

OFFICIAL



ADF CAPSTONE DOCTRINE

Australian Military Power

Edition 2

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Edition 1, 2002

Edition 2, 2005

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Australian Military Power

0 Series | Capstone

Edition 2

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Australian Defence Force – Capstone – 0 *Australian Military Power*, Edition 2 is issued for use by the Australian Defence Force and is effective forthwith. This publication supersedes both Australian Defence Force – Capstone – 0 *Foundations of Australian Military Doctrine*, Edition 4 and Australian Defence Force – Capstone – 0 *Australian Military Power*, Edition 1 and consolidates their respective subject matter into a single capstone doctrine publication.

Angus J Campbell, AO, DSC

General
Chief of the Defence Force
Department of Defence
CANBERRA ACT 2600

28 June 2024

Preface

1. Military doctrine explains fundamental principles that guide actions by armed forces to achieve their objectives. While authoritative, doctrine requires judgement in application.
2. Australian Defence Force (ADF) doctrine describes principles that guide the employment and operational effectiveness of an integrated force. ADF doctrine publications are designed to concisely describe these principles, and so promote coordinated actions in support of missions and the commander's intent. ADF doctrine publications are written at several levels—capstone, philosophical, integration and application.
3. The content of this publication has been derived from general principles, other ADF doctrine, Defence manuals, allied publications and agreements. Every opportunity should be taken by users of this publication to examine its content for applicability and currency. Doctrine Directorate invites assistance from you, the reader, to improve this publication. Please report any deficiencies, errors or potential amendments.
4. Australian Defence Force – Capstone – 0 (ADF-C-0) *Australian Military Power* is the ADF's capstone doctrine. It is the public expression of how military capabilities are developed and how they are orchestrated to achieve the Government's military power and objectives. As capstone doctrine, it is also the touchpoint to Defence strategic policy documents, including the *National Defence Strategy*.
5. **Aim.** ADF-C-0 *Australian Military Power* aims to explain the ADF's contribution to Australian national power.
6. **Audience.** This publication has two distinct audiences:
 - a. **Primary.** The primary audience of this capstone doctrine is members of the ADF and Defence.
 - b. **Secondary.** As a publicly released document, this publication also informs those who have an interest in understanding the ADF's contribution to Australian national power.
7. **Scope.** This publication provides capstone and philosophical level doctrine on Australian military power and its relationship to national power.

It describes the ADF's contribution to the defence of Australia's national interest. This publication informs commanders and other key personnel about the use of the ADF as the Australian Government's instrument of military power.

8. **Updates.** ADF-C-0 *Australian Military Power*, Edition 2 supersedes the combined scope of ADF-C-0 *Foundations of Australian Military Doctrine*, Edition 4 and ADF-C-0 *Australian Military Power*, Edition 1 within a single volume. It also includes the following content changes:

- a. It reflects changes in Defence policy consistent with the release of *National Defence Strategy 2024*.
- b. It reflects organisational changes in Defence, including the creation of new three-star appointments—Chief of Personnel and Chief of Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance.
- c. Provides a definition for doctrine use of 'integrated force'.

9. **Legacy publications.** ADF-C-0 *Australian Military Power*, Edition 2 includes material from the following legacy publications, which have now been retired:

- a. Australian Defence Force – Capstone – 0 (ADF-C-0) *Foundations of Australian Doctrine*, Edition 4
- b. Australian Defence Force – Capstone – 0 (ADF-C-0) *Australian Military Power*, Edition 1.

Foreword

1. ADF-C-0 *Australian Military Power* describes the Australian Defence Force (ADF), how it contributes to national power and the elements that contribute to developing and maintaining Australia's military instrument of national power.
2. Defence's mission is 'to defend Australia and its national interests in order to advance Australia's security and prosperity'. The ADF's mission is 'to apply military power in order to defend Australia and its national interests'.
3. To fight and win, the ADF must operate as an integrated force with a clear understanding of how military power supports national power. ADF-C-0 *Australian Military Power* contributes to this understanding.
4. This doctrine provides a clear focus for the ADF at a time when increasingly intertwined, competing and contradictory drivers can blur the clarity around when and how the military fights. It discusses both the importance of campaigning in competition with legitimate authority (see [ADF-P-3 *Campaigning in Competition*](#)) and the demanding and changing character of war.
5. I commend this publication to you.



Angus J Campbell, AO, DSC

General

Chief of the Defence Force

Department of Defence

CANBERRA ACT 2600

28 June 2024

Amendments

Amendment number	Location(s)	Amendment	Date effective

Proposals to amend ADF-C-0 *Australian Military Power* may be sent to:

Doctrine Development Manager
ADF Doctrine Directorate
Joint Warfare Development Branch
Russell Offices
PO Box 7909 | Canberra BC | ACT 2610
[ADF Doctrine Directorate](#)

Doctrine publication hierarchy

The hierarchy of ADF doctrine, and the latest electronic versions of all ADF doctrine publications, are available on:

- Defence Protected Network [ADF Doctrine Library](http://drnet/vcdf/ADF-Doctrine/Pages/ADF-Doctrine-Library.aspx)
(<http://drnet/vcdf/ADF-Doctrine/Pages/ADF-Doctrine-Library.aspx>)
- Defence Secret Network Defence Doctrine Library.

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Chapter 1 – Australian military doctrine

Executive summary

- Doctrine is the codification of knowledge and beliefs that unify a professional body in the collective mastery of their profession. Doctrine is authoritative but not dogma—it must be applied with judgement.
- The Australian Defence Force Doctrine Hierarchy is structured over four publication levels: capstone, philosophical, integration and application.
- This publication is the capstone publication of the Australian Defence Force Doctrine Hierarchy.
- All members of the Australian Defence Force have an obligation to ensure that Australian Defence Force Doctrine is contemporary, mutually consistent and reflects best practice within the scope of its purpose.

1.1 Doctrine is the codification of knowledge and beliefs that unify a professional body in the collective mastery of their profession.

1.2 Australian Defence Force (ADF) doctrine is the corpus of knowledge in the profession of arms in Australia. It is a suite of principles, factors and guidelines for planning and completing military action with the greatest likelihood of success in complex, stressful and dangerous situations. It is derived from lessons, best practice and long held beliefs that underwrite successful action. ADF doctrine is thus representative of the Australian approach to conflict across the spectrum of competition. It also facilitates procedural interoperability with military allies and partners. ADF doctrine is written by the profession of arms for the profession of arms.

1.3 ADF doctrine aims to guide military professionals in the mastery of their decisions, behaviour, conduct and actions, and should be applied with judgement. While it is not policy, and not enforceable as such, ADF doctrine is informed and constrained by law, policy, strategy and international

conventions. To ignore ADF doctrine is to choose behaviours and practices that have neither been tested nor endorsed by the ADF, and may contravene laws, rules and conventions. At best, professional judgements that are not informed by doctrine are likely to be challenged as disregarding the obligations of professional mastery and, at worst, could be illegal and negligent.



Figure 1.1: Chief of Navy addressing Australian and international officers who are studying at the Australian Defence Force's Australian Command and Staff College

1.4 Doctrine should be interpreted within the context of circumstances and applied with the experience, foresight and adaptability that characterises professional judgement. Furthermore, the application of doctrine should be critically appraised in after-action reflections so that opportunities for improvement are captured for the perpetual enhancement of the profession and its body of knowledge.

1.5 The ongoing development of ADF doctrine is a deliberate process that considers contemporary military practice, lessons, analysis and outcomes evaluation¹ to inform changes to doctrine.

Doctrine and strategic policy

1.6 Defence is strategy-led. Strategy is a prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronised and integrated fashion to achieve theatre, national, and/or multinational objectives. The *National Defence Strategy* describes how Government guidance and direction on strategic policy is delivered by Defence. Strategic guidance is also provided in other documents, which may change over time but generally include Defence white papers, strategic updates, planning guidance, preparedness directives, planning directives, concept papers and other guidance. This strategic guidance cascades through the ADF to inform campaign planning, theatre management and joint collective training.

1.7 The aforementioned documents are 'strategic policy'. They detail Government's perception of national strategic interests and the principles and courses of action to safeguard or promote these interests. As such, strategic policy is direction from Government to Defence.

1.8 Doctrine complements strategic policy. Doctrine is not an order or other form of direction. However, the knowledge that doctrine imparts to military professionals contributes to planning and the development of strategic objectives and the orders that control military operations, activities and actions.

Doctrine's relationship to concepts

1.9 Doctrine and concepts are the foundation of the ADF's body of professional knowledge. While doctrine and concepts complement each other, they serve different purposes and are hence different in nature.

1.10 Doctrine provides guidance and direction for the employment of the force-in-being to achieve military objectives. It codifies military knowledge to

¹ An evaluation conducted on the intended outcomes of a doctrine publication.

facilitate shared understanding and establish a professional vernacular. It is educational in purpose—it underpins the ADF's professional military education and training. Doctrine drives consistency, which supports procedural integration.

1.11 By contrast, concepts provide aspirational solutions to future military problems. They are a mechanism to explore military problems in anticipation of changes in technology and the strategic environment. They may challenge military orthodoxy. Concepts drive change and inform the direction of ADF force design, force integration and capability development.



Figure 1.2: Defence Science and Technology researchers and Australian Defence Force personnel engage in analytical war games

1.12 Doctrine supports concepts by providing the starting point for explaining military problems being explored. Doctrine is the baseline knowledge that all military personnel are expected to have before reading a concept. Concepts are written using professional language that has been established in doctrine. This facilitates consistency in communication of the concept and clarifies how the proposed concept differs from related doctrine. Doctrine publications are available from the [ADF Doctrine Library](#).

1.13 Concepts support the continual improvement of doctrine by deliberately testing the boundaries of current military understanding. By their nature, concepts are forward leaning. This does not mean that concepts

are exclusively about the future; they can also explore ideas, technologies or scenarios that may not be adequately covered in the scope of current doctrine. Consideration of concepts—through experiments, exercises or other professional discourses—may result in insights that advance military professional understanding and become codified in doctrine. Concepts are available from the [ADF Concepts Library](#).

Australian Military Power

1.14 ADF-C-0 *Australian Military Power* is written from a strategic perspective and applies to the conduct of all ADF operations and activities. This includes international engagement, preparedness and capability development. This doctrine also describes the relationship between national policy and ADF operations with regard to:

- a. national security and strategic policy issues applicable to Australia
- b. the nature of international conflict, and the application of armed force in international affairs
- c. the constitutional, political, legal and administrative contexts and arrangements within which—and under which—Australia may use armed force.

Australian Defence Force Doctrine Hierarchy

1.15 ADF-C-0 *Australian Military Power* is the capstone publication of the [ADF Doctrine Hierarchy](#). As such, all other doctrine within the hierarchy is derived from, and must be consistent with, this publication.

1.16 As depicted in Figure 1.3, the ADF Doctrine Hierarchy has four distinct tiers:

- a. **Capstone doctrine.** Capstone doctrine explains the ADF's roles and its contribution to Australian society.
- b. **Philosophical doctrine.** Philosophical doctrine explains the fundamental, enduring principles that guide the application of military power in pursuit of national objectives.
- c. **Integration doctrine.** Integration doctrine explains how the integrated force applies doctrine principles to planning, conducting,

and enabling campaigns and operations. It further describes the use of military power within the maritime, land, air, cyber and space domains.

- d. **Application doctrine.** Application doctrine describes the way particular tasks are conducted in an operational setting and is usually linked directly to integration doctrine. Capability managers, as the principal domain advisors, lead the development of ADF doctrine at the application level.



Figure 1.3: The four tiers of the Australian Defence Force Doctrine Hierarchy

Doctrine development and review

1.17 The Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) authorises the development and release of ADF doctrine publications. CDF may delegate sponsorship and approval of doctrine to other commanders or principal staff officers. For example, the CDF has delegated responsibilities for developing application-level doctrine to capability managers and force providers. These delegations are captured in the [ADF Doctrine Hierarchy](#), normally approved annually by the Chiefs of Service Committee.

1.18 While much of doctrine is enduring, it must be periodically reviewed and refined to ensure continuing relevance. This is an enterprise wide responsibility, coordinated and supported by ADF Doctrine Directorate, within the Joint Warfare Development Branch.

1.19 The Vice Chief of the Defence Force, as the Joint Force Authority, assigns ADF Doctrine Directorate to manage the program of work that maintains the currency and accessibility of ADF doctrine.

1.20 All members of the ADF have an obligation to ensure that doctrine remains current and relevant by using the ADF's doctrine feedback channels to identify inconsistencies with best practice and within the library itself.

Chapter 2 – Australian national power

Executive summary

- The Australian Government uses diplomatic, informational, military and economic instruments of national power to protect and promote Australia's national interests.
- The diplomatic instrument of national power is used to engage with other states and foreign groups to influence and shape events to advance national interests, values and objectives.
- The information instrument of national power is used to shape and influence the perceptions and attitudes of others. Australia's information power derives from a wide range of sources, such as public diplomacy, media, cyber operations and national institutions.
- The military instrument of national power is used in combination with other elements of national power to influence, and, if necessary, to forcibly impose Australia's will on competitors or adversaries threatening Australia's national interests.
- The economic instrument national power is used to influence others through foreign aid, financial regulations, trade policy and sanctions.

National power

There is no greater responsibility for the Government than defending Australia.

Opening sentence, *National Defence Strategy, 2024*

2.1 Preserving sovereignty and pursuing national interests is the first priority of all governments. The ability of the Australian Government to achieve its national objectives depends on the power that the nation can

generate and then apply. National power is both the sum of all the capabilities available to the Australian Government, as well as the Government's ability to use these capabilities to achieve national interests. National power is not just material resources, but includes the ideas that direct this power; the combination of the two is needed to successfully achieve national objectives.

2.2 In a complex international environment of cooperation, competition and conflict, a nation's ability to achieve its objectives varies depending on its national power relative to the other state and non-state actors with which it has relationships. The Australian Government prudently applies national power to influence international affairs within its region and throughout the world.

2.3 **National defence.** The Australian Government takes a whole-of-government and whole-of-nation approach to security. This approach requires a much more active Australian statecraft that harnesses all arms of Australia's national power into a holistic, integrated and focused effort to help deter coercion, lower the risk of conflict and maintain the regional balance of power in the Indo-Pacific.

2.4 ADF-C-0 *Australian Military Power* describes how Australia's military instrument is developed, and used, in support of Australian national power and Government objectives.

Factors shaping national power

2.5 A broad range of geographic, economic, political, demographic, and relationship factors shape Australian national power.

