



**United
Nations
Association
of Australia**

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29 October 2014

Defence White Paper 2015
R1-3-A135
Russell Offices
Department of Defence
PO Box 7901
CANBERRA BC ACT 2610

Dear Defence White Paper Consultative Committee,

Subject: Submission for the 2015 Australian Defence White Paper

Please find attached the United Nations Association of Australia's submission for the 2015 Australian White Paper on Defence.

The UNAA consents to this submission being published by the Department of Defence.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Kronborg', is located below the 'Kind regards,' text.

Matthew Kronborg
Executive Director
United Nations Association of Australia



UNAA Submission for the 2015 Australian White Paper on Defence

Executive Summary

The United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA) submits that an enhanced commitment and preparation by the ADF for United Nations and other international peace and stability operations will advance Australia's interests. It will contribute to the strengthening of peace and stability in our region and assist with global and regional security. Such a commitment will also provide a good medium to develop closer ties with regional and international partners, and opportunities for Australians to gain experience in complex civil aid activities that are not always conflict based, e.g. natural disaster assistance. The UNAA submits that the nation's long term interests will be further enhanced by encouraging members of the ADF to see peace-keeping as integral to their career development. It is recommended that Australia should plan to always have a range of individuals and force elements preparing for and deployed on international peace operations. Well directed public information and publicity programs will lead to a wider acceptance by civil society of the roles of the ADF in peace-keeping and peace-building in dysfunctional environments and will contribute to the recruitment of the best and brightest into these vital national activities.

Submission

Since the end of the Cold War, UN peacekeeping has risen to become the leading instrument for global crisis management. Deployed into fragmented and dangerous environments, modern peacekeepers typically contend with a mosaic of political-military actors, whilst managing the inherent difficulties that accompany the deployment of every large multinational force. In short, UN peacekeeping is an enterprise inevitably beset by a myriad of constraints, and fraught with complexity. For these reasons, it is an enterprise that is deserving of the highest levels of professionalism and initiative. In conditions requiring a more nuanced approach to their deployment environments, Australian personnel have been shown to be remarkably effective practitioners of the art of peacekeeping (i.e. Somalia, East Timor, Cambodia, Bougainville, and the Solomon Islands). Bearing this in mind, the ADF should consider expanding the pool of UN peacekeeping opportunities offered to its personnel. UN peacekeeping allows soldiers, doctors, logisticians, pilots, intelligence officers, engineering and support elements as well as other defence force personnel to utilise their skills in deeply challenging environments, as part of multinational



missions comprising a diversity of military, civilian, police, humanitarian, and development actors.

The ADF has a long and proud history of contributing to UN peacekeeping, beginning in the late 1940s. It has deployed Navy and Airforce platforms and units on peace operations usually in a support role. Additionally, the Army has deployed combat, combat support, and logistic elements on such operations including capabilities of battalion groups, engineers, aviation, medical and other specialist units. ADF members have deployed as commanders, staff, military observers and advisers, at senior, middle ranking and junior levels. These contributions have helped support Australian foreign policy objectives in addition to international peace and security. US based academic, Virginia Page Fortuna, has demonstrated that peacekeeping significantly improves a country's chances of peace whilst a Swedish research team recently demonstrated that peacekeepers reduce civilian deaths within their areas of operation. With these points in mind, the ADF should strongly consider a renewed focus on the provision of support to a new generation of UN missions. Currently, Australia has only 51 uniformed personnel deployed in UN missions and is ranked just 79th in the world amongst contributing nations.

The commitment of well-prepared and highly professional individuals and contingents from nations such as Australia also provides an experienced, disciplined framework to such operations and capabilities, among which many other nations are unable to provide. This is particularly so at the commencement of a new peace operation when early deployment of effective contingents can assist in strengthening the often fragile peace. Once a peacekeeping mission is well established some reduction in the capability of the peacekeeping forces may be possible although a strong force reserve should always be maintained.

ADF elements and individuals need to be well prepared for peace and/or civil aid operations. It is critical that they are firstly highly proficient in their a specific individual Defence Force skills and collective capability for joint and combined warfare. Without these skills they cannot respond effectively to the often-volatile situation they could encounter in peace operations that may require the application of force under strict Rules of Engagement. However they also need to be prepared for additional individual and team skills and challenges that are applicable in peace operations and for the specific environment they will face. The importance of ongoing cycles of training towards developing and enhancing specific skills essential for peacekeeping/civil aid deployments is emphasised.



For example, acting as an unarmed military observer in a country that has been in conflict for years where there are often many different armed groups still operating, requires both military understanding and diplomacy skills plus sensible planning for force safety issues. Additionally, many UN peacekeeping mandates now include the job of protecting civilians, a task not normally taught to Defence Forces. On peace operations ADF elements will also find themselves working alongside international and national police and civilian agencies including a wide range of international, regional and local Non Government Organisations (NGOs). ADF contingents deployed on such missions must be fully prepared for such tasks and interacting through appropriate training courses and activities.

The preparation and deployment for peace operations provides many opportunities for the ADF to develop good relationships, trust and understanding with regional neighbours in the Asia Pacific and with our traditional allies. Our peace operations training programmes should include personnel from other nations both to impart their experiences and to learn from our experiences. We should also participate in the wide range of international and regional seminars considering international peace and security issues. We should be prepared to post ADF officers and personnel to headquarters involved in peace operations including at UNHQ in New York. Such postings are very challenging and should be seen as beneficial to the advancement of ADF personnel career planning. Consideration should be given to assisting individuals and components from regional nations to deploy alongside Australian contingents and to draw upon our training and support systems.

While the deployment of Australian forces overseas will always be based upon our national interests and available assets, it is recommended that Australia should plan to always have a range of individuals and force elements preparing for and deployed on international peace operations. Such a commitment will pay dividends in the goodwill, experience and critical defence force skills developed. Such deployments should be programmed into the schedule of all three services with force elements and individuals warned well in advance for the probable activity and having completed appropriate performance assessed training courses assessed on their performance. This should include Reserve Forces, which would need to be brought onto full time service for the duration of the preparation and deployment. A standing commitment to such peace operations would also provide both national recruitment opportunities and a clear message to Australians about the value and contribution of the ADF to international peace and security.