



National Bosun's Call



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Once Navy, Always Navy

August 2025

Mogami Frigates for the RAN

MELBOURNE — Australia has selected Japan's improved Mogami-class frigate design for its future fleet of general-purpose frigates, in a deal with further cements ties between the two US Indo-Pacific allies and gives Japan its first major defense export.

"Following a rigorous and competitive tender process, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries' Mogami-class frigate was assessed as best able to quickly meet the capability requirements and strategic needs of the Australian Defence Force (ADF)," said the Australian Defence Department in a media release.

The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) will acquire 11 frigates under the \$10 billion AUS (\$6.5 billion US) program, with the first three ships to be built in Japan and the remainder to be built in Western Australia, said Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles.

Marles was speaking at a press conference in the Australian capital Canberra to announce the deal, where he said that it was decided that the Japanese design was the best option for the RAN following a rigorous selection process, which saw the Mogami-class beat out competition from German shipbuilder TKMS with its MEKO A200 design.

"This is a decision that is made about how we can get the best platform, the best capability for the Royal Australian Navy," Marles said.

He added that the Japanese government had agreed to give three production slots at Mitsubishi's shipyard to Australia, which would see the first ship handed over in 2029 and enter service in 2030, with the third entering service in 2034.

Production of the remaining eight ships would then move to the Henderson Defence Precinct in West-

ern Australia, where the Australian government has entered a Strategic Shipbuilding Agreement with a newly established subsidiary of shipbuilder Austal, known as Austal Defence Shipbuilding Australia.

Australian Minister for Defence Industry Pat Conroy, who was also at the press conference, said that the Mogami-class came out tops in terms of operating costs over its lifetime, and was the only of the candidates, which at one point also included South Korea's Daegu-class and the Spanish ALFA3000 designs, that would be able to meet Australia's tight schedule.



Euan Graham, an analyst with the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, told Breaking Defense that for Washington, "it's positive to have its two closest allies in the Western Pacific boosting their front-line naval capabilities and becoming more inter-operable with each

other. There's an important deterrent value to that signal of strategic cooperation in its own right."

As to the Mogami-class itself, "integrating it will obviously pose challenges, but the key consideration in 'speed to capability' is likely to be Japan's willingness to front-load production in Japan to meet Australian requirements ahead of its own," Graham said. "It's very likely that as part of the deal the overseas build will have to be increased from the current requirement for [three] hulls, as Australia's own shipbuilding capacity is behind schedule."

Marles said the Australian Mogami-class ships would have minimal changes from the ships going to the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) to reduce program risks, and would retain

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National Newsletter of the of the
Naval Association of Australia

Mogami Frigates for the RAN

(Continued from page 1)

the Japanese combat system with the main changes being due to Australian regulatory requirements, such as the ship's signages being translated into English.

He added that while the selection of the improved Mogami-class was driven by its capabilities alone, it also represented a very significant moment in the bilateral relationship between Australia and Japan.

"There is no country in the world with whom we have a greater strategic alignment, and that is being reflected in a really blossoming defense relationship," Marles said.

For Japan, the deal marks the first major arms export since the end of World War Two. Japanese officials recently told *Breaking Defense* that they hope the Mogami deal, including a willingness to share intellectual property with customers, will become a model for Japanese exports going forward.

Japan has eight of 12 planned original Mogami-class frigates currently in service and will switch production over to the improved Mogami-class in 2028.

The JMSDF plans to acquire a total of 12 improved Mogami-class frigates, which are approximately 10 metres (30 feet) longer and feature improvements including being fitted with 32 Mk.41 Vertical Launch Systems (VLS) to launch SM-2 and SM-6 air-defense missiles and Tomahawk land-attack missiles.

The country had only announced the general-purpose frigate acquisition program in 2023 following a surface fleet review as it became apparent that the more expensive and complex ongoing Hunter-class frigate program would miss entry-into-service timelines and budget estimates.

