

HON JUDITH COLLINS, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Defence Ministers' Meeting

2024

This publication provides the briefing pack to support the Minister of Defence's participation in the 2024 Defence Ministers' Meeting. The Defence Ministers' Meeting is a formal annual meeting as part of the Australia-New Zealand Defence Dialogue Architecture.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- *Australia-New Zealand Defence Ministers' Meeting Briefing Document*

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: www.defence.govt.nz/publications.

It has been necessary to withhold certain information in accordance with the following provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. Where information is withheld, the relevant sections of the Act are indicated in the body of the document. Where information has been withheld in accordance with section 9(2) of the Act, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Information is withheld where making it available would be likely to prejudice:

- the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand [section 6(a)]
- the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on the basis of confidence by the Government of any other country [section 6(b)(i)].

Information is also withheld in order to:

- maintain the constitutional conventions for the timing being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials [section 9(2)(f)(iv)]
- maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any department or organisation in the course of their duty [section 9(2)(g)(i)]
- enable a Minister of the Crown or any department or organisation holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations [section 9(2)(j)].

AUSTRALIA–NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE MINISTERS’ MEETING

Briefing Document

31 January – 1 February 2024

Melbourne, Australia



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TAB ONE: OVERVIEW

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Overview and Objectives

You will travel to Melbourne, Australia to meet with your Defence Ministerial counterpart, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Hon Richard Marles, and take part in the Defence Ministers' Meeting (DMM). You will also meet with Foreign Minister Hon Penny Wong, alongside Deputy Prime Minister Rt Hon Winston Peters as part of the ANZMIN meeting. This will be your second formal engagement with DPM Marles, following your attendance at the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting in December 2023.

The Importance of the Defence Ministers' Meeting

The Defence Ministers' Meeting (DMM) is a formal annual meeting as part of the Australia-New Zealand Defence Dialogue Architecture. This meeting provides a valuable opportunity for you to have an in-depth discussion across a range of defence areas with DPM Marles, in advance of the ANZMIN meeting with Defence and Foreign Affairs Ministers.

It is an opportune time for you to raise the defence issues most pertinent to the Australia-New Zealand Defence relationship, and to determine the priorities for the relationship moving forward.

s6(a)

Agenda

The agenda has five key thematic areas:

1. Geostrategic settings and strategy (Australia lead)

s6(a)

3. Interoperability (Australia lead)
4. The Alliance (New Zealand lead)
5. Updating the Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations (Australia lead)

The key thematic areas from the DMM such as capability and deterrence, the Alliance, s6(a) will also be discussed with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs during the ANZMIN meeting. This is an opportunity for you and DPM Marles to reflect back your discussions to the wider Ministerial grouping from a defence perspective.

s6(a)

Key Objectives for New Zealand

There are five key objectives New Zealand is seeking to achieve from this meeting:

1. To share New Zealand's approach to deterrence:

s6(a)

s6(a)

- Support Australia's proposal for the Pacific Response Group (PRG), s6(a)

s6(a)

3. To discuss how we can improve interoperability:

- Share our early assessment of how we can increase interoperability with Australia.
- Seek views from Australia on how they are readying themselves for AUKUS Pillar Two.
- Affirm the complementary nature of our respective Defence industries, and commit to ensuring easy market access on both sides of the Tasman for Australian and New Zealand companies.

4. To commit to the Alliance at a political level:

- Reaffirm New Zealand's enduring commitment to the Trans-Tasman Alliance.

s6(a)

5. To agree on a process to update the Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations:

- To agree on key themes for an updated Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations.
- Agree a timeframe for delivery of the updated Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations.

Delegation

From Defence, you will be accompanied by:

- Air Marshal Kevin Short (Chief of Defence Force)
- Andrew Bridgman (Secretary of Defence)
- s9(2)(g)(i) (Director – Pacific, Ministry of Defence)
- s9(2)(g)(i) (Private Secretary, Defence)
- s9(2)(g)(i) (Intermediate Analyst – Australia, Ministry of Defence)
- Wing Commander s9(2)(g)(i) (Personal Staff Officer to CDF).

