

## **Government Response to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade report on *Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations.***

### **Recommendation 1**

The committee recommends that, before the Australian Government commits personnel to a peacekeeping operation, it is satisfied that the mandate has:

- clearly stated and achievable goals based on an assessment and understanding of risks, including the worst case scenario;
- a level of commitment that can be sustained throughout the life of the mission in order to achieve the stated objectives; and
- adequate resources to meet the objectives—the proposed force to have the capacity and capability to fulfil its tasks as set out in the mandate, and sufficient financial resources available to implement the mandate.

Furthermore, where Australia is taking a key or lead role in the proposed mission, the committee recommends that the Government of Australia ensure the terms of the mandate strictly meet these fundamental requirements. This would be done in consultation with the host country, the UN and potential partners.

### **Response**

**Partially agreed.** The Government is committed to promoting well informed, clear mandates, as well as achievable goals and a commitment to adequate funding as a fundamental enabler of mission success. This is demonstrated by our engagement with the United Nations (UN) Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) on the development of peacekeeping doctrine.

The Government notes that in some circumstances it may be necessary to allow Australia to commit personnel prior to the full articulation of these mission aspects where our strong national interests are engaged. Flexibility is also required to enable ongoing review of a mission's mandate and goals in response to developments over time, as has occurred with the UN and African Union's efforts in Sudan.

Where Australia is considering or has taken a leading role in a mission, the ability to sustain an appropriate level of materiel, human resourcing and financial support over the life of the mission is a priority consideration for Government. This is evidenced through Australia's ongoing support to missions including in Solomon Islands and East Timor.

### **Recommendation 2**

The committee recommends that the Australian Government continue to support actively the R2P doctrine and, through its representations in the UN, ensure that international deliberations are informed by the doctrine.

The committee also recommends that in the committee's proposed white paper on peacekeeping (Recommendation 37), the Australian Government include a discussion on, and an explanation of, Australia's current position on this evolving doctrine.

## **Response**

**Partially agreed.** The Government is committed to advancing the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle, and Australia is an active supporter of R2P within the UN and its own region. The Government is providing an overall package of \$4.58 million to advance a number of R2P initiatives including a \$1.86 million joint initiative with the Asia Pacific Centre for R2P at the University of Queensland; a \$2 million Australian R2P Fund that will disburse grants to support R2P outreach and research projects in the Asia Pacific region; and \$300,000 to the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect and \$417,000 to the Non Government Organisation (NGO) Coalition for R2P, both of which are based in New York. This package of Australian support will materially contribute to the advancement of R2P at the local, regional and global levels and across a range of political and civil society settings.

Government does not agree there would be benefit in a white paper on peacekeeping as noted in response to recommendation 37. See further response to recommendation 37.

## **Recommendation 3**

The committee recommends that before the Australian Government decides to contribute to a non-UN mandated peacekeeping operation, it is satisfied that the mission has a proper legal framework with recognised authority to deploy the operation and is consistent with Australian law. In this regard the committee recommends that:

- as early as practicable, the UN is consulted and fully informed about developments and any proposals for a peacekeeping operation;
- the Australian Government places the highest priority on securing regional support for the peacekeeping operation;
- the host country, through its legally recognised authorities, has requested the establishment of a peacekeeping operation and willingly consented to the deployment of forces and the conditions under which they are to operate - the agreement to be documented in appropriate legal instruments and provided to the Security Council; and
- the legal documents authorising the deployment of a peacekeeping operation to be treated, if not in the form of a treaty, in a way similar to treaties; that is, tabled in Parliament with an accompanying National Interest Analysis and examined by a parliamentary committee.

Furthermore, that the operation's mandate:

- is in complete accord with the UN Charter and is accountable to universally accepted human rights standards and Australian law;
- contains arrangements to ensure that the Security Council and the peacekeeping operation complement each other's efforts to keep the peace; and
- includes provisions making the mission accountable to the UN and covers issues such as reporting procedures and channels for the exchange of information.

Finally, through both formal and informal channels, the government endeavours to obtain UN endorsement of the operation even though the operation may have commenced.

## **Response**

**Partially agreed.** The Government will continue to ensure that, before contributing to non-UN mandated peacekeeping operations, the operations' mandate is in accord with the UN Charter (including any relevant Security Council resolutions), applicable human rights standards and

Australian law. The Government must satisfy itself that the conditions under which forces are to operate are documented in appropriate instruments. While in some circumstances a treaty-level instrument may be required, in other circumstances lower level instruments may be sufficient. Consistent with long-established Government policy, such lower level instruments are not tabled in Parliament.

The Government would only contribute to a non-UN mandated peacekeeping operation if satisfied that the host country, through its legally recognised authorities, requested the establishment of a peacekeeping operation and willingly consented to the deployment of forces.

The Government notes that in certain circumstances where a host country seeks a peace-keeping operation due to a humanitarian emergency (e.g., East Timor in 2006 and 2008 and Tonga in 2006), an instrument of less-than treaty status may be the only mechanism allowing relevant countries to consent to that operation in a timely manner. Such an instrument would be confidential to the participants and therefore the Government would not be in a position to table the instrument in Parliament for examination by a parliamentary committee. The Government considers it necessary only to table in Parliament those instruments that create binding international legal obligations on Australia.

