Australia’s Defence Force Posture and Engagement 2016-2020

- The 2020 Defence Strategic Update prioritises international engagement and the ADF’s ability to deploy force in support of shared interests in security and stability.
- This continues the focus of the 2016 Defence White Paper on international engagement and the ADF’s ability to deploy.
- Since 2016, Defence has enhanced its presence and engagement in the Indo-Pacific, including through the Pacific Step-Up initiative, and has maintained a high operational tempo dealing with existing security threats and challenges, both in our near region and globally.
- The 2020 Defence Strategic Update prioritises our immediate region – ranging from the north-eastern Indian Ocean, through maritime and mainland South East Asia to Papua New Guinea and the South West Pacific.

MILITARY OPERATIONS
- Defence has supported operations domestically, regionally and globally, with examples set out below.
- Domestically, contributing to the whole-of-government response to both the COVID-19 pandemic and to the 2019/20 Australian bushfires, as well as providing support to border protection operations and the Australian Antarctic Division.
- Regionally, supporting whole-of-government responses to natural disasters and humanitarian crises, such as White Island Volcano and Tropical Cyclone Harold.
- In South West Pacific, contributing to maritime security in the Pacific region.
- In South East Asia, providing maritime surveillance patrols in critical sea lanes in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea.
- In North East Asia, contributions to the multinational effort to enforce UN Security Council resolutions related to North Korea.
- In Afghanistan, contributing to the NATO-led train, advise and assist mission.
- In Iraq, contributions to the international effort to combat the Daesh terrorist threat and the NATO capacity building mission.
- In the Middle East maritime region, contributing to efforts to promote maritime security, stability and prosperity.
- In the Middle East and Africa, support to multiple UN peacekeeping operations.

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT
- Defence has grown international engagement since the release of the 2016 Defence White Paper.
- The Defence Cooperation Budget has grown from $98.3 million in 2016-17 to $159.2 million in 2019-20.
- International education and training has expanded from 1,251 places for foreign defence officials in 2016-17 to 1,590 available places in 2019-20 (246 places were not filled due to COVID-19).
- On track to deliver Government’s commitment in the 2016 Defence White Paper to double training in Australia for international military students over the next 15 years.
- 25 new Defence representation and civilian international policy positions have been established in overseas posts since 2016.
- We have deepened the Australia-US Alliance with the US Force Posture Initiatives, including the Marine Rotational Force-Darwin.
- The Marine Rotational Force-Darwin has grown in size and complexity since the first 2012 rotation. Each rotation furthers the joint interoperability of the ADF and US Marines.
- The conduct of the 2020 rotation, during the COVID-19 pandemic, underscores the strength of the Alliance and both countries’ ability to support regional peace and security.
- Joint multinational exercises increased from 28 in 2016 to 34 in 2019.
- Indo-Pacific Endeavour has grown from 6 port visits; 1,088 ship tours, 1,200+ staff in 2016 to 13 port visits, 2,195 ship tours; 1,500+ staff in 2019.
- Joint exercises increased from 1,828 to 2,532.
- Under the Government’s Pacific Step-Up, Defence is investing more in the region, including:
  - in key facilities in PNG, Fiji, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands;
  - establishing a new dedicated Pacific Support Team;
  - undertaking Army Mobile Training Team engagements;
  - convening annual Joint-Heads of Pacific Security events in Australia and the region; and
  - reinforcing alumni and sporting networks in the security sector and expanding health engagements.
- Pacific Maritime Security Program.
  - 21 Guardian Class Patrol Boats to 13 regional countries by 2023.
  - Integrated aerial surveillance to 15 Forum Fisheries Agency member countries from 2018.
  - Continuation of sustainment and maintenance support through the Defence, Maritime Surveillance and Technical Advisers network.
- Defence is investing more in South East Asia.
  - In Indonesia, as a key pillar of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, Defence now conducts around 20 increasingly joint and complex exercises annually.
  - In the Philippines, Defence has trained over 10,000 members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines following the siege of Marawi in 2017.
  - In 2020, Australia signed a treaty with Singapore, which builds on almost 30 years of training in Australia and underpins a $2.25 billion investment in ADF training areas.
  - Australia and Japan have deepened defence cooperation, including through:
    - joint exercises to improve our capability to respond to regional contingencies;
    - the first ever bilateral fighter jet Exercise BUSHIDO GUARDIAN held in 2019.
  - Australia and India’s relationship has elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and continues to grow – we have increased our defence activities four-fold since 2014.
  - We have new arrangements on defence and maritime cooperation, including a Mutual Logistics Support Arrangement and a Defence Science and Technology Arrangement.
  - Exercise AUSINDEX 2019 focused on anti-submarine warfare and was one of our most complex and successful exercises with India to date.