Agenda

Defence Ministers' Meeting Agenda
Melbourne, 1 February 2024

Timing	Agenda Item	Lead
5m	Opening remarks	AUS
20m	Session One – Geostrategic settings and strategy s6(a) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deterrence networks and the prevention of conflict. Shape and dynamic of future conflict 	AUS
s6(a)		
20m	Session Three – Increasing Interoperability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pathways for increased interoperability (exercises, contingency planning, capability investment, personnel exchanges). Defence industry integration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced technology 	AUS
15m	Session Four – Strengthening the Alliance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building a more robust Alliance in the contemporary strategic environment s6(a)	NZ
5m	Session 5 – Update the Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree to update the Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations. 	AUS
5m	Closing remarks	NZ

TAB TWO: ANNOTATED AGENDA

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Opening Remarks

Lead: Australia

Key messages

- Thank you for hosting this meeting in Australia.
- I'm looking forward to our discussions this morning, and continuing a wider discussion with Foreign Minister Wong and DPM Peters later today.
- I want to stress that Australia is New Zealand's most important defence and security partner, and that the health of the partnership matters to us deeply.
- I want the conversation today to be a free and frank exchange, to support consideration of how we ensure our Alliance is strengthened against the backdrop of heightened strategic tension, in an increasingly contested geostrategic environment.
- While we have a relationship where we can be frank with each other, we will always seek to reinforce the closeness and importance of New Zealand and Australia's relationship in public.
- Today's meeting is an opportunity to discuss some of the key issues that we're currently seeing across our region and globally; and to seek ways in which we can better address these issues collectively.

s6(a)

- We are also aware of the threat that geostrategic competition poses to the stability and security of our region, and globally.

s6(a)

s9(2)(g)(i)

- We are keen to discuss how we can better work with the Pacific to improve regional resilience and security. New Zealand considers open communication and consultation with Pacific nations as imperative to the success of any regional-wide initiative.

Lead: Australia

Key objectives

s6(a)

s6(a)

Key points – Geopolitics

s6(a)

- New Zealand is committed to working with Australia to address these challenges to our shared interests, [redacted] s6(a)
- A range of tools are required to respond to, and seek to mitigate, these challenges.

Taiwan

- New Zealand welcomed the successful conclusion of Presidential elections in Taiwan on 13 January. [redacted] s6(a)

- New Zealand has a strong interest in the maintenance of the status quo: of peaceful s6(a) [redacted] coexistence between mainland China and Taiwan.

s6(a)

s6(a)

s6(a)

South China Sea

s6(a)

- New Zealand regularly undertakes freedom of navigation and overflight operations in support of UNCLOS, s6(a) [redacted]

s6(a)

Key points – Deterrence

- Deterrence is a key element of New Zealand's national security and defence policy settings.

s6(a)

s6(a)

- New Zealand also deploys s6(a) [redacted] further afield, including presence patrols in the South China Sea and our deployments in support of the sanctions monitoring operation for North Korea. These deployments underline the depth and breadth of global interests, s6(a) [redacted]

s6(a)

s6(a)

s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a)

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s6(a)

Lead: New Zealand

Key objectives

- [redacted] s6(a)
- Support Australia's proposal for the Pacific Response Group, [redacted] s6(a)
- [redacted] s6(a)

[redacted] s6(a)

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s6(a)

Pacific Response Group

- New Zealand supports the idea of a Pacific regional response mechanism to respond to adverse events in the region. This would emphasise the region's ability to meet its own security needs, and responds to the calls of Pacific Island Forum (PIF) leaders for the development of a regional response mechanism.

s6(a)

- The New Zealand Army has recently established the Pacific Small Armies Forum. This Forum, working with land forces from Papua New Guinea (PNG), Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu and Timor-Leste, [REDACTED]

s6(a)

s6(a)

s6(a)

