

National Security

2007 National Security Election

Advancing domestic and national security practice
26 October 2007



Week 2 Roundup

Week 2 of the election and again initiatives and policies on national security were absent.

Labor did not put out any media releases on the subject and the only Liberal initiative was the \$200 million commitment over four years designed to increase the skill base of military personnel and establish two Australian Defence Technical Colleges. See the panel - Skills for Australia's Future Defence Plan.

During the Great Debate, the Prime Minister stated that there is an evolution underway in the role of the Australian forces. They had a security role in relation to the Japanese, they now have an overwatch role in relation to the Iraqi forces and we see a greater training role for them and we would see the training as taking place in Iraq

Australian Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keely stated during the week that he never had confidence in the charge laid against the Gold Coast doctor and one-time terror suspect, Mohamed Haneef. This brings into question assertions by the Immigration Minister about the strength of the case against Dr Haneef. Labor made no identified comment on this.

The week ended with the death of an SAS soldier in Afghanistan. This tragedy will probably mean that there will be a respectful silence on national security election initiatives until after the funeral.

Replacement for a lack of news

As there is no news, the Centre is publishing its survey of security experts on their perception of the Australian Government's priority to a range of national security threats.

The survey was carried out on 3 and 4 October at the Safeguarding Australia Summit in Canberra which was attended by 130 people. The Summit was the 6th Annual Conference and is the premier national security conference each year.

The survey was designed to identify how security experts rate the level of priority given by the Australian Government to the following threats:

- Domestic terrorism
- Climate change security-induced threats
- Demographic- induced threats
- Pandemics and biological threats
- Espionage
- Chemical and radiological threats
- Cyber threats
- Energy security

It also asked security experts to rate the quality of their organisation's:

- assessment of all the relevant threats
- strategic decisions about the capabilities required to deal with the relevant threats



About the AHSRC

The Australian Homeland Security Research Centre undertakes independent, evidence-based analysis of homeland security (the domestic dimensions of national security).

The Centre's vision is to be one of Australia's leading independent sources of research on domestic security policy and programs for the government, industry, the community and the media.

Many of the Centre's activities are run in partnership with other organisations which reflects its philosophy that collaboration is the key to ensuring optimal outcomes in national security.

The Centre is not aligned with any political party or funded by government grant. The Centre is fully self-supporting and is funded by its commissioned studies, events and sales of publications.

About the author

Athol Yates is the Executive Director.

Copyright 2007. All rights reserved.

Key findings

Positives

1. About 80% of security experts consider that the Australian Government is giving the appropriate level of priority to chemical and radiological threats
2. About 78% of security experts consider that the Australian Government is giving the appropriate level of priority to domestic terrorism.
3. About 60% of security experts consider that the Australian Government is giving the appropriate level of priority to pandemic and biological threats, and espionage.

Negatives

1. Over 70% of security experts consider that the Australian Government is giving inadequate or very inadequate attention to the climate change security-induced threats
2. Over 40% of security experts consider that the Australian Government is giving inadequate or very inadequate attention to the cyber threats
3. About 50% of security experts consider that the Australian Government is giving inadequate or very inadequate attention to the energy security

See the following graphs for details.

Impact of the election on mass transport, mass gathering and precinct security

Athol Yates is going to run a workshop on *The impact of a Coalition or ALP victory on mass transport, mass gathering and precinct security* at the

Mass Transport, Mass Gathering and Precinct Security 2007 Conference 7 - 8 November 2007
Hilton on the Park, Melbourne

The workshop will discuss these issues:

1. What Labor and the Coalition has proposed for mass transport security during and prior to the 2007 election?
2. What initiatives might be proposed to improve mass transport?
3. How can the proposed and possible initiatives be achieved?

Skills for Australia's Future Defence Plan— Liberal Policy Statement, 24 October 2007

A re-elected Coalition Government will introduce a detailed and integrated plan to provide essential trade and higher education skills for the Australian Defence Force and the broader Australian defence sector.

A re-elected Coalition Government will provide more than \$200 million over four years to increase the skill base of military personnel and establish two Australian Defence Technical Colleges.

Over the next five years, it is estimated that the defence sector needs an additional 7,000 trained people with skills in a range of disciplines including engineering, project management and logistics, and in crucial technical trades such as aviation electronics, information technology and electronic systems.

The Coalition's Skills For Australia's Future Defence Plan will encourage young Australians, particularly those with an interest and talent in maths, sciences and trade skills, to prepare from as early as Year 11 for a defence related career. It will provide options for study in vocational education through to masters qualifications. It will create centres of defence training excellence in the Adelaide region and south-east Queensland, both key national defence hubs.

It will also provide a pathway for Reservists and former ADF personnel to gain new technical skills and a mechanism to rejoin the ADF in a full time capacity in critical areas. Reservists will be able to receive a salary while they undertake relevant study or trade training.

This is part of the Coalition's plan for a Strong Australia, ensuring our national security and protecting our borders into the future.

The Plan consists of:

- The establishment of two Australian Defence Technical Colleges, one in the Adelaide region and one in south-east Queensland;
- The provision of up to 2200 Defence Skills Scholarships to cover study costs and a stipend for those undertaking traineeships, cadetships and work experience placements;
- A plan to train existing Reservists in critical trades and to provide critical skills for Reservists and former ADF personnel who want to come back into the ADF on a full-time basis;
- The creation of more than 200 higher education and 500 vocational education and training places in existing tertiary institutions, tailored to the needs of students who want a career in the defence sector;
- The establishment of an Australian Centre for Defence Skills to identify the sector's emerging skill needs, manage the studies of Defence Skills Scholarship recipients and, in partnership with tertiary institutions, design tertiary courses tailored to the defence sector's needs, and
- The establishment of a Defence Software Engineering Institute in partnership with Carnegie Mellon University to deliver a program of applied research in software engineering.