2.6 **Geography.** Australia is a large, island nation surrounded by seven seas and oceans that includes extensive areas of shallow water. Australia also has substantial national resources to trade, and sits within the Indo-Pacific region, one of the world's most dynamic economic regions. Taken together, these physical characteristics make us dependent on maritime trade and supply lines, but also pose problems for potential aggressors. Historically, the risk of aggressors approaching through the air/sea gap and targeting our maritime trade, supply and communication lines was the most likely military threat; however, operations in the space and cyber domains, as well as advanced missile capabilities, have reduced the traditional security advantages of our geography.

national interests

The general and continuing ends for which a state acts.

national objectives

The aims, derived from national interests, toward which a national policy or strategy is directed and efforts and resources of the nation are applied.

national power

The total capability of a country to achieve its national objectives, devoid of external constraints and without being subject to coercion.

instruments of national power

All of the means available to the government in its pursuit of national objectives.

Note: They are expressed as diplomatic, informational, military and economic.

military power

The ability of a nation to use military means in pursuit of national objectives.

2.7 **Economy.** Australia is rich in natural resources with a well-developed, globally integrated economy underpinned by a mature financial and educational base. Australia's economy has been characterised by long periods of modest, consecutive annual growth, resulting in high standards of living. It benefits from membership of economic forums and trade with and beyond the Indo-Pacific region. Australia's economy is highly dependent on its ability to trade natural wealth and services globally on mutually beneficial terms.

2.8 **Political.** Australia gained independence at federation in 1901 and has had a history of stable governance under a system of parliamentary democracy. Principles of democratic government—including respect for the

rule of law, human rights, as well as social equity and fairness—underpin our institutions and culture. The Australian community has widespread support for national institutions, promoting the legitimacy and authority of Government action.



Figure 2.1: Australian Parliament House in Canberra—the home of Australian democracy

2.9 **Demography.** Australia is home to the world’s oldest continuing culture and is also a multicultural nation. Its people, industry and institutions are concentrated in cities on the eastern, south-eastern and south-western fringes of the continent. Despite a long history of overseas immigration, it has a small population relative to its significant landmass. The nation’s educational institutions develop our intellectual capacity. A widely-skilled, well-educated, diverse demographic base is essential for a resilient national workforce.

2.10 **Alliances and partnerships.** Australia has historically partnered with other states to aggregate national power in support of the rules-based

global order. Australia's alliance with the United States is fundamental to our national security and the ADF's capacity to generate, sustain and project credible military capability. We also invest in security relationships with partners across the Pacific, Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean and North Asian regions to collectively build a secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, and we greatly benefit from our deep, close relationships with the Five Eyes community of nations. Indo-Pacific nations are major bilateral and multilateral partners and Australia is actively engaged in regional cooperation, capacity building and economic integration.



Figure 2.2: A Royal Australian Air Force officer briefs a Japan Air Self-Defense Force pilot during Exercise COPE NORTH 2024 in Guam, United States of America

2.11 Rules-based international order. As a middle power, Australia best achieves its national interests through a strong rules-based international order, the current form of which emerged from the devastation of the Second World War. This international order is a shared commitment by all state and non-state actors to conduct activities in accordance with agreed rules that promote international peace and prosperity. These rules create rights and obligations for all actors that limit their exercise of coercive power and require them to peacefully resolve disputes. These rights and obligations enable an open global economy and the peaceful development of states

through liberal institutions, universal values and respect for human rights. This order is currently under great stress, principally from states that seek to diminish its liberal democratic character.



Figure 2.3: A Royal Australian Air Force loadmaster guides an Australian Government-donated Bushmaster protected mobility vehicle bound for Ukraine from the ramp of a C-17A Globemaster III aircraft in Europe

Generating national power

2.12 The four instruments of national power are diplomatic, informational, military and economic (DIME). These instruments are indicative not exhaustive, and each instruments delivers unique power and influence. When used together, they are the means by which the Government effects its national strategy. For examples of how the military supports national strategy, see [ADF-P-3 Campaigns and Operations](#).

Diplomatic instrument

2.13 The Australian Government uses diplomacy to engage with other states and foreign groups to influence and shape events to advance Australia's interests, values and objectives. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is the lead for providing Government advice and for

implementing Government policy and direction with regards to the diplomatic instrument.



Figure 2.4: Instruments of national power

2.14 Australia's exercise of the diplomatic instrument is centred upon a diplomatic network incorporating embassies and high commissions, permanent missions and other representative offices. Diplomats provide a source of information, analysis and foresight on international conditions and conduct negotiations with foreign countries and multinational organisations to advance Australia's interests.

2.15 Defence has developed many trusted international military partnerships and alliance networks. These relationships are sustained by a dedicated network of attachés and advisors that reinforce and complement DFAT's diplomatic networks. These partnerships and alliances are exercised

internationally through codified security agreements, the conduct of combined operations, personnel exchanges, deployed personnel, military training activities and capability development programs.



Figure 2.5: The Australian Defence Attaché to Laos in front of a C-17A Globemaster loaded with Australian Aid pallets during regional engagement activity Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2022

Informational instrument

2.16 Information is the instrument of national power that is used to collect, disseminate, shape and influence perceptions, attitudes, opinions and decisions of both domestic and international audiences. It plays a pivotal role in enabling national power in ways that protect and advance national interests.

2.17 The informational instrument is available in various forms, including public diplomacy, media engagement, cyber operations, national content in the media and on the internet, national cultural institutions (such as the arts and sporting competitions) and military capabilities. Each of these elements can project Australia's values, policies and perspectives to shape international narratives and support diplomatic and strategic goals.

2.18 The emergence and widespread adoption of digital technologies has created a ubiquitous crowded and ungoverned information environment. State and non-state actors, including individual citizens, can access or generate vast amounts of information and have the ability to influence on a global scale.

2.19 The effectiveness of the informational instrument of national power relies on the strategic integration of its components within a broader national approach. It requires an understanding of the target audience, content, the medium of delivery and the timing of dissemination. In an era where information travels instantaneously across the globe, the ability of a state to effectively manage and deploy information, and overcome counter narratives of disinformation, can significantly influence its standing and the pursuit of its interests.

Military instrument

2.20 The Australian Government employs the military instrument of national power to defend Australia and its national interests in order to advance Australia's security and prosperity. The Government directs how military capabilities are to be used in support of national objectives. The Government invests in Defence resources—including personnel, equipment and estate—to create military capabilities that are used to meet national needs. Capabilities include military platforms and equipment, weapons, systems and infrastructure, and people with specialised skills.

2.21 Accordingly, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) maintains and continues to develop the capacity to:

- a. defend Australia and our immediate region
- b. deter through denial any adversary's attempt to project power against Australia through our northern approaches
- c. protect Australia's economic connection to our region and the world
- d. contribute with our partners to the collective security of the Indo-Pacific
- e. contribute with our partners to the maintenance of the global rules-based order.



Figure 2.6: A Royal Australian Navy marine technician conducts rounds in HMAS *Anzac*'s engine space during a regional presence deployment

2.22 Defence plays a unique and vital role as the only arm of government that generates and employs military power. Within this construct, the ADF is authorised by the Government to use offensive lethal force. Such force is only exerted in response to an Australian Government directive, to compel an adversary or competitor to act in a manner consistent with Australia's national interests. The use of military power is done so in accordance with the law of armed conflict and in concert with the other instruments of national power, to achieve specified national objectives.

2.23 The ADF routinely interacts with other Australian Government departments and agencies to develop a mutual understanding of the capabilities, limitations and consequences of military action, and to recognise the ways in which military and non-military capabilities can complement each other.

2.24 The ADF works to Australian Government direction and prepares to deter, or if necessary respond to, conflict. It is funded, designed and maintained to apply military power in order to defend Australia and its national interests. This is its primary force structure determinant. Using this force, the ADF adapts to other contingencies in support of national

objectives. In Australia, civil organisations address law and order and emergency management at the state and federal levels.

Economic instrument

2.25 The economic instrument of national power is integral to Australia's prosperity and way of life. It is also tightly linked to the security and prosperity of countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

2.26 Australia's economic power comes from the skills and capacities of its workforce to leverage the country's key sectors, which include mining, agriculture, tourism, health, education, manufacturing, services, construction and finance, among others. The Australian workforce converts natural resources into commodities, develops products and delivers value adding services. These elements are involved in trade and investment arrangements that enrich both the Australian economy and that of Australia's trading partners. Government leverages taxes and incentivises investment to develop Australia's economic power.

2.27 Economic power can manifest as foreign aid, investment programs and incentives that yield goodwill towards Australia or as trade sanctions, tariffs and boycotts that discourage undesirable behaviours by actors operating against Australian national interests.

2.28 Economic power also contributes to Australia's soft power because a strong economy often correlates with cultural output, educational excellence, and technological innovation, all of which enhance Australia's global appeal and influence without the need to resort to the hard power of force or coercion.

2.29 Defence's greatest direct contribution to the economic instrument is through defence industry. Defence industry supports the ADF directly but also contributes to Australia's exports. Australia is party to a number of international conventions, treaties, trading regimes and arrangements which constrain some economic activity. These export control regimes promote Australia's national interests and contribute to the security and stability of a rules-based international order. Defence export controls regulate the export and supply of military and dual-use goods and technologies so that the risks associated with transfers of arms-related information, conventional arms, dual-use goods and technologies are considered and mitigated.

2.30 The Australian Government makes national investment decisions informed in part by the needs and opportunities of defence industry, such as the requirement to establish a naval shipbuilding capability and the Australian Submarine Agency, or to build or maintain the Defence estate. Critically, investment in Defence supports both ADF capability and the Australian economy.

2.31 Defence recognises industry as a fundamental input to ADF capability. An internationally competitive and innovative Australian defence industry is essential to both Australian national and military power. The Defence Science and Technology Group (DSTG) contributes to the generation of sovereign military capabilities through collaborative programs with academia, research agencies, industry and international partners. The maintenance of sovereign industrial capabilities ensures that strategically critical capabilities remain within Australia's control.

2.32 The instrument of economic power has high utility on its own but also adds considerable weight to the other instruments used to influence international affairs in favour of Australia's national interest. Sustained military power depends upon strong economic power.

Maximising national power

2.33 Like all countries, Australia has always sought to maximise its national power, to deter potential adversaries and secure its national interests. In Australia's case, this has meant harnessing opportunities—and overcoming challenges—presented by factors such as our small population, limited industrial base, vast geography and long international supply chains.

2.34 Common to most democracies, the effort to maximise and harness our national power has been more focused, directed and integrated when the nation has been confronted by an immediate threat, crisis or war. Over time, this has seen an evolution of arrangements such as combined arms and fleets, alliance relationships, joint forces, joint interagency task forces and integrated forces. Each successive era of crisis or conflict has been addressed with an enhanced expression of aggregated and applied power as more organisations, capabilities, domains and partners have been harnessed to the effort.

Orchestrating national power

2.35 The Australian Government orchestrates the instruments of national power and—to varying degrees—determines when, where and how these instruments are to be exercised. They use the National Security Committee (NSC), the Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCNS), interdepartmental committees, task forces and working groups to orchestrate national power.

National Security Committee

2.36 The Cabinet is the premier decision-making and priority-setting forum for the Australian Government. Cabinet priorities and decisions are shaped by the national interest, the political process, public policy and fiscal considerations. The Cabinet has devolved the consideration of national security issues to the NSC.

2.37 The NSC orchestrates the Australian Government's cultivation and employment of national power. The NSC is chaired by the Prime Minister and includes the Deputy Prime Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Defence, Minister for Finance, Minister for Home Affairs and Attorney-General as permanent members. The NSC is supported by the SCNS. The NSC is convened in response to an emerging security situation, or in a more regular, formal and deliberative manner. The NSC considers matters related to Australia's national security, including strategic priorities, operational matters and activities of the intelligence community. NSC decisions do not require the endorsement of the Cabinet.

Secretaries Committee on National Security

2.38 The principal interdepartmental committee that directly supports the NSC is the SCNS. The SCNS is composed of the secretaries of each department supporting an NSC minister, as well as the Chief of the Defence Force, the Director-General of National Intelligence, the Director-General of Security and the Director-General of the Australian Signals Directorate. Other senior officials will attend as invited. The SCNS serves as the peak official-level committee considering all national security matters to be put before the NSC. The SCNS supports whole-of-government national security policy development and implementation.

National security policy decision-making



Figure 2.7: National security decision-making cycle

2.39 The national security decision-making cycle (see Figure 2.7) is an iterative process. Planning can be instigated either by top-down direction and guidance by the NSC, or by bottom-up advice. Policy advice is consulted across a wide variety of departments and agencies. Consultation may include inputs from a range of governmental and non-governmental institutions, including think tanks, industry, allies and partners, and other specialists. Once drafted, policy progresses through a series of increasingly more senior consultations before presentation to the NSC. The NSC then considers and issues direction and guidance. Actions are then implemented, monitored and reviewed. Updates on progress are provided to the NSC, with further decisions and/or guidance issued as required.

National Defence Strategy

2.40 Defence policy development has moved away from traditional white papers to a biennial National Defence Strategy cycle. This provides a structured basis for regularly evaluating and prioritising efforts to maintain a more lethal ADF that is capable of credibly holding potential adversaries at risk of imposed costs—including as military forces modernise and strategic challenges continue to evolve. More broadly, the biennial cycle allows Government policy, strategy, planning and reform efforts to keep pace with the rapidly evolving strategic environment, respond to Australia's national security priorities and provide clear intent and approaches for defence industry.

Chapter 3 – Australian Military Power

Executive summary

- The Australian Government controls the military instrument of power.
- The Australian Defence Force maintains three core elements of military power: moral, intellectual and physical.
- The Australian Defence Force conducts and contributes to integrated campaigning through four actions of applied power: understand, orchestrate, effect and sustain.
- The Australian Defence Force achieves strategic objectives by integrating effects in the five operating domains: maritime, land, air, cyber and space.

Military power

3.1 Military power is the ability of a state to use military means to pursue its national objectives. Australian military power is a foundational instrument of Australia's national power, along with the diplomatic, informational and economic instruments. National strategy is implemented by coordinating effects across all instruments of national power.

3.2 The military instrument is often seen as the most direct and tangible means of exerting national power; however, in the Australian context, military power is integrated with all other instruments of national power.

Australian military power

3.3 Australian military power is not measured by merely the number of ships, tanks or aircraft at the nation's disposal. Australia's military power also draws on the nation's industrial strength, technological sophistication, logistics and supply chain efficiency, and the overall readiness and professionalism of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to lead, guide and direct Australia's military posture and operations.

3.4 The ADF provides Government with a unique and wide range of capabilities and resources that constitute the military instrument of national power. The ADF has primacy in the conduct of military operations and can be used to shape, deter and respond.



