

Chapter 13

Coordinating Australia's contribution

13.1 Cooperation between agencies involved in a peacekeeping operation is critical to the success of a mission. Defence made clear that it understood the necessity for whole-of-government cooperation, explaining:

In recent years, a more whole-of-government approach to peace operations has developed. Such an approach necessitates a thorough understanding of the interrelated roles of all actors involved and methods to plan and implement a multifaceted campaign. The whole-of-government approach...whereby all relevant elements are coordinated at the strategic and operational level, maximises the efficacy of the resources made available.¹

13.2 In this chapter, the committee considers the existing mechanisms for the coordination of Australian peacekeeping operations. It also examines the structures that provide whole-of-government policy direction. The first section is concerned with planning and coordination at the strategic level. The second section focuses on operational considerations and preparedness, identifying how Australian peacekeepers can work together effectively as a coordinated and well-integrated whole.

Coordination—strategic level

13.3 The arrangements for coordinating and implementing Australia's contribution to peacekeeping operations are developed case by case and based on 'flexibility, responsiveness and reliability'. Ms Gillian Bird, DFAT, observed that 'We have well-established and well-tried structures to make decisions and to coordinate planning and implementation'.²

13.4 The following mechanisms are used to formulate whole-of-government policy and to coordinate Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations:

- the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSC) and the Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCONS) provide policy direction and development;
- the Strategic Policy Coordination Group (SPCG) at the deputy secretary level provides strategic oversight and direction across agencies; and
- standing interdepartmental committees (IDCs) address specific peacekeeping operation issues.³

1 *Submission 30*, p. 6.

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

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

13.5 As noted in Chapter 3, the NSC sets policy and is chaired by the Prime Minister. It sits at the highest level of government, convenes regularly, and meets on a daily basis, if required. The SPCG includes DFAT, PM&C and Defence as the core agencies.⁴ Although chaired by PM&C, any member of the committee may call a meeting if issues arise. The SPCG committee meets routinely on a monthly basis, and more frequently as required.⁵

13.6 The IDCs provide a whole-of-government framework for policy formulation and coordination of an individual peacekeeping operation. Whole-of-government working groups focussed on particular areas, such as a legal working group and security working group, come under the IDC. For example, with RAMSI, DFAT convenes an IDC that meets weekly.⁶ However, Australia's contribution in Timor-Leste is coordinated through the SPCG, which includes the AFP, A-G's and AusAID as well as the core agencies for discussions on East Timor.⁷ Major General Mike Smith commented that he was 'surprised that there was not an IDC or a real whole-of-government approach to the recent East Timor mission' as there was for RAMSI.⁸

13.7 In addition to specific whole-of-government fora, agencies have established other mechanisms for coordinating peacekeeping operations. For example, AusAID and ADF 'meet at head of agency/CDF level periodically for strategic and senior level discussions'. During a humanitarian crisis, the ADF places liaison officers with AusAID.⁹

13.8 Lt Gen Gillespie considered that the new Joint Operations Command Headquarters at Bungendore, near Queanbeyan, NSW, would improve whole-of-government planning and coordination:

Because of the way that our headquarters are constructed at the present time, the different capabilities that the headquarters can bring are in the different places. Whilst we can engage with other departments, we can't engage with them with all the toolsets there at one time. We will be able to do that in Bungendore. So situational awareness, intelligence, access to legal staff, the ability to take something from the joint operations level back to the strategic commitments/whole-of-government level will be vastly increased. Turnaround times will decrease. The duplication of effort and staffs will decrease dramatically.¹⁰

4 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 61.

5 Lt Gen Gillespie, *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, pp. 10–11.

6 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 3.

7 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 61.

8 *Committee Hansard*, 6 September 2007, p. 36.

9 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 85.

10 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July, pp. 2, 16.

13.9 In addition to the standing forums and facilities for coordinating peace operations, the committee received some examples of operation-specific coordination.

