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Chief of Army

***An Insight into the Australian Defence Force's Future Land Capability***

Address to the ADM Congress, Canberra Theatre, Wednesday 13 February 2019.

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Distinguished guests, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning.

I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are meeting today, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respects to their elders, both past and present.

Well, it really is great to be here today.

There is no doubt that the ADM Congress continues to build and grow in significance and influence, the fact this larger venue was required this year is just one example of this.

My last real opportunity to engage with all of you in this way was my Chief of Army Land Forces Seminar in Adelaide last year. That was of significant benefit to Army, and to me as a new Chief. To be able to connect again at the ADM Congress is terrific, and I would like to thank Katherine, her team and the sponsors for this opportunity to meet and talk about the challenges we all share.

The mix of delegates here today, speaks to one of Army's recurring themes for building capacity and capability - the need for strong partnerships between Army and industry, between Army and all the stakeholders who contribute to our success. I will touch on this again later.

I have just returned from visiting our troops in the Middle East Region and I just wanted to take this opportunity to say how well they are doing, and how proud I am of their work. It was wonderful to see the ability of Army's people to operate in widely diverse environments, to overcome challenging problem sets, to see their professionalism and their own pride in the work they are doing, the difference they are making. Our Australian contribution remains immensely valued, and it is making an impact.

Likewise here at home. The selfless commitment to supporting our communities in the North Queensland floods has been inspiring.

I thank all of you for your support to our troops.

As their Chief, I also have the great responsibility to ensure success continues into the future – to ensure we can meet our obligation to the nation.

The Australian Army **mission**, as an institution, is to prepare land forces for war.

This presents a challenge in itself, preparing for the contemporary environment – to be **Ready Now** and, at the same time, to become **Future Ready** – for an unknown future.

Our command philosophy and organisational change framework of an **Army in Motion** helps us frame the problem, determine priorities and assess risk within a strategic approach to Preparedness.

Today, I will provide an **Insight into the Australian Defence Force's Future Land Capability**, through the challenges and response of **Accelerated Warfare** and through our modernisation priorities.

But I also humbly seek your input and contribution to that developmental process, and to foster your ongoing partnership with Army.

Army already partners with, and is directly supported by, many Australian-based **small and medium enterprises**. These partnerships embrace leading-edge technologies and help unlock Australia's potential for new ideas. We will continue to seek to partner with the best of Australian industry, universities, think-tanks, research organisations, and others. As an Army for the nation, we nurture these partnerships all across the country.

The real and tangible contributions that you make must build upon a shared understanding of the opportunities, the challenges and our approach to them.

As you are aware, Army published our Future's Statement – titled **Accelerated Warfare** – last year, describing the environment we are facing into the future. This set of ideas has been further refined in the **strategic guidance** I issued to Army just last month.

These documents provide an insight into what Army considers to be the **challenges** in our future. They also highlight the accelerating nature of that change, and the importance of owning the initiative.

Army's **response** to these challenges is also a key element of my *strategic guidance*, identifying our response as being **strategy and command led**, and **culture and concept driven**. This approach puts us on the right path to meet the challenges ahead.

The areas set out for further investigation are: a **credible combat force, access and persistent presence**, and **joint integrator**. These ideas are interconnected, and relate to what the capability must **be and** what the capability must **do**.

Foremost, our future land capability must continue to deliver a **credible combat force**.

Credible; it is an important term. Assessing what being credible means will be the subject of continuous work – what meets the threshold today may not do so tomorrow. What we do know is that a **credible combat force** has land forces prepared for war, and is prepared to use them. A **credible combat force** generates influence, has multiple options available to it, and is an effective force multiplier in the joint force.

To successfully compete in the dynamic of Cooperation, Competition, and Conflict, it is essential to leverage the unique ability of our Land Forces to generate **access and presence** – a capacity enabled by both hard and soft power capabilities, to **gain and maintain access**, to uniquely provide **persistent physical presence**, and from there to comfortably operate into all five domains.

And this demands our future land capability be a **joint integrator**. Military power is joint and we all understand how and why this is true – and why it is vital.

For Army to effectively enable – and be enabled by – the Joint Force, all land capability must not just be joint-by-design, but Integrated-by-design. This is an essential start point for all future land capability.

Army's force design and force employment logic must focus on its integral role as part of a greater system.

So, there is a great deal of intellectual rigour going into how we address these challenges, and Army will remain tightly engaged with our partners in developing our response.

There is also a practical, tangible side of this work, it is in our land capability modernisation.

I have set four modernisation priorities for Army as a way of getting after the challenges of **Accelerated Warfare**, they are the **Network, Protected Manoeuvre, Joint Fires**, and the **Enabled Soldier**. While there will always be a significant requirement placed upon Army to procure and modernise a wide range of capability, these are the four key areas which will ensure our future land capability is **Connected, Protected, Lethal and Enabled**, and they are the areas that have the greatest impact on our **credible contribution to the joint force**, to maximise potential of the joint force.