Figure 3.1: A Royal Australian Air Force officer working at the Australian Space Discovery Centre in Adelaide

3.5 The ADF maintains significant capability, supported by the Defence Logistics Network, and utilises advanced technologies in its contribution to Australian national power. These capabilities can be used in a broad range of non-conflict circumstances, including contributions to civil maritime security, counterterrorism, search and rescue, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

3.6 Consistent with the adage ‘if you want peace, prepare for war’², the ADF’s strategic posture is an expression of Australia’s willingness and ability to defend its territorial sovereignty, its interests and its people. While the ADF has a suite of capabilities that enable deterrence and tactical or

² Vegetius, *De Re Militari*, c late 4th - early 5th century.

operational level offensive action, its overall posture is defensive. As the custodian of Australian military power, the ADF is designed to shape regional strategy, deter adversaries from actively interfering in Australia's national interests, and respond with force as directed by the Australian Government. To this end, the ADF's activities in the Indo-Pacific are intended to underscore Australia's strong commitment to security and a rules-based order.

3.7 The use of the ADF is bound by Australian protocols as well as international laws, including treaties and customary principles of international relations. The ethical use of Australia's military power is a significant consideration, with debates focusing on just-war theory, the responsibility to protect, and the moral implications of military interventions.

3.8 While Australia maintains a strong military instrument of national power, the nation's culture is not especially militaristic nor does the Commonwealth of Australia have military ambitions. Australia plans and prepares to defend its national territory and sovereign rights, and supports other nations to do the same within the confines of international law.

3.9 **Fighting power.** The military instrument of Australia's national power is derived from the ADF's military capabilities, which are trained, organised and equipped to generate a combat-effective integrated force. The ADF achieves advantage by employing military power in the operational and information environments. Military power broadly consists of three distinct but interrelated elements focused on attacking an adversary's will and ability to fight, or safeguarding our own: moral, intellectual and physical. At the tactical and operational levels, military power is often described as fighting power.

integrated force

A military force designed, generated and employed to achieve unified action across all domains in support of Government directed missions.

Moral element

3.10 The moral element establishes, sustains and enhances legitimacy for the decision to fight and win. The moral element enhances fighting cohesion by establishing and reinforcing the lawful, ethical and moral reasons for the use of the military instrument of national power.

3.11 **Just-war theory.** Just-war theory is an evolved set of principles to provide ethical guidelines for the initiation and conduct of warfare. Two key components of this theory are *jus ad bellum* (the conditions under which states may resort to the use of armed force) and *jus in bello* (facilitates the regulation of the conduct of parties engaged in an armed conflict). *Jus ad bellum* includes criteria like just cause, right intention, and legitimate authority, demanding that a state must have morally sound reasons for going to war and must do so under proper authority. *Jus in bello* focuses on the conduct during war, emphasising principles like distinction and proportionality, ensuring that combatants target military objectives and avoid excessive harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure.

3.12 **Sovereignty.** The employment of military power is intrinsically linked to the notion of state sovereignty and the international legal framework. The *United Nations Charter*, particularly Article 2(4) and Chapter VII, regulates the use of force in international relations. The moral element of fighting power, in this context, is intertwined with its legality. Actions that uphold international law and the principles of the *United Nations Charter* are generally seen as morally justifiable.

3.13 **Human rights and humanitarian law.** The moral use of military power requires adherence to standards that prioritise the protection of human rights even in the context of warfare. International humanitarian laws, such as the Geneva Conventions, set out rules to protect both combatants and non-combatants, including prisoners of war and the wounded during conflicts. The ADF maintains strict adherence to these conventions.

3.14 Moreover, in the contemporary international system, the moral element of military power is increasingly evaluated in terms of effectiveness in achieving broader political objectives. This includes considering the long-term implications of military action for peace, stability, and conflict resolution in the affected regions.

Intellectual element

3.15 The intellectual element generates the knowledge, skills and experiences required within the ADF to fight and win. It is critical in achieving successful military outcomes. The intellectual element guides the ADF's preparation for, and employment of, force using capabilities inherent to the organisation, as well as effective integration with partners.

3.16 Mastery of the intellectual element demands an attitude of lifelong learning within the profession of arms. The joint professional military education system provides a centrepiece for developing the ADF's professional body of expertise. ADF doctrine (available from the [ADF Doctrine Library](#)) evolves as necessary to support professional learning, while ADF concepts (available from the [ADF Concepts Library](#)) constantly challenge the boundaries of established doctrine to cultivate its evolution.

3.17 In addition to traditional sources of professional intellectual input are debates on strategic policy and Defence capability that take place in academia and the wider public domain. Such sources provide a venue for the contest of ideas debate that can expand professional understanding and strengthen the intellectual element. The internet (including social media platforms) facilitates access to information and opinion. However, such dialogue may also provide a source of confusion and misinformation, and hence understanding the truth and context is essential.

Physical element

3.18 The physical element provides a means to fight and win. It encompasses ADF capabilities, or those of allies and partners combined with the ADF, that create effects on the adversary's warfighting capability and the operational environment. In the context of military power, the physical element fractures an adversary's will to fight through destruction, overmatch or dislocation in the warfighting domains. Application of the physical element also contributes to effects in the information environment.

3.19 The ability to deploy forces rapidly, along with effective force protection strategies, plays a significant role in the physical element. Sustainable operations benefit from a strong industrial base. At the national and alliance level, the industrial base should be able to support the sustainability, scalability and innovation of military materiel to meet the evolving requirements of the integrated force. Additionally, forming alliances and regional partnerships enhances Australia's military capabilities, providing additional support and resources.

Applying military power

Integrated campaigning

3.20 Integrated campaigning is the focused aggregation and application of national power in pursuit of national interests, achieved by realising the potential of the ADF's people, ideas and materiel, combined with those of allies and partners. The ADF conducts and contributes to integrated campaigning by embracing and exploiting integration persistently across all levels, all domains, all settings and all forms. Through integration of the ADF with other elements of national power, including industry and academia, as well as with allies and partners, the military can most effectively contribute to the defence of national interests.

3.21 The ADF conducts and contributes to integrated campaigning through four actions of applied power: understand, orchestrate, effect and sustain.

3.22 These actions are conducted continuously and simultaneously across the spectrum of competition. They are integrated with the actions of other elements of national power, as well as with allies and partners.

3.23 **Understand.** The ADF contributes to national understanding of competitors, allies and partners, as well as other potential sources of power. To develop understanding, the ADF is active throughout the spectrum of competition to support deliberate, persistent campaigns in pursuit of national interests. By contributing to the efforts of allies and partners, the ADF helps to identify and illuminate the activities of competitors, improves the detection of sophisticated disinformation and deception, and helps identify opportunities for collective responses.

3.24 **Orchestrate.** Orchestration is the arrangement and sequencing of national power from multiple sources to apply diverse effects throughout time and space. When combined with understanding, orchestration enables deliberate decisions to be made about how, when and where actions are taken through a campaign approach. Orchestration requires the ADF to engage across and beyond organisational boundaries to identify opportunities and mitigate risks. Orchestration differentiates the aggregation of power from physical concentration.

3.25 **Effect.** Applying the desired effect involves influence and the application of force. The ADF applies military power—in conjunction with

allies and partners—to achieve persistent shaping, to deter competitors and potential adversaries from resorting to conflict, and to respond decisively where conflict occurs, to defend Australia and its interests. To achieve influence, the ADF builds partnerships and generates integrated effects with allies and partners. To apply force effectively, the ADF must fight to win. This requires having the expertise to plan and direct joint, inter-agency and combined operations in, through and across all domains and within the operational and information environments. Australia seeks asymmetric advantages in the application of force. By developing a broad range of kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities, the ADF retains the ability to respond above or below the conflict threshold, and to select ways that are predictable or unpredictable. This requires capabilities and innovative approaches that can hold adversaries' forces and infrastructure at risk further from Australia by using range, speed, surprise and lethality.

3.26 **Sustain.** Sustaining the application of military power involves force generation, operational concepts and logistics systems that harness resources and effects from multiple domains and allow the force to continue to fight, even if degraded. To sustain a force also involves the seamless transition of supporting and supported relationships between elements of national power, to maintain initiative and continually build influence.

Military power through domains



Figure 3.2: Integrated military power domains within the information and operational environments

3.27 The ADF contributes to integrated campaigning by acting in and creating effects in one or more of the five domains, namely maritime, land, air, cyber and space. Each domain has its own characteristics and requires specialised expertise. However, the domains are not independent of each other—actions in one domain can have effects in other domains. Hence, the ADF achieves strategic objectives by integrating effects within the operational environment—which consists of the five domains and is interdependent with the information environment—and across the spectrum of competition in response to government directions (see Figure 3.2).

The information environment

3.28 The information environment encompasses the globe and those parts of space that can influence, or be influenced by, human activity. It affects, and is affected by, all military power domains. It is characterised by ubiquitous, on-demand information and hyper-connectivity and enables information creation, collaboration and sharing on an unprecedented scale.

3.29 As with all aspects of national power, military power is reliant on accurate and timely information, which in turn relies upon network operations, information assurance and cyberspace operations, all of which exist in the information environment.

Military power domains

3.30 Within the operational environment, a domain is a medium with discrete characteristics in which, or through which, military action takes place. Domains are often critical manoeuvre spaces where access or control is vital to the freedom of action and superiority required to achieve military and national power objectives.

3.31 The Government has directed the ADF to maintain capabilities to achieve effects in the maritime, land, air, cyber and space domains. The ADF has evolved its organisation into an integrated multi-domain force that harmonises preparedness across all operational domains. Joint operations employ capabilities through the domains to have effects on targets and target audiences—hence they are called ‘operational domains’.

Maritime power



Figure 3.3: Royal Australian Navy sailors conduct weapons training aboard HMAS *Childers*

maritime domain

The environment corresponding to the oceans, seas, bays, estuaries, islands, coastal areas, including the littorals and their sub-surface features, and interfaces and interactions with the atmosphere.

maritime power

The total strength of a nation's capability to conduct and influence activities in, through and from the sea to achieve its objectives.

3.32 National maritime power is the total strength of a nation's capability to conduct and influence activities in, through and from the sea to achieve its objectives. Military maritime power is a nation's ability, by means of all aspects of military power, to control the use of the sea (for trade, exploitation of resources, communication and movement of military force) and deny such use to an adversary, and to exercise its jurisdiction in maritime areas over which it has sovereignty or sovereign rights. Maritime power is crucial for controlling vital sea lanes and is essential for Australian

trade and strategic movements. In this way, maritime power and the maintenance of good order at sea contribute directly to national interests through the protection of Australia's international economic connections and the maintenance of the global rules-based order.

3.33 ADF maritime forces enable flexible and responsive military presence, projected far from the nation's borders, with poise and prolonged presence in international waters. This means the ADF can conduct prolonged operations, supported by advanced replenishment and logistical capabilities, and be a persistent and versatile instrument in international relations and military strategy across the spectrum of competition. See [ADF-I-3 ADF Maritime Power](#) for more details.

Land power



Figure 3.4: An M1A1 Abrams main battle tank crosses a medium girder bridge at Lavarack Barracks, Townsville

3.34 Land power is a nation's capability to exert control over territory, as a cornerstone of the protection of sovereignty and projection of strategic depth. It is characterised by: persistence, dominance of decisive terrain, utility, austerity and the human dimension.

land domain

Located at the Earth's surface and sub-surface ending at the high water mark and overlapping with the maritime environment in the landward segment of the littorals.

land power

The total strength of a nation's capability to conduct and influence activities in, through and from the land to achieve its objectives.

3.35 The human dimension of conflict is pivotal in land power. Land forces often engage peacefully with local populations, playing a crucial role in the provision of human security and in winning hearts and minds, during all natures of conflict. This direct interaction with the populace is a unique attribute of land power, influencing both tactical and strategic outcomes. See [ADF-I-3 ADF Land Power](#) for more details.

Air power**air domain**

The envelope of air surrounding the Earth, where density, pressure, temperature, natural obstacles and weather systems are the dominant environmental factors.

air power

The total strength of a nation's capability to conduct and influence activities in, through and from the air to achieve its objectives.

3.36 Air power provides a nation with the advantage of speed, range and altitude, enabling rapid responses and the ability to strike at considerable distance. Air power leverages aircraft agility, reach, persistence, resilience, and payload to influence the air domain to the advantage of Australian military power.

3.37 Air power is essential for control of the air, which is a prerequisite for successful operations in the other physical domains of maritime and land. Air power plays a key role in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), offering real-time battlespace awareness. Air power also includes maritime and land strike and air mobility, as well as close air support to land forces.

The agility and reach of air power make it a critical component in modern conflict, capable of shaping the battlespace and providing decisive advantages. See [ADF-I-3 ADF Air Power](#) for more details.



Figure 3.5: Personnel working on the operations floor inside No. 1 Remote Sensor Unit at RAAF Base Edinburgh

Cyber power

cyber domain

An integrated global domain consisting of cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum.

cyber power

The total strength of a nation's capability to perform activities, in, through and from the cyber domain to achieve its objectives.

3.38 Cyber power is core to the informational element of military power. Cyber power is the total strength of a nation's capability to perform activities in, through and from the cyber domain to achieve its objectives. The cyber domain consists of cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum. Cyber

power connects military power across all domains and allows Defence to effectively integrate capabilities for lethal and non-lethal effects.



Figure 3.6: Defence personnel participate in the Australian Defence Force Cyber Skills Challenge in November 2023

3.39 The cyber domain is as ubiquitous as the information environment. It is global and blurs geographic or political boundaries. The cyber domain is the infrastructure of cyberspace built on the naturally occurring attributes of the electromagnetic spectrum. It permeates all other operational domains. It has become a key domain in modern conflict, critically enabling the broader force. It presents novel opportunities and challenges in both the projection and protection of military power.

3.40 The unique characteristics of the cyber domain allow smaller actors to asymmetrically challenge larger ones, often with anonymity. Cyber power blurs the traditional boundaries between military and civilian realms, given that much of the ADF's cyber mission-related terrain is neither owned, controlled nor exclusively managed by Defence and is integrated with economies, industry and critical infrastructure. See [ADF-I-3 *ADF Cyber Power*](#) for more details.

Space power

space domain

The environment corresponding to space where radiation, charged particles, electric and magnetic fields, vacuum, micro-meteoroids and orbital debris are the dominant environmental factors.

space power

The total strength of a nation's capability to conduct and influence activities to, in, through and from space to achieve its objectives.

3.41 Space power represents the ability of a nation to exploit the benefits afforded by space systems, and their potential for unrestricted global coverage. The boundary for space is considered to begin at 100km altitude, which is known as the Karman Line. This nominal boundary is the point at which orbital mechanics dictates space vehicle motion, rather than aerodynamic lift or buoyancy that predominates for air vehicles. Space power's characteristics of reach, perspective and adaptability provide distinctive operational benefits to the integrated force for the conduct of campaigns and operations. Like activity in other domains, all space activities directed by the ADF are conducted in accordance with international law, with consideration of responsible space behaviours.