RAMSI

13.10 Individual operations have mechanisms for coordination on the ground. For example, RAMSI has a special coordinator, a DFAT officer, who has overall responsibility for the mission. In addition, the senior group involves an AusAID development coordinator, a senior AFP officer and a senior ADF officer. The group meets frequently to ensure 'total transparency of knowledge between them...so that the mission is in fact ready for contingencies that may be foreseen'.¹¹ RAMSI's Special Coordinator is also supported by a Deputy Special Coordinator from New Zealand, and an Assistant Special Coordinator from Fiji.¹²

13.11 In addition to thrice-weekly coordination meetings in Honiara, there is a weekly IDC meeting by telephone hook-up between the Office of the Special Coordinator and agencies in Canberra. The Special Coordinator's office also provides a weekly situation report. DFAT coordinates a six-monthly report to the NSC, with input from all agencies.¹³ Mr Alan March, AusAID, explained the information flow from Solomon Islands back to contributing agencies:

There is a whole-of-government structure in Honiara that captures this information, makes decisions and prioritises. Thereafter, there is a twin stream in which information then comes back to Canberra. It is through that whole-of-government reporting back to the whole-of-government structure here in Canberra and then separately through the line agencies...¹⁴

13.12 In an audit of the coordination of Australian government assistance to Solomon Islands, the ANAO concluded that the coordination arrangements between Australian government agencies were sound.¹⁵ The ANAO found that program objectives had been established for RAMSI, an evolutionary approach to strategic planning employed, a strategic approach to risk management adopted and arrangements put in place for regular whole-of-government reporting to the Australian Government.¹⁶

13.13 As noted earlier, this IDC approach is not used for Timor-Leste which is coordinated through the SPCG.

11 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 64.

12 DFAT, *Submission 15*, p. 9.

13 Mr Tim O'Brien, ANAO, *Committee Hansard*, 6 September 2007, p. 51.

14 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 77.

15 Mr John Meert, *Committee Hansard*, 6 September 2007, p. 52.

16 ANAO, Audit Report No. 47 2006–07, *Coordination of Australian Government Assistance to Solomon Islands, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Australian Agency for International Development*, p. 13.

Peace Operations Working Group and other contacts

13.14 DFAT also informed the committee about the Peace Operations Working Group which looks at peacekeeping operations more thematically. It is an informal working group chaired by DFAT, with members from Defence, AFP, AusAID and A-G's. The group was formed in 1995 and meets as required, generally 'a few times a year'. Mr Michael Potts, DFAT, described three main aims of the Peace Operations Working Group:

Firstly, its objective is information sharing...Secondly, it is a very useful clearing house...to look at how peacekeeping is likely to figure on the [General Assembly] agenda for this year. Thirdly, it provides the opportunity for new initiatives, to look at, for example, what we might want to do with the Peacebuilding Commission and so on.¹⁷

13.15 Agencies also maintain informal dialogue with each other. For example, the AEC liaises with other agencies regarding countries in which it has long-term interest; and it is frequently consulted on election-related matters and governance issues. Outside Australia, AEC staff maintain contact with Australian embassies and high commissions. The AEC observed that it has 'invariably received strong support from them'.¹⁸

Adequacy of existing arrangements

13.16 The Government of Canada advised the committee that it has adopted a whole-of-government approach to peace operations and has established a specific bureau for this purpose.¹⁹ In Australia, government departments and agencies did not see the need for a specialised coordination group; they were satisfied with existing arrangements.²⁰ AusAID noted, however, that these arrangements have a 'high transaction cost' as agencies have to invest senior and experienced people in the process. It added that some agencies have had to strengthen their 'senior level staffing profile to be able to engage in this'. Nevertheless, AusAID considered that 'It is certainly an acceptable cost, and it is certainly a cost that is far outweighed by the dividends of having a more joined up approach'.²¹

13.17 In reference to RAMSI, DFAT noted the 'intensity and complexity' of managing whole-of-government planning and implementation, observing the

17 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 62. DFAT noted that the working group discusses a range of peacekeeping policy issues including the work of the UN's Special Committee on Peacekeeping (C34) and regional capacity-building initiatives. See DFAT, answer to written question on notice 5, 25 July 2007..

18 *Submission 21*, p. 14.

19 *Submission 37*, p. 6.

20 See for example, DFAT, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 61; AFP, answer to question on notice 10, 25 July 2007; AEC, *Submission 21*, p. 14.