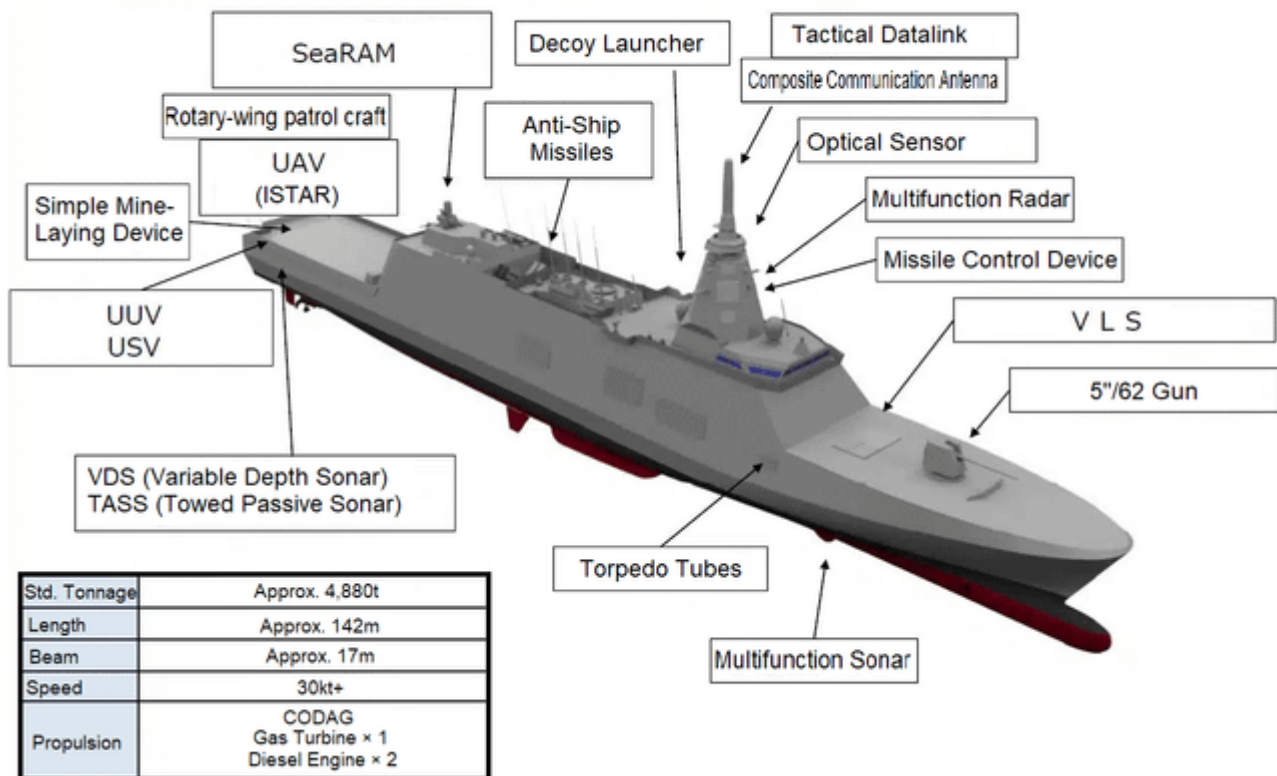
The review had also called for the frigates to be rapidly acquired owing to the regional geostrategic situation in the Indo-Pacific region as well as the need to replace the RAN's existing fleet of seven ANZAC-class frigates, the oldest of which is 27 years old.

Text: Colin Clark in Sydney contributed to this report.

Breaking Defense Daily Newsletter



Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. Proposal Summary



The Naval Association of Australia Inc Patron-in-Chief His Majesty, King Charles III
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Last Post Ceremony Commemorating Victory in the Pacific



15 August 2025 -At the Australian War Memorial Canberra marking the 80th anniversary of VP Day.

Wreath laying

at top—by the Governor General Her Excellency Ms Sam Mostyn AC,

at right - NAA ACT Section Vice President Alex McGown in the centre, and

below—NAA wreath at 4 o'clock from the standing wreath

Photos; Flickr



King's Crown approved for RAN Badge

Defence has begun updating digital images, brand marks and logos bearing Queen Elizabeth II's St Edward's Crown after service chiefs approved new versions featuring King Charles III's Tudor Crown.

The new pattern comes into effect from August 1. Digital uses, including website, intranet pages, social media platforms, Microsoft Office templates, Outlook signatures and brand guidelines, will be among the first to be updated.

The rollout will occur in phases across Defence groups and services, aligning with the King's wish to avoid unnecessary expenditure.

Uniform updates will occur gradually, as stock runs out and opportunities arise, and will be aligned with the evolving design for each uniform type.

Most units are expected to receive the updated branding within the year.

The last change to Defence's royal symbol occurred in 1952, following Queen

Elizabeth II's accession, with the St Edward's Crown incorporated into Navy's Ceremonial Badge on December 3, 1957.

Chief of Navy Vice-Admiral Mark Hammond approved the updated Navy Badge, featuring the Tudor Crown.

Manager Navy Badges Paul Burnett said both versions of the Monarch's crowns were endorsed royal symbols, and the St Edward's Crown was a valid symbol of Navy's royal warrant until replaced.

Mr Burnett said the design was a chance to revise the placement of the Navy Badge and Navy brand within the wider Defence environment.

He said it offered a chance to refresh promotional materials and corporate templates, and reflected the ongoing refocusing of Navy directions and intents.

Uniform updates will occur gradually, as stock runs out and opportunities arise, and will be aligned with the evolving design for each uniform type.



Defence

Veterans can earn more before pensions affected

21 July 2025

The veteran's guide to living in an aged care home is designed to assist and support veterans and families living in an aged care home.

The guide and related resources describe the support available for clients and their families through DVA, ex-service organisations and other advocacy services to enable them to live well when living in an aged care home.

The focus is on recognition, the importance of lifestyle, accessing clinically needed supports and remaining connected to friends, family and community when living in an aged care facility.

The guide and related resources include:

- information on developing care plans with your aged care provider
- accessing DVA supports and services that meet the client's needs

- resources to help aged care staff gain a better understanding of the veteran's or war widow(er)'s life experience
- a set of recognition products with a poppy motif that DVA clients can choose to display in their residential aged care home.

Designed in collaboration with aged care providers, peak bodies and those with lived experience, the guide is easy to read, informative and tailored specifically for the use of veterans, families and their carers.

In addition to the veteran's guide, DVA has also published resources to help residential aged care providers, and their teams better understand the unique needs of DVA clients, and the additional support that may be available to them.

The veterans guide will be mailed out to DVA Veteran Gold Card and Veteran White Card Holders living in residential aged care, along with a letter from the Repatriation Commissioner.

Veterans can earn more before pensions affected

1 July 2025

From 1 July 2025, veterans can earn more, and the value of their assets can be higher, before their pension payments are affected.

The rise in income and asset amounts is in line with the annual indexation process and the income free areas and asset value limits that are used to calculate rates of income support pensions.