Government further notes that Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations does not require Member States participating in a regional peacekeeping operation to provide a copy of the relevant instrument to the Security Council. If requested by the UNSC, the Government would use its best endeavours to seek the agreement of the other participants before providing copies of the relevant instrument to the Security Council. Likewise, if the UN requests the Government provide further information or report periodically on the progress of Australian contributions to a regional peace-keeping operation, the Australian Government would seek to cooperate fully with the UN.

#### **Recommendation 4**

In light of the concerns raised about the conditions under which some members of ATST -EM were deployed, the committee recommends that the ADF conduct a review of this deployment to identify any shortcomings and ensure that lessons from ATST-EM's experiences inform the deployment of similar small contingents. This case study would, for example, examine matters such as their preparation to serve as unarmed peacekeepers, the chain of command arrangements and the provision of health services.

#### **Response**

**Agreed.** The Government is already in compliance with this recommendation. Headquarters Joint Operations Command (HQJOC) staff is reviewing the Australian Training Support Team East Timor (ATST-EM) deployment to ensure that relevant lessons have been captured and incorporated into planning processes where appropriate.

Beyond the specific case of the ATST-EM, the ADF has an ongoing 'lessons learned' process which integrates lessons through small evaluation teams focussed on designated objectives. These teams capture data and information, during the actual conduct of each operation as well as reporting from commanders, senior staff and participants. The information is recorded in the ADF Activities Analysis Database System.

In addition to the 'lessons learned' process, HQJOC has implemented an Operational Capability Review (OCR) process to review the tasks and composition of all deployed elements. The OCR process will enable information and issues from theatre to be captured and conveyed to HQJOC directly, allowing timely action such as force design and training adjustments for follow-on rotations, and the application of lessons to other relevant situations. The OCR process is being rolled out progressively with priority to larger and more complex contingents, but will in time be applied to every ongoing ADF deployment.

With regard to medical support for our deployed personnel in East Timor, Defence establishes and maintains medical facilities to support ADF personnel in Australian-commanded missions. Health facilities supporting ADF personnel in East Timor have matured since the first Australian deployment in 1999. For Timor, UN health facilities are currently augmented by the contracted ADF facility for more serious medical conditions/cases.

UN-assigned personnel routinely receive first line medical support through organic UN health facilities. Where ADF local support is not available to provide a back-up facility, ADF personnel within UN contingents receive agreed health support through the local UN health facilities (if available). ADF personnel also receive Combat First Aid training and are issued with a deployable medical kit. Additionally, there are agreed higher levels of care available regionally where ADF personnel can be evacuated for treatment if required.

Government is committed to ensuring that the very best health support is available ADF personnel. As noted in the response to Recommendation 27, Defence has commissioned the Centre for Military and Veterans' Health to conduct the Deployment Health Surveillance Program, a series of longitudinal health studies of deployed personnel, including mental health issues.

### **Recommendation 5**

The committee recommends that, before deploying Australian personnel to a peacekeeping operation, the Australian Government ensure that all instruments covering the use of force are unambiguous, clearly understood, appropriate to the mission and provide adequate protection.

### **Response**

**Agreed.** Prior to approving deployment of Australian personnel to a peacekeeping operation, the Government determines whether the legal basis allows for sufficient force protection in light of the assigned mission and after considering all the prevailing circumstances of the proposed peacekeeping operation.

The Government notes that the legal basis for use of force contained in the authorising UN mandate for a particular peacekeeping operation cannot be unilaterally amended by the Government to ensure that it is 'appropriate to the mission and provide[s] adequate protection.' Instead, the mission's rules of engagement (ROE) must be appropriately defined and suitably tailored to complement the legal basis for use of force. If the legal basis for the mission is deemed to be inadequate, then the Government may either decline to contribute to the peacekeeping operation or seek changes to the mandate that would satisfy its concerns.

The Government further notes that while deployed, all ADF commanders and AFP personnel have an obligation to continually review the authorised ROE or Use of Force, and to seek clarification or request any necessary changes if they are considered to be unclear or inadequate



to cover the security situation. The Government understands the importance of having an appropriate and unambiguous use of force regime that is fully understood by all personnel involved, whether the mission is a UN or non-UN peacekeeping operation.

### **Recommendation 6**

The committee recommends that all government agencies advising the Australian Government on Australia's participation in a proposed peacekeeping operation address clearly the adequacy of force protection provided in the mandate and accompanying ROE. This consideration is not only from the perspective of the physical safety of Australian personnel but also their mental wellbeing. Ultimately, the government must be satisfied that the mandate matches the needs on the ground.

### **Response**

**Agreed.** A primary consideration when advising Government on a decision to commit personnel to a peacekeeping operation is the adequacy of available force protection measures for the overall wellbeing of Australian personnel.

The Government is committed to ensuring that high quality mental health support is available for Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel and the ex-service community. As discussed in the Government response to Recommendation 23, Government has developed a Mental Health Lifecycle Initiatives Package. The Package includes nine strategic mental health initiatives targeted across the four stages of an ADF member's lifecycle: recruitment, service, transition, and resettlement into civilian life. As part of these initiatives, the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health (ACPMH) is undertaking research and learning processes to enhance current practices. Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs are working closely with the ACPMH on the lifecycle initiative.

In addition, Defence has commissioned the Centre for Military and Veterans' Health to conduct the Deployment Health Surveillance Program, a series of longitudinal health studies of deployed personnel, including mental health issues.

