

Australia Defence and Security Report Q2 2014

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Abstracts

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BMI View: The Australian Defence Force (ADF) is now in a transitional period. After years of intensive operations in Afghanistan, the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, the ADF now has an opportunity to regroup and take stock. Organisational changes are expected: the ADF aims to become a more flexible and mobile force, with a greater focus on amphibious operations as it shifts its strategic focus away from the Middle East. As the operational budget shrinks, more funding will be available for personnel and equipment. Most importantly, the new Abbott government will oversee a huge increase in the defence budget over the next decade, if it can stick to its pledge of spending 2% of GDP on defence by 2023-24. The government plans to increase the 2013-14 defence budget to AUD27.1bn, from AUD25.4bn in 2012-13, and to grow the budget sequentially over the next four years until 2017-18, when it plans to spend AUD34.8bn.

A total of AUD113.1bn is being budgeted for the four-year period, equating to a 5% rise this year, and then a 6.5% rise for each of the next three years after that. The budget increases came as the government realised that it would be unable to eliminate the country's structural deficit in the near term, and also that it had already cut as much from defence as it could without jeopardising some key capabilities.

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