

Kevin Rudd and Labor

A New Way



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FUTURE NAVY TASKFORCE

A re-elected Rudd Labor Government will establish a *Future Navy* Taskforce that will provide advice to the Government on implementing the recommendations of the Australian Defence Force Posture Review (FPR).

The key recommendations that the Taskforce will advise on include:

- Establishing a supplementary east coast fleet base at Brisbane for the Future Submarine and large amphibious ships.
- Develop options involving Brisbane and Fleet Base West to homeport the Air Warfare Destroyers and Landing Helicopter Docks.
- Develop options to expand wharf capacity and support facilities at Fleet Base West to:
 - Support major surface combatant capability and operations by:
 - Providing adequate infrastructure and facilities, including missile loading and maintenance facilities, to homeport the Future Frigate class and forward deploy at least one Air Warfare Destroyer.
 - Ensuring such facilities are also able to be used for deployments and operations in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean by US Navy major surface combatants and aircraft carriers.
 - Support submarine capability and operations by:
 - Enabling Fleet Base West to continue as the primary submarine homeport when the expanded Future Submarine fleet enters service.
 - Ensuring such facilities are also able to be used by US Navy submarines.
- Plan to upgrade or expand bases to accommodate minor war vessels including patrol boats, landing craft and hydrographic vessels and their replacements including:
 - Upgrades or expansion of bases at Darwin and Cairns.

- Upgrades at HMAS Waterhen in Sydney.
- Upgrades required at Fleet Base West to be able to support OCV mine countermeasures operations.
- Examine, in consultation with Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, options involving investment to enhance Broome as a forward operating base.

The Taskforce will be co-chaired by the Chief of the Defence Force and the Secretary of Defence, with the Chief of Navy as an ex officio member. There will also be representation from defence industry and business.

This decision ensures that Australia has a long term plan for our future defence capabilities, particularly in the North and West, and our ability to sustain high tempo operations in the immediate neighbourhood and the wider Asia-Pacific region.

The implementation of these recommendations will ensure Australia's Naval Forces are placed in the right places to be able to quickly respond to the many and varied challenges that will confront our Nation in the century ahead.

This announcement is also good news for the economies of Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, Darwin, Townsville, Cairns and Broome.

Background

Fleet Base East (FBE) at Garden Island currently supports a large part of Navy's active fleet assets.

The 2013 Defence White Paper (DWP) and FPR did note that strategic factors are weighted towards a north and north-west disposition of assets and that, in the longer-term, an alternative location to the north on the east coast might offer operational advantage by being closer to Army units and operational areas while also, over time, enhancing capability sustainment requirements.

A re-elected Rudd Labor Government will establish a *Future Navy* Taskforce to provide advice to the Government on implementing recommendations from the FPR and 2013 DWP that ensure naval force posture planning optimises Australia's ability to respond to threats and shape the strategic transformation of the region.

Future Navy Taskforce

The Taskforce, whose work is expected to take 24 months, will:

- Examine the feasibility of moving some or all of FBE to a combination of Brisbane, Fleet Base West, Townsville or Cairns, including the benefits, operational implications, costs, timelines, and risks.
- Provide advice on the most cost effective options, alternative sources of funding and implementation.

The Taskforce will be asked to include staff from Infrastructure Australia, the Departments of Prime Minister and Cabinet and Finance and Deregulation, and other relevant agencies and departments.

Future Use of Garden Island

We will establish an advisory body that will be asked, once the work of the Taskforce is completed, to consider issues relating to the future use of Garden Island including public/green space, heritage preservation, small scale naval facilities, commercial and tourism usage.

Membership of the Garden Island Taskforce will include the NSW Government, local government, Tourism and Transport Forum, Defence and the Committee for Sydney and the Sydney Business Chamber.

Cost

The cost of establishing the Taskforce and planning work is \$5 million and will be met from existing research and planning capacity across Government.

Benefits

The relocation of some or all of FBE to Queensland could offer clear operational and other advantages, including:

- Brisbane is an advantageous geographical location for transit to potential operating areas for both submarines and amphibious ships, to amphibious mounting bases at Darwin and Townsville, and to the Shoalwater Bay Training Area;
- Bringing the Navy's assets closer to the Army's future amphibious capability (consistent with Army's 'Plan Beersheba') and operational and training areas;
- Promoting in the medium to longer term, strategic, economic and social benefits in both New South Wales and Queensland;
- Addressing the capacity pressures at Garden Island, both now and into the future from encroachment and commercial sector pressures, including the cruise ship industry's requests for berth access; and
- Permitting the reclaiming of some or all of Garden Island for use as a significant public space, an inner city commercial precinct, and an attractive place for tourism, including cruise ship access.