Different limits may apply for veterans who are assessed under transitional rules. Disability compensation payments and war widow(er)'s pensions are not subject to the income and assets tests.

Related to these thresholds increasing, some recipients of the service pension, income support supplement, veteran payment and social security age pension may see an increase to their payments.

Permanent impairment payments, eligible young person payments and the limits for household services and attendant care under the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA) and the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988 (DRCA) have increased.

Pensioners don't need to do anything to receive the increase.

The table below outlines the new limits and thresholds for income support payments and new MRCA and DRCA rates. For more information, including a summary of the new income and asset thresholds, pension rates and allowances please visit the [DVA payment rates](#) page.

DVA

New maximum limits and thresholds from 1 July 2025		
Amount of income an income support recipient may receive before their pension is reduced	Single rate (fortnightly)	Couples rate - combined (fortnightly)
Service or Age Pension	\$ 218.00	\$ 380.00
Income Support Supplement (War Widow(er)'s Pension is included in these amounts)*	\$ 1,792.60	\$ 2,411.60
Maximum value of assets a person can have before their pension is affected		
Service or Age Pension		
Homeowner	\$ 321,500.00	\$ 481,500.00
Non-homeowner	\$ 579,500.00	\$ 739,500.00
Income Support Supplement*		
Homeowner	\$ 584,000.00	\$ 820,500.00
Non-homeowner	\$ 842,000.00	\$ 1,078,500.00
Deeming threshold	\$ 64,200.00	\$ 106,200.00
MRCA rates	New Rate (Weekly)	
Maximum Permanent Impairment amount	\$ 431.84	
Maximum rate of Household Services	\$ 611.46	
Maximum rate of Attendant Care	\$ 611.46	
Dependent eligible young person	\$ 184.90	
DRCA rates	New Rate (Lump Sum)	
Maximum lump sum permanent impairment	\$ 323,722.77	
	New Rate (Weekly)	
Maximum household services	\$ 588.55	
Maximum attendant care service	\$ 588.55	
Death dependent child	\$ 182.68	

Inaugural Archdeacon to Veterans appointed

28 July 2025

Reverend Andrew Nixon has been appointed as the inaugural Archdeacon to Veterans by the Anglican Church of Australia (ACA) during a ceremony at St Andrews Cathedral in Sydney today.

The ceremony was led by the Primate of the ACA and the Bishop to the Defence Force, and was attended by over 200 guests, including former Governor-General David Hurley AC CVO DSC, Rear-Admiral Chris Smith AM CSM RAN, Department of Veterans' Affairs Secretary Alison Frame, and other senior Defence, government and religious representatives.

'This appointment is about bringing to the fore the importance of supporting our veterans and recognising that there are veterans right across the country in all our parishes, in our suburbs and in our neighbourhoods,' Reverend Nixon says.

Reverend Nixon served as a Navy officer from 1989 until 2001, where he specialised in warfare and leadership training. He left the ADF to pursue a career in Anglican ministry, before returning as a reserve Chaplain in 2011.

'It's an incredible honour to support and represent Australia's veteran community to the ACA as the inaugural Archdeacon to Veterans.'

Evidence brought before the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide highlighted the important role that ADF Chaplains can play in suicide prevention and care and in supporting veterans with moral injury.

Below: from left): Former Governor-General David Hurley AC CVO DSC, Mrs Jenny Nixon, Mrs Linda Hurley, Archdeacon Andrew Nixon

'Chaplaincy is about caring for our human spirit. It's not a religious thing; it's a human thing. Everybody has a deep part of them which determines their identity and purpose,' Reverend Nixon says.

'We ask our ADF members to go and do really difficult things, which can both clarify and challenge this identity and purpose. We ask them to put their life on the line, to potentially take the life of another person, or even to lose a mate.'

'There's a really deep dimension to that; a spiritual dimension. That's why the ADF is really clear about the provision of chaplaincy, because of the work we ask of our service personnel.'

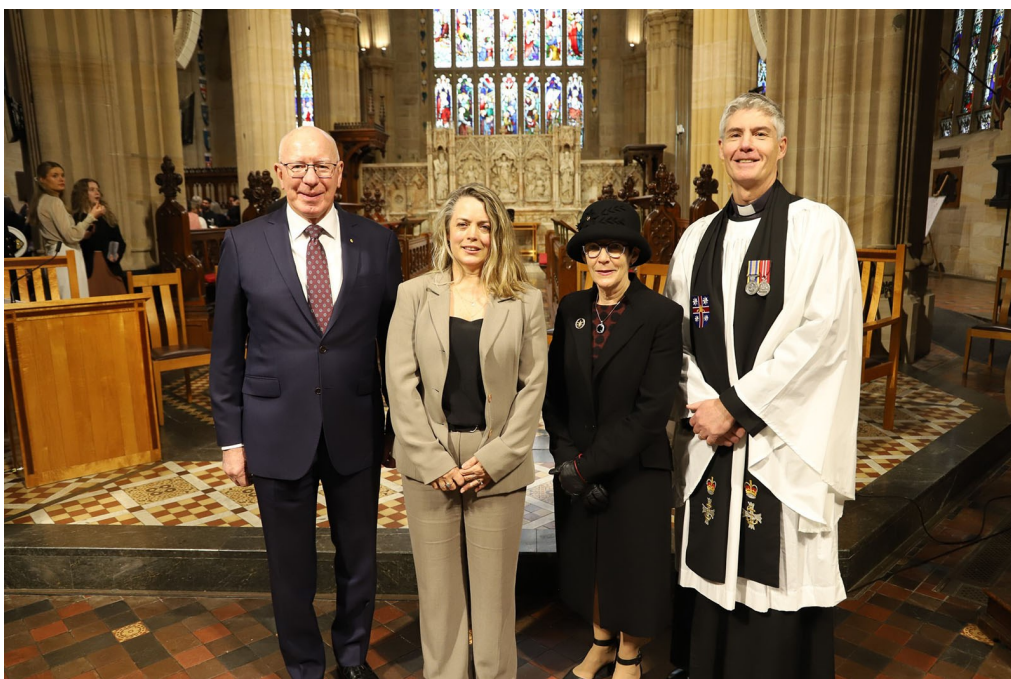
His belief in the importance of chaplaincy has led Reverend Nixon to take up his current role as Director of DVA's Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Program (VCP), which offers chaplaincy services to transitioning ADF members, veterans and their families, ensuring continuity of spiritual and pastoral support when they leave the ADF.