The Government notes that, in the case of a UN-mandated peacekeeping operation, force protection policy and military ROE applicable to Australian personnel are ultimately derived from the UN mandate, which as previously noted cannot be unilaterally amended.

Prior to approving Australian participation in a peacekeeping mission, the Government receives advice on the sufficiency of ROE and force protection measures in view of the needs on the ground. This process applies to all ADF operations including those not led by the UN, and non-peacekeeping operations.

As noted in the response to Recommendation 5, all ADF commanders deployed on peacekeeping operations have an obligation to continually review the authorised ROE, and to seek clarification or request any necessary changes if they are considered to be unclear or inadequate to cover the military situation.

### **Recommendation 7**

The committee recommends that, when considering a proposed peacekeeping operation, the Australian Government examine in detail the mission's exit strategy to ensure that Australia's

contribution is part of a well-planned and structured approach to achieving clearly stated objectives. When committing forces to an operation the Australian Government should clearly articulate its exit strategy.

### **Response**

**Partially agreed.** The Government recognises the importance of exit strategies. However, as noted in response to Recommendation 1, a degree of flexibility is required, as there may be circumstances where it is not appropriate to articulate an exit strategy.

The Government conducts a classified annual review of the ADF's commitments to peacekeeping operations. This review critically examines each mission and considers the continuance, or otherwise, of the ADF's contribution.

### **Recommendation 8**

The committee recommends that the ADF place a high priority on its undertaking to give training for peacekeeping operations a 'more prominent place' in its training regime. This training should extend to reservists as well as regular members of the ADF.

### **Response**

**Agreed.** Training for peacekeeping operations has been identified as a fundamental element to the continuum of training in the ADF, especially within the Army. Land Command provides collective training for regular and reservist personnel aimed at meeting operational requirements, and peacekeeping is included as part of this requirement for operational training. In addition, the ADF Peace Operations Training Centre (formerly the ADF Warfare Centre (ADFWC)) includes peacekeeping operations modules on most of its joint courses and incorporates peacekeeping and stabilisation operations in joint exercises, such as the Talisman Sabre series with the United States. Peacekeeping operations are covered in a dedicated civil-military cooperation course, and also in a variety of other courses conducted by the ADFWC through presentations, syndicate tutorials and discussion periods.

The ADF Peacekeeping Centre also provides the ADF UN Military Observers' Course, which prepares selected military personnel from Australia and overseas for service as military observers in UN or multinational peacekeeping operations. The course is focused on meeting the standards stipulated by UN DPKO's Integrated Training System. Since 2008, components of the course have been merged into a course conducted by the AFP's International Deployment Group.

Previously, the ADFWC ran the International Peace Operations Seminar (IPOS). The Asia Pacific Civil-Military Centre of Excellence (APCM COE), created in 2008, now has responsibility for conducting IPOS, and has split the seminar into two courses focused on enhancing whole-of-government and whole-of-nation capabilities, and promoting civil-military UN and international engagement in the Asia Pacific region. These are the Civil-Military Interaction Seminar and the Civil-Military Interaction Workshop, the latter which is developed and delivered with the Asia Pacific Centre for Military Law (APCML). APCMCOE is also working closely with the ADF and relevant Government agencies to identify core training activities as part of a Training Continuum for military, police and civilian personnel.

### **Recommendation 9**

The committee recommends that the AFP adhere to a procurement policy that requires, where possible, any equipment purchased for use in a peacekeeping operation to be compatible with equipment or technology used by the ADF.

### **Response**

**Agreed.** The need for the ADF and AFP to operate together closely has been recognised by both Agencies and is pursued vigorously under an interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on interoperability, signed in 2008 by the Secretary of the Department of Defence, the Chief of the Defence Force and the Commissioner of the AFP.

AFP and ADF logistics and capability development staff meet on a regular basis to discuss procurement opportunities as appropriate, and both Defence and the AFP recognise the unique operational responsibilities that each organisation needs to meet. Where practicable, common procurement solutions will be pursued; however, where operational responsibilities diverge and unique solutions are required, the most efficient and effective procurement solutions will prevail. Future developments on ADF and AFP Interoperability are under the direction of the Joint Steering Committee on Defence and AFP Interoperability.

### **Recommendation 10**

The committee recommends that the ADF and the AFP work together to devise and implement programs—joint training and exercises—and develop shared doctrine that will improve their interoperability when deployed overseas. In particular, the committee recommends that the ADF implement a program of secondments of their members to the AFP's International Deployment Group.

### **Response**

**Partially agreed.** As noted in response to recommendation 9, in 2008 Defence and the AFP signed an MOU on interoperability, which provides a framework for cooperation in the preparation for and conduct of operations. A Joint Steering Committee on interoperability, headed by the National Manager of the AFP's International Deployment Group and the ADF's Chief of Joint Operations, has been established in accordance with the MOU. The MOU notes that interoperability is the ability to train, exercise and operate effectively together in the execution of assigned missions and tasks. Participation by the AFP on Exercise Talisman Sabre 2009 is a contemporary example of exercising together.

Should Defence and AFP be deployed to the same area of operations, coordination mechanisms are developed to achieve mutually supporting outcomes. As interoperability between organisations matures, this may lead to the inclusion of police as part of the Australian joint operations architecture. The APCM COE has secondees from Defence, the AFP and civilian agencies, and provides a further opportunity to develop and participate in joint training and education programs, and develop doctrine for practical collaboration.