3.42 Space power plays a critical role in Australia's national security and military power. Defence has long used space power to support terrestrial forces across the spectrum of competition. Governments, and their defence forces specifically, have come to rely on a mix of military, civil, commercial and international space capabilities. Cost, value, flexibility and resilience have necessitated this capability mix along with what is commonly known as the 'dual use' nature of space systems. Space systems enable integrated forces by providing critical capabilities, including satellite communications, remote sensing, environmental monitoring, missile warning, and positioning, navigation and timing. Notably, their global nature enables service to multiple theatres concurrently and support to strategic, operational and tactical decision-making. Technological advances in space capabilities continue to enhance the effectiveness of the integrated force.



Figure 3.7: The Space Surveillance Telescope, located at the Harold E. Holt Naval Communication Station, operated by the Australian Defence Force's first Joint Space Unit – No. 1 Space Surveillance Unit

3.43 However, with the growing dependency on space capabilities comes a growing risk of vulnerability. The predictable nature of satellite orbits and reliance on terrestrial infrastructure means that space services are at risk of disruption and degradation through kinetic and non-kinetic means. This risk is further heightened as near-Earth space becomes a more congested and contested operating environment—a problem that will be exacerbated by easier access to space capabilities by state and non-state actors. This means that space domain awareness and space control capabilities, including both offensive and defensive systems, will be an increasingly critical part of maintaining space power advantage, while denying this to competitors and adversaries. The effective employment of space power will be increasingly challenged by the need to better balance exploiting dependency with mitigating vulnerability. See [ADF-I-3 ADF Space Power](#) for more details on the employment of space power.

Chapter 4 – Using military power

Executive summary

- The Australian Defence Force needs to be capable of using force—as a last resort and always in the context of other policy measures—to defend Australia and its national interests.
- Conflict is a clash of wills that is fundamentally rooted in the threat or application of violence, death and destruction. Its nature is unchanging, but its character (how it is fought) continues to evolve.
- The changing character of conflict and the reduction of strategic warning time complicate assuring Australia’s sovereignty and security.
- The Australian Defence Force now describes peace and war—previously seen as absolute concepts—as a spectrum of competition, covering cooperation, competition and conflict.
- Australian decision-making may occur at national strategic, military strategic, operational and tactical levels.
- Defence determines its strategic ends based on direction from Government and in alignment with Australia’s strategic objectives.

Purpose of the Australian Defence Force

4.1 To defend Australia and its national interests, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) needs to be capable of applying force. For Australia, force is a last resort and always undertaken in the context of other policy measures. Where other measures are insufficient, the ADF may need to apply the threat, or use, of force to compel, deter, deny, coerce or defeat threats and protect Australia’s sovereignty. The mission set of the ADF is detailed in Figure 4.1.

4.2 The ADF contributes the military instrument of national power among the suite of instruments available to the government in pursuit of its strategic objectives. The ADF’s contributions include participation in peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace-building activities, humanitarian

assistance and disaster relief, international engagement and other operations or activities in the national interest. However, the ADF's ultimate contribution to national power is to apply military power in conflict with an adversary, at the Government's direction.

Outcome 1: Defend Australia and its national interests through the conduct of operations and provision of support for the Australian community and civilian authorities in accordance with Government direction.

Outcome 2: Protect and advance Australia's strategic interests through the provision of strategic policy, the development, delivery and sustainment of military, intelligence and enabling capabilities, and the promotion of regional and global security and stability as directed by Government.

**The Government's specified outcomes for Defence
(as at financial year 2023–24)**

Understanding conflict

conflict

A situation in which an actor seeks to impose its will upon others using violence.

4.3 **'War' versus 'conflict'**. This doctrine uses the term 'conflict' in preference to 'war'. This does not mean that the ADF may not need to wage war. Instead, the broader term 'conflict', within which war is a particular type, is more appropriate for describing the contemporary circumstances in which the ADF may need to apply military power across the spectrum of competition. The word 'war' has been retained within the context of established terms, for example 'the principles of war' set out below.

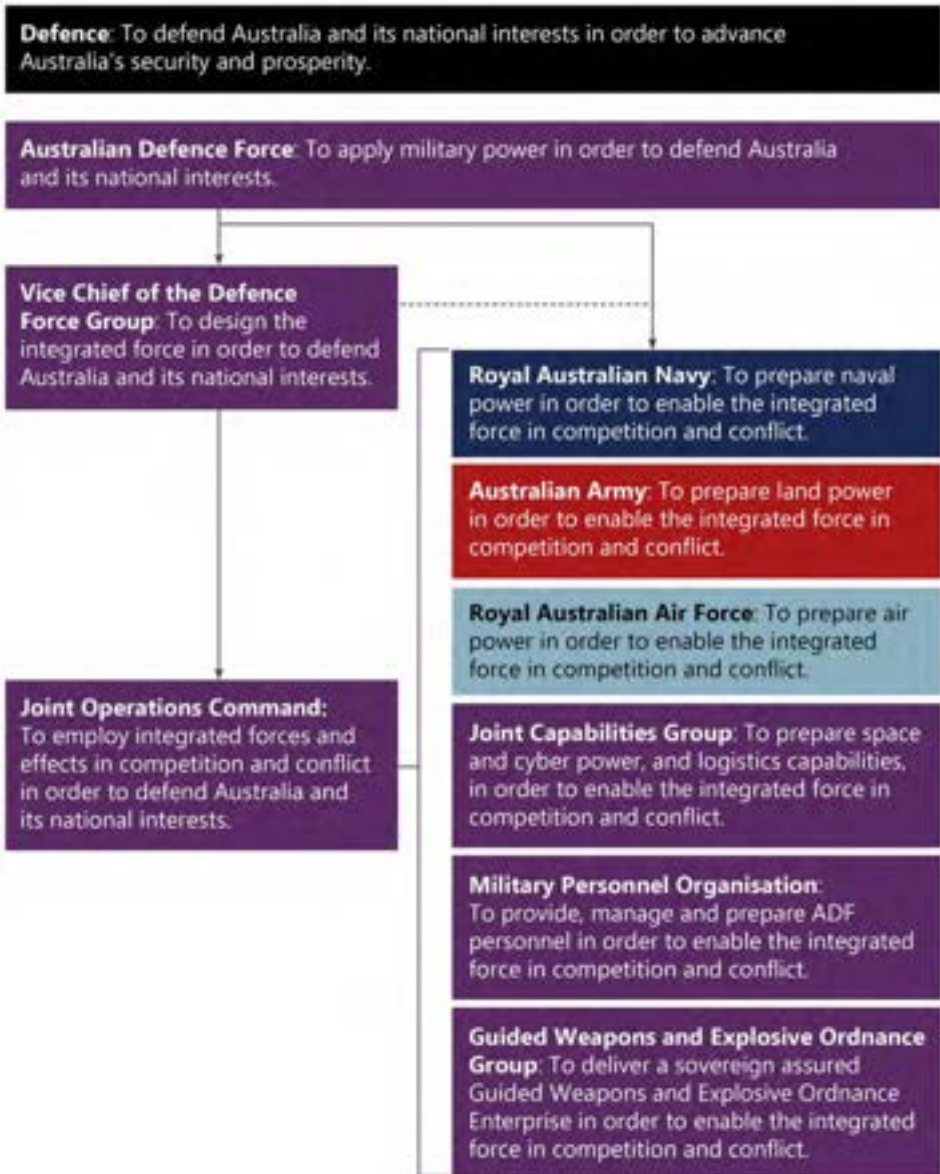


Figure 4.1: The Australian Defence Force mission set³

³ Mission statements are from the Chief of the Defence Force charter letters, dated 04 December 2023.

The nature and character of conflict

4.4 The nature of conflict is unchanging. The historical experience of conflict demonstrates some enduring features. Conflict is a clash of wills that remains fundamentally rooted in the threat or application of violence, death and destruction. In this context, future conflicts will likely possess the following characteristics:

- a. **Chaos.** Confusion and disorder arise from the unpredictable and the unexpected in conflict. Chaos favours neither side; but the side that deals with it best will be more likely to succeed. Chaos is to be expected and managed.
- b. **Friction.** Friction is everything that goes wrong and creates problems with the smooth flow of a plan. It is the operational grit that makes everything hard.
- c. **Uncertainty.** Chaos and friction can create insufficient understanding of threats and features of the operational environment. Flexibility, planning, clear command and control, clarity of purpose and maintaining the aim can mitigate the worst aspects of uncertainty.
- d. **Violence and danger.** Violence and danger are inherent in conflict. They are to be expected, managed and dealt with. Purpose and commitment of the force will assist in meeting the challenges of facing the violence and danger of war.

4.5 By contrast to the enduring nature of conflict, the way conflict is fought—the character of conflict—continues to evolve. The character of conflict at any point in time reflects the contemporary circumstances and development of the societies involved and their international environment. In our times, actors can increasingly conduct or support conflict in, through and from space and the cyber domain. Technology and political ideology continue to transform how conflict is fought, and new groups emerge that use lethal force and other tools in indiscriminate and anarchic ways. Non-state actors may take a range of not clearly attributable actions with lethal or non-lethal effects, including cyber actions, in an environment of heightened competition, but short of conflict. In some cases, the application of non-kinetic actions may actually cause lethal effects. Such actions can be applied by state and non-state actors with the deliberate intent to mask lethality or attribution. An example is the non-kinetic targeting, through means such as

cyber, that result in catastrophic failure of equipment that causes destruction or loss of life.



Figure 4.2: Australian Army soldiers from 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment conduct an assault on a main defensive position during Exercise BROLGA RUN 2023 in Queensland

4.6 The changing character of conflict suggests that those who would seek to cause Australia harm have more potential capability to do so. It is still very possible that nations will mobilise large forces on a traditional road to conflict. However, there is also potential for a messier, non-attributable and nonlinear set of engagements and interactions will define future conflicts. The changing character of conflict makes it difficult to predict when adversaries will have both the capability and intent to cause harm. The indicators will be there, but new tools are required to identify and analyse increments of change.

4.7 Despite the rise of unconventional threats, the threat of conventional conflict remains. This has been plainly demonstrated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and its broader effect on the global security environment. The ADF needs to remain ready across a broader spectrum of competition to respond to Government direction and defend Australia and its national interests in order to advance Australia's security and prosperity. But the

ADF's preparedness focus will be to deter and, if necessary, respond to high-end state on state conflict.



Figure 4.3: A Royal Australian Air Force F-35A Lightning II demonstrates air power during the 'Airshows Down under Shellharbour' near Shellharbour Airport

The spectrum of competition

4.8 Today, absolute peace or absolute war are uncommon. Therefore the ADF, while recognising that war still does exist, now describes them in a more nuanced manner, as a spectrum of competition that ranges from cooperation, through competition, to conflict, as illustrated in Figure 4.4.

Contemporary example

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022

In February 2022, following a period of build-up and agitation, Russia invaded Ukraine with the aim to disrupt or extinguish Ukraine's political independence.

Russian military operations began with a short air campaign before the ground invasion focussed in the north on Kyiv and Kharkiv, in the east on the Donbas region, and in the south on the Crimean Peninsula. The air and land campaigns were supported by concurrent cyber operations to disrupt Ukrainian command and control. The Ukrainian defence has been a conventional ground-based effort with innovative use of uncrewed systems to offset their disadvantages in fires and maritime power. The Ukrainian government has also employed substantial diplomatic effort and strategic communications to balance Russia's considerably greater conventional military power.

As at early 2024, the Russian campaign has not extinguished Ukraine's political independence, however, the military conflict is increasingly one of attrition.

This example highlights the nature and character of war.⁴ The 'nature' of the war in Ukraine is a conventional clash of political wills: Russia is exerting its military power to disrupt Ukraine's political independence and Ukraine is fighting to retain independence. The 'character' of the conflict is the use of conventional maritime, land, air and cyber power in defence against large-scale Russian military power. Ukraine is also applying other instruments of national power in its use of diplomatic and informational power to rally global support.

⁴ 'war' is deliberately used here because it appropriately represents the political relationship between the Russian and Ukrainian states. Each state is exerting national power for their contested claims including the use of respective military instruments in strategic, operational and tactical actions.



Figure 4.4: The spectrum of competition

4.9 This model depicts the various states of engagement on a spectrum between peaceful cooperation and general conflict. However, the reality is far more complex. Nations may be trading openly while conducting malicious activities (such as cyber activity, interference operations or aggressive use of paramilitary agencies). A nation may seek to covertly disadvantage another nation while publicly promoting deeper engagement. Nations may seek to promote their interests outside established rules and norms without resorting to violence. Competition can occur across all dimensions of national power, across all domains and at the same time.

4.10 **Crisis.** Defence can expect that the strategic environment with regard to the spectrum of competition will not be static. Circumstances can rapidly shift the status of a situation in either direction along the spectrum of competition. A crisis is a situation, which may or may not be foreseen, which threatens national security or interests or international peace and stability, and which requires decision and action. A crisis can threaten to rapidly shift a situation's status into, or closer to, the conflict end of the spectrum.

4.11 **Strategic warning time.** The loss of strategic warning time is one significant feature of the contemporary character of potential conflict for Australia. Strategic warning time for conventional conflict is the time a sovereign state estimates an adversary would need to launch a major attack against it. In the latter part of the twentieth century, the Australian Government could assume a 10-year warning time as the foundation for planning, capability development and preparedness for conflict. Emergent capabilities—including longer-range missiles, hypersonic missiles, and offensive cyber and space capabilities—have reduced strategic warning times around the globe. Strategic warning is less relevant when countering malign activities below the threshold of overt conflict, which can occur with little or no warning time and may be disguised or false-flagged. Lack of strategic warning time means that the ADF—using the force-in-being and

operating across the spectrum of competition—needs to be prepared for crisis to escalate into conflict.

Principles of war

4.12 Armed conflict is complex and chaotic so it would be folly to reduce warfare to a set of rules. However, from an understanding of the nature and types of conflict, and humanity's experience of war, it is possible to derive enduring principles that promote success in armed conflict. These principles have utility across the spectrum of competition, and across all levels of conflict. They maintain relevance in spite of dramatic changes over time in the methods, techniques and weapons of war.

4.13 In applying these principles to specific situations, balancing one principle against another may be necessary. The principles should not be viewed as merely a 'checklist' for success but rather they must be applied, as with all doctrine, with professional judgement in emphasis befitting the circumstances.

The principles of war

- **Selection and maintenance of the aim**
- **Concentration of effects**
- **Cooperation**
- **Offensive action**
- **Security**
- **Surprise**
- **Flexibility**
- **Economy of effort**
- **Sustainment**
- **Morale**

4.14 **Selection and maintenance of the aim.** Clear expression of the aim of a campaign, operation or strategy anchors the effort to a single cohesive purpose. Maintaining that clarity of purpose under challenge is key to ensuring unity of effort and consistency in the execution of the plan. Military action is always a means to an end and never an end in itself. The end must always be kept clearly in view at all levels of competition and is guided by a whole-of-government approach. In multinational operations, it must be

appreciated that nations may have divergent aims, which may place restrictions and caveats on what can be achieved.

