effective and Efficient Army*². At that time the committee made it clear that the report was an interim report, and that the committee would seek the community's views on the content and recommendations. In this way, the committee could gain valuable public interest and opinion to guide the future direction of the Army in a time of anticipated pressure on the Defence and Army budget. It was, and still is, the committee's opinion that important decisions need to be made now regarding the long-term future of the Australian Army.
- 1.2 In *From Phantom to Force*, the committee drew heavily on a seminal parliamentary research paper on the Defence budget³, which indicated that, after 2007, it would be extremely difficult to make substantial

1 Handel, M, *War, Strategy and Intelligence*, Frank Cass and Company Ltd, London, 1989, p. 24.

2 Australia, Parliament, *From Phantom to Force: Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army*, Report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Canberra, August 2000.

3 Woolner D, *Pressures on Defence Policy: The Defence Budget Crisis*, Research Paper 20, 1999/2000, Parliamentary Library, 11 April 2000

changes to the army until the third decade of this new century. The future hiatus in the army's development is likely to be caused by the need to allocate significant Defence resources to addressing block obsolescence of platforms within the RAN and the RAAF and the increasing cost of personnel.

- 1.3 In practical terms, because of the lead-times associated with defence expenditure, decisions made by Government and Defence in the next three years will determine Army's capability for at least the next 16 to 18 years. This situation dramatically underlined for the committee the importance of providing a robust report that would provide a platform on which to base these vitally important decisions.
- 1.4 At the time of the release of *From Phantom to Force* the committee was aware of the proposed release of the Government's White Paper on Defence, *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*. The committee is supportive of the majority of views expressed in the White Paper, and recognises that some of those views flow directly from recommendations raised in *From Phantom to Force*.
- 1.5 This report is an attempt to adjust and refine the committee's initial conclusions and recommendations, based on community feedback and taking into account changes within Defence since the release of *From Phantom to Force*.

The Response

The Evidence Received

- 1.6 Following the tabling of *From Phantom to Force*, the committee sought feedback from:
 - All citizens and organizations who provided submissions to the initial report;
 - Selected journalists/commentators and industry representatives;
 - Serving and retired soldiers; and
 - Parliamentary Library research staff.
- 1.7 In total, the committee received 43 written responses, held one public hearing and visited Army establishments to speak to junior Army personnel.

Outline of Views

- 1.8 The committee was very happy with both the volume and constructive nature of the community feedback. In general terms the feedback was positive, with support for the thrust of the report.
- 1.9 From two opposite and contradictory perspectives there was some criticism that:
- The report provided too much detail about matters that should be left to the experts;⁴ or
 - The report provided insufficient detail to explain what was being recommended, and the committee should have further investigated areas of the report.⁵
- 1.10 However, much of the feedback was supportive, and those submissions that raised objections to the committee's recommendations generally did so for one of three reasons:
- Necessity – was the recommendation considered necessary to permit the army to provide an effective contribution to desired strategic outcomes?
 - Affordability – was the recommendation affordable?
 - Achievability – was the recommendation actually achievable, even if resources were available?
- 1.11 This report reviews the committee's recommendations from the perspective of these three questions. An analysis of the community reaction to each of the committee's recommendations is at Chapter 5.
- 1.12 There were also issues raised that either had not been dealt with in depth or were not the subject of recommendations in *From Phantom to Force*. Examples were the questioning of the Army's rotation policy and the introduction of a form of National Service. Some of these issues are dealt with in summary at the end of Chapter 5.

4 Mr R Copley, Submission 7

5 Mr R Jennings, Submission 38

Report Structure

- 1.13 This report will deal with the committee's previous recommendations, detailed in Appendix C, under the themes of necessity, affordability and achievability in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. Chapter 5 provides detail of the comment received from respondents on each of the recommendations in *From Phantom to Force*. The report concludes with a final chapter that outlines the adjustments the committee recommends be made to *From Phantom to Force: Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army*.