### **Recommendation 11**

The committee recommends that DFAT and AusAID jointly review the pre-deployment training arrangements for Commonwealth officers being deployed on peacekeeping missions with a view to establishing a government approved course of training. The committee recommends further that:

- all Commonwealth personnel deploying to a peacekeeping operation satisfy the requirements of this course;
- relevant government agencies require all their external contractors providing services to a peacekeeping operation to undergo appropriate screening and training; and
- to ensure the effective transfer of skills and knowledge, DFAT and AusAID include in their pre-deployment preparations a 'training for trainers' course for personnel whose duties involve instructing or coaching people in a host country.

### **Response**

**Partially Agreed.** The Government agrees that AusAID and the APCM COE should review the pre-deployment training arrangements for Commonwealth officers being deployed on peacekeeping missions, and this process is already underway.

The Government agrees that all Commonwealth personnel deploying on peacekeeping operations should satisfy pre-deployment training requirements. There is scope for training modules to be further developed and refined, to address core skill sets for peacekeeping operations. However, given the wide range of peacekeeping situations and varying roles of agencies, training programs must also be tailored to different contexts and roles.

The Government agrees that 'train the trainer' or capacity building skills are important for personnel whose duties involve instructing or coaching people in a host country. AusAID currently provides such training when required as a part of its pre-deployment programs for Commonwealth officers deployed under the aid program.

### **Recommendation 12**

The committee recommends that DFAT undertake a comparative review and analysis of the strategic level arrangements for the planning and coordination of RAMSI and peacekeeping operations in Timor-Leste and to use the findings as a guide for future missions.

### **Response**

**Agreed.** The Government agrees with the intent of this recommendation. The APCM COE commissioned the Australian Strategic Policy Institute to conduct a study into the key civil-military lessons from Australia's response to recent disaster and conflict events in the region, including support to the Regional Assistance Mission Solomon Islands (RAMSI) and Timor-Leste. The study focused on civil-military lessons in relation to whole-of-government policy and planning and operational implementation. The findings of the study, together with supplementary research and lessons learned activities, will help to support Australia's approach to strategic-level planning and coordination for future missions.

Mission planning will also be informed by the development of a civil-military conceptual framework for conflict and disaster management. This framework, being developed by the APCM COE in collaboration with relevant government departments and agencies, is drawing from both Australian and international experiences in planning for peace and stabilisation operations.



### **Recommendation 13**

The committee recommends that AusAID coordinate a consultation with DFAT, Defence, AFP, ACFID and key NGOs to establish a more effective mechanism for involving the NGO sector in the planning of Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations.

#### **Response**

**Agreed.** The Government has demonstrated its commitment to broader engagement with the NGO sector through the AusAID-ACFID Partnership Agreement. The Agreement contains an undertaking on the part of AusAID to facilitate an enhanced relationship between the NGO sector and other federal agencies.

The Government, through AusAID and the APCM COE, will collaborate to host a forum with the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and relevant NGOs and international organisations in 2010. It is expected that this forum will provide a further opportunity for dialogue and the exchange of ideas on peacekeeping issues and best practice for peacekeeping operations. This will build upon an earlier collaborative activity organised by the Government to ensure Australian and international NGO involvement in the development of civil-military doctrine for UN DPKO.

In addition, a responsibility of the APCM COE is to engage and develop collaborative mechanisms to support civil-military best practice with the non-government sector, which has been enhanced by the creation of an NGO Adviser position at the APCM COE. The position facilitates dialogue and an enhanced understanding between the NGO sector and government agencies on civil-military planning and capabilities for conflict and disaster management. The position, funded by AusAID, was filled by ACFID in September 2009.

It is important to note that while opportunities to involve the NGO sector in the planning for Australian peacekeeping operations is considered desirable by the Government, the extent to which this can occur needs to be balanced by relevant security considerations.

### **Recommendation 14**

The committee recommends that a whole-of-government working group, such as the Peace Operations Working Group, arrange to hold regular meetings with representatives of NGOs engaged in peacekeeping operations to discuss and develop training programs and courses that would improve their working relationship. The committee recommends further that, in consultation with other government agencies and relevant NGOs, DFAT and AusAID review this arrangement in 2010 to assess the value to each organisation involved, and how it could be improved. The results of the review would be noted in DFAT's annual report.

#### **Response**

**Partially agreed.** The Government agrees there is a need for regular dialogue between relevant government agencies and NGOs to enhance cooperation between the government and non-government sector, including through appropriate training activities. The mechanism for dialogue raised in response to Recommendation 13 provides an opportunity to consider training and education needs. Also, as raised in response to Recommendation 13, the NGO Adviser position at the APCM COE is strengthening Government-NGO engagement, and facilitating input from the NGO community into civil-military training and education programs organised by the APCM COE.

AusAID and APCM COE (through the Department of Defence) will report on progress on engagement with NGOs in their respective Annual Reports given their leading role in the NGO dialogue and engagement mechanisms noted above.

### **Recommendation 15**

The committee recommends that, in consultation with AusAID and ACFID, Defence review its civil-military cooperation doctrine, giving consideration to identifying measures to improve coordination between the ADF and the NGO sector when engaged in peacekeeping activities.

The committee recommends further that Defence include a discussion on its CIMIC doctrine in the upcoming Defence White Paper as well as provide an account of the progress made in developing the doctrine and its CIMIC capability in its annual report.