4.15 Concentration of effects. Success in combat depends on the concentration of superior force at the right point at the right time. Traditionally expressed as concentration of force, modern conflict demands that effects be concentrated but physical forces must remain as dispersed as possible and only concentrated for the shortest possible time—and only when absolutely necessary. Minimum-mass teams must be able to produce coordinated effects while remaining below an adversary's engagement threshold. This will place a premium on skilful and imaginative planning to balance risk to mission and risk to force.

4.16 Cooperation. The complexity of military operations and the need to integrate and coordinate many different elements demands each element works cohesively and cooperatively with the others. This requires alignment with the purpose of the activity and the intent. Cooperation harnesses the collective will and capabilities of all forces and agencies towards the end state. Interoperability and liaison are key elements in cooperation, and cooperation is fundamental to integration.



Figure 4.5: A Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter from the 1st Aviation Regiment at sunset over the Northern Territory

4.17 Offensive action. It is only through an offensive spirit, aggressive thinking, and a bias for action that military dominance can be achieved. Offensive action puts the adversary off balance and dominates their decision cycle. It relates to both kinetic engagements and the spirit and attitude of

the force. Offensive action is the application of lethal and/or nonlethal means to achieve effects and objectives across the spectrum of competition. While defensive fires have increased significantly to change the character of conflict in recent years, the nature of conflict demands that only offensive action can lead to an enduring decision. Offensive action will be an essential component of any future conflict if deterrence fails.

4.18 **Security.** Maintaining security allows forces freedom of action to operate offensively and denies the adversary an advantage. Failure to achieve security leads to surprise—in a bad way. Security is always relevant at all times, particularly given the omnipresent threat from cyber operations.

4.19 **Surprise.** Every effort must be taken to surprise an adversary and to guard against being taken by surprise. Creating surprise can induce shock and dislocation and cause the sudden breakdown in cohesion of an adversary force. Surprise is a key element of all military action, and is not limited to crisis and conflict. It is a fundamental requirement of a smaller force if it is to gain an asymmetric advantage over a larger force.



Figure 4.6: Royal Australian Navy Armidale Class patrol boat, HMAS *Childers* conducting company training with Royal Navy offshore patrol vessel, HMS *Spey* during a patrol in Australia's northern waters

4.20 **Flexibility.** Flexibility is the ability to adapt to and capitalise on unforeseen circumstances, friction, resistance or setbacks without losing sight of purpose and aim.

4.21 **Economy of effort.** Economy of effort is the prudent allocation and application of ADF and civil resources to achieve desired results. This principle is linked directly to risk and concentration of effort—campaign planning must be prepared to accept and cover risks on secondary efforts.

4.22 **Sustainment.** Sustainment includes all logistics and administrative action necessary for the efficient and effective support of a force. The long distances and difficult terrain and climate in Australia's region will stress sustainment on even the simplest of operations. Sustainment will usually be the key limiting factor on what is militarily possible.

4.23 **Morale.** Morale is an essential component of combat power. It feeds the spirit and the will to fight. It demands a clear understanding of the purpose of the operation and is founded on effective communication and leadership. Breaking the adversary's morale is a clear goal of war. High morale engenders courage, energy, cohesion, endurance, steadfastness, determination, resilience and a bold, offensive spirit. Morale is central to the intellectual and moral aspects of military power. In a regional setting, the legitimacy of Australia's actions—and strong and consistent national support—will be key drivers of morale.

Additional factors affecting operations

4.24 The following three additional principles are worthy of consideration when planning and operating during campaigning in competition, particularly below the threshold of conflict:

- a. **Restraint.** Restraint is the deliberate act of not using unnecessary force. It is a prudent balance between the needs of the mission, protection of the force, and national and regional objectives.
- b. **Perseverance.** Perseverance is the application of commitment over time. Within the context of threats to national interests, the principle of perseverance applies to the will of the people, the resolve of the Government and the resilience of the military force in broadly equal measures and concurrently.

- c. **Legitimacy.** The principle of legitimacy brings the qualities of logic, validity and justifiability to any action. The lethal capabilities of Australian military power must be employed with legitimacy. All military power exerted by the ADF must be lawful or rules-based, ethical and morally justifiable. Simply following the law is insufficient in this context. The ability to maintain moral legitimacy as a trusted partner is crucial to military success in any coalition or alliance.

Information age and the future

4.25 The changing character of conflict and the reduction of strategic warning time complicate the task of assuring the safety and security of Australia. Technology is a catalyst that accounts for much of this change. The world is in the midst of a technological revolution driven by information technology and its emerging applications.

4.26 These factors underpin a revolution that is moving at an exponential rate, shaping the fabric and nature of societies. Today's changes are not only faster, but deeper and broader. Technology promotes interconnectedness within and between societies and through its ubiquity, it is having a profound effect on the future of conflict.

4.27 Future trends in conflict driven by technological change may include the influence of artificial intelligence on the speed and quality of decision-making, the effect of asymmetries in strategic capabilities, a weakening of international governance and arms control and expanding domains of conflict. Furthermore, technological trends are likely to increase the ability for non-state actors—which may be less bound by legal and moral constraints—to engage in conflict. The ADF must harness technology and seek to understand how it will shape the future character of conflict.

Military strategy

4.28 At any point on the spectrum of competition, Australian decision-making may occur at four different levels (see Figure 4.7):

- a. **National strategic.** The national strategic level is directed by the Australian Government, which defines Australia's strategic objectives. This level coordinates instruments of national power and allocates national resources.

- b. **Military strategic.** The military strategic level, led by the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF), cultivates and sustains Australia's military power. The CDF commands military forces and advises Government on the use of military power in support of strategic objectives. Decision-making at the military strategic level considers strategic objectives and derives from them objectives for the operational level.
- c. **Operational.** The operational level is led by a theatre commander—usually the Chief of Joint Operations—who is responsible for planning and coordinating campaigns to achieve strategic objectives. The theatre commander commands forces assigned for specific operational activities within a campaign framework. Decision-making at the operational level derives objectives for the highest-level tactical commanders.
- d. **Tactical.** The tactical level concerns the planning and conduct of operational activities that form the elements of a campaign. The tactical level consists of a hierarchy of commanders, up to and including a commander joint task force (when appointed). In the tactical level, each commander derives objectives for their subordinate tactical commanders.

4.29 As capstone doctrine, this publication principally focuses on the strategic levels. Operational- and tactical-level issues are covered in other [ADF Doctrine Library](#) publications. In developing military strategy, one can apply ends, ways, means and a risk framework. Ends can be expressed as strategic objectives. Ways are concerned with the various methods of applying military force. In essence, ways become an examination of courses of action designed to achieve the objectives. Means refers to the military resources (personnel, materiel, finances, forces, logistics, etc) required to accomplish the mission.

4.30 Crucially, if the strategic ends, ways and means are not balanced, risk increases. Risk is the possibility of loss or damage, or of not achieving an objective. The relationship between ways and means, and the balance required to achieve ends, is critical in determining whether an effective military strategy exists. Assessing this balance informs the degree of strategic risk faced.

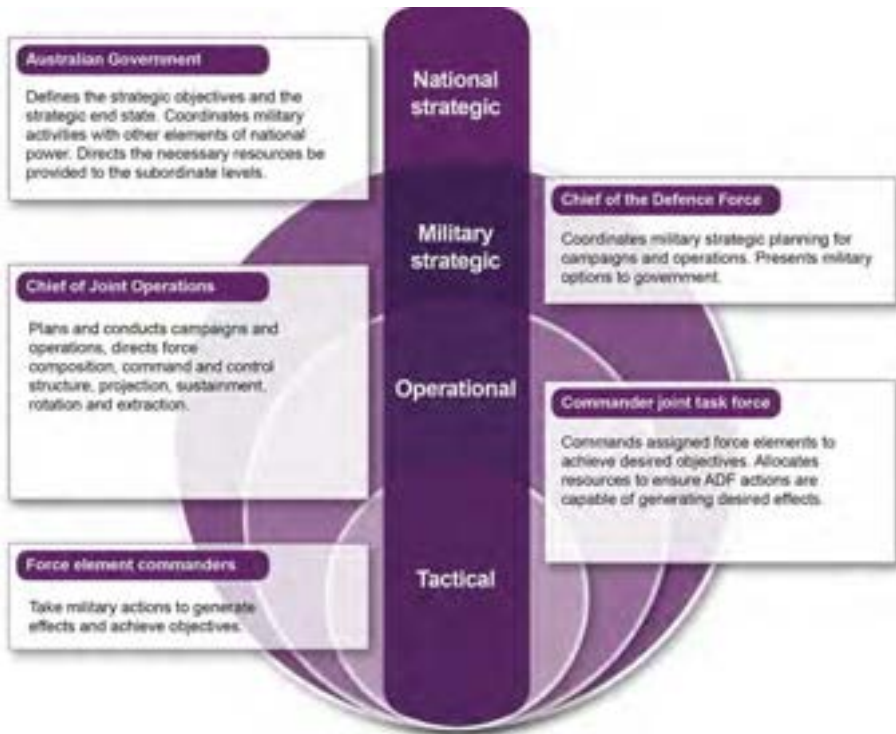


Figure 4.7: The strategic, operational and tactical levels

Strategic ends

4.31 Defence determines its strategic ends based on direction from Government and in alignment with Australia's strategic objectives. The biennial release of a national defence strategy (alongside white papers from Foreign Affairs and other related policy areas) provides a comprehensive statement of the Government's broad, long-term expectations of Defence. Specific direction is provided to Defence from Cabinet or National Security Committee decisions. Together, this guidance provides a key input into processes described in the *Defence Strategy Framework*, through which the Secretary of the Department of Defence and the CDF set strategic objectives for Defence and its constituent groups and Services.

4.32 Strategic competition between the United States and China will be the principal driver of dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region into the foreseeable future. In this environment, Defence must be able to contribute to Australia's strategy of denial. A denial strategy aims to deter any conflict

before it begins and otherwise prevent any potential adversary from successfully coercing Australia through force. Defence's contributions to support regional security and prosperity, and upholding a favourable regional strategic balance, are other elements of a strategy designed to deter a potential adversary from taking actions that would be inimical to Australia's interests and regional stability.



Figure 4.8: A loadmaster from No. 35 Squadron examines the coastline of Nadi during a patrol in a C-27J Spartan as part of the first Defence Pacific Air Program rotation to Fiji

4.33 The strategy of denial involves working with international partners to ensure no country attempts to achieve its regional objectives through military action. By signalling, a credible ability to hold potential adversary forces at risk of imposed costs, this strategy also seeks to deter attempts to coerce Australia through force. Both objectives involve altering any potential adversary's belief that it could achieve its ambitions with military force at an acceptable cost.

Strategic ways

4.34 The strategic level determines if, how and where Defence capabilities are used to contribute to national security. However, although the bottom

line is that the ADF must be capable of full-scale warfighting, this force also needs to adapt to a diverse range of activities across the spectrum of competition. Beyond conflict, this includes conducting humanitarian and stabilisation operations, limited objective military operations and operations in support of civilian governance. [ADF-P-3 Campaigns and Operations](#) provides details on how Defence contributes to operations. Defence's contributions to Australia's strategic objectives are not confined to discrete operations. Rather, Defence's routine activities during cooperation and competition—including exercises, ship deployments and international engagement—also contribute to deterrence by denial. Such activity helps to deny an adversary freedom of action in the region by increasing Australian influence and demonstrating Australian military reach. This is discussed further in [ADF-P-3 Campaigning in Competition](#).

4.35 Campaign and contingency planning. To ensure alignment with Australia's strategic objectives, the strategic level provides planning direction to the operational level. Campaign planning and contingency planning—done at the operational level—allows Defence to be best positioned to respond with operational activities when required. Defence's approach to planning is described in [ADF-P-5 Planning](#).

4.36 Discretion to employ the Australian Defence Force. A particularly consequential responsibility at the strategic level is making decisions on whether or not to commit the ADF to operations, including armed conflict. Since at least the Second World War, Australia has not faced an existential threat. Consequently, the Australian Government has had discretion in committing the ADF to the operations undertaken. In some occasions, that discretion has been limited—Timor-Leste in 1999 and the Solomon Islands in 2003 are two examples. In other operations, the Australian Government had discretion to support collective security (eg involvement in Korea 1950–56, the Gulf War 1990–91, Somalia 1993–94, Afghanistan 2001–02 and 2005–21, Iraq 2003–08 and the Solomon Islands 2003–17). One of the biggest challenges the ADF faces today is the prospect of an unavoidable, short-warning conflict where Australia has no discretion and is forced into a fight, at a place and at a time not of its choosing.

Strategic means

4.37 For the ways to be feasible and the ends achievable, Defence develops military capabilities that provide the means. This military power should be available in a timely and appropriate manner for the range of

scenarios and within strategic warning times identified in strategic analysis. Forces also need to be maintained at a scale and posture that is within the limits of financial resources and consistent with the broader priorities of the Australian Government. The ADF's strategic means—ie its capability—is continually defined through concept development, which informs force structure and this in turn provides the basis for ongoing capability development. Defence's preparedness system (discussed in Chapter 5) provides assurance to this process. Assisting the CDF to maintain suitable and appropriate military power is a primary strategic function of the Services (and Defence groups with a capability manager function).



Figure 4.9: Australian Army light armoured vehicles from the 2nd Cavalry Regiment fire during an exercise in Queensland

4.38 Force structure and force generation. Military capability is achieved by developing an appropriately structured force that is prepared for a range of potential operations and military response options. The total military capability available to Defence at any given time is known as the current force. Outside of operational activities, the main focus for the ADF is to prepare the current force so that it is capable of generating force elements as required. Vitality, this force structure and its constituent elements need to be capable of operating as an integrated force, both within the ADF and with partner nations and agencies. Defence's approach is to design an integrated

and focused force, rather than adopt a domain-centric force design. Force design focuses on developing capabilities that address specific strategic and operational needs based on realistic and prioritised scenarios. This approach also involves bringing minimum viable capabilities into service as efficiently and effectively as possible. This will ensure capability development is appropriately aligned with strategy and resources.

minimum viable capability

A capability that can successfully achieve the lowest acceptable level of the directed effect in the required time and be able to be acquired, introduced into service and sustained effectively.

4.39 **Capability development.** The force structure and specific capabilities needed by Defence are continually evolving. This evolution is necessary to keep up with developments in technology, society and the strategic environment. It requires Defence to invest in ongoing capability development to see the current force evolve toward a future force (based on analysis of force structures required beyond the time horizon of current investments). Capability development for Defence requires substantial investment of government resources over long timeframes. This requires sound military strategic advice to help Government make focused investments.

Chapter 5 – Preparing and employing the Australian Defence Force

Executive summary

- The Australian Defence Force must be able to conduct operations with the force-in-being while also planning to conduct future operations with new capabilities planned for the future force.
- Operational art and operational design are complementary functions. Operational art is the skilful employment of military forces to attain strategic goals through campaigns and major operations. Operational design is a command planning framework for the sequencing and synchronisation of military operations to generate effects for the achievement of operational objectives.
- The Australian Defence Force uses formal planning processes to develop military options, plans and recommendations to Government.