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Lead: Australia

Key objectives

- Discuss how we can increase interoperability with Australia.
- Seek views from Australia on how they are readying themselves for AUKUS Pillar Two.
- Affirm the complementary nature of our respective Defence industries, and commit to ensuring easy market access on both sides of the Tasman for Australian and New Zealand companies.

s6(a)

Key points

People

- From a personnel perspective, we are interoperable. Our people can move between the New Zealand and Australian civilian and military organisations interchangeably and we routinely do this.

s6(a)

Capability

- This government is keen to collaborate with our partners, especially Australia, in capability development and investment wherever it makes sense.
- Given the timing of our own fleet replacement, we are particularly interested in Australia's plans for your naval fleet configuration.

s6(a)

s6(a)

[Redacted]

- We are also keen to align capabilities in the land domain to ensure interoperability, such as through our procurement of Bushmaster protected vehicles.

AUKUS Pillar Two

[Handling note: this will be discussed in further detail in the ANZMIN meeting this afternoon]

- AUKUS Pillar Two is a possible avenue for greater interoperability between New Zealand and Australia.

[Redacted] s6(b)(i)

[Redacted] s9(2)(g)(i)

[Redacted] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Defence Industry Integration

[Redacted] s9(2)(f)(iv)

[Redacted] s6(a)

- Under Closer Economic Relations and Closer Defence Relations, the Trans-Tasman Defence market is an exemplar to others of what industrial cooperation in Defence can look like. [Redacted] s6(a)

[Redacted]

- With this in mind, I am keen that we continue to work together to remove any barriers of entry, real or perceived, to Australian and New Zealand companies in our respective markets.

[Redacted] s6(a)

[Redacted]

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Session Four: The Alliance

[Handling note: the Alliance is also on the agenda for the ANZMIN 2+2 meeting. This agenda item provides the opportunity to have a Defence-focused discussion, before wider discussion with Foreign Affairs Ministers]

Lead: New Zealand

Key objectives

- Affirm New Zealand's enduring commitment to the Trans-Tasman Alliance.

s6(a)

s6(a)

Key messages

- The Alliance relationship between New Zealand and Australia is fundamental to the overall bilateral relationship, and to New Zealand's national security. We take our obligations under it extremely seriously.
- New Zealand's strong commitment to the core obligations of the Alliance are:
 1. To maintain and develop individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack;
 2. To consult together when territorial integrity, political independence or security is threatened; and
 3. To "act to meet the common danger" in the event of an armed attack on Australia at home or in the Pacific.
- Both countries derive significant value from having a formal Alliance that goes beyond defence. In particular our Alliance has enabled and amplified our contributions to collective security efforts particularly in the Pacific, but also further afield such as in the Middle East.

s6(a)

s6(a)

s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a)

- As part of our commitment to the Alliance, New Zealand is keen to continue to work closely with Australia and other key partners s6(a)

s6(a)

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Session Five: Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations (CDR)

[Handling note: The Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations was agreed to be reviewed at least every two years. A comprehensive review has not taken place since the previous Joint Statement was released in 2018]

Lead: Australia

Key objectives

- Agree on key themes for an updated Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations.
- Agree a timeframe for delivery of the updated Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations.

s6(a)

Key points

- There is a need to update the CDR to ensure it takes into context our shared heightened geostrategic environment. [redacted] s6(a)

s6(a)

- Broadly following the themes of today's discussion; geostrategic settings, the Alliance in a modern context, our work in the Pacific, capability and interoperability seem sensible areas to include in the updated CDR.

s9(2)(g)(i)

Closing Remarks

Lead: New Zealand

Key messages

- This has been an immensely valuable discussion, and I'm glad we've been able to discuss some of the most pressing security issues facing our region.
- I hope that you have assurance that New Zealand highly values our partnership with Australia in the defence space. As I've underscored, New Zealand takes our alliance responsibilities seriously.

s6(a)

- I look forward to developing even better coordinated regional response plans to address common strategic objectives.

s6(a)

- I'm looking forward to continuing these discussions with our Foreign Affairs counterparts. This will be a great opportunity to consider in more detail the way in which we can both s6(a) support a sovereign, resilient Pacific.
- *[Handling note: you may wish to share any additional reflections from the meeting]*