21 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, pp. 81–82.

importance of devoting sufficient resources to the coordination task.²² It was satisfied that the development of the IDG and engagement between the agencies provides the capabilities that Australia needs for the kinds of operations it is involved in.²³ AusAID considered that such costs would mitigate over time as agencies 'get intuitively more involved with aligning our systems and the areas of overlap become much more clearly understood at all levels in agencies'.²⁴

Committee view

13.18 The committee notes the formal mechanisms that exist to coordinate the Australian Government's contribution to peacekeeping operations at a strategic level. Evidence suggested that government agencies are satisfied with current arrangements.

13.19 The committee accepts the argument that flexibility is needed when coordinating arrangements for peacekeeping operations to enable appropriate responses to the circumstances of each mission. It would be interested in the findings of a comparative study into the effectiveness of the approach taken for RAMSI with the establishment of an IDC and that for East Timor where coordination is managed through the SPCG. The committee believes that there are important lessons to be learnt from such review and analysis.

Recommendation 12

13.20 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.

13.21 In Chapter 14, the committee considers how these mechanisms relate to those outside government, and in particular, the extent to which NGOs understand and engage with the process.

Coordination—operational level

13.22 Having considered the whole-of-government arrangements for managing peacekeeping operations, the committee now examines how effectively Australian government agencies work at an operational level. Although the committee has already discussed ADF–AFP interoperability, it considers them here within a whole-of-government context.

13.23 With the increasing number of civilian personnel engaged in peacekeeping, greater attention has been given to the importance of whole-of-government

22 *Submission 15*, p. 9.

23 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 64.

24 Mr Alan March, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 82.

cooperation.²⁵ Dr Bob Breen, ANU, noted that Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, was significant in this regard. This was the first time that diplomats were involved at an operational, tactical level. It was also the first time that civilian peace monitors were engaged in an operation:

Mixing those groups in and getting them to work cohesively with the military marks the first attempt by a number of agencies to take a more than crisis time interest in longer term commitments to work together to get an effect on the ground.²⁶

13.24 The findings of an ANAO report on the coordination of Australian government assistance to Solomon Islands illustrated the importance of government agencies working together. The report identified some deficiencies in coordination on the ground when the security situation deteriorated rapidly in April 2006. It found that while some civilian members of RAMSI were well informed about developments during the riots, others were not.²⁷ DFAT advised the committee that a broad 'lessons learned' exercise had been undertaken following the riots and, as a result, RAMSI had 'strengthened security, including establishing clear lines of communication in Honiara'. Some of the changes put in place included the launch of a security website to provide information to personnel and the development of a new civilian security plan, including regular threat and risk assessments.²⁸

13.25 The experiences in Honiara in 2006 underscore the fact that peacekeeping operations may occur in volatile environments, where temporary flare-ups of violence and breakdowns in law and order test the effectiveness of the interoperability of all relevant government agencies. With the involvement of civilians from a range of agencies, it is essential that basic information about personnel, such as knowing their location, is available through a central register and reliable communication networks are in place and efficiently managed.

13.26 DFAT also advised the committee that coordination had been further improved in light of RAMSI's response to the tsunami that caused widespread destruction in Solomon Islands in April 2007, with all RAMSI civilians required 'to enter their current and planned movements on to the RAMSI Civilian Security website'.²⁹

25 See for example, Department of Defence, *Submission 30*, p. 6.

26 *Committee Hansard*, 5 September 2007, p. 46.

27 *Committee Hansard*, 6 September 2007, p. 52.

28 DFAT, answer to written question on notice 6, 24 July 2007.

29 DFAT, answer to written question on notice 6, 24 July 2007.

Coordination—preparedness

13.27 Administrative tools such as clear lines of communication are essential to achieving coordination between all components of a peacekeeping operation. But a shared understanding of the government's objectives in the mission, of the roles and functions of participating agencies and how their contribution forms part of an integrated mission is also important. For example, Defence noted:

In recent years a more whole-of-government approach to peace operations has developed. Such an approach necessitates a thorough understanding of the interrelated roles of all actors involved and methods to plan and implement a multifaceted campaign.³⁰

13.28 Furthermore, Defence expected that peacekeeping operations would continue 'to evolve as a strategic tool for the resolution of conflict' and that such operations 'will contribute to, and are coordinated with, a whole-of-government approach'.³¹