### **Response**

**Agreed.** Defence is already in compliance with this recommendation. The ADFWC completed a review of its Civil Military Co-operation (CIMIC) doctrine in April 2009. A wide range of civilian and military agencies were consulted in the formulation of this review, including NGOs. The doctrine has also been designed to facilitate interoperability with our major allies and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Defence has also provided key support to the UN DPKO in developing CIMIC doctrine for modern, complex UN peacekeeping missions.

In the 2009 Defence White Paper, the Government recognised that:

*“...it will be crucial to ensure that the ADF can work effectively alongside civilian agencies that specialise in law enforcement, development assistance, humanitarian relief, health, correctional services, municipal services (such as water and infrastructure), education, and political and administrative governance. ... The Asia Pacific Civil-Military Centre of Excellence will inform Australia's response to these challenges through research, education and doctrine development drawn from the accumulated experience of the ADF and other parts of the Australian Government, the United Nations, other nations and non-governmental organisations.”<sup>1</sup>*

### **Recommendation 16**

As part of this review process, the committee recommends that, in consultation with AusAID and other relevant government agencies and ACFID, Defence and the AFP consider the merits of a civil–military–police cooperation doctrine. The consideration given to this doctrine would be reflected in the committee's proposed white paper on peacekeeping.

### **Response**

**Agreed.** The need for the development of this doctrine has already been identified. The APCM COE assists departments and agencies with the development of civil-military-police doctrine, protocols and guidance and will consider this recommendation.

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<sup>1</sup> Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030, pg 23.

**Recommendation 17**

The committee recommends that in conjunction with its review of CIMIC doctrine, ADF consider ways to strengthen its CIMIC capability.

**Response**

**Agreed.** As raised in response to recommendation 15, the requirement for a strong ADF CIMIC capability is recognised in the new Defence White paper. The APCM COE will assist in strengthening the ADF's CIMIC capability through related training programs, advisory support, and research and analysis.

**Recommendation 18**

The committee recommends that AusAID, ACFID and Defence jointly review the current pre-deployment education programs, exercises, courses and other means used to prepare military and civilian personnel to work together in a peacekeeping operation. The committee recommends further that based on their findings, they collectively commit to a pre-deployment program that would strengthen cooperation between them and assist in better planning and coordinating their activities.

**Response**

**Agreed.** The APCM COE will facilitate dialogue and practical measures to strengthen the pre-deployment preparation of military and civilian personnel for peacekeeping operations. In 2008, the APCM COE commissioned an audit of current civil-military training courses available in Australia and internationally. The findings of this audit are informing the Centre's training and education strategy and its implementation.

The APCM COE is working closely with AusAID on the civil-military training needs for civilians deployed overseas, and with the ADF to ensure the inclusion of civil-military perspectives within military deployment training and exercises. ACFID involvement in the development and conduct of identified training activities will be facilitated by APCM COE on a regular basis.

**Recommendation 19**

The committee recommends that Defence, AFP, AusAID and DFAT commission a series of case studies of recent complex peacekeeping operations, as proposed by Austcare, with the focus on the effectiveness of civil-military cooperation and coordination. Their findings would be made public and discussed at the Peace Operations Working Group mentioned in Recommendation 14

**Response**

**Agreed.** As noted in the response to Recommendation 12, the APCM COE commissioned a study of Australia's responses to recent conflict and disaster events in the region to identify civil-military lessons. This study was undertaken by ASPI and involved interviews with personnel from the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet, DFAT, Defence, Attorney-General's Department, AusAID, AFP and a range of NGOs. Where appropriate, this and other studies and lessons learned, will be discussed with ACFID and NGO representatives.

### **Recommendation 20**

The committee recommends that the Australian Government consider the lessons from RAMSI regarding the positive local reaction to the mission's 'relatively low profile' with a view to adopting this approach as policy and best practice.

### **Response**

**Agreed.** The Government seeks to capture and consider lessons learned from peacekeeping missions and use them to inform future engagements as a matter of course.

### **Recommendation 21**

The committee recommends that the Australian Government commission independent research to test, against the experiences of past deployments, the relevance of the factors identified by the committee that should inform Australia's approach to, and planning for, a regional operation. These include the need for understanding sensitivities regarding sovereignty, language skills and cultural awareness, local ownership and involving local community groups (for complete list see paragraph 16.61). The committee further recommends that the information be used to develop a template for the conduct of future missions.

### **Response**

**Partially Agreed.** The Government is committed to continuous improvements in both civilian and military training, and recognises that reviews of lessons learned from a whole-of-government perspective can help our planning, policy and practice in-country. Existing exercises and training by the AFP, ADF and AusAID have improved the focus on cultural awareness, language skills and related issues. AusAID and other government agencies are examining mechanisms to improve civilian deployment, while recognising that every mission involving the deployment of civilians will be different.

### **Recommendation 22**

The committee recommends that a whole-of-government working group review the language and cultural awareness training of government agencies with a view to developing a more integrated and standardised system of training for Australian peacekeepers. The Peace Operations Working Group may be the appropriate body to undertake this work.

### **Response**

**Agreed.** As noted in the response to recommendation 21, while recognising that every mission will be different, the Government is committed to continuous improvements in both civilian and military training. AusAID and other government agencies continue to examine mechanisms to improve civilian deployments while existing exercises and training by the AFP, ADF and AusAID have enhanced their focus on cultural awareness, language skills and related issues.