TAB THREE: BACKGROUND BRIEFS

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Defence relationship with Australia

Engagement with Australia

Our defence relationship, under the 'Australia – New Zealand Defence Dialogue Architecture' (see below) is characterised by a series of formal engagements between Ministers and defence officials from Chief Executive level down.

s6(a)



Bilateral Defence Relationship

2. Australia is New Zealand's only formal defence ally and our most important international security partner. New Zealand and Australia's security is inextricably linked to one another.

s6(a)

s6(a)

4. Our defence relationship is wide and deep. We work closely together at all levels across the strategic, operational, and tactical domains—both regionally and globally—through extensive policy consultation, information-sharing, secondments, training, and deployments.

s6(a)

6. Together, we advocate for Pacific-led approaches to Pacific challenges. The deployment of NZDF personnel

to the Solomon Islands International Assistance Force alongside Australian, Fijian and Papua New Guinea personnel under the Solomon Islands-Australia Bilateral Security Treaty, is a testament to our joint approach.

s6(a)

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Australian Defence Overview

Defence Budget overview

Defence budget:	A\$52.558 billion, 2.05% of GDP.
Military personnel:	Total – 59,095 Navy – 15,027 Army – 29,627 Air Force – 14,441
Common military platforms:	ANZAC-Class frigate, P-8A Poseidon (future), Super King Air B300, C-130J-30 Super Hercules (future - ADF uses 'J' version), NH90 (ADF uses MRH90 version but is looking to replace these with Black Hawk Helicopters), Bushmasters (ADF has PP1 – PP5 versions) (future)
Groupings:	Five Eyes, ADMM-Plus, SPDMM, Five Power Defence Arrangement

The Australian Department of Defence currently has four Ministers: Minister for Defence Richard Marles, Assistant Minister for Defence Matt Thistlethwaite, Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel Matt Keogh, and Minister for Defence Industry Pat Conroy.

Australian Defence Spending

2. Australia currently spends 2% of GDP on defence (A\$52.6 billion) and intends to increase this to over 2.3% by 2033 (A\$95.2 billion).

3. As part of this increase, additional investment of A\$30.5 billion between 2027/28 and 2032/33 has been announced to deliver the ambition of the Defence Strategic Review (DSR). It should be noted that this increase in investment is planned to occur after the next election (which must be held no later than 27 September 2025) and final budget decisions will be spread across three future election terms.

s6(a)



Australian 2023 Budget Announcement

5. The Australian Government reinforced its commitment to delivering on the recommendations of the DSR through reprioritising planned spending and existing baselines. The Government also confirmed s6(a) a reprioritisation of the Integrated Investment Program worth \$7.8b, and will also deliver the first National Defence Strategy, in 2024.

6. The dominant feature of the Defence budget was the first financial provision to commence the work on Australia's nuclear-powered submarine programme. In addition, other priority DSR areas benefiting from reprioritisation included long range strike, infrastructure, personnel and technology which all saw major injections.

7. Overall, the Government announced it would invest more than \$19b to implement the immediate priorities identified in the DSR, namely:

- An initial \$9b for the nuclear-powered submarine programme through AUKUS Pillar One;
- \$4.1b for long-range strike capabilities;
- \$3.8b for northern base infrastructure;
- \$0.4b to support ADF personnel through a new continuation bonus; and
- \$0.9b on defence innovation, to establish the Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator and through AUKUS Pillar Two.

Australia's Defence Strategic Review

2023 Defence Strategic Review

In August 2022 the Australian Government announced it had commissioned a Defence Strategic Review (DSR). The Australian Government has responded to all recommendations in the public version of the DSR (released in 24 April 2023) with either 'agreed' or 'agreed-in-principle'. s6(b)

2. The DSR stresses that Australia's strategic circumstances are no longer benign, and that geography and warning time are no longer protections for Australia. s6(a)

In response, the DSR recommends a Whole-of-Government approach which draws upon a much more active Australian statecraft focussed on maintaining a regional balance of power in the Indo-Pacific.