13.29 Agencies should have a common understanding of a range of important matters such as the legal aspects of a peacekeeping operation and their implications for Australians participating in the mission. For example, the Australian Red Cross suggested that joint training must include a detailed explanation of the legal framework within which the operations are undertaken. In its view, training needs to include, as a minimum, the relevant UN or bilateral agreements covering such operations and the underlying international legal framework—in particular international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Training should also include clear guidance as to the application of Australian domestic law, including criminal law.³²

13.30 Studies indicate that joint pre-deployment training provides the platform for a successful deployment. The Folke Bernadotte Academy, a Swedish Government initiative with a particular focus on peace operations, has noted that 'There is a critical need for participants in peace operations to train together' prior to the deployment, instead of meeting for the first time on location. It has stated:

The earlier in one's education and training that one is exposed to the often different views of other disciplines, the more readily one can adapt to the needs of cooperative work in the field.³³

30 *Submission 30*, p. 6.

31 *Submission 30*, p. 3.

32 Australian Red Cross, *Submission 22*, pp. 3–4.

33 Challenges Project, *Meeting the Challenges of Peace Operations: Cooperation and Coordination*, Elanders Gotab, Stockholm, 2005, p. 124, <http://www.folkebernadotteacademy.se/roach/images/pdf/challenges.pdf> (accessed 14 November 2007).

13.31 The committee now considers the measures taken by the Australian Government and its agencies to achieve an effective whole-of-government operation through pre-deployment training and preparation.

Staff secondments

13.32 As noted in Chapter 11, the AFP second officers to various Defence establishments. Several departments also second staff to other departments to improve the links between their organisations, increase their knowledge and understanding of each other's work and to encourage more comprehensive and cohesive input to peacekeeping operations. AusAID explained that it provides a seconded liaison officer to the IDG to assist in the coordination of duties/projects of mutual interest to both agencies. It said:

In line with these responsibilities, the AusAID liaison officer provides assistance in the development and design phase of the IDG's current Capacity Development training program. The AusAID liaison officer continues to provide ongoing advice to IDG and contributes to all relevant IDG training/course components, particularly in areas of capacity building and practice. This officer also delivers briefings to all IDG pre-deployment training courses to provide a broad overview of AusAID, its mandate and the development projects in which it is involved.³⁴

13.33 The AFP appreciates the benefits that derive from the exchange of personnel and reciprocates by placing officers within AusAID. Assistant Commissioner Walters described the strong strategic partnership between AFP and AusAID:

The linkage from peace, stability and development to security and the rule of law is well known. The AFP's relationship with AusAID in preparing and implementing police and law and justice programs in pre and postconflict environments grows. We have staff members embedded in AusAID's Fragile States Unit and the Office of Development Effectiveness and we benefit from having an AusAID liaison officer attached to the International Deployment Group.³⁵

13.34 A number of other agencies also second officers to AusAID, particularly to the Fragile States Unit.³⁶

AusAID's Fragile States Unit

13.35 AusAID's Fragile States Unit (FSU) was formed in 2005 to analyse international and regional experiences in relation to vulnerable states, particularly

34 AusAID, answer to question on notice 1, 25 July 2007.

35 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 3.

36 It has been renamed the Fragile States and Peace-building Unit(FSP).

those in Australia's region.³⁷ It was conceptualised at the outset as an inter-agency unit, recognising the need for an integrated approach to fragile states.³⁸

13.36 Both the AFP and Treasury have officers placed within the FSU. Defence does not currently have personnel seconded to the FSU but stated that it would consider assigning an officer for 2008.³⁹

13.37 Mr March, AusAID, considered that one of the greatest strengths of the FSU is the improvement in inter-agency understanding and the approach it fosters:

I think strengths are...that we bring from Treasury, AFP and, in the past, from Defence, their perspective into our thinking, planning and conceptualisation of how we are preparing activities and thinking about providing advice to other programmatic areas in AusAID.⁴⁰

13.38 The advantages flow both ways. Ms Alison Chartres, Director of the FSU, commented that officers seconded to unit:

...take the knowledge that they are gaining from the unit and AusAID staff that they are working with in our building back into Treasury. So they have regular meetings back with Treasury and AFP. They report back, they share the experiences that they are accessing through our international work and our regional reviews that we are undertaking.⁴¹

13.39 Overall, secondments bring agencies closer together, increase the level of mutual understanding and help to build a body of expertise that cuts across agencies. They pay dividends when such officers are deployed because much of the ground work for cooperation and coordination between these agencies has already been done.