### **Recommendation 23**

The committee recommends that exchange programs and joint exercises with personnel from countries relevant to peacekeeping operations in the region continue as a high priority. It also suggests that such activities form part of a broader coherent whole-of-government strategy to build a greater peacekeeping capacity in the region.



## **Response**

**Agreed.** The Government acknowledges the value of continuing exchange programs and joint exercises with personnel from countries relevant to peacekeeping operations in the region.

The Government notes a requirement to balance exchange programs and joint exercises with Australian policy priorities, and with consideration for the particular circumstances of a given agency. Individual agencies need the flexibility to pursue engagement priorities informed by wider national interests and Government guidance. For example, the AFP delivers education and training programs for the Pacific Island Countries contribution to the Participating Police Force in RAMSI; this has been extended to include observer/trainers from the East Timor Police Force. The AFP is the only regional police force with a training institution dedicated to preparing its officers for duty in peace and stability operations. Accordingly, the AFP is focused on education and training rather than exchanges. The AFP expects to conduct broader engagement with regional nations from South East Asia in the future.

The Government will also continue to support the work of UN agencies and regional organisations, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, in capacity building efforts for partner countries involved in peace operations. The civil-military training programs being developed and facilitated by the APCM COE, as noted in the response to Recommendation 8, include participants from the Asia Pacific region.

## **Recommendation 24**

The committee recommends that greater impetus be given to the implementation of UN Resolution 1325. It recommends that the Peace Operations Working Group be the driving force behind ensuring that all agencies are taking concrete actions to encourage greater involvement of women in peacekeeping operations.

The committee recommends further that DFAT provide in its annual report an account of the whole-of-government performance in implementing this resolution. The report should go beyond merely listing activities to provide indicators of the effectiveness of Australia's efforts to implement Resolution 1325.

## **Response**

**Partially agreed.** The Government notes that Resolution 1325 covers issues broader than peacekeeping, making full application and implementation of the resolution broader than the working group's mandate. In 2008 the Australian Government Office for Women funded an Australian non-government organisation to undertake research into possible options for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (Resolution 1325) including the possible development of a National Action Plan (NAP). Detailed research and community consultation was undertaken, culminating in a report to the Office for Women in July 2009 for consideration by government. In October 2009 an inter-departmental working group was convened to consider next steps. The Minister for the Status of Women then wrote to the Prime Minister and relevant ministerial colleagues seeking their support for the development of an Australian national action plan.

The Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Defence, Minister for Home Affairs, the Attorney-General and the Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance have given their support for a whole of government approach to the development of an Australian national action plan.

**Recommendation 25**

The committee recommends that Australian government agencies actively pursue opportunities to second senior officers to the United Nations. Furthermore, that such secondments form part of a broader departmental and whole-of-government strategy designed to make better use of the knowledge and experience gained by seconded officers. In other words, appointments should not be terminal postings and should be perceived as important and valuable career opportunities.

**Response**

**Agreed.** The Government actively pursues opportunities to deploy senior officers to UN missions and UN Headquarters in New York. The Government agrees that secondment opportunities must be strategically selected to ensure balance between the availability of senior officers and wider responsibilities and opportunities of each agency.

**Recommendation 26**

The committee recommends that the ADF develop a comprehensive and reliable database on Australian peacekeepers that would provide accurate statistics on where and when ADF members were deployed. The database would also enable correlations to be made between particular deployments and associated health problems.

**Response**

**Agreed.** PMKeyS, the ADF corporate human resource management system, provides a comprehensive and reliable database from which statistics can be extracted to identify dates and locations of service by Australian Peacekeepers.

The PMKeyS OpsLog is completed prior to a service member's departure on any operational service, and then maintained to accurately represent service within an Area of Operations. OpsLog data enables periods of overseas service to be correlated against reported health problems, by operation, time and location. Considerable work has been undertaken since the introduction of OpsLog in July 2005 to incorporate information from other data sources. Project Remediate, the latest of such initiatives, is intended to capture data on ADF operational deployments of all types prior to July 2005.

**Recommendation 27**

The committee recommends that the ADF broaden the scope of the research and studies being done on veterans' mental health by the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health and the Centre for Military and Veterans' Health to include the rehabilitation of veterans with mental health problems; the retraining opportunities or career transition services provided to them; the quality of, and access to, appropriate and continuing care; and the stigma attached to mental health problems in the ADF.

**Response**

**Agreed.** These issues are being addressed in the Government Mental Health Lifecycle Initiatives Package. The Package includes nine strategic mental health initiatives targeted across the four stages of an ADF member's lifecycle: recruitment, service, transition, and resettlement into civilian life. As part of these initiatives, the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health (ACPMH) is undertaking research and learning processes to

enhance current practices. Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) are working closely with the ACPMH on the lifecycle initiative.

In addition, Defence has commissioned the Centre for Military and Veterans' Health to conduct the Deployment Health Surveillance Program, a series of longitudinal health studies of deployed personnel, including mental health issues. Studies have been completed on the Solomon Islands, Timor Leste and Bougainville, and a study of the Middle East Area of Operations will follow.

As part of the Review of Mental Health in Defence, Professor David Dunt has examined the scope of mental health research in the ADF, addressing the issue of the stigma attached to mental health problems. The review included a variety of submissions taken from many interested parties including individuals, ex-service organisations and other Government Departments. The report, and Government response, was released by the former Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, the Hon Warren Snowdon and the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Hon Alan Griffin on 1 May 2009. The Government has accepted, either wholly or in principle, all recommendations in the report.