Preparing and employing military power

5.1 The Australian Defence Force (ADF) contributes to national security by applying military power as a component of national power as directed by the Australian Government. Navy, Army, Air Force and Joint Capabilities Group (JCG; for cyber, space and logistics capabilities and as the ADF Information Warfare Lead) prepare the capabilities that are then available within the ADF. With forces allocated by the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) from the Services and JCG, the Chief of Joint Operations commands, directs and coordinates task forces, joint task forces and operational headquarters to achieve assigned missions.

5.2 Military power is developed through force structures appropriately designed and prepared to succeed in a range of military scenarios. The success of the ADF and its ability to apply military power is measured in two ways: by what it achieves and what it deters. The mere possession of the capability and the ability to employ it at a time and place of the

Government's choosing can be a very effective deterrent in particular threat scenarios. The Australian Government relies on the ADF to shape, deter and, if necessary and directed, respond in pursuit of Australian national interests.

Evolution of military power

5.3 **The current force.** The current force is the standing force that is available for deliberate or responsive operational activities today.

5.4 **The future force.** The future force is the integrated force that Defence intends to have available in the future, including capabilities proposed in the Integrated Investment Program (IIP) as well as those under design consideration. As such, the future force is the ADF's view of the capabilities required for the future generation of military power and sets out a concept for capability, force structure and readiness development. Capabilities inspired and delivered through future force planning are progressively incorporated into the current force as they become available. The improvement of the current force from the intended future force, facilitated by the IIP and the force design process, is how the ADF continually develops Australian military power.

Preparedness and mobilisation

Preparedness

5.5 Preparedness is the measurable capacity of Defence to generate sustainable military power to achieve government directed objectives over time. Preparedness is core to Defence's mission, and the Defence Preparedness Management System is central to how Defence achieves and assures directed preparedness outcomes. Preparedness is a condition met when the readiness and sustainability of force elements are appropriate and aligned to the outcomes sought. Defence preparedness management involves judgments at every level about risk, resources, time, and assessment and assurance of performance. Preparedness policy helps Defence identify and manage strategic and operational risk through mandating reporting and assurance in accordance with preparedness direction. Defence industry capacity also supports Defence preparedness. However, given the diversity of private-sector stakeholders, industry capacity is not easily measured.

5.6 Preparedness is a measure of the ability of the current force to achieve specified effects. ADF's management of preparedness determines

the level of capability that can be made available for operations. The state of preparedness of any force element (FE) is the combined outcomes of its readiness and sustainability. Additionally, the planned for preparedness of the future force informs force design activities.



Figure 5.1: A loaded MAN-40 truck is guided onto the MV *Bandicoot* ahead of setting sail for Operation RESOLUTE at the Port of Darwin

5.7 Strategic materiel reserves. The capability, employability and sustainability of the ADF is enabled and constrained by the supply of strategic materiel, making logistics fundamental to preparedness. The availability of strategic materiel informs options for the viable employment of Defence capabilities. Complexities of global supply chains and distribution requires the ADF to hold reserves of strategic materiel (such as fuel and explosive ordnance) which are immediately available to the integrated force.

5.8 Integrated supply chains. Sustaining deployed ADF forces relies on integrated supply chains. The ADF retains organic capabilities within the current force that are augmented by non-organic, defence industry capabilities, civil infrastructure and international support as required. International support may include supply arrangements for ADF weapons, platforms, systems and equipment, and supplementary support through resupply arrangements with Australia's allies. Further information regarding

sustaining operations is available in [ADF-P-4 Logistics](#) and [ADF-I-4 Logistics Support to Operations](#).

Mobilisation

5.9 Mobilisation in Defence is the act of moving from the prepared state for a range of contingencies to being ready to execute a specific contingency or operation. It may involve generating Defence capabilities and capacities outside the scope of existing preparedness guidance and budgetary allocations, and in certain circumstances may necessitate the marshalling of national resources.

5.10 Mobilisation may occur over three levels: partial, Defence and national. Partial mobilisation involves an occasional surge of some ADF elements and their supporting contractor base, and is more likely to occur than large-scale mobilisation. This type of mobilisation provides an immediate effect, generally arises at short notice, only affects a small range of activities or few organisations, and usually proceeds under current legislation with some modifications to contractual provisions. Defence mobilisation and national mobilisation are likely to involve a significant increase in effort over a wide range of activities for an extended period, with comprehensive linkages and synergies between many organisations. National mobilisation may necessitate the marshalling of national resources to defend the nation from substantial or existential threats.

5.11 Mobilisation requires deliberate planning to set out how the ADF expands, at speed, and continues operations beyond the scope of the initial response.

Preparedness and mobilisation within Defence

5.12 The preparedness of the current force is bound by its structure, posture, capabilities and the capacities of available resourcing. Mobilisation increases the scale and depth of the current force, which enables the expansion of operations.

5.13 The capability managers—Chief of Navy, Chief of Army, Chief of Air Force, Chief of Joint Capabilities, Chief of Personnel and Chief of Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance—are responsible for preparing their respective capabilities to levels described in specified preparedness direction from the CDF and Secretary. Capability managers in the enabling groups—such as Security and Estate Group for Defence infrastructure and bases and

Defence Digital Group for information and communication technology—are similarly required to meet the preparedness direction given to support to the Chief of Joint Operations (CJOPS) and the domain leads. Additionally, enabling capability managers are required to meet the strategic materiel reserve direction and intent. CJOPS, as the force employer, applies assigned force elements and capabilities prepared by the capability managers through planning, conducting and managing operations and activities.

5.14 The current force is prepared to meet the requirements of strategic tasks derived from threat assessments, Government direction and policy. However, if a military commitment becomes protracted, exceeding the estimated capability and capacity of the sustainable current force, mobilisation of additional resources becomes necessary to generate the required military power. This mobilisation may include accessing national and international resources.

5.15 Preparedness and mobilisation are discussed further in [ADF-P-0 *Preparedness and Mobilisation*](#).

Campaigning

5.16 Campaigning applies military power in a specific operational theatre within a given time. A campaign plan identifies objectives, the sequence of those objectives, the time and resources necessary for achieving those objectives and, therefore, the broad scheme of manoeuvre.

5.17 The building blocks of campaigns are operations, just as the building blocks of operations are actions at the tactical level. The essence of a campaign is the orchestration of operations and tactical actions to achieve the military strategic end state. If tactical actions do not contribute to the desired end state, then, ultimately, they are wasted effort.

5.18 In the Second World War, Australia participated in campaigns in the Middle East, Malaya, Europe and the South-West Pacific. Those campaigns were subsets of the overall conflict. In the first two decades of the twenty-first century, the ADF participated in campaigns in Timor-Leste, Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East.

5.19 Campaigns are an important construct in ADF operational thinking as they can bound a geographic or functional area of concern. Geographically, a

campaign can be developed to secure areas of interest—such as sea lines of communication through a specific area—or to secure a region or locality.



Figure 5.2: Australian Army soldiers from the 8th/12th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery work as a team to load the M777 howitzer during danger close serials at Mount Bunday Training Area, Northern Territory

5.20 Functionally, a campaign could be developed to deal with a type of threat, especially in non-traditional areas. A cyber campaign could be developed to defeat a cyber or physical threat from a nation or rogue actor. An information campaign might be developed to influence an adversary against a course of action. Refer to [ADF-P-3 Campaigns and Operations](#) and [ADF-P-3 Campaigning in Competition](#) for more detail.

Operational art and design

5.21 Operational art and operational design are complementary functions. Operational art translates strategic direction into tactical actions and drives the design, which in turn moderates the art. Operational art relies on abstract and creative thought, informed by a thorough understanding of the strategic environment; whereas, operational design is predominately focussed on practicalities including logistics, resources, time and sequencing.

Operational art

5.22 Operational art is the skilful employment of military forces to attain strategic goals through campaigns and major operations. It is a cognitive approach reflecting experience, creativity, intuition, and judgement.

5.23 Operational art considers:

- a. identification of the military conditions or end state that constitute the strategic objective
- b. the development and selection of operational objectives that must be achieved to reach the desired end state
- c. the risks and limitations of a military contribution within a whole-of-government effort.



Figure 5.3: Australian Defence Force personnel during Exercise CYBER SENTINEL in 2023 (This image has been digitally altered for security purposes)

Operational design

5.24 Operational design is a command planning framework for the sequencing and synchronisation of military operations to generate effects for

the achievement of operational objectives. It enables coherence between strategy and tactics by synchronising and sequencing military capability to achieve directed operational outcomes and objectives. It provides the 'science' to translate the aspiration of operational art into defined military response options.

5.25 Operational design considers:

- a. the designation of a geographic theatre or area of operation
- b. the sequence of key actions to achieve the operational objectives
- c. effects, centres of gravity and defeat mechanisms (explained in [ADF-P-3 Campaigns and Operations](#))
- d. operational reach and culmination
- e. risk and relevant contingencies.

If we now consider briefly the subjective nature of war—the means by which war has to be fought—it will look more than ever like a gamble...In short, absolute, so-called mathematical factors never find a firm basis in military calculations. From the very start there is an interplay of possibilities, probabilities, good luck and bad that weaves its way throughout the length and breadth of the tapestry. In the whole range of human activities, war most closely resembles a game of cards.

**Carl von Clausewitz *On War*,
edited and translated by M. Howard and P. Paret,
Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1989, pp 85-86.**

5.26 Clausewitz reminds the military profession that inherent variables in war will test commanders at all levels. These challenges will become increasingly difficult in the future operating environment as the rate of technological change accelerates and the character of war evolves. Notwithstanding the perpetual frictions of warfare, commanders must use their experience and judgement as well as detailed planning to achieve desired end states.

Strategic considerations

5.27 The CDF and Government will liaise regularly during planning to clarify the national security effect required and any constraints. This ensures operational planning (both the art and design) aligns military actions with the broader strategic intent.

5.28 Defence can provide Government fully developed operational plans or less detailed contingency response options. Operational plans describe all aspects of employment, including force flow into the theatre. Contingency plans address broad considerations, resource requirements, and the general scheme of manoeuvre.

5.29 The degree to which Defence develops contingency or operational plans is informed by the threat assessment and likely warning times. Those contingencies considered likely, or those that would have a catastrophic effect, will be well-developed, while those assessed as less likely will usually have broad outline plans.

5.30 When Australia is in a coalition as a contributing partner, it may be given responsibilities to conduct decisive action(s) on a line of operation, as part of a wider combined effort to achieve a directed operational objective(s).

5.31 For additional guidance on operational art and operational design, see [ADF-P-5 Planning](#).

Assessing threats

5.32 Anticipating threats and accurately identifying contingencies are fundamental to operational art and design. When these are done effectively, the ADF can allocate force elements for each contingency, establish degrees of readiness, design training and conduct exercises that prepare for those contingencies.

5.33 The degree of operational planning for contingencies is directly related to Australia's intelligence capabilities, an understanding and assessment of the operational environment, risk appetite, and Government confidence in its commitment to military action. See [ADF-P-2 Intelligence](#) for details about the role of intelligence in informing assessments. Planning for contingencies requires striking a balance between deterring aggression—

through open, transparent preparations that signal capability—and preserving operational secrecy of capabilities, tactics and preparedness.

Operational preparation

5.34 At the strategic and operational levels, operational design has a greater focus on the logistics of an operation than on the employment of the force. In this sense, logistics means more than the sustainment of the operation.

5.35 Logistics in this sense relates to operational-level preparation across a wide range of activities, including negotiation with partners and allies for access to transit, basing and staging areas. It covers the factors required to keep forces effectively engaged and supported with secure lines of communication and supply. Further details about logistics are available in [ADF-P-4 Logistics](#).

5.36 While the scheme of manoeuvre and employment of effects are key aspects, the great strength operational design is its ability to accurately plan the time required to mount and deploy a force to respond to a contingency. It identifies force elements, readiness, training and preparation, force projection and—critically—logistics sustainment.

5.37 This may lead to a requirement for pre-positioning assets and stocks. This then drives ADF posture, positioning, logistics preparation and readiness (as described above). It also informs policies for forward basing and pre-positioning, including the relationship between those and the capacity and capabilities to move supplies to meet demand in theatre. These elements are interlinked. Such actions may serve to prevent conflict by demonstrating clear intent and capability.

5.38 Operational design is a key contributor to government policy and posture in its diplomatic positioning. If an Australian diplomatic position requires the support of military power, then the ADF must be able to assure Government that it can provide the necessary force and effects. If it cannot, then the Government will need to adjust its position, accept greater risk or adjust military capability to ensure the ADF can provide what is required.

5.39 The linkage between operational art and design and the military strategy adopted by Australia is fundamental to generating a force capable of delivering on that strategy. This is best done well in advance of any

contingency, with a clear understanding of the effects and limitations of military power.

Military decision-making

5.40 The Government makes decisions informed by advice provided by a range of departments and organisations through the Cabinet process. No single model of decision-making is used across all government agencies and departments.

5.41 The ADF uses deliberate planning processes to develop military options, plans and recommendations to Government. Detailed planning of options and risks contributes to the confidence and trust Government places in the ADF.

5.42 The military appreciation process (MAP) is a campaign and operational planning tool that nests within more general strategic planning. Intelligence assessments feed into the MAP. The MAP is described in [ADF-P-5 Planning](#). Understanding and using these processes to support military decision-making is essential for ADF leaders and planners.

Chapter 6 – The Australian Defence Force and the profession of arms

Executive summary

- The Australian profession of arms consists of people practised in the ethical application and exercise of lethal force to defend the rights and interests of the nation.
- Use of offensive lethal force to achieve the mission for the Australian Government requires the highest professional standards and personal character.
- Australian Defence Force personnel acknowledge an unlimited liability as part of their unique service to Australia, recognising the expectation and likelihood of death or injury during conflict. This in turn creates an enduring responsibility of the Australian Government to those who serve.
- Members of the profession of arms embody the Defence Values of Service, Courage, Respect, Integrity and Excellence. These values establish an expectation of behaviour by and among ADF personnel, their teams and the integrated force, to work with others to achieve our mission. Through these lived values the ADF retains the trust of Government and the Australian people.

The Anzac spirit

6.1 The history of Australian military service, conspicuously the Anzac tradition, shapes the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and is reflective of the Australian community it serves. Originally formed from Australian and New Zealand armies serving during the First World War, the ideals of the Anzac legend have grown to represent all who have served and continue to serve in the Australian military. The term also expresses the characteristics that are seen as quintessentially Australian: courage, endurance, mateship and

sacrifice.⁵ The Anzac legend has evolved over the years and interpretations of its meaning and use continue to inform notions of national identity, and shape ADF thinking on service and leadership (see [ADF-P-0 ADF Leadership](#)).