Joint training

13.40 Some agencies use training to improve understanding between agencies, increase people-to-people links across agencies and enhance the whole-of-government approach to peacekeeping operations. In particular, AusAID has taken on a role training personnel from other government agencies. The FSU not only conducts applied research work and actively encourages other agencies to place personnel in the unit, but it also contributes to inter-agency coordination through training programs and pre-deployment briefings. Mr Alan March explained:

This group here plus officers who work with us would on a regular basis provide briefing to Australian Defence Force and the Australian Federal

37 AusAID, *Submission 26*, p. 8.

38 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 79.

39 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 75; Defence, answer to a question on notice W7, 24 July 2007.

40 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 76.

41 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 76.

Police. In general, it is command and staff college courses on issues as diverse as state fragility, humanitarian response and humanitarian law, peace conflict issues, gender issues, but up to and including briefing rotations of AFP staff and ADF staff who are about to deploy to a theatre for a particular activity.⁴²

13.41 In 2003, AusAID established a Peace Conflict and Humanitarian Adviser position to provide training for peacekeepers, civilian police and humanitarian workers.⁴³ The position develops capacity-building tools and training and oversees a 'modularised' training package on peace and conflict concepts and terminology. According to AusAID, its intention is to expand the package to comprise thematic issues such as gender and peacebuilding, and continue delivering it to other government and non-government agencies.⁴⁴

13.42 AusAID noted that it has a large role in the design of the two-day humanitarian segment of the International Peace Operations Seminar (IPOS).⁴⁵ IPOS gives AusAID an opportunity to present its view on coordination, namely, that 'we can work with the ADF in this busy battle space with both of us doing our core capabilities—but having a much better understanding of where we overlap—and improving that work'.⁴⁶ AusAID Operations Support Unit has briefed DFAT and other public service employees in RAMSI on peace, conflict and development issues.⁴⁷

13.43 The ADF offers a number of opportunities for personnel from other government agencies to attend its pre-deployment courses. According to Defence, the 39th Personnel Support Battalion has trained representatives from agencies such as AFP, DFAT, Customs and Immigration. Participants from other agencies have also attended and given presentations at IPOS. According to the Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA), agencies such as DFAT have also been involved in Defence's Mission Rehearsal Exercises (see paragraph 9.24).

13.44 The AEC provides training for Australian government agencies regarding electoral matters. It has collaborated with the ADF and contributed to IPOS since 1994.⁴⁸ The AEC noted:

In the last two years they (ADF) had major exercises going where they were simulating peace operations with an electoral dimension and we went

42 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 81.

43 *Submission 26*, pp. 3, 17.

44 *Submission 26*, p. 7; AusAID, answer to written question on notice 4a, 25 July 2007.

45 Mr Steve Darvill, AusAID, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 84.

46 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, pp. 83–84.

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

48 *Committee Hansard*, 5 September 2007, p. 18.

along for a week each time to provide input into that exercise to try to make it more realistic for the military officers who were doing that work.⁴⁹

13.45 The AEC has not been involved in the AFP's IDG training courses. Mr Maley explained that in Solomon Islands, the AEC would work through its contacts in the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission, whose role it would be to coordinate election security with police authorities. He also commented:

I suspect the IDG has been focused very much on the sort of emergency end of the deployments in a case like Timor or the Solomons and that normally electoral processes are not going to arise in that sort of environment until things have calmed down very considerably.⁵⁰

13.46 The committee notes that the IDG's role has extended well beyond initial emergency response to longer-term institution and capacity building. The committee suggests it would be worthwhile for the AEC and AFP to consider opportunities for AEC contribution to the IDG pre-deployment training.

