

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE**

**INQUIRY INTO THE DEFENCE ANNUAL REPORT 2007-08**

**21 August 2009**

**Questions taken on notice during the Hearing**

**Q1**

**Status of stores on loan to Fiji for operations in Iraq**

Mr Hale, Hansard, 21 August 2009, p18

**On page 45 of the *Defence Annual Report 2007-08* the table lists that there are stores on loan to the Fijian military for their personnel serving in Iraq. Can Defence please advise what those stores are and the status of this loan?**

**RESPONSE**

Military equipment such as protective clothing, tents, body armour, weapons and ammunition had been loaned by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to Fijian military personnel serving in Iraq. On 16 May 2008 the deployed ADF headquarters in Iraq (HQJTF633) advised that the senior Fijian officer deployed in Iraq had advised that ADF capability support was no longer required. HQJTF633 subsequently confirmed that all items were either recovered, or deemed beyond economical repair or past use by date by a Board of Survey and disposed of in theatre. The stores account created to record equipment loaned to Fiji was cleared of all items and closed.

**Q2**

**Update on the status of the rapid acquisition of short barrels for the rifles used by the Special Forces.**

Mr Bevis, Hansard, 21 August 2009, pp18-19

**Can Defence please provide the committee with an update on the status of the rapid acquisition of short-barrels for the ADF's Special Forces? Can the committee also be advised as to what type of barrels are being acquired?**

**RESPONSE**

Major Capital Equipment Project Joint Project 2088 is currently tendering for The Close Quarter Battle Weapon system for use by the East Coast Tactical Assault Group.

The requirement is for a weapon system shorter than the current 14 inch barrel used on the standard Special Forces 5.56mm Colt M4A1 Modular Weapon System. The solution may either be a new weapon or a shortened barrel (approx 10-12 inches) that fits on the M4A1 weapon that can be interchanged easily with the standard 14 inch barrel.

Examples of possible options include:

- Colt M4 Commando weapon,
- Knights Armaments Corporation 11.5 inch Upper Receiver, and
- Heckler & Koch HK 416 weapon & Upper Receiver

An open tender was released on 7 July 2009 and closed on 26 August 2009.

There were seven responses to the tender which are now being evaluated. The evaluation of tender responses will be lengthy due to the required trialling of different types of ammunition and weapon sights, in addition to a range of occupational health and safety, user, climatic and environmental testing requirements.

The acquisition plan for JP 2088 is:

| <b>Date</b>                    | <b>Activity</b>   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 7 July 2009                    | Tender released for the Close Quarter Battle Weapon               |
| 26 August 2009                 | Tender closes   |
| October 2009                   | Initial screening & report  |
| December 2009                  | Initial Technical Compliance Evaluation                           |
| December 2009                  | Short-list report & Initial Source Evaluation                     |
| February 2010                  | Land Engineering Agency firing trials completed                   |
| March 200                      | Preliminary Design Acceptance                                     |
| June 2010                      | User Trials completed   |
| November 2010                  | Departmental environmental, climatic and safety testing completed |
| December 2010 and January 2011 | Contract Negotiations   |
| February 2011                  | Contract Awarded  |
| July 2011                      | Weapons delivered   |

There are currently no Rapid Acquisitions under way for short-barrel weapons for Australia's Special Forces.