

# Chapter 12

## DFAT, AusAID and other government agencies

### Introduction

12.1 In the previous three chapters, the committee examined the roles, preparedness and training regimes of the ADF and the AFP as separate entities and then as combined elements in a peacekeeping operation. Peacekeeping operations, however, are no longer solely the domain of the military or the police—other government agencies have become major players. The important role of these 'other' organisations in peacekeeping operations was acknowledged in several submissions. Ms Gillian Bird, DFAT, noted:

The traditional blue helmet model...is no longer the norm. Today we are seeing many operations, which include peacemaking and law enforcement functions, humanitarian protection, support for electoral processes and institution building and postconflict reconstruction as essential elements of their mandates. These operations require the skills not only of trained military personnel but also of civilian police, aid workers, legal personnel, medical personnel and accountants.<sup>1</sup>

12.2 AusAID also observed that there is 'an increasing awareness internationally that peacekeeping operations must be situated within a comprehensive and long-term approach to peacebuilding and statebuilding'.<sup>2</sup>

12.3 In this chapter, the committee introduces the main agencies likely to be involved in peacekeeping, with a particular focus on DFAT and AusAID. It also considers their respective roles and the training regimes for personnel to be deployed.

### Government agencies and their roles

12.4 In addition to Defence and the AFP, a number of government agencies have contributed to peacekeeping operations in Bougainville, East Timor or Solomon Islands. They include DFAT, Attorney-General's Department, AusAID, Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), Customs, Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance), Office of Financial Management, National Archives, Treasury and Department of Veterans' Affairs.<sup>3</sup>

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1 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 44.

2 *Submission 26*, p. 3.

3 DFAT, answer to written question on notice 1, 25 July 2007.

12.5 As at July 2007, Australia had a significant number of civilian personnel in UN peacekeeping missions including 152 civilians deployed in East Timor and Solomon Islands.<sup>4</sup>

12.6 DFAT has a central role in coordinating the whole-of-government response to conflicts in cooperation with the ADF and the AFP.<sup>5</sup> As noted in Chapter 3, during the early stages of a proposed mission, DFAT monitors and gathers facts about international events, consults with other countries and, through discussions with other departments, provides advice to government on the likely effects of Australia's participation in a peacekeeping operation. DFAT also assigns staff to peacekeeping operations. For example, Mr Tim George, a career diplomat with DFAT, is the Special Coordinator of RAMSI.

12.7 AusAID is also a major contributor to peacekeeping operations, working with its partners, including NGOs, in the field of development and humanitarian aid. It focuses on conflict prevention and peacebuilding; conflict management and reduction; and post-conflict recovery.<sup>6</sup> Its aid programs play 'a critical role' in supporting peacekeeping operations.<sup>7</sup> AusAID does not generally deploy staff into line positions within peace operations. Its officers tend to work with and alongside 'key actors in peace operations to inform Australian Government humanitarian and development responses to the particular crisis'.<sup>8</sup>

12.8 In addition to its own staff deployments and contracted experts, AusAID assists volunteer efforts. In 2006–07, AusAID spent \$31.5 million to place 882 Australian volunteers overseas in 29 countries in the Middle East, Africa and the Asia–Pacific region.<sup>9</sup> AusAID places volunteers through volunteer service providers.<sup>10</sup>

12.9 Other agencies such as the AEC, Treasury and Finance also provide skilled staff to assist a peacekeeping operation. For example, involved in international electoral assistance since 1989, the AEC has staff with extensive experience in the management of elections and cooperation with other agencies internationally.<sup>11</sup> AEC staff have served as election supervisors, researchers and project managers. They have

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4 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 43.

5 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2006–07*, 2007, p. 49.

6 *Submission 26*, p. 21.

7 *Submission 26*, p. 5.

8 AusAID, answers to written questions on notice 2a and 8, 25 July 2007.

9 AusAID, *Annual Report 2006–07*, p. 104.

10 AusAID, *Annual Report 2006–07*, p. 104; AusAID, Partners, Volunteers, <http://www.aisaid.gov.au/partner/volunteer.cfm> (accessed 9 November 2007).