In addition, Professor Dunt also undertook an Independent Study into Suicide in the Ex-Service Community, with the report released by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs on 4 May 2009. There were five recommendations common to both reports relating to transition which Defence and DVA are working together to implement.

### **Recommendation 28**

The committee recommends that the Australian Government release a policy paper outlining the options and its views on a rehabilitation and compensation scheme for the AFP, invite public comment and thereafter release a draft bill for inquiry and report by a parliamentary committee.

### **Response**

**Partially agreed.** The Government agrees with the intent of the recommendation. The Review of Military Compensation Arrangements is examining the current military rehabilitation and compensation system, including whether the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA) should cover the AFP members deployed on high risk overseas missions. A Steering Committee has been established to manage the Review. The Committee is comprised of senior Government representatives and a member of the community with compensation expertise, and is chaired by the Chair of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission.

Interim arrangements have been put in place for AFP officers serving in high risk missions to align rehabilitation and compensation arrangements with Defence, pending the outcomes of this review. Options will be discussed with the AFP and various interest groups for establishing ongoing arrangements including both high risk and other AFP missions, that provide parity with arrangements that will be put in place by Defence. Current interim arrangements will be subsumed into any ongoing arrangements.

**Recommendation 29**

The committee recommends that the ADF commission an independent audit of its medical records to determine the accuracy and completeness of the records, and to identify any deficiencies with a view to implementing changes to ensure that all medical records are up-to-date and complete. The audit report should be provided, through the Minister for Defence, to the committee.

**Response**

**Not agreed.** While initiatives are underway to meet the intent of the recommendation, the Government notes that an audit, as proposed by the committee, would not meet the requirement to “determine the accuracy and completeness of records” because effective datum for benchmarking accuracy and completeness does not exist.

The Government further notes that Defence is developing an electronic medical record system based on a commercial product, enabling individual records to be developed and maintained electronically. Using the Rapid Prototype Development and Evaluation (RPDE) process, Defence has commenced a requirements collection task. RPDE will then consider commercial off-the-shelf options, then trial and evaluate potential solutions before making a decision on the way ahead. This new e-health system will ensure all health information is collected and is available to all health providers for the care of the individual, and for Joint Health Command to use to manage the health of the ADF.

**Recommendation 30**

The committee recommends that the Australian Government requests ANAO to audit the hardware and software used by the ADF and DVA in their health records management system to identify measures needed to ensure that into the future the system is able to provide the type of detailed information of the like required by the committee but apparently not accessible.

**Response**

**Partially Agreed.** Following an ANAO audit in 2001, a number of health initiatives were identified aimed at retiring legacy systems and delivering a new health information systems environment to Joint Health Command, including the development of an e-health system as recommended by the ANAO and as detailed in the response to Recommendation 29. When completed, this system will enable the detailed information requirements mentioned by the Committee to be addressed.

**Recommendation 31**

The committee also recommends that Defence commission the Centre for Military and Veterans' Health to assess the hardware and software used by Defence and DVA for managing the health records of ADF personnel and, in light of the committee's concerns, make recommendations on how the system could be improved.

**Response**

**Partially agreed.** In light of the initiatives underway to retire legacy systems and deliver a new health information systems environment to Joint Health Command, there would be limited value in the Centre for Military and Veterans' Health (CMVH) assessing the hardware and software currently used by Defence in managing health records. There may be value in the CMVH assessing the new hardware and software at a future date.



Government also notes that the CMVH has made considerable contribution to informing the e-health debate within Defence and DVA, and continues to do so through the quarterly meeting of the CMVH E-Health Strategic Research Working Group.

### **Recommendation 32**

The committee recommends that the Australian Government consider additional funding for the proposed Peacekeeping Memorial.

### **Response**

**Agreed.** The Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project Committee (APMPC) is keeping the Minister, through DVA, informed about the progress of its fundraising activities. Any additional funding, beyond the \$200,000 paid to the APMPC in June 2006, would be considered by the Minister. However, consistent with the rules governing all other memorials, public donations form a key indicator of public support for the establishment of a national memorial.

The Government notes that it is usual practice for the construction of new national memorials to be managed by committees of ex-service organisations and other community groups which have demonstrated the ability to raise the necessary funds and the skills necessary to manage such a project to completion.

### **Recommendation 33**

The committee recommends that the Australian Government include Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations in East Timor in the terms of reference for the Official History of Australian Peacekeeping, Humanitarian and Post-Cold War Operations.

### **Response**

**Agreed in-Principle.** The Government recognises the public prominence of Australia's involvement in East Timor, which was Australia's largest peacekeeping operation and was the first time Australia had led a major international coalition force. The Official Historian, Professor David Horner, has begun consultation with relevant departments to discuss this matter.

### **Request to Auditor General**

The committee requests that the Auditor-General consider conducting a performance audit on the mechanisms that the ADF has in place for capturing lessons from current and recent peacekeeping operations including: the adequacy of its performance indicators; whether lessons to be learnt from its evaluation processes are documented and inform the development or refinement of ADF's doctrine and practices; and how these lessons are shared with other relevant agencies engaged in peacekeeping operations and incorporated into the whole-of-government decision-making process.