The VCP is currently being trialled in Perth, Brisbane and Townsville. All transitioning members of the ADF, as well as veterans and their families, can access these support services, regardless of their personal faith.

'I feel very deeply that veterans are my people, so working in this role feels like I'm back home, which is an amazing privilege,' Reverend Nixon says.

Chaplaincy Program Director

Reverend Andrew Nixon commenced with DVA in 2025 to lead the Chaplaincy Program going forward. He brings significant chaplaincy management experience including children and youth, not for profit and charity, hospital, aged care, and emergency services.



Andrew is a veteran, serving as a Naval Officer from 1989 to 2001 where he specialised in warfare and leadership training. He had the immense privilege to work with warfare officers, combat system operators, submariners and clearance divers, but a highlight was helping teach and equip Leading Seaman and Petty Officers to harness and develop the most powerful capability the Navy possesses: its people.

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Inaugural Archdeacon to Veterans appointed

(Continued from page 6)

Lieutenant Commander Nixon transferred to the reserve force in 2002 in order to train and work in full-time church ministry. He had the opportunity to transfer to the Navy Chaplaincy Branch in 2011 where he continues to serve as a reserve Senior Chaplain.

Who are the Veterans' Chaplains?

VCPP Veterans' Chaplains are current or former ADF Chaplains.

Perth

Chaplain Cornelis Bosch is the Veterans' Chaplain based in Perth, Western Australia.

Chaplain Bosch started his military life in the Netherlands as a soldier in 1987 and completed National Service in 1988. During this time, he experienced the need to find a listening ear from a military chaplain to navigate difficult challenges. This experience became instrumental in his decision, much later in life, to join the ADF as a Defence Chaplain.

Chaplain Bosch then joined the Royal Australian Navy (Navy) in 2012, where he was posted to HMAS Moreton in Brisbane, spending much of his time visiting ADF members and their families in hospitals and clinics. Since then, he has served around Australia and completed sea deployments in the Middle East and South East Asia.

Chaplain Bosch has faced his own challenges during his military career, experience which has given him a greater ability to connect with people facing a range of difficulties.

Chaplain Bosch is working from HMAS Stirling and the Perth Veterans' and Families' Hub and supports veterans and family members in both city and regional locations around Perth.

Brisbane

Chaplain Stan Fetting is the Veterans' Chaplain in Brisbane, Queensland.

Chaplain Fetting entered the Navy as a chaplain in Darwin 1999, before becoming an Army Chaplain in 2003. Chaplain Fetting has provided chaplaincy across a number of units, areas and domestic operations, primarily working in the Army Reserve. He has extensive experience in suicide prevention, mental health care, moral injury and working with members who are transitioning out of the ADF.

Chaplain Fetting is also a qualified fitness professional, with experience in using physical activity as a pathway for mental and spiritual wellbeing.

Chaplain Fetting works closely with Open Arms and particularly with the Lived Experience Peers. He works with the Soldier Recovery Centre on Gallipoli Barracks, the Veterans' and Families' Hub in Caboolture and the RSL Queensland Veteran and Family Wellbeing Centre in Stafford.

Townsville

Chaplain David Kelly is the Veterans' Chaplain in Townsville, Queensland.

After joining the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) as a chaplain in 2013, Chaplain Kelly served in RAAF Amberley, RAAF Wagga and RAAF East Sale before posting to RAAF Townsville in late 2016.

In 2018-2019 he was deployed to the Middle East in service of deployed personnel in the UAE and beyond. After his initial period of service in Air Force, Chaplain Kelly provided chaplaincy services to other branches of the ADF including 2 RAR and a period of service on HMAS Canberra, before moving back to RAAF Townsville.

Prior to joining the ADF, Chaplain Kelly worked within the health sector in South Australia and Queensland in a variety of roles. He has extensive experience in palliative care, bereavement counselling, mental health, moral injury and suicide prevention. Chaplain Kelly continues to provide chaplaincy services to 4HB on Lavarack Barracks as a Reservist.

DVA News



Left: (front) DVA Secretary Alison Frame, Archdeacon Andrew Nixon (middle) Deputy President Mark Brewer AM, CSC and Bar, Deputy Secretary Alison McLaren (back) Helen Lyons, Deputy Commissioner Mahmoud El-Hussein, and Deputy Secretary Andrew Kefford

Photos: DVA

What is the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card

The Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) is intended to assist eligible retirees and other eligible seniors who fail to qualify for income support payments from DVA because of income and assets.

