



# about Australia

## Defence and security

- Australia works closely with other countries to promote security in the Asia–Pacific region and further afield.

Australia's defence and security policy has many dimensions and comprises a number of complementary elements—strong alliances and bilateral relationships, a versatile military capability, and emphasis on regional cooperation. Australia has a multifaceted response to security challenges such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and weak and failing states, involving a wide range of agencies. These agencies include the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT); the Department of Defence; the Australian Federal Police (AFP); state law enforcement agencies; intelligence, border control and financial intelligence bodies; the Australian Customs Service; and the Office of Transport Security.

### Defending Australia's national interests

The mission of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) is to defend Australia and its national interests. The ADF comprises three armed services: the Australian Army, the Royal Australian Air Force and the Royal Australian Navy. In June 2007, there were more than 51 500 permanent full time members of the ADF and over 19 500 reservists. Defence's average staffing level in 2006–07 (including civilian and military) was about 85 500. The Department of Defence received a budget allocation of \$22 billion for 2007–08 and the ADF's total assets at June 2007 were worth over \$58 billion.

In response to the complexities of the global environment, the ADF is making the necessary investments in capabilities required to respond to a broad range of contingencies including threats such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and to the challenges posed by fragile and vulnerable states in our region.

The ADF has four strategic tasks that guide the development of its military capabilities. These are:

- ensuring the defence of Australia
- contributing to the security of Australia's immediate neighbourhood
- supporting wider interests by contributing to international coalitions to meet crises beyond Australia's immediate neighbourhood
- undertaking peacetime national tasks that support wider Australian interests.

### Engagement on security issues

In addition to its longstanding bilateral defence and security links with countries in the region, Australia is also expanding bilateral, regional and multilateral links, including dialogues on a range of non-military issues such as pandemics, counter-narcotics, transnational crime and counter-terrorism.

The enduring relationship between the United States and Australia is highly valued as are our growing ties with the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Indonesia and Japan in pursuing common strategic and defence interests, particularly in countering global and regional terrorist threats.

Australia enjoys close and productive relations with China and India. We have valuable longstanding defence ties with Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea, and are developing further ties with many other countries in the Asia-Pacific.

## Terrorism and the new strategic landscape

The strategic landscape in Australia and the world has changed radically in recent years, with the threat of terrorism and concerns about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction becoming increasingly prominent.

The Australian Government's response to terrorism has been decisive and wide ranging with the aim of protecting Australians and Australian interests both at home and overseas.

The Australian Government works closely with state, territory, and local governments, as well as the private sector and the community, in building an effective, nation-wide counter-terrorism capability, and by contributing to regional and global efforts to counter-terrorism.

Over a dozen Australian agencies are involved in counter-terrorism capacity building efforts in the region, with key areas including law enforcement, intelligence, border control and transport security, defence, counter-terrorist financing and anti-money laundering, legal training and emergency response.

## Current international operations

In June 2008, up to 3500 Australian Defence Force personnel and 350 Australian Federal Police personnel were deployed on operations overseas to protect Australia and its national interests. In addition, up to 450 ADF personnel were deployed to conduct maritime protection operations in Australia's Economic Exclusion Zone.

Current operational deployments include:

- maritime, air and logistics support for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Iraq
- at the request of the Government of East Timor, assistance in the restoration of peace and stability to East Timor
- Operation Slipper, the ADF contribution to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. This operation is an important component of the Australian Government's commitment to working together with the international community to help prevent acts of terrorism around the world
- the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) to assist the Solomon Islands Government in restoring law and order, economic governance, and improving the machinery of government.

## Support for international peacekeeping

The ADF has made many contributions to world peace by serving in combat operations and acting as UN and multinational peacekeepers and observers.

- Australia's post-war peacekeeping role began in 1947 when it was asked

by the United Nations to provide four observers to join the UN Commission for Indonesia during Indonesia's struggle for independence from the Netherlands.

Reflecting Australia's tradition of good global citizenship, Australia's contributions to peacekeeping have not been restricted to our region. Since our first peacekeeping operation in 1947, Australia has made contributions to UN and multilateral peacekeeping operations in Africa, Europe, Central America, the Caribbean, the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region.

For further details on Australian contributions to UN and other multilateral peacekeeping efforts see the fact sheet, *Peacekeeping and other related peace operations*.

## Defence and science

Australia's Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) ensures the expert, impartial and innovative application of science and technology to the defence of Australia and its national interests. The organisation's research supports the ADF by investigating future technologies, providing smart buying advice, developing new capabilities, increasing performance and safety, and reducing costs.

## Defence and industry

The Australian Government is committed to building a sustainable in-country defence industry that can support a technologically advanced ADF. The primary goal of defence industry policy is to ensure the cost-effective delivery of equipment and support to the ADF in line with Australia's strategic circumstances.

Throughout Australia, an estimated 19 000 people are employed in the defence

industry, particularly in the aerospace, naval shipbuilding and repair, electronics and land vehicles sectors.

Australian companies, including many internationally competitive small and medium-sized enterprises with advanced technologies, are winning work in this international program and entering the global aerospace market.

## 2008 Defence White Paper

In February 2008, the Australian Government announced the commissioning of a new Defence White Paper. This document will be the blueprint for Australia's future defence. It will examine Australia's strategic environment and priorities, and determine the size, capacity and shape of Australia's Defence Forces for the next 20 years and beyond.

## Further information

Department of Defence  
[www.defence.gov.au](http://www.defence.gov.au)

The Defence White Paper  
[www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper](http://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper)

Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO)  
[www.dsto.defence.gov.au](http://www.dsto.defence.gov.au)

Australia Army  
[www.army.gov.au](http://www.army.gov.au)

Royal Australian Air Force  
[www.raaf.gov.au](http://www.raaf.gov.au)

Royal Australian Navy  
[www.navy.gov.au](http://www.navy.gov.au)

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