### **Response**

**Agreed.** The Auditor General will consider the merits of undertaking such a performance audit in the development of its 2009-10 Audit Work Program, taking into account other audit priorities.

### **Recommendation 34**

The committee recommends that the relevant government agencies jointly develop standard measurable performance indicators that, where applicable, would be used across all agencies when evaluating the effectiveness of their peacekeeping activities (also see Recommendation 36).

#### **Response**

**Partially Agreed.** The Government notes that agencies already monitor and evaluate peacekeeping missions, particularly where agencies are represented together in the field. The AFP has contracted the University of Queensland to research measures of performance for police contributions to peace and stability operations and capacity building missions. Initial discussions between AFP and DSTO specialists have determined that some of the measures could be jointly applicable to both policing and the ADF in the peace and stability operations environment, and they will attempt to test this joint applicability in an exercise environment.

Government agencies, however, hold differing areas of expertise and mission focus, necessitating divergent approaches towards meeting their particular mission goals and requirements. In conjunction with the diverse scope of requirements across peacekeeping missions, this makes it problematic to standardise performance indicators across multiple peacekeeping operations and contributing departments.

### **Recommendation 35**

The committee recommends that the Australian Government designate an appropriate agency to take responsibility for the whole-of-government reporting on Australia's contribution to peacekeeping. This means that the agency's annual report would include a description of all peacekeeping operations, a list of the contributing government agencies, and, for each relevant agency:

- a description of its role in the operation;
- the agency's financial contribution to the operation during that reporting year;
- the peak number of personnel deployed by the agency during the reporting year and the date at which the peak occurred; and
- the number of personnel deployed as at the end of the reporting year.

#### **Response**

**Partially agreed.** Government is considering if and how best to take forward Recommendation 35. An annual report may not be the best publication in which to collate and publicise Australia's contribution to peacekeeping operations. Government agencies currently report relevant information on peacekeeping operations within their respective annual reports. As noted in response to recommendation 7, Defence also coordinates a classified annual review of the ADF's commitments to peacekeeping operations for consideration by Government.

### **Recommendation 36**

In light of the committee's discussion on the adequacy of performance indicators, the committee also recommends that the agencies reporting on peacekeeping activities provide in their annual reports measurable performance indicators on the effectiveness of these activities.

## **Response**

**Partially agreed.** The Government acknowledges the importance of agencies providing clear and accurate reporting – against measurable performance indicators where appropriate – on the effectiveness of their activities. Government notes that Australian support to peacekeeping is conducted across multiple agencies, and the level of effectiveness of certain contributions is not always amenable to being quantified and measured, as noted in the response to Recommendation 34.

## **Recommendation 37**

Committee recommends that the Australian Government produce a white paper on Australia's engagement in peacekeeping activities.

## **Response**

**Partially agreed.** The Government recognises the importance of a whole-of-government approach to Australia's engagement in peacekeeping activities. In May 2009, Government delivered the most comprehensive Defence White Paper ever produced. While Government recognises that peacekeeping involves a range of key stakeholders beyond Defence, the Defence White Paper undertook an examination of peacekeeping. Government is considering if and how to move forward on recommendation 37, including instead making a comprehensive whole-of-government statement on peacekeeping.

## **Recommendation 38**

The committee recommends that the Australian Government establish a task force to conduct a scoping study for the Asia-Pacific Centre for Civil-Military Cooperation, focusing on best practice. The task force would:

- include representatives of the ADF, the AFP, DFAT, AusAID and NGOs;
- examine the structure, reporting responsibilities, administration, funding and staffing of these institutions - the task force would seek specific information on matters such as the civil–military–police coordination, administration of a civilian database and domestic/regional focus;
- visit the major international peacekeeping centres and hold discussions with overseas authorities - visits could include the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in Canada, Centre for International Peace Operations in Germany and centres in Malaysia and/or India;
- assess the strengths and weaknesses of the various institutions with a view to identifying what would best suit Australia and the region; and
- based on this assessment, produce a final report for government containing recommendations on the Asia-Pacific Centre for Civil-Military Cooperation.

The government should make the report available to the committee.

## **Response**

**Partially agreed.** The Prime Minister officially opened the Asia Pacific Civil-Military Centre of Excellence (formerly referred to as the Asia Pacific Centre for Civil-Military Cooperation) on 27 November 2008. The APCM COE has made a strong start with a comprehensive forward work program based in part on the examination of international best practice by a number of the counterpart organisations referred to in the Committee's recommendation.

It has been established as an inter-agency initiative and includes staff from Defence, DFAT, AFP, AusAID and AGD. In addition, self-funded positions in the APCM COE have been filled

by the New Zealand Government and ACFID. AusAID provided the funding for ACFID to establish and operationalise the position in the first year as a demonstration of the commitment it places on engaging NGO views.

The mission of the APCM COE is to support the development of national civil-military capabilities to prevent, prepare for and respond more effectively to conflicts and disasters overseas. The views of relevant government departments and agencies, and NGO organisations, were taken into account in the development of the APCM COE's key responsibilities and priorities.

The APCM COE is developing partnerships with selected UN agencies, as well as bilateral and regional partners, peacekeeping centres and research organisations to encourage an active sharing of experiences, lessons, ideas and future training activities, including for peacekeeping missions. It engages with Australian NGOs, primarily through ACFID and AusAID.

The progress of the APCM COE will be reported in the Defence Annual Reports and formally reviewed by the Government in FY2010-11.