11 *Submission 21*, pp. 11–12.

also provided training for new electoral administrators in recipient countries and coordinated curriculum development.<sup>12</sup>

12.10 Treasury has participated in international peacekeeping operations since 2003 as part of RAMSI in Solomon Islands. In financial year 2006–07, three departmental officers were deployed with RAMSI, assisting their counterparts to use the budget process to encourage accountable and transparent spending decisions.<sup>13</sup> Another four Treasury officers were deployed to the Economic Reform Unit to liaise with 'government, donors and other stakeholders to identify opportunities for economic reform and facilitate its implementation'.<sup>14</sup>

12.11 Similarly, in 2006–07, three Finance officers were deployed as part of the Financial Management Strengthening Program within RAMSI. They 'provided training in budget processes for local officials and continued work on maintaining and developing the financial management framework and expenditure controls for the Solomon Islands Government'.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Agency-specific training***

12.12 Unlike ADF or AFP personnel, government civilian peacekeepers are not charged with restoring or maintaining peace or enforcing law and order. They are selected for their specialist knowledge and skills and tend to occupy administrative roles. Hence they are not as likely as the military or the police to confront difficult conflict situations. Nonetheless, they live and work in an environment very different from home and are often without immediate access to the resources they would normally have at hand.

12.13 There is a substantial amount of evidence emphasising the need for and benefits of pre-deployment training for public servants engaged in peacekeeping operations. For example, the Challenges Project argued that 'For government employees it is a matter of due diligence that governments make available comprehensive training for peace operations'.<sup>16</sup>

12.14 Mr David Ritchie, DFAT, observed that there is 'a substantial training component for Australian public servants who are deployed to Solomon Islands government departments'. The pre-deployment preparation comprises a unit of

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12 *Submission 21*, pp. 2–3 and 6; *Committee Hansard*, 5 September 2007, p. 19.

13 Department of the Treasury, *Annual Report 2006–2007*, p. 40.

14 Department of the Treasury, *Annual Report 2006–2007*, p. 41.

15 Department of Finance and Administration, *Annual Report 2006–2007*, p. 27.

16 Challenges Project is a multinational cooperation, initiated in 1997, to promote cooperation and to develop recommendations to benefit peace operations. See *Meeting the Challenges of Peace Operations: Cooperation and Coordination*, Elanders Gotab, Stockholm, 2005, p. 129, <http://www.folkebernadotteacademy.se/roach/images/pdf/challenges.pdf> (accessed 27 November 2007).

training in Australia and then further training in Solomon Islands which includes cross-cultural awareness courses and instruction in the work environment.<sup>17</sup> DFAT noted that it provides training in cultural awareness and language skills both prior to deployment and in the country of operation. Language and cultural awareness training is discussed more fully in Chapter 18.

12.15 AusAID has engaged RedR Australia, a humanitarian organisation specialised in training NGOs in the field of humanitarian operations, to provide security training for its employees. In 2006–07, 30 AusAID officers took part in the RedR Essentials of Humanitarian Practice course and 18 in the Personal Security and Communications course. In addition, one officer attended the Basics of International Humanitarian Response course run by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Centre.<sup>18</sup>

12.16 The training regime for AusAID's Rapid Response Team (RRT)—'a team of trained AusAID emergency response personnel'<sup>19</sup>—is more comprehensive. In addition to the above courses, members undertake a psychological test and attend an RRT course. It is a five-day training program focusing on the global context in humanitarian disaster response; AusAID specific issues; data collection and analysis; and familiarisation with communication devices. The training finishes with a two-day simulation. Training at overseas posts is otherwise similar but the content and context is customised for local conditions. According to AusAID, other government agencies and NGOs are increasingly attending the course.<sup>20</sup>

12.17 Because of the smaller number of Australian civilian officers deployed to a peacekeeping operation and the diversity of their tasks and functions, relevant agencies do not have a training regime as structured as the ADF or the AFP. Many rely on other agencies such as DFAT, AusAID, ADF and AFP or other sources such as universities and NGOs to help them prepare their officers for deployment. The Australian Red Cross was of the view that training across government agencies for personnel potentially involved in peacekeeping 'appears to be inadequate'.<sup>21</sup> It wanted to emphasise the important role that it and similar organisations 'can play in the pre-deployment phase and would strongly recommend that such organisations be involved in all general and pre-deployment training and briefings offered'.<sup>22</sup>

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17 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 63.

18 AusAID, answer to written question on notice 3a, 25 July 2007.

19 *Submission 26*, p. 13.

20 AusAID, answers to written questions on notice 4b and 4c, 25 July 2007.

21 *Committee Hansard*, 21 August 2007, p. 2.

22 *Committee Hansard*, 20 August 2007, p. 3.