If you were receiving Social Security Age Pension paid by DVA and you no longer receive payments because of an income and assets test, you may also be eligible for the CSHC.

The card enables you to get discounts and concessions on health care as well as other living costs.

Who can receive it

Your eligibility for the card depends on your circumstances.

You may be eligible to receive the CSHC if you are an Australian resident who is either:

- a veteran aged 60 years or over with [qualifying service](#) (QS)
- the partner or widowed partner of a veteran with qualifying service who has reached [age pension age](#) receiving a [War Widow\(er\)'s Pension](#) or a [Wholly Dependent Partner](#) Payment and are aged 60 years or over.

[Social Security Age Pension](#) recipient who lost payability with DVA due to the income or assets test.

To be eligible for a CSHC you must also:

- be 60 years of age if you are a veteran with QS or a war widow/er
- be Age Pension age if you are a partner of a veteran with QS or a previous Social Security Age pension recipient
- not be receiving a Service Pension (SP), Income Support Supplement (ISS) or Social Security Age pension from DVA
- not be receiving a pension or benefit or CSHC from Services Australia
- satisfy the CSHC income test.

Your eligibility also depends on the CSHC income test which includes:

- Your [adjusted taxable income](#)
- [deemed income](#) on account-based pensions (also known as allocated pensions).

You can earn up to:

- \$99,025 per year if you are single
- \$158,440 per year if you are a couple
- \$198,050 per year (combined) if you are a couple separated by illness, [respite care](#) or prison.

If you are caring for a child, you can earn an extra \$639.60 per year.

You may be eligible for a CSHC even if you are no longer receiving a pension because of changes to:

- your income and assets
- the pension assets test on 1 January 2017

You may also be eligible for a CSHC if you are widowed or separated from a partner who receives either:

- age pension
- invalidity service pension

If you already have a [Pensioner Concession Card \(PCC\)](#), you will not be eligible for a CSHC.

Estimated income

If you estimate your income when you apply for your card, you will need to send your notice of assessment from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) to us within:

- 12 months of the end of the tax year
- 3 months of receiving your notice of assessment.

Health benefits

You can get cheaper prescription medicines under the [Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme \(PBS\)](#)

The benefits include:

- prescriptions at the concession rate of \$7.70 each
- free prescriptions once you spend up to the [PBS Safety Net limit](#) in a calendar year.

Your GP may also be able to bulk bill your medical appointments.

You could have higher medical costs if you often need to:

- see your doctor
- have blood tests or scans.

You can get more back for each treatment under the [Medicare Safety Net](#) once you spend up to the limit.

Other living costs

Your card may also give you access to concessions on:

- electricity and gas bills
- property and water rates
- ambulance services
- dental treatment
- eye care
- public transport

Please refer to [Discounts and concessions](#) for links to your state or territory.

DVA does not set the discount and concession amounts. These are set by the organisations and businesses that charge these fees.

The discount amounts may change without notice.

Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025

Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025 is being conducted across Australia from 13 July to 04 August. More than 40,000 military personnel from 19 nations will participate in Talisman Sabre 2025, primarily in Queensland but also in Western Australia, the Northern Territory, New South Wales, and for the first time, offshore activities will be conducted in Papua New Guinea. Talisman Sabre is the largest Australia-US bilaterally planned, multilaterally conducted

exercise and a key opportunity to work with likeminded partners from across the region and around the world. Canada, France, Fiji, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Tonga, and the United Kingdom are all participating in Talisman Sabre 2025.

Occurring every two years, Talisman Sabre reflects the closeness of our alliance and strength of our enduring military relationship with the United States and also our commitment to working with likeminded partners in the region. Now in its eleventh iteration, Talisman Sabre provides an opportunity to exercise our combined capabilities to conduct high-end, multi-domain warfare, to build and affirm our military-to-military ties and interoperability, and strengthen our strategic partnerships.



A RAAF C-27J Spartan makes a Maritime Air Delivery (MAD) to HMNZS Te Kaha off the coast of Queensland, Australia during Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025.

Photos: PO Isaac Inwood-Reardon

Left: Chief of Joint Operations, Vice Admiral Justin Jones AO CSC RAN, presents a gift to the Deputy Chief of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, Brigadier Opa Lari Opa, during the closing ceremony for Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025 in Papua New Guinea.



Photo: :CPL Cameron Pegg

Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025

12 July 2025

Exercise Talisman Sabre is the largest exercise conducted in Australia. Talisman Sabre is bilaterally designed between Australia and the United States, and is a multilaterally planned and conducted exercise.

Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025 (TS25) will be the 11th and largest iteration of the exercise. It will consist of a live fire exercise, and field training exercises incorporating force preparation activities, amphibious landings, ground force manoeuvres, and air combat and maritime operations.

Forces will be moving into Australian training areas from mid-July 2025.

Participants

Exercise Talisman Sabre continues to grow, with 19 nations invited to participate in this iteration. The exercise is a key opportunity to work with partners from across the region and around the globe.

The exact number of personnel and types of equipment are still being planned, but it is expected the exercise will be similar to past iterations in scale and complexity.

Locations

TS25 will utilise a number of locations, including both Defence and non-Defence training areas. These locations provide a realistic test of how a large military force should function in a broad area of operations. TS25 will leverage locations and ranges for all domains of military operations: air,



land, maritime, space, and cyberspace. Exact locations are still being planned and will be updated as they become available.