Figure 6.1: Australian Army soldiers assault a trench system during the culminating activity on Exercise RHINO RUN 2023

⁵ The four virtues inscribed on the Isurava Memorial.

The profession of arms

6.2 The Australian profession of arms consists of people practised in the ethical application and exercise of lethal force to defend the rights and interests of the nation.

6.3 A key characteristic of traditional professions is that members regulate their professional conduct, defining what is right and wrong in the pursuit of their professional duties. Furthermore, in return for such regulation, these professions are trusted to do things that are otherwise restricted in society.

General Sir John Hackett and the Profession of Arms

The 'profession of arms' is a term whose origins are usually associated with Australian-born British General Sir John Hackett. General Sir John Winthrop Hackett, GCB, CBE, DSO & Bar, MC was born in Perth, Western Australia in 1910 and died in 1997. He served with the British Army in the Second World War, where his most notable service was in North Africa in 1942 and his involvement in Operation MARKET GARDEN in 1944.

General Hackett proposed that the requirements of modern militaries are similar to those requirements of professions such as the law and medicine. That is, there is a specialised body of skills and knowledge, and its members are subject to strict codes of conduct, based on rigorous ethical and moral obligations.

The ADF has adapted General Hackett's theorem to define the standards and expectations that apply to all its members regardless of Service, rank, trade or categorisation.

The unique nature of military service

6.4 The relationship between ADF members and the Australian people is one of service. The ADF exists not to serve itself, but to serve the nation, its national interests and its people. Uniquely, that service may include the need to apply lethal force and the risk of injury or death.

6.5 Character lies at the heart of service and underpins the ethical conduct for members of the profession of arms. The ADF calls on its

members to apply and evolve virtuous conduct within the contemporary military setting and in the exercise of lethal force.



Figure 6.2: An Air Force officer briefs exercise and visiting personnel during Exercise DIAMOND SHIELD 24, No. 26 Squadron at RAAF Base Williamtown

6.6 The profession of arms and the unique nature of military duty form the basis for service to the nation and the conduct that governs a professional military force—known as the ethos of the profession of arms. These two elements are crucial to the fabric of the ADF. Regardless of how ADF personnel serve—as full-time, part-time, conscript or professional—all are members of the profession of arms with a non-negotiable obligation to adhere to its standards and practices.

6.7 Distinguishing features of the profession of arms include direction by command, notions of mission, military expertise, service-oriented character, objective analysis and consideration, ethical and moral conduct, regulation via military law and discipline, the use of lethal force and the individual obligation of unlimited liability.

6.8 The special knowledge and skills of military professionals vary by Service and mustering, but all have the principal role of warfighting in common.

6.9 The ethos of the profession of arms is described in the doctrinal set of: [ADF-P-0 Command](#), [ADF-P-0 ADF Leadership](#), [ADF-P-0 Military Ethics](#), [ADF-P-0 Character in the Profession of Arms](#), and [ADF-P-0 Culture in the Profession of Arms](#).

6.10 Membership within the ADF and its profession of arms begins with swearing an oath during enlistment or appointment. Once sworn, the individual commits to serve the nation and is subject to military law, discipline and command direction.

Unlimited liability

6.11 The term 'unlimited liability' refers to the expectation and possibility of death and injury during armed conflict. The military profession is unique in that members may be ordered to do tasks that put one's life at risk. Commanders can expect that casualties are likely to occur in conflict and that ADF members may be killed or severely wounded.

6.12 While other sectors of the Australian community face dangers in their work, they are not expected to die or be severely injured in the course of their duties. By contrast, ADF members accept this liability and, if they refuse it, will be subject to military discipline.

6.13 The gravity of an ADF member's unlimited liability should not be underestimated nor misunderstood. However, it also represents the most honourable part of a commitment to serve others for the common good.

6.14 Military service requires us to be prepared to deploy anywhere across Australia, the region or around the world in pursuit of Australia's interests. Our membership in the ADF implies a willingness to put our own safety at risk to achieve our mission.

6.15 As members of the profession of arms we may be called upon to do things that would not normally be ethically permissible; we may be directed to kill. The use of lethal force and the destruction of property is a task that may be required to achieve the ADF mission, but this is not an end in itself. The ADF uses the ethical, disciplined application of force to achieve the national interest.

6.16 The potential requirement to kill and the risk of being killed mean we may face serious ethical challenges in our service. We prepare for these

challenges with a strong understanding of Defence Values and military ethical principles.



Figure 6.3: A Royal Australian Navy sailor aboard HMAS *Choules* during Exercise MALABAR in the Eastern Australian Exercise Area

Use of lethal force

6.17 The ADF is authorised to use lethal force offensively, on a large scale, and in pursuit of the ADF's mission. This responsibility weighs heavily on military professionals. In a complex and ambiguous operating environment, ADF members need a deep and sophisticated understanding of their obligations.

6.18 Like unlimited liability, the use of lethal force by military professionals is also a condition of service and should not be misunderstood nor underestimated.

Enduring responsibility to those who serve

6.19 Australian society is intrinsically linked to the ADF. It provides the people and resources the ADF needs. Consequently, how the ADF treats its people and their families during service is fundamental to Australia's military power. The ADF reflects its relationship with Australian society in its culture, ethics and moral approach. Similarly, it is reflected in how Australia treats members of the ADF as they leave and after they leave service.

Culture of the profession of arms

6.20 Culture is fundamental to achieving the Defence mission and implementing the Government's strategy. An organisation's culture is derived from its mission and values.

Mission of the Australian Defence Force

6.21 The ADF's mission is: to apply military power in order to defend Australia and its national interests. The ADF is designed, trained and sustained for this mission. The deliberate articulation and lived practice of Defence's values and behaviours is the foundation of the culture necessary to achieve this mission.

Defence Values

6.22 The Defence Values are Service, Courage, Respect, Integrity and Excellence. These values establish an expectation of behaviour by, and among, ADF personnel and promote a stronger, more capable joint and integrated force as part of a wider and unified Defence organisation. It is through living these values that the ADF retains the trust of Government and society, and of its members, and is best prepared to succeed in its mission.

6.23 The Defence Values meet an organisational and a societal need. They promote alignment between the Government, the military and the people who support them. The ADF must reflect Australian community values while meeting the demands required to succeed on the battlefield.



Figure 6.4: Australian Defence Force culture is underpinned by its values and consistent with its purpose

6.24 In addition to the Defence Values, the ADF's culture also acknowledges the rule of law with the highest levels of respect and adherence. Australian laws are created and administered democratically and legitimately, and offer the nation security through the assurances of public accountability. Therefore, the culture of the ADF must understand and adhere to all of the nuances of the rule of law.

6.25 Conflict, which by its nature is brutal and tough, is demanding on the moral fibre of the people involved. In this environment, ADF personnel must demonstrate their respect for law, conventions of war and codes of conduct in order to maintain their ethical and moral grounding in the violence, chaos and uncertainty around them. In doing so, they will achieve their missions with integrity. A slide into amoral, unethical conduct is deeply corrosive of force cohesion, legitimacy, trust and personal well-being for all those involved. Ethical conduct is not negotiable.

6.26 The ADF needs to be spiritually, mentally and physically tough to engage in armed conflict. Spiritual, mental and physical toughness are not innate qualities gained at birth; they must be taught, trained and practised through ADF service and the joint professional military education (JPME)

system. Ultimately, the ADF seeks to promote professional mastery to achieve an intellectual edge characterised by knowledge, skills, behaviours, cognitive capacity, character and ethos. These aspects, together with experience and practice, build the professional mastery required to achieve and sustain the military advantage necessary for projecting military power.

A culture of continuous improvement for organisational learning

Defence is a complex organisation that places unique demands on its people. The unique aspects of the profession—unlimited liability, the use of lethal force and decision-makers who need to manage these unique risks—mean that some actions can have dire consequences. When this occurs, Defence cannot dismiss these simply as individual failures. Defence, as an institution, needs to learn and evolve through a culture that embraces critical self-reflection.

Decisions made in military service, particularly in the context of armed conflict, must respect risks to the life and wellbeing of people and communities. Moral and ethical failures cannot be dismissed or overlooked—this will undermine trust in the Australian Defence Force.

Through a ‘lessons lens’ Defence applies a continuous improvement culture to assess operational effectiveness. Deliberate reflection of recorded observations and insights allows the ADF and wider Defence to undertake critical analysis, reflection and organisational learning.

To succeed—as individuals and teams, or as an institution—Defence’s people must have the courage to identify shortcomings, accept personal responsibility where due, hold colleagues to account and do what is required to fix problems.

For more information on how Defence adapts, see [ADF-P-7 Learning](#).

6.27 ADF personnel participate in JPME throughout their careers. The JPME pathways provide a framework for Defence professional learning in four core areas: command, leadership and ethics; joint warfare; technology and capability; and national security, policy and strategy.

6.28 JPME is specifically designed to achieve an advantage in the professionals that generate, curate and project ADF’s military power. Moreover, through mastery of the profession of arms the military and civilian elements of Defence are made into a coherent unified force able to develop

policy, build strategy, generate forces and execute operations that are the essence of Australia's military power.

Reputation and trust

6.29 The reputation and legitimacy of the ADF is of pivotal importance. To achieve its purposes, the ADF must be trusted. A government that does not trust its military will be reluctant to give the military the resources, authority and latitude it needs to operate effectively. Furthermore, a public that does not trust its military is a public that will be reluctant to allow family members to enlist. Trust is the lifeblood of the ADF.

6.30 In the operational context, reputation is important in building trusted relationships with allies, supporting agencies, local government bodies and local communities in areas of operations. In short, reputation and trust are important elements for capability and for success on operations. Reputation matters because trust matters.

6.31 Trust between the ADF and the Australian Government, and between the ADF and the Australian people, is betrayed when Defence Values are not the demonstrated basis of individual and team behaviour and culture. It is essential to the maintenance of trust that ADF leaders swiftly identify and correct behaviours that are inconsistent with Defence Values. Such leadership promotes trust in, and within, the ADF.

Chapter 7 – Australian Defence Force and the law

Executive summary

- A fundamental constitutional principle is the authority of the civil government over the Australian Defence Force. *The Australian Constitution* expressly provides the authority to command the Australian Defence Force.
- Establishing the law as the foundation for operations establishes the legitimacy and moral authority of the Australian Defence Force.
- Amendments in 2016 to the *Defence Act 1903* made the Chief of the Defence Force the sole commander of the Australian Defence Force. These amendments also formalised the authority of the Vice Chief of the Defence Force as the Chief of the Defence Force’s deputy.
- In the conduct of warfare, the Australian Defence Force is directed by Australian national objectives, international law and custom, the law of armed conflict, rules of engagement, and moral and ethical considerations.

The executive power of the Commonwealth

7.1 At the highest level, the framework for Australia’s national system of government is set out in *The Australian Constitution*. *The Australian Constitution* specifies the separate legislative, judicial and executive powers and functions of the Australian Government.

7.2 The Australian Defence Force (ADF) operates under the executive control of the Australian Government. *The Australian Constitution* expressly provides the authority to command the ADF. This is a critical factor in understanding the ADF, its purpose and the legal basis for it to act on behalf of the Australian people at the direction of the Australian Government. All planning, advice to Government and operational activity by the ADF must be consistent with the law. The battlespace may be chaotic, but it is not anarchic: the use of military power is governed by law and convention.

7.3 While *The Australian Constitution* authorises the Government to use military power, there are also moral, ethical and social considerations concerning its use. These are informal but extremely important factors governing Australia's use of military power. These informal considerations promote the ADF's moral authority. Moral authority derives not only from doing what is legal, but what is legitimate.

The Commonwealth's defence power

7.4 *The Australian Constitution* provides legislative power under Section 51(vi) for the Parliament to make laws concerning the defence of the Commonwealth and the states. Commonwealth powers with respect to defence also flow from the executive power generally in Section 61, as well as Section 68 (command in chief of the armed forces) and Section 119 (protection of the states against invasion and domestic violence). Under *The Australian Constitution*, only the Commonwealth can raise armed forces (Section 114), control the armed forces and the Department of Defence (Sections 52(ii) and 69)), and exercise the prerogative executive power of declaring war, conducting warlike operations and making peace. Such prerogative powers are not authorised by an Act of Parliament.

7.5 The extent of the defence power expands and contracts according to the degree and nature of the danger of international aggression or international or domestic threat at a given time. The High Court of Australia has said that the Government could take a wide range of defence measures in times of actual war and a less wide range in times of less-imminent danger. This capacity contracts after the conclusion of hostilities and in peacetime.

7.6 While military practitioners are not expected to be legal experts, they must acknowledge the supremacy and authority of the law as the source of authority for the use of military power. Establishing the law as the foundation for operations contributes to the legitimacy and moral authority of the ADF.

7.7 The law identifies in what circumstances ADF leaders might engage with Government to ensure appropriate powers are available under law to deal with new and emerging threats. The public is sensibly wary of increasing the powers of Government and the military. To assuage public concern and build confidence, effective engagement and communication are required to explain the emergent threat and why new powers are required.

7.8 Effective communication of the need for new powers is an important part of building the capabilities and authorities needed to operate across the entire spectrum of competition. It is even more critical when an adversary seeks to aggressively and maliciously exploit those weaknesses and legislative constraints. Getting the urgency right and delivering authorities to act in time will be critical success factors in any future threat environment.

Direction and control of the Australian Defence Force

7.9 Section 68 of *The Australian Constitution* states that ‘the command-in-chief of the naval and military forces of the Commonwealth is vested in the Governor-General as the Queen’s⁶ [Sovereign’s] representative’. In practice, the Governor-General acts on the advice of ministers. The system of responsible government means that the National Security Committee ultimately exercises control over the ADF. The reference to ‘command in chief’ does not mean operational command, but it signifies civilian control of the ADF through the Minister for Defence.

7.10 In practical terms, the Minister for Defence exercises direction over Defence (including the ADF). This control is exercised in conjunction with processes involving the Prime Minister, other members of the National Security Committee, and other ministers as appropriate. Defence is led by the Secretary of the Department of Defence and the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF), in a relationship known as the diarchy.

The diarchy

7.11 The diarchy is an arrangement of equals with separate and joint responsibilities. The term ‘diarchy’ has no specific legislative basis. Rather, it has become a commonly used term to describe the relationship between the Secretary and the CDF, who both report to the Minister for Defence. The diarchy is a governance structure unique in the Australian Government. It reflects the integration of entities within a single Defence organisation; the Department of Defence and the ADF.