3. The DSR identifies six priority areas for immediate action:

- Acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines through the AUKUS partnership;
- Developing the ADF's ability to strike targets at longer-range;
- Improving the ADF's ability to operate from Australia's northern bases;
- Growing and retaining a highly skilled Defence workforce;
- Partnering with Australian industry to translate disruptive new technologies into ADF capability; and
- Deepening diplomatic and defence partnerships in the Indo-Pacific.

Defence Policy Alignment

4. New Zealand and Australia share the same assessment of the strategic environment. As expressed in New Zealand's 2023 Defence Policy and Strategy Statement, and Australia's 2023 DSR both Australia and New Zealand see the strategic environment as the most challenging it has been for decades.

s6(a)

6. In light of the challenging strategic environment both Australia and New Zealand are seeking to promote security in the Pacific and Indo-Pacific using Whole-of-Government approaches. s6(a)

s6(b)(i)

s6(a)

s6(a)

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Maritime Fleet Renewal

Overview

All of the Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN) vessels, with the exception of the sustainment vessel HMNZS Aotearoa, will reach the end of their design life by the mid-2030s. The need to replace the majority of the ships around the same time provides a unique opportunity to design a new and fit-for-purpose fleet.

2. New Zealand is taking a holistic approach to maritime fleet renewal. This includes consideration of alternative fleet configurations, leveraging new technologies, and alternative crewing, operating, and support concepts.

2. Defence has recently undertaken industry engagement to gain a better understanding of the market in support of the upcoming Defence Capability Plan (DCP).

3. The DCP will present an overall approach to fleet renewal. More detailed fleet configuration options will be presented to government following the release of the DCP. Following decisions on the overall fleet configuration, individual investments will then be progressed for government consideration.

Challenges relating to the current RNZN fleet

4. The current fleet configuration of nine ships across six classes is becoming increasingly difficult for the RNZN to manage. Maintenance, operational management, and training requirements differ significantly between ship classes, [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] s6(a)

Maritime Fleet Renewal programme

6. A Defence programme has been set up to progress options for fleet renewal. Work is underway to develop a programme business case to allow Cabinet to provide direction on the shape of the future fleet. [REDACTED] s9(2)(g)(i)

7. A broad range of Fleet consideration options are under consideration [REDACTED] s9(2)(g)(i)

Maritime Helicopter Replacement project

8. Defence is also currently considering replacement options for the aging SH-2G(I) Seasprite helicopter fleet. [REDACTED] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Collaboration with Australia

9. New Zealand has a keen interest in learning from and collaborating with Australia, and other likeminded partners, on the development of defence capabilities.

s6(a)

12. The Anzac class frigates are an example of Australia and New Zealand undertaking a joint procurement process. [REDACTED]

s9(2)(g)(i)

13. Australia has indicated that there is a need for an accelerated response to the strategic environment, including Tier Two combatants. [REDACTED]

s9(2)(g)(i)

s9(2)(g)(i)

Australia Tier 2 surface combatants and response to Surface Combatant Review

15. Australia's DSR highlights the need for an enhanced lethality surface combatant fleet, which will require "the acquisition of a contemporary optimal mix of Tier 1 and Tier 2 surface combatants, consistent with a strategy of a larger number of smaller surface vessels."

16. In response to the Defence Strategic Review, the Australian Government initiated an independent analysis of the Royal Australian Navy's (RAN) surface combatant fleet capability. The Australian Government has signalled its intentions to respond to the findings of this surface combatant review early this year.

17. RAN Tier 1 ships include the Hobart class destroyers and the future Hunter class frigates.

s9(2)(g)(i)

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Defence Capability Plan

Overview

Work is underway to develop options for a new Defence Capability Plan (DCP). This will provide options to Government, including indicative timing and cost, based on the policy set out in the *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement 2023* and *Future Force Design Principles 2023*. This will include consideration of capabilities that are complementary to Australia's.