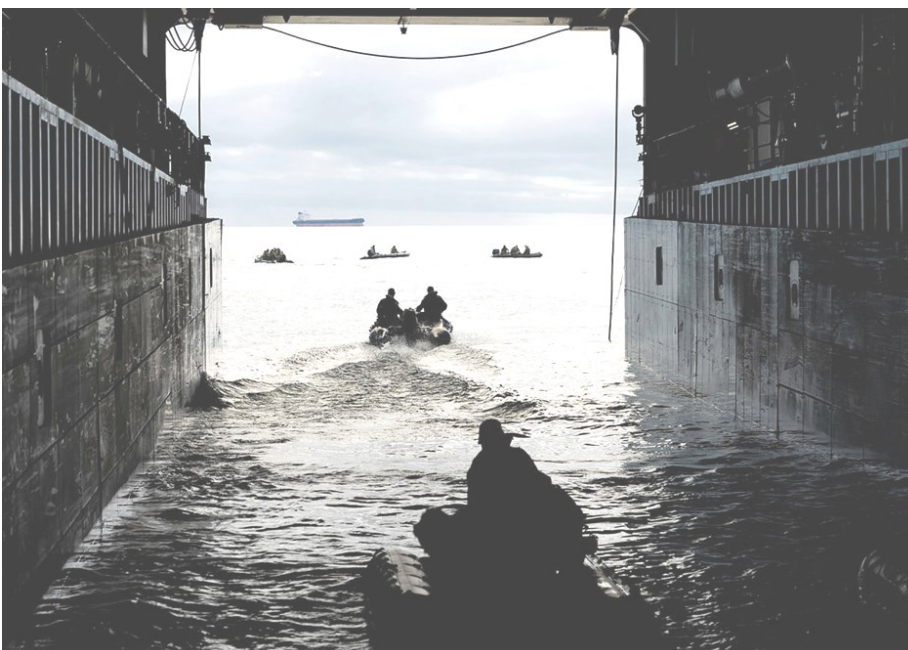
Community engagement

Defence consults with local governments, land owners and emergency services to help plan all field training exercises, including TS25. This engagement will occur with dedicated Defence liaison officers on location to ensure community communication.

Some community impacts expected during TS25 are:

- Large military vehicle convoys will be on public roads, including major highways and country roads.
- RAAF Bases will experience increased military air traffic during TS25. Notices of flying dates and timeframes will be published publicly.
- Closures of waters and airspace in vicinity of

(Continued on page 11)



Above and at left: Personnel from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment depart the vehicle deck of HMAS Choules to conduct amphibious operations as part of Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025.

Photo: LSIS Lauren Pugsley

Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025

(Continued from page 10)

training areas (including non-Defence Training Areas) will be communicated via notices to mariners and notices to airmen respectively. Temporary restrictions to airspace will apply for some activities. Yachts, fishing vessels and aircraft operating are asked to heed these notices and maintain a safe distance from military training.

In non-Defence Training Areas, TS25 will involve the use of weapons and blank ammunition. Public safety is of utmost importance, and all required risk reduction measures will be taken. The public should not handle weapons or touch ammunition and ordnance.

Safety management

Defence conducts site surveys to plan TS25 activities in a safe way that maximises training objectives and minimises possible impacts.

The management and control measures to restrict public access to the training areas used throughout TS25 are designed to keep the community and

exercise participants safe.

Defence will work with local communities to ensure access around training areas is clearly marked and easily identified.

Environmental management

Defence will protect threatened species, migratory species and marine mammals through a comprehensive framework of risk mitigation procedures ensuring compliance with relevant legislation.

An environmental management group will be on location throughout TS25 to ensure incident management and resolution occurs.

All foreign equipment, stores and ammunition being brought into Australia will be subject to biosecurity inspection.

Economic contributions

TS25 is expected to have a positive economic impact on local communities with Defence actively employing multiple local service providers injecting millions of dollars into communities nationally.

Defence



Australian Army Reserve soldiers from 41st Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment, board a RAAF KC-30 aircraft at RAAF Base Amberley in Queensland to deploy to northern Western Australia as part of Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025

Photo: Private Hamid Farahani



The ADF has expanded its naval rearmament capability in Northern Australia, rearming a Canadian warship. This is the second rearmament of a Canadian warship in Northern Australia, and the first in Darwin. HMCS Ville de Québec was rearmed with conventional munitions while supporting Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025 (TS 25). This 2025 rearmament activity was conducted with the aid of the Royal Australian Air Force, Australian Army, Australian and Canadian ammunition-loading experts,

Left: An RGM-84 Harpoon missile is manoeuvred aboard HMCS Ville de Québec in Darwin

Photo: CPL Brendan Gamache

Dog watch on board HMAS Canberra

20 July 2025

Charlie, an explosive detection dog with the 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment, and his handler Sapper Brandon Subloo, have embarked on *Canberra* for Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025. It is the first time the pair have been on board a warship and they are excited to be here.

"I'm really liking it on a ship and it's really nice how happy people are to see a dog and how we can bring up the mood by just walking around," Sapper Subloo said.

He and Charlie have the opportunity to work domestically and internationally to support the ADF and civilian agencies in detection of improvised explosive devices and unexploded ordnance.

"Basically, we are a rapid and independent capability that attaches to help engineers and the infantry in expedited searches of areas, buildings, routes and vehicles," he said.

For Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025, Charlie and Sapper Subloo are participating in amphibious assault operations in the Cowley Beach Training Area in Queensland to clear unexploded ordnance for the successive waves of Australian troops and Japanese marines.

Charlie and Sapper Subloo have been together for two years; Charlie will retire from service at the end of the year and his handler will receive a new partner.