**The network** enables Army to fight as a combined arms team, to integrate into the joint force, and is a critical enabler to many new technologies such as robotics and autonomous systems. The networks must also be ready to rapidly evolve in the modern battlespace with the emergence of quantum computing and artificial intelligence. Connected systems maximise their utility across the joint force, to protect them from

threats, to reduce lag and coordinate rapid responses, and simply to improve the overall effectiveness of the joint force.

There are many projects within Army that are connected and networked, indeed there are many more across the joint force. It is of the highest priority that these networks are integrated, resilient and agile. Our people on land must be connected with our air and maritime capabilities, and to our partners, for effective joint operations, just as much as they need to be connected across the land-based capabilities.

Agility in this area is hard, and we know we have much to do – but we must get this right if we are to realise our Potential.

The program central to Army's **protected manoeuvre** is the Combat Vehicle Program. The decision to acquire Boxer under Land 400 Phase 2 will see an expansion and transformation of the Combat Reconnaissance Vehicle fleet.

The first of these vehicles are on track to be delivered to the Commonwealth in April.

The infantry fighting vehicle selected under Land 400 Phase 3 will continue the essential modernisation of our combat vehicle capability. The tenders for Phase 3 close on the first of March. I would like to thank those companies who have made the significant effort to tender for what will be Army's largest project to date.

In related projects we will upgrade our Main Battle Tank and acquire new Under Armour Breaching and Bridging capability. Together, they generate a combat vehicle system that is essential to our response to **Accelerated Warfare**.

The need to operate amongst the people in a denied environment, to get close to the threat, and to ultimately decide an outcome on the ground, will be an enduring requirement. Army provides that unique capability to the joint force.

The protection and networked capability of a modern combat vehicle fleet, integrated as a system, is vital for our Australian soldiers in a credible Army.

Our vehicles will cease to be individual nodes on the battlefield and will instead become nodes in the Land Combat System. As we expand this system, we know we will have to continuously innovate and adapt to realise its potential. But we are an **Army in Motion**, and hungry for this opportunity.

The prioritisation of **joint fires** aims to substantially increase Army's lethality and our ability to support the joint force with effects in the land, air and maritime domains. Two key areas of work are the Short-Range Ground-Based Air and Missile Defence Project, and the Long Range Fires Project. These two projects will not only replace existing capability but will provide a fundamentally new contribution to the joint force, providing a **credible combat force** and, through our deliberate focus on the wider joint fires system, a fully integrated system as well.

Army's focus on **lethality** strengthens the joint force. The ADF's future air capability is a generational change, the future maritime capability expands and enhances our fleet, and Army's joint fires will add reach, protection and persistence to the force. In particular, long range fires will allow Army to support both air and maritime platforms from the land, while meaningfully adding to the influence that our joint force creates.

As for all domains, **People** are at the heart of Land capability: we need our soldiers to outthink, outperform and outlast our adversaries.

Our Army has experienced a wide range of operating environments over the past two decades and, through this lived experience, we have tested the practical limits of modern soldiering.

We know that a continued focus on the **enabled soldier** is essential to ensure our people will be fully effective regardless of how and where they are deployed – to ensure they are connected and integrated, and to enable and leverage the organic capability of the individual soldier.

Army is also increasingly focussed on the physical, cognitive and psychological dimensions of high performance, to operate, to thrive and to always find a way to win.

So, my focus for Army is to be **connected, protected, lethal** and **enabled**. These all provide a great deal of room for collaboration, for assistance, for **Partnership** – Army is not doing this alone.

Indeed **Partnership** has become a natural addition to our four Ps of **Preparedness, People, Profession** and **Potential**.

Army will continue to focus on strong partnerships, they are essential to expand our capacity, to create greater value, to open our minds to the power of diverse teams and the innovation that flows. We must invest in partnerships to achieve the capability advantage we seek, to reach our **Potential**, to be **Future Ready**.

One way **partnership** can be embraced is in the *contest of ideas*.

As Army works toward the **Army Strategy for release** later this year, we will be working with others to develop the best possible outcome for Army and the joint force. However, strategy – as with preparedness – is not a static concept, it is dynamic. We will be better for ongoing engagement from industry, from academia, from think-tanks, from the Defence community writ-large. And this includes those who have arrived at different conclusions about what is needed to respond to **accelerated warfare**. I welcome diversity of opinions. No good idea should go unchallenged. Our argument should win on the strength of its logic, not the strength of the advocate.

Ladies and Gentlemen, providing you an insight into future land capability is important. The challenges of accelerated warfare are the challenges of our future land capability. In developing the concepts of a **Credible Combat Force, Access** and **Persistent Presence**, and being a **Joint Integrator**, the form and function of our future land force will become clear!

These modernisation priorities will see our Army better **connected, protected, lethal** and **enabled**, and therefore best positioned to contribute to the joint force.

And most importantly, it is through collaboration and **Partnership** with you that Army will contribute to the joint force in the best way possible.

I look forward to engaging with you all as we take this journey together.

Thank you.