2. Once approved, a new DCP will outline the Government's intentions for the capabilities to meet strategic challenges from the time of publication through until 2040. *[Handling Note: delivery timing subject to your direction]* [Redacted] s9(2)(f)(iv)

3. It is expected that over the next 15 years the NZDF will need to deploy more often and in a greater variety of situations. To do so, it will need to have the combat capability and resilience to act in many situations and environments, including doing this concurrently. It is also expected Defence will need greater flexibility to both protect against and utilise new technologies.

[Redacted] s9(2)(g)(i)

Engagement with Australia

5. Officials have conducted a series of engagements with Australian counterparts. Most recently, the Assistant Chief of Capability (NZDF) and Director of Development Branch (MoD) visited Australia in December 2023 to discuss capability interoperability, [Redacted] s6(a)

6. An update on the direction of the Plan will be shared with Australian officials in due course.

Pacific Regional Context

Overview

s6(a)

Challenges to regional stability

7. New Zealand and Australia have shared views on the challenges in the Pacific, s6(a)

8. There are also a number of ongoing risks s6(a) A number of elections, no-confidence motions and questions of statehood are all likely to feature throughout 2024².

9. Intensifying weather events, ongoing economic disruptions, s6(a) will also continue to impact the security and prosperity of the region.

² In the first six months of 2024, there will be elections in Tuvalu and Solomon Islands, the moratorium on no-confidence motions in PNG comes to an end and negotiations will continue on independence questions between, respectively, PNG and Bougainville and France and New Caledonia.

Strengthening our regional response

s6(a)

12. New Zealand is supportive of strengthening regional approaches and institutions as a key way to build regional resilience, and help better position the region to respond to the ongoing challenging environment.

13. Greater sharing of information with the Pacific is another key method in which our regional responses to geostrategic challenges can be strengthened. This was a key theme during the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting.

s6(a)

Defence and security architecture

18. There is value in strengthening the existing defence architecture

s6(a)

s6(a)

s9(2)(g)(i)

21. The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is reviewing the wider regional architecture this year. A strengthened defence architecture will allow for the Pacific to have a more robust discussion with the PIF, and contribute to the overall security discussion in the region.

Regional Security Treaties

s6(a)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

25. From a defence perspective, New Zealand is largely supportive of the development of a regional security treaty, or network of treaties. [REDACTED]

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a)

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Pacific Response Group

Australia formally pitched a concept to develop a Pacific Response Group (PRG) to partners during the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting in December 2023. The proposed PRG would involve Australia, France, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Tonga, with Chile welcome to contribute.

s6(a), s6(b)(i)



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s6(a), s6(b)(i)

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

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AUSTRALIA – NEW ZEALAND 2018 JOINT STATEMENT ON CLOSER DEFENCE RELATIONS

The strategic partnership between Australia and New Zealand remains the closest in our region, and continues to have global dimensions established in the days of the first ANZACs. As close neighbours and allies, we have a mutual commitment to support each other's security, closely coordinate our efforts in the South Pacific, and maintain a shared focus on the security and stability of our broader region. The formal expression of our alliance and security partnership is found in the 1944 Canberra Pact, ANZUS Treaty and through Australia – New Zealand Closer Defence Relations instigated in 1991.

We are proud of the history our Defence Forces share in working together side-by-side in support of the rules-based global order. Our already close interoperability has continued to grow through these important military deployments, as has our coordination on strategic planning, capability development, and intelligence cooperation with our Five Eyes partners.

This statement sets out the strategic context of our Defence relationship, the principles that underpin the relationship and the practical outcomes we seek.

Strategic Context

Both our sovereign nations recognise that we today face an ever-more contested and competitive world, characterised by rapid change, with the rules-based global order that for so long has underpinned our security and prosperity coming under increasing pressure. Our Defence Force commitments to stability operations and capacity-building programs, both regionally and globally, are essential to our broader efforts to protect and promote a stable international order, including unimpeded trade, and freedom of navigation and overflight.