'I was a normal combat engineer before I specialised as a dog handler. It took me two years, and it was the best thing I ever did.'

The good news is that Charlie will enjoy retirement

at home with Sapper Subloo.

Reflecting on the totality of his time in Army, Sapper Subloo said being a dog handler was the pinnacle.

"I was a normal combat engineer before I specialised as a dog handler. It took me two years, and it was the best thing I ever did," he said.

"I don't think a lot of people realise you spend every living moment with your dog in this role, and when you're having a bad day your dog is always there for you to bring your mood up.

"It will be a challenge having a new dog. But it will also be rewarding as there's something new every day which I like."

For training dogs, Sapper Subloo recommends mealtime as the dogs are hungry and they will do what they can for rewards.

But on *Canberra*, the question everyone has been asking is: where does Charlie go to the bathroom?

"Charlie has a spot on the forecastle, on command, on a little mat," Sapper Subloo explained, adding that he was also responsible for carrying all of Charlie's food, water and first aid kit.

Sapper Subloo wryly commented that no one remembered his name, only Charlie's, but he was

Below: A Republic of Korea Navy officer plays with Australian Army Explosive Detection Dog Charlie during a equipment showcase on board HMAS Canberra off the coast of Queensland during Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025.

Photo: LSIS Connor Morrison



Multinational Task Group sea power display

23 July 2025

Combined Task Group 628.1 (CTG628) has completed force preparation in anticipation of the next stage of Exercise Talisman Sabre 25.

Thirteen warships conducted intricate officer-of-the-watch manoeuvres as they positioned the extensive force of the amphibious assault ships, escorting frigates and destroyers into a close 'arrowhead formation' to conduct an aerial PHOTEX (photo exercise).

In a dominant display of amphibious sea power, CTG 628.1 presents a formidable force capable of rapidly deploying to deal with any of the multiple potential challenges in our region.

The battlegroups are comprised of two amphibious task groups and two escort groups, consisting of over six thousand sailors, soldiers and aviators.

The Combined Task Group has now completed an extensive preparation phase including amphibious wet and dry environmental rehearsals, maritime geospatial and mine counter measures, surface warfare serials, anti-submarine warfare exercises with HMAS *Farncomb*, naval gun fire support and air defence exercises with the Royal Australian Air Force.

CTG628.1 now pivots in anticipation of increased tempo of high-end warfighting and complex amphibious operations in the coming days.

"We are highly capable in all forms of maritime warfare. We are deeply knowledgeable in our craft. We are practised, we are lethal, and we are ready."



Commander Australian Amphibious Task Force Captain Chris Doherty said he was extremely pleased with the progressive integration with our multinational partners.

"Amphibious Task Group 1 is a critical part of CTG 628.1 and comprises the amphibious platforms ROKS *Marado*, HMAS *Canberra* and HMAS *Choules*; supported by our escort group of USS *Higgins*, ROKS *Geok* and FNS *Vendemiaire*," Captain Doherty said.

"We are highly capable in all forms of maritime warfare. We are deeply knowledgeable in our craft. We are practised, we are lethal, and we are ready."

Commander Landing Forces, Colonel Judd Finger, agreed Amphibious Task Group 1 was poised ready to strike.

"Navigating language, doctrine and cultural challenges, the force has worked incredibly hard to combine our skills, increase our knowledge, and find innovative solutions to the problems that invariably confront us," Colonel Judd said.

And with high-end amphibious warfighting just over the horizon, these Battle Groups are now ready for the next stage of the Exercise.



Above: Ships front to back: Norwegian warship HNoMS Roald Amundsen, HMS Prince of Wales, Australian warship HMAS Sydney, with an F-35B taking off from HMS Prince of Wales.

Left: HMAS Sydney transits as part of the double carrier formation, UK Carrier Strike Group, led by HMS Prince of Wales and US Navy's George Washington Carrier Strike Group,

Photos: Defence

UK shows off military might as Carrier Strike Group arrives in Darwin

22 July 2025

The UK's Carrier Strike Group has arrived in Darwin as it undergoes an eight-month deployment to showcase its commitment to the security of the Indo-Pacific.

Ahead of the fleet's arrival Britain's new High Commissioner Dame Sarah MacIntosh talked up the UK-Australia partnership as an "anchor relationship in a dangerous world".

The prosperity and stability of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions were "indivisible," she said.

"We are in an era of radical uncertainty, to be navigated with agility, speed and clarity."

Operation Highmast, led by Royal Navy flagship HMS Prince of Wales, embarked on its mission to the Pacific and Australia in late April as a signal of the British Government's intent to maintain a presence in the Indo-Pacific despite the war in Ukraine on Europe's doorstep.

The international Task Group is made up of five core ships, 24 F-35 fighter jets, and 17 helicopters, centred around the UK's flagship aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales.

Its deployment follows a British Government commitment to hike defence spending to 2.5 per cent of GDP by 2027, raising it well above Australia's projected target of 2.33 per cent by 2033.

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer went even further in June, pledging to boost Britain's overall defence and security spending to five per cent of economic output by 2035 to meet a NATO target – the highest level since the Cold War.

Australia's Government has so far refused to follow its UK ally to lift its spending any higher, deferring to a defence review next year and a "needs-based" approach despite pressure from the Trump admin-

istration to pour 3.5 per cent of GDP into defence spending.