12.18 AusAID has taken on a role training personnel from other government agencies, which is discussed in the following chapter dealing with coordinating Australia's contribution to peacekeeping operations.<sup>23</sup>

### ***Training the trainers***

12.19 Public servants deployed to a peacekeeping operation are often involved in training their host country counterparts. To have a lasting benefit, local people should learn from these experts and as soon as practicable replace them. Thus, peacekeepers in these positions need to be able to effectively impart their specialist skills and knowledge. In this regard, Professor Raymond Apthorpe and Mr Jacob Townsend pointed to the importance of teaching and training skills:

The tendency is to assume that those with knowledge can make others learn it, which is an assumption challenged by experience and the existence of teacher training for our own education systems.<sup>24</sup>

12.20 They submitted that a 'major requirement for executing capacity-building programs effectively is to have staff who are trained as trainers'.<sup>25</sup> Using the same argument, Associate Professor Wainwright raised the issue of dependency and the importance of ensuring that those working within host governments are passing on skills and not just doing the job themselves.<sup>26</sup>

12.21 The AFP certainly recognises its role as a teacher in a peacekeeping operation. Personnel attend courses to learn 'a coaching approach to capacity development'.<sup>27</sup> The committee believes that all Australian personnel likely to be involved in capacity building should undergo courses on how to be an effective trainer.

### ***Contracting***

12.22 According to DFAT, where 'the right skill sets are not readily available', government agencies attempt to find a suitable candidate from outside the public service through a merit selection process or contracting. All are required to abide by either the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct or a Code of Conduct developed for contractors. Public servants are required to undergo a security clearance; contractors are required to be of 'good name and character' and have no criminal record.<sup>28</sup>

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23 AusAID, answer to written question on notice 4a, 25 July 2007.

24 *Submission 32*, p. 6.

25 *Submission 32*, p. 6.

26 *Committee Hansard*, 20 August 2007, p. 13.

27 See Chapter 10, paragraph 10.41.

28 DFAT, answer to written question on notice 2, 24 July 2007; AusAID, answer to written question on notice 24, 25 July 2007.

12.23 AusAID follows the same guidelines as DFAT when recruiting civilians for overseas operations. It can 'enter into direct contract arrangements for the provision of technical advisers', and has a formal funding agreement with RedR Australia to provide technical experts to UN agencies. The deployments are usually 'of three to six months' duration but may be as short as a few weeks'. In the period July 2006–July 2007, there had been 55 such deployments.<sup>29</sup>

12.24 AusAID advised that training for contractors is outsourced. GRM International provides pre-deployment briefings to contracted personnel and suppliers 'as stipulated in AusAID's contract for the Provision of Services for Governance and Related Aid Activity in Solomon Islands'. AusAID stated that it monitors GRM's performance through quarterly milestones reporting and independent annual audits.<sup>30</sup>

### *Committee view*

12.25 The committee recognises the importance of ensuring that all Australian peacekeepers receive adequate training before they are deployed. It accepts that departments such as Treasury, that contribute only a small number of staff to peacekeeping operations, may not have the resources or expertise to train staff adequately for deployment. The committee is therefore concerned that officers from such departments may miss out on appropriate training opportunities.

12.26 In the committee's view, the current training programs for Australian public servants, apart from AusAID's RRT, could be better structured. To some extent, the existing lack of structure is understandable because specialists are being drawn from various departments to perform specific tasks. The committee believes that more could be done to coordinate the training programs for Commonwealth public servants in a peacekeeping operation.

12.27 Preparing officers engaged in capacity building to be effective teachers and trainers is one particular area that warrants close attention.

12.28 The committee also believes that contractors who undertake work on behalf of the Australian Government in a peacekeeping operation should be appropriately trained and prepared. Agencies that engage outside contractors still have responsibility for the conduct and behaviour of contractors. The committee believes that government agencies, as part of their due diligence and duty of care obligations, must ensure that any contractor performing work on behalf of the Commonwealth in a peacekeeping operation is fully equipped to do so.

### **Recommendation 11**

**12.29 The committee recommends that DFAT and AusAID jointly review the pre-deployment training arrangements for Commonwealth officers being**

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29 AusAID, answer to written question on notice 2, 25 July 2007.

30 AusAID, answer to written question on notice 8, 25 July 2007.

**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.**

## **Conclusion**

12.30 To this point, the committee has considered training from an individual agency perspective. The ADF, AFP and AusAID, in particular, have developed programs suited specifically for their officers, though AusAID has taken on a training function for other departments. The committee has also considered ADF and AFP interoperability. As the committee found with the ADF and the AFP, the various elements of a peacekeeping operation work best when they come together as an integrated whole. The following chapter looks at the approach taken by the Australian Government and its agencies to achieving this integration.