7.12 The diarchy reflects the individual responsibilities and accountabilities of the CDF and the Secretary who are, jointly and individually, accountable to

⁶ This is a verbatim quote from *The Australian Constitution*, which was drafted at the time when Queen Victoria was Sovereign.

the Minister for Defence for Defence's performance, having regard to their respective statutory responsibilities under the *Defence Act 1903*, the *Public Service Act 1999*, and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. The Secretary and the CDF jointly lead Defence as a single strategy-led and centrally-directed organisation. The diarchy provides a mechanism to administer Defence as a fully integrated enterprise that continuously evolves its strategic posture, improves its ability to develop capability, and delivers on its mission for Government.



Figure 7.1: The Secretary of the Department of Defence, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chief of the Defence Force during Australia – New Zealand Ministerial Consultations

7.13 The Minister for Defence formally directs how the diarchy operates by issuing a joint directive to the Secretary and the CDF. The joint directive provides detailed ministerial direction to both on how the Minister expects them to conduct their business in delivering Defence outcomes to the Australian Government. The joint directive is used to detail the respective roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the Secretary and the CDF, to set out ministerial expectations, and to detail pragmatic implementation changes. It also covers their joint responsibilities and accountabilities to ensure Defence delivers to the Australian Government particular outcomes in defending Australia and its national interests.

Command of the Australian Defence Force

7.14 In 2016, a profound change in the command of the ADF occurred when Parliament amended the *Defence Act 1903* to provide the CDF with full command over the ADF. While the CDF still acts jointly with the Secretary in administering the Department of Defence, the legislation now clarifies the CDF's command over all ADF personnel. See [ADF-P-0 Command](#).

International law

7.15 International law has a significant effect on ADF operations. The primary sources of international law are treaties, customary international law and general principles recognised in domestic law. Subsidiary sources are judicial decisions and teachings of the most highly qualified publicists. This includes the jurisprudence of bodies such as the international military tribunals established in the aftermath of the Second World War to try alleged war criminals. Other examples are the United Nations tribunals set up to try alleged war criminals from the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. A permanent International Criminal Court was established in The Hague in 2002, with jurisdiction over Australians, although it would not normally consider Australians dealt with under Australia's own domestic war crimes legislation.

7.16 International law on the use of force falls into two main categories:

- a. laws governing the resort to the use of armed force (*jus ad bellum*)
- b. laws governing the conduct of armed conflict (*jus in bello*).

7.17 The United Nations Charter requires all nations to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of other nations (Article 2(4)). However, armed conflict may occur in support of United Nations Security Council Resolutions or in cases of individual or collective self-defence.

Law of armed conflict

7.18 Law of armed conflict (LOAC) falls into two main areas, which have tended to merge over the years. The first is Hague Law, which governs the means and methods of armed conflict. The second is Geneva Law, which provides for the protection of the victims of armed conflict.

7.19 The basic principles covered by LOAC are military necessity, humanity, distinction, proportionality and the prohibition of superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering. These general principles form the basis for more specific provisions governing the means and methods of armed conflict and the protection of victims. More information is available in [ADF-I-0 *Law of Armed Conflict*](#).

Rules of engagement

7.20 The practical application of LOAC can be found in the expression of rules of engagement (ROE), issued by the CDF. ROE are CDF directives issued to the ADF, in consultation with the Australian Government, which regulate the use of force and activities connected to the use of force. ROE may be more restrictive of the use of force than permitted under LOAC.

7.21 ROE align with national objectives. ROE are a part of the command function in that they regulate the application of military force consistent with Government policies and legal obligations. All operational documents—such as operation orders, targeting directives, orders for opening fire, orders for the use of force, and special instructions—must be consistent with ROE; operational documents may be more restrictive than ROE, but never more permissive.

7.22 ADF ROE for combined and coalition operations are developed by Australia. Consideration is made for operating with alliance and coalition partners, and differences may arise. In all cases, Australian ROE will guide ADF use of force. If necessary, ADF representatives will not participate in certain activities or operations if the ROE for those activities or operations conflict with Australian ROE. Exercising this caveat is often termed a 'red card', meaning Australian force elements will not participate in that activity. More information is available in [ADF-I-0 *Rules of Engagement*](#).

Command and control



Figure 7.2: The General John Baker complex outside Bungendore is home of Headquarters Joint Operations Command

7.23 The ADF's conduct during conflict is governed by Australian national objectives, international law and custom, LOAC, ROE, and moral and ethical considerations. The ADF has a comprehensive system of command and control to ensure all operations and military activities are conducted with professionalism and follow Government policy.

7.24 Command is the authority which a commander in the military lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment. Command requires the commander to make decisions and direct military operations to achieve operational objectives. The commander bears sole responsibility for the decisions taken and the outcomes achieved.

7.25 Control is the act of coordinating forces towards outcomes determined by command. Control communicates and governs how those decisions are enacted. Control is the function of the commander's staff who manage the execution of the commander's decisions and the operations conducted to achieve the objectives by assigned force elements. Commanders are similarly responsible for the control their staff effect on the commander's behalf.

7.26 For more information on ADF command and control, see [ADF-P-0 Command](#).

Glossary

The source for approved Defence terms, definitions and shortened forms of words is the Australian Defence Glossary (ADG), available on the Defence Protected Network at <http://adg.dpe.protected.mil.au/> and the Defence Secret Network. Note: The ADG is updated periodically and should be consulted to review any amendments to the data in this glossary.

Terms and definitions

air domain

The envelope of air surrounding the Earth, where density, pressure, temperature, natural obstacles and weather systems are the dominant environmental factors.

air power

The total strength of a nation's capability to conduct and influence activities in, through and from the air to achieve its objectives.

campaign

A set of military operations planned and conducted to achieve a strategic objective within a given time and geographical area.

campaign plan

A plan for a series of related military operations aimed at accomplishing a strategic or operational objective within a given time and space.

campaigning

Strategic application of power to achieve national interests.

capability

The power to achieve a desired operational effect in a nominated environment within a specified time, and to sustain that effect for a designated period.

Note: In a military context, capability is achieved by developing a force structure appropriately prepared for a range of military operations.

capability manager (CM)

An officer who is directly responsible to the Chief of the Defence Force for preparing specified capabilities at the levels of preparedness described in the Defence Preparedness Directive.

Note: This responsibility includes the sustainability of their capabilities while assigned to the Chief of Joint Operations for the conduct of operations and joint exercises.

capstone doctrine

The doctrine publication(s) at the apex of the doctrine hierarchy, and from which all other doctrine is derived.

command

The authority which a commander in the military Service lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment.

Notes:

1. Command includes the authority and responsibility for effectively using available resources, and for planning the employment of organising, directing, coordinating and controlling military forces for the accomplishment of assigned missions.
2. It also includes responsibility for health, welfare, morale and discipline of assigned personnel.

command and control

The process and means for the exercise of authority over, and lawful direction of, assigned forces.

competition

A situation in which an actor seeks to promote its interests at the expense of others, working inside and outside established rules and norms, and usually, but not always, without resorting to violence.

conflict

A situation in which an actor seeks to impose its will upon others using violence.

control

The authority exercised by a commander over part of the activities of subordinate organisations, or other organisations not normally under their command, which encompasses the responsibility for implementing orders or directives.

Note: All or part of this authority may be transferred or delegated.

cooperation

A situation in which an actor, in conjunction with another or others, seeks to promote its interests or a common objective, usually within an agreed framework of rules and norms.

current force

The standing prepared force that is available for deliberate or responsive operational activities today.

cyber domain

An integrated global domain consisting of cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum.

cyber power

The total strength of a nation's capability to perform activities, in, through and from the cyber domain to achieve its objectives.

cyberspace

All interconnected communication, information technology and other electronic systems, networks and their data, including those which are separated or independent.

deter

Persuade someone that the consequences of a course of action would outweigh potential gains and/or expected costs.

doctrine

A command and planning tool that contains fundamental principles, considerations and guidance for military action in support of objectives.

Notes:

1. Users of doctrine apply their judgement when applying it to the situation at hand.
2. It is used in education and training as appropriate.

domain

Within the operational environment, a medium with discrete characteristics in which, or through which, military activity takes place.

effect

The consequences of an action, which impacts physical, physiological, psychological or functional capabilities.

force element (FE)

A component of a unit, a unit, or an association of units having common prime objectives and activities.

force structure

Relates to the size and shape of military capabilities.

Note: It is the ordered architecture that underpins the design and possible use of those capabilities across the organisation, command and management, personnel, major systems, facilities and training areas and supply fundamental inputs to capability.

future force

The integrated force that Defence intends to have available in future, including capabilities proposed in the Integrated Investment Program (IIP) as well as those under design consideration.

information environment

The aggregate of individuals, organisations or systems that collect, process or disseminate information.

Note: It also includes the information itself.

instruments of national power

All of the means available to the government in its pursuit of national objectives.

Note: They are expressed as diplomatic, informational, military and economic.

integrated force

A military force designed, generated and employed to achieve unified action across all domains in support of Government directed missions.

Integrated Investment Program (IIP)

A ten year expenditure plan covering activities and projects that have been approved for inclusion in the program by Government.

integration

The bringing together of force elements and enablers and ensuring that they function effectively and efficiently as a whole to conduct identified government missions.

intelligence

The activities, processes and outputs that relate to the directed acquisition, processing and dissemination of information about threats, vulnerabilities, opportunities and operating environments.

interoperability

The ability of systems, units or forces to act together to provide services to or from, or exchange information with partner systems, units and forces.

Note: The three levels of interoperability are integrated, compatible and deconflicted.

joint

Activities, operations and organisations in which elements of at least two Services and/or groups participate.

land domain

Located at the Earth's surface and sub-surface ending at the high water mark and overlapping with the maritime environment in the landward segment of the littorals.

land power

The total strength of a nation's capability to conduct and influence activities in, through and from the land to achieve its objectives.

leadership

The art of positively influencing others to get the job done.

logistics

The science of planning and carrying out the movement and maintenance of forces.

Note: In its most comprehensive sense, the aspects of military operations which deal with:

- a. design and development, acquisition, storage, movement, distribution, maintenance, evacuation, and disposal of materiel
- b. transport of personnel
- c. acquisition or construction, maintenance, operation, and disposition of facilities
- d. acquisition or furnishing of services
- e. medical and health service support.

maritime domain

The environment corresponding to the oceans, seas, bays, estuaries, islands, coastal areas, including the littorals and their sub-surface features, and interfaces and interactions with the atmosphere.

maritime power

The total strength of a nation's capability to conduct and influence activities in, through and from the sea to achieve its objectives.

military power

The ability of a nation to use military means in pursuit of national objectives.

military strategy

That component of national or multinational strategy, presenting the manner in which military power should be developed and applied to achieve national objectives or those of a group of nations.

minimum viable capability

A capability that can successfully achieve the lowest acceptable level of the directed effect in the required time and be able to be acquired, introduced into service and sustained effectively.

national interests

The general and continuing ends for which a state acts.

national objectives

The aims, derived from national interests, toward which a national policy or strategy is directed and efforts and resources of the nation are applied.

national power

The total capability of a country to achieve its national objectives, devoid of external constraints and without being subject to coercion.

national security

The ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory; to maintain economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms; to protect its environment, institutions and governance from disruption from outside, and to control its borders.

national strategy

The art and science of developing and using the diplomatic, economic, cultural and informational powers of a nation, together with its armed forces, during peace and war, to secure national objectives.

non-state actor

Political actors other than legitimate, recognised governments such as international, non-governmental and civil society organisations; and insurgent, criminal or terrorist groups.

objective

A clearly defined and attainable goal for a military operation, for example seizing a terrain feature, neutralising an adversary's force or capability or achieving some other desired outcome that is essential to a commander's plan and towards which the operation is directed.

operation

A series of tactical actions with a common unifying purpose, planned and conducted to achieve a strategic or campaign end state or objective within a given time and geographical area.

operational art

The skilful employment of military forces to attain strategic goals through campaigns and major operations.

operational design

A command planning framework for the sequencing and synchronisation of military operations to generate effects for the achievement of operational objectives.

operational environment

All the elements, conditions and circumstances which may influence the employment of capabilities and the decisions of the commander during campaigns and operations.

Note: Its chief characteristics are complexity, instability and persistent threat.

operational objective

A condition that needs to be achieved during a campaign or operation to enable the desired end state to be reached.

Note: Correct assessment of operational objectives is crucial to success at the operational level.

posture

The demonstration by a force of its intent and commitment in order to influence the behaviour of target audiences.

power

The ability of a person or group to influence the behaviour of others.

preparedness

The measurable capacity of Defence to generate sustainable military power to achieve government directed objectives over time.

Note: It describes the combined outcome of readiness and sustainability.

professional mastery

The measure of the ability of Defence members to execute their duties, encompassing:

- a. their ability to perform these duties in a range of circumstances
- b. their self-confidence to act autonomously despite risk and ambiguity
- c. their understanding of the purpose and consequences of their actions.

Note: Incorporates the application of Defence, technical and social mastery.

reach

The distance over which a military capability or system can contribute to desired effects.

readiness

The ability of a capability to be applied to a specific activity within a nominated time frame, for a specified period of time, to achieve a desired effect.

Note: It assumes the availability of appropriate competencies and other fundamental inputs to capability to provide an acceptable level of risk.

shape

Enhance the friendly force's position, delay the adversary's response, or lead an adversary into an inadequate or inappropriate response to set the conditions for decisive action.

space domain

The environment corresponding to space where radiation, charged particles, electric and magnetic fields, vacuum, micro-meteoroids and orbital debris are the dominant environmental factors.

space power

The total strength of a nation's capability to conduct and influence activities to, in, through and from space to achieve its objectives.

spectrum of competition

The framework used to describe the complex range of geostrategic interactions of national power that range dynamically between cooperation, competition and conflict.

strategic objective

A desired end state for military operations which is communicated from the strategic to the operational level and forms the basis for operational planning.

Note: It is derived from an analysis of strategic policy and the military strategies associated with particular national security objectives.

strategy

A prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronised and integrated fashion to achieve theatre, national, and/or multinational objectives.

sustainment

The provision of personnel, logistics, and other support required to maintain and prolong operations or combat until successful accomplishment or revision of the mission or of the national objective.

targeting

The process of selecting and prioritising targets and matching the appropriate response to them, taking into account international and Australian national law, national and strategic objectives, and operational requirements and capabilities.

theatre

A designated geographic area for which an operational-level joint or combined commander is appointed and in which a campaign or series of major operations is conducted.

Note: A theatre may contain one or more joint force areas of operations.

values

Basic (personal or organisational) convictions that a specific behaviour or end state is personally or socially preferred to some alternate behaviour or end state.

warfighting

Government directed use of military force to pursue specific national objectives.

Shortened forms of words

ADF	Australian Defence Force
CDF	Chief of the Defence Force
CM	capability manager
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DIME	diplomatic, informational, military and economic
FE	force element
IIP	Integrated Investment Program
ISR	intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance
JPME	joint professional military education
LOAC	law of armed conflict
MAP	military appreciation process
NSC	National Security Committee
ROE	rules of engagement
SCNS	Secretaries Committee on National Security



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