

**AUSTRALIA – NEW ZEALAND
JOINT STATEMENT ON
CLOSER DEFENCE RELATIONS
9 MARCH 2018**

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

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

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

Strategic Context

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

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

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

cooperation to work together to support regional partners to help maintain the security and stability of our near region.

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

To best achieve these goals, our respective Defence Forces must be able to work together as effectively and efficiently as possible. We will continue to maximise interoperability through aligning our strategic planning, capability development, logistics, communications, cyber security, and personnel practices, as well as continued exchanges and bilateral and multilateral exercises. We will closely coordinate our military efforts in the region through our existing dialogue structures, from Ministerial-level down to interoperability working groups, and focused planning talks between our respective regional defence capacity building and engagement programs.

Guiding Principles

Our Defence relationship is guided by the following principles:

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

Outcomes

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

Focus Area 1: Effectiveness in influencing security outcomes.

- 1.1 Our approaches to operations and exercises are coordinated and complementary, and contribute to stability in our region.
- 1.2 Our defence diplomacy, regional capacity building efforts, and policy approaches are well-aligned and enhance our shared security interests.

Focus Area 2: Effectiveness in combined operations.

- 2.1 Respective force design and capability decisions take into account our need to operate together.
- 2.2 Logistic support and sustainment arrangements enhance mutual operational effectiveness.
- 2.3 Our command, control and communications arrangements deliver combined operational effectiveness, and facilitate timely coordination between our Defence agencies.
- 2.4 Interoperability is enhanced through opportunities for our personnel to undertake bilateral training, education, exchanges and attachments.

Focus Area 3: Effectiveness in regional stability

- 3.1 Our approaches to regional stability and peace operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and regional defence cooperation agreements and arrangements seek to enable and support our neighbours to build resilience and self-reliance.
- 3.2 Our responses to regional requests for assistance or cooperation deliver capability enhancement and force multiplier effects to the existing capabilities of our neighbours.

Implementation

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

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

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

Review

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