

### WATCHING BRIEF: DEFENCE WHITE PAPER 2015

The Federal Government has plans to develop a Defence White Paper for 2015, and has appointed an Expert Panel to begin the process. Members of the Panel are:

- Peter Jennings, executive officer of Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI)
- Rear Admiral James Goldrick (retd)
- Rory Metcalf (Lowy Institute)
- Mike Kalms (KPMG)
- Andrew Davies (ASPI)
- Stephan Fruhling (ANU)

The intention is that the White Paper will be a whole-of-government product and that the Expert Panel with “engage with experts in Australia and abroad, within government and industry, the think-tank community, State and Territory and local governments and with the Australian people throughout the development of the White Paper”.

General David Hurley (who was Chief of the Australian Defence Force until 30 June) has spoken of the need to review the assumptions that underpin the choice of principal tasks to ensure they are appropriate to our strategic circumstances. This statement opens the possibility of greater reflection on where Australia is heading, and to challenge the current Government’s stated commitment to quarantine defence spending from budget cuts and increase it to 2% of GDP (currently 1.6%).

In 2013 QPLC worked with the Earthcare Committee to put forward a submission to that year’s White Paper, and this covered the following points:

- A defence policy, and the role of the ADF, should be seen as part of a comprehensive set of policies that identify strategic risk and set up ways of minimising that risk. Those threats include wide income inequalities, political and economic dominance, ecological degradation, and economic turmoil. Prevention is the best way to avoid widespread destruction through armed conflict.
- The threat of ecological degradation and its consequences is not significantly appreciated, nor is the danger of further economic crises. These threats are far more significant than a direct military threat to Australia.
- We strongly support the Government’s decision to implement a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. This Plan requires monitoring and evaluation of all Defence policies.
- There is a role for the ADF in border protection for immigration and customs, dealing with anti-terrorist and cyber attacks, providing humanitarian and disaster relief, and being part of an international policing force related to an international justice system.
- The reliance on the USA for military purposes is outdated and

inconsistent with the preventive and policing means of addressing the strategic risks. We encourage a more even-handed and independent approach to military alliances.

- Our view is that the Government should put more resources and attention towards preventing crises from escalating into violence, use the international system to put in place better ways to achieve this, and work collaboratively with other agencies in the field.

**The development of a White Paper for 2015 is an opportunity for Friends to consider what issues to raise, and QPLC invites feedback on the concerns Friends have, so that we can be prepared to make a further submission when that is invited by the Expert Panel.**

You may wish to comment on such things as (a) the ongoing commitment of Australia to the US Alliance and the implications for defence policy, (b) the connections between foreign and defence policies, (c) the way in which decisions to go to war are made in Australia, and (d) what Australia can contribute to global security and peace building by diplomacy and aid as well as through international bodies such as the United Nations.

Canberra  
July 2014