We have a shared interest in a stable and prosperous South Pacific region, and recognise the importance of continuing to effectively work closely together and with our key partners, both within the region and outside of it. Close cooperation and engagement in the Pacific is a high priority for Australia and New Zealand. As the region's largest security contributors, we note the importance of maximising the benefits of our Defence engagement for Pacific states by ensuring activities are effective, collaborative and de-conflicted.

We are conscious that our security is linked to continued peace and stability in our broader region, particularly maritime Southeast Asia. We promote this through our close and productive cooperation in the key regional security frameworks such as the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus and the ASEAN Regional Forum, our common membership of the Five Power Defence Arrangements, and the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting. With the increasing threat of terrorism in Southeast Asia, we recognise the need for new cooperation to work together to support regional partners to help maintain the security and stability of our near region.

Australia and New Zealand also share compelling global security interests. We uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter and we acknowledge our responsibility to be prepared to make military contributions in support of those principles. We each attach the highest importance to pursuing our national goals peacefully, constructively and collaboratively, free from the threat or use of armed force or terrorism against us.

To best achieve these goals, our respective Defence Forces must be able to work together as effectively and efficiently as possible. We will continue to maximise interoperability through

aligning our strategic planning, capability development, logistics, communications, cyber security, and personnel practices, as well as continued exchanges and bilateral and multilateral exercises. We will closely coordinate our military efforts in the region through our existing dialogue structures, from Ministerial-level down to interoperability working groups, and focused planning talks between our respective regional defence capacity building and engagement programs.

Guiding Principles

Our Defence relationship is guided by the following principles:

- We are sovereign, independent states working together both regionally and globally for our mutual security;
- We share an interest in promoting and protecting a region that is secure, open, and prosperous, with a particular focus on our cooperation in the South Pacific;
- Our defence and security partnership is open, based on mutual respect, and enduring;
- We will work together to deliver capability in the most cost-effective way;
- We will develop and harness the skills of our people to enhance cooperation; and
- We will focus on, and commit resources to, practical collaborative activities to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

Outcomes

The value of our alliance can be measured by our capacity to work together, particularly in our region, to shape our security environment and our effectiveness in combined operations. Our success depends on sustained cooperation in two key areas, with six agreed outcomes.

Focus Area 1: Effectiveness in influencing security outcomes.

1.1 Our approaches to operations and exercises are coordinated and complementary, and contribute to stability in our region.

1.2 Our defence diplomacy, regional capacity building efforts, and policy approaches are well-aligned and enhance our shared security interests.

Focus Area 2: Effectiveness in combined operations.

2.1 Respective force design and capability decisions take into account our need to operate together.

2.2 Logistic support and sustainment arrangements enhance mutual operational effectiveness.

2.3 Our command, control and communications arrangements deliver combined operational effectiveness, and facilitate timely coordination between our Defence agencies.

2.4 Interoperability is enhanced through opportunities for our personnel to undertake bilateral training, education, exchanges and attachments.

Focus Area 3: Effectiveness in regional stability

3.1 Our approaches to regional stability and peace operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and regional defence cooperation agreements and arrangements seek to enable and support our neighbours to build resilience and self-reliance.

3.2 Our responses to regional requests for assistance or cooperation deliver capability enhancement and force multiplier effects to the existing capabilities of our neighbours.

Implementation

Closer Defence Relations provides the policy framework to review, update and adapt the alliance relationship to meet the regional security challenges of today. It ensures our relationship maintains its contemporary substance through a program of practical cooperative activities in areas such as: strategic assessment and planning; combined and joint operations, and exercises; command, control and communications; force design and capability development; logistics; and personnel development and training.

Australia and New Zealand maintain a close dialogue on security and defence issues with both Ministers and senior defence officials meeting at least annually, with subordinate working groups taking forward practical implementation against each of the Outcomes above.

These meetings will continue to review and evaluate progress towards the Outcomes, provide direction to future activities and update the joint statement when necessary to reflect national policy developments and the current strategic circumstances.

Review

Defence Ministers will review this Joint Statement at least every two years.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982