Nicola Smith

THE NIGHTLY

Politics

16 Jul 2025

The participation of the UK's Carrier Strike Group in Australia's multinational exercise Talisman Sabre comes alongside Britain's renewed commitment to the \$368 billion trilateral AUKUS program to provide nuclear-powered submarines to Australia.

British AUKUS envoy Sir Stephen Lovegrove told the Australian Strategic Policy Institute earlier this month that London viewed AUKUS as a "momentous collaboration" between three allies, playing down fears about an ongoing Pentagon review of the landmark project.

More than 3,000 UK personnel are taking part in Talisman Sabre, the largest military exercise Australia has ever hosted, with the participation of 19 countries in total, including the United States.



Above: RN F-35B Lightning fighter

Below: HMS Prince of Wales berthing at HMAS Coonawarra . Darwin

Photos: UK Defence



Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025

Right Three Australian Army High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) launch rockets at Shoalwater Bay Training Area

Photos: Defence



Above: A German Air Force (Luftwaffe) pilot waves from the flight deck of an A400M Atlas, as it taxis on the flight line at RAAF Base Amberley, Queensland, prior to the commencement of Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025.

Right: A United States Coast Guard vessel heads out on patrol from HMAS Coonawarra in Darwin



Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025



Above: HMAS Canberra assigned to the Australian Amphibious Force - Amphibious Task Group 1 (ATG-1) in the Cowley Beach Training Area off the coast of Queensland

Below: A United States Air Force KC-46 Pegasus tanker taxis at RAAF Base Darwin during Exercise Talisman Sabre 25

Photos: Defence



HMAS Sydney—Regional Presence Deployment 25-2.

The Royal Australian Navy is undertaking its second regional presence deployment for 2025. From late March until early July, HMAS Sydney will sail throughout the Indo-Pacific to conduct training, exercises and other engagements with regional navies. Regional presence deployments play a vital role in Australia's long-term security and prosperity by protecting our interests, preserving a rule-based international order, enhancing cooperation and relationships with partners and allies, and developing capability and interoperability.

Right: Officers and sailors on board HMAS Sydney in Darwin Harbour after completing their overseas Regional Presence Deployment.

Below: (L-R) HMAS Sydney and Spanish Navy frigate Mendez Nunez conduct officer of the watch manoeuvres during Regional Presence Deployment 25-2.

Photos: Defence



DVA Contacts

DVA Contact numbers

- Provider invoicing & billing enquiries: [1300 550 017](tel:1300550017)
- Provider enquiries: [1800 550 457](tel:1800550457)
- Transport bookings: [1800 550 455](tel:1800550455)
- [Veterans' Affairs Pharmaceutical Advisory Centre](#) (VAPAC): [1800 552 580](tel:1800552580)

Hearing or speech impairment assistance

- If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the [National Relay Service](#) (NRS):
- Talk To You (TTY) users phone [1800 555 677](tel:1800555677) then ask for 1800 838 372
- Speak and Listen users phone [1800 555 727](tel:1800555727) then ask for 1800 838 372
- Internet relay users connect to the [NRS](#) then ask for 1800 838 372

Claims on hand

Despite record numbers of claims continuing to be lodged by the veteran community Initial Liability (IL) unallocated claims consistently remain below our Business as Usual (BAU) expectation (two weeks of intake).

- The average age of MRCA IL claims on hand has reduced 13.3 per cent over the last six months (218.1 days in January 2025 to 189.0 in July 25) and the age time on hand for MRCA PI has dropped 20.8 per cent (173.0 days in January 2025 to 137.0 in July 25).
- Over 58% of claims on hand are less than 200 days old, and the department continues to strive to reduce time taken to process to meet legislative guidelines.
- In June 2022 there were 65,231 claims on hand. 33 per cent of claims were with an officer for processing and 67 per cent were yet to be allocated.
- At the end of July 2025, there were 83,822 claims on hand. 81 per cent of claims were with an officer for processing and 19 per cent were yet to be allocated.

Information on health services may be obtained from DVA. The contact numbers for health care providers requiring further information or prior financial authorisation for all States and Territories are listed below:

PHONE NUMBER:

Telephone:

[1800 VETERAN \(1800 838 372\)](tel:1800VETERAN)

International callers:

[+61 2 6289 1133](tel:+61262891133)

POSTAL ADDRESS FOR ALL STATES AND TERRITORIES:

Health Approvals & Home Care Section department of Veterans' Affairs

GPO Box 9998

BRISBANE QLD 4001

DVA WEBSITE:

<http://www.dva.gov.au/providers/allied-healthprofessionals>

DVA email for prior financial authorisation: health.approval@dva.gov.au

The appropriate prior approval request form can be found at: <https://www.dva.gov.au/providers/servicesrequiring-prior-approval>

CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT

For information about claims for payment visit: www.dva.gov.au/providers/how-claim

Claim Enquiries: 1300 550 017
(Option 2 Allied Health)

Claims will take a variety of times to complete based on whether or not the claim is prioritised for allocation to a decision maker and the complexity of the claim itself. For example, if the service of the individual crosses two or more Acts or contains a lot of health conditions and injuries or both. This results in some claims being decided faster than the average time, while some claims take longer.

For any condition, to make the claiming process smoother, follow these 3 steps:

- **Step 1:** Get your medical practitioner to confirm your diagnosis.
- **Step 2:** Supply the documents you need to;
- **Step 3:** Check if you are already eligible for free health care and treatment.

OPEN
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1800 011 046



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CALL 1800 142 072

**Defence
Family
Helpline**



1800 624 608

**Defence
All-hours
Support Line**



1800 628 036