Adequacy of training

13.47 While commending the efforts of departments to improve their understanding and cooperation, some submitters concluded that more could be done. World Vision Australia endorsed the secondments so far undertaken between government agencies, but saw scope for significantly increased exchanges of information, training and staff between key departments.⁵¹ Further, Major General Ford asserted:

...there is considerable ignorance concerning the complexity of peacekeeping operations in many components of the ADF. In particular, our military leadership could work more closely with AFP leadership and DFAT at developing expertise in combined approaches to international and regional security initiatives.⁵²

13.48 AusAID was of the view that 'Australia's whole-of-government approach is seen as international best practice'. Even so, it believed that there was room for improvement in planning and preparation for peacekeeping operations across military and civilian elements, 'Where gains can be made is on systems alignment and joint doctrine and policy approaches'.⁵³

13.49 Assistant Commissioner Walters also thought that the experience of agencies beyond the security sector could be further utilised:

49 Mr Michael Maley, *Committee Hansard*, 5 September 2007, p. 18. See also *Submission 21*, p. 14.

50 *Committee Hansard*, 5 September 2007, p. 20.

51 World Vision Australia, *Submission 19*, p. 6.

52 *Submission 4*, p. 2.

53 Mr Alan March, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 73.

I think that to date we have done a reasonable job from a whole-of-government perspective on trying to anticipate the challenges and other developments, particularly in the arc of instability and particularly in our region. I think there are opportunities for us to garner the experience and resources of other institutions to help inform that body of work. Whilst the AFP and the ADF have been working closely together and will enhance that level of work, we will also bring the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and AusAID—who also have extensive experience in offshore missions and other activities—into the picture to try and inform that bigger picture. I think it has been working well to date, but there are opportunities that we can exploit by having broader engagement.⁵⁴

13.50 Major General Ford advocated a 'combined military, police and DFAT approach to training leaders who are prepared to command Australian contingents in peace operations'. He pointed to the need for a coherent whole-of-government approach that 'both studies and teaches an integrated Australian approach to peacekeeping and peace-building'.⁵⁵ To this end, he argued for a dedicated national peacekeeping facility staffed by civil, military and police experts.

13.51 Similarly, Austcare commented that 'Australia's impressive record of contributing to peacekeeping operations notwithstanding...more needs to be done to coordinate "whole-of-government" and "whole-of-nation" effectiveness'. Austcare also argued that part of the solution lies in the formation of an independent national institute.⁵⁶

13.52 Associate Professor Elsin Wainwright considered that the 'linkages between all the agencies are pretty good on a world scale', but saw merit in a centralised institutional capacity focused on aspects of peace building that are not directly security related, such as democracy, finance and economics. She considered that one possible avenue would be to expand the SFU within AusAID.⁵⁷

13.53 It may be that a central agency is required to promote a whole-of-government strategy to peacekeeping involving not only training but a whole range of activities including the development of doctrine and the evaluation of programs. This proposal is considered in detail in Chapter 25.

Committee view

13.54 The committee recognises the important role that joint training or combined courses have in preparing Australian peacekeepers for deployment. The committee is encouraged by the efforts of key agencies to improve their understanding of each

54 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 34.

55 *Submission 4*, p. 2.

56 *Submission 11*, p. 15.

57 *Committee Hansard*, 20 August 2007, p. 9.

other's roles and methods of operation. It believes, however, that activities such as secondments and joint training do not yet form part of a whole-of-government strategy. It appears that activities geared toward improving coordination currently rely on the motivation of individual agencies. The committee commends the AFP for its initiative in seconding officers to other departments and its willingness to form what it terms 'interdepartmental partnerships'. The committee recognises that AusAID is similarly keen to take on an active role in interagency training and notes the role that the Fragile States Unit may play in this regard.

13.55 The committee is also pleased that Defence is making places available for AFP and other government agency personnel in its training courses and encourages it to continue these efforts. However, it considers that Defence has been somewhat more active in creating opportunities for other agencies within its structures than it has been in placing its own personnel within other agencies. The committee sees significant benefit in key departments having a sound appreciation of each other's role, approach and procedures. It urges them, particularly Defence and DFAT, to seek opportunities to place their staff with other departments.

Conclusion

13.56 Overall, the committee is of the view that if Australia is to achieve an effective whole-of-government training framework, it must begin by finding a way to integrate the separate training programs and *ad hoc* courses into a coherent whole. While allowing agencies to continue to train their personnel for their specific functions, this whole-of-government approach would avoid duplication, identify and rectify gaps in training and promote better cooperation and coordination among all participants in the field. A central agency is required to provide overarching strategic guidance and planning that would give coherence to the agencies' individual and joint education and training programs.

13.57 In the next chapter, the committee looks at the role of non-government organisations (NGOs) and their pre-deployment training.