

In AFAC's (Australasian Fire Authorities Council) current annual report

<https://www.afac.com.au/auxiliary/about/report> it was noted that the NAFC (National Aerial Firefighting Centre) board recommended that NAFC merge with the AFAC (as at July 2018).

Also a position paper on *Climate Change in the Emergency Services Sector* (2009) was identified as requiring review....In May 2017 the *Rural and Land Management Group* agreed to revise and update the report. The *AFAC Climate Change Group* submitted a national paper "*Climate Change and the Emergency Management Sector*" to AFAC council in May 2018. The paper identified current and potential implications of climate change for the EM sector and suggested ways to support climate change adaptation.....

Extracts from the Senate Report on Implications of climate change for Australia's national security 17 May 2018 © Commonwealth of Australia 2018

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[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and Trade/Nationalsecurity/Final_Report](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/Nationalsecurity/Final_Report)

All the footnotes/references in brackets in the extracts from the website above are broken links. Any bold and underlined font is my emphasis.

Recommendation 5

6.20 The committee recommends the National Aerial Firefighting Centre undertake a cost benefit analysis to assess whether leasing arrangements or government ownership of firefighting aircraft will provide the best value and support to firefighters and communities in the future.¹

Chapter 4

Suggestions for improving coordination within Defence

Proposals for preparing Defence to respond to disasters

4.55 **The committee heard various proposals for addressing this issue, including that Defence readjust its priorities, invest in versatile personnel and assets, or further support non-military forces to respond to climate-related events.**

4.57 **As an example, the committee raised the example of whether Defence should own and operate a fleet of aircraft for firefighting purposes.**[125] Mr Mark Crossweller, Director General of EMA, suggested there are good reasons for contracting rather than owning such aircraft:

We're able to contract the best and the brightest and the latest aircraft into Australia that suit Australian conditions²...They're not required in Australia for 12 months of the year, so we bring the expertise in from overseas when we need it. It goes back when we don't need it. That's managed through the National Aerial

¹ It was also noted in the AFAC annual report in relation to this recommendation that "NAFC supports the principle of the recommendation, but proposes ongoing staged implementation, whereby NAFC and the states and territories will continue to evaluate the best approach."

² I would submit that this very much open to question.

Firefighting Centre, which is a cooperative arrangement between the federal government and the states.[126]

4.58 He further added:

...we are well-served by a volunteer firefighting force that is the envy of the world.³..We've often talked to Defence about supplementation of capabilities in that particular space. We don't believe that it's necessary to train soldiers to that level of firefighting capability, and I think Defence would agree with that.[127]

4.59 A possible compromise may entail Defence investing in 'dual-use-styled forces' that could be available for HADR⁴ or war fighting.[128]

4.60 Some submissions raised alternative structural changes to the ADF, such as the creation of a dedicated 'green helmet' force or separate 'wake force' focussed on responding to humanitarian needs in climate emergency scenarios.[130]

4.61 The committee also heard that, instead of positioning dedicated HADR forces within the ADF, the role of non-military forces could be expanded. Dr Bergin and Ms Glasson suggested:

Because of demands on ADF resources for maritime border security, maritime enforcement and disaster relief, climate change may give greater currency to arguments in support of a coastguard and re-vamped civilian disaster agencies.[133]

4.62 Rear Admiral Titley also addressed the idea of a dedicated HADR force:

Your question gets to what we sometimes refer to as a constabulary force. It's not maybe high-end military, high-end war fighting, but they are able to go into these uncertain security situations, disasters, and re-establish some sort of order, communications, intelligence, logistics and all that...it's a very good idea that needs to be kept on the table and really thought through, but at what level—how much of that do you need to do to really make it worthwhile? If it's below that level, then maybe it's more efficient to simply have the ADF, who is exceptionally good at this, to just simply achieve that mission.[134]

4.63 Admiral Barrie responded:

I would say that members of the Australian Defence Force are the most expensive assets that the government funds to get jobs done, whatever they are. And I think if you can find someone else to do that work and you don't have to spend that amount of money, you should go and find it...I worry that we see the emergence of these paramilitary forces, and I would put Border Protection in one of those classes. Paramilitary forces are there to do jobs that essentially look very military to me, but I wouldn't go so far as to say that becomes 50 per cent of the defence function; I think that would be a total misuse of resources.[135]

4.64 On the broad topic of how Defence responds to climate change, Air Vice Marshal Hupfeld reiterated it is being considered across Defence as part of its normal activity, and noted Defence continues 'to review our structures to see what is the most efficient and effective way of delivering the capabilities that are required'.[136]

⁴ Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

In a 2003 submission to the Senate Committee on the Recent Bushfires Matt Carroll a then Senior Consultant with Codarra Advanced Systems said:

The Canadair 415 is the only aircraft designed and built specifically to fight fires, and is extensively used very successfully in Canada and the USA. It is ideal to provide an initial attack on a fire that is getting out of control by getting to the fire quickly and repeatedly dropping large amounts of water or suppressing foam.

Each aircraft is capable of delivering 75,000 litres an hour to a fire front about 20 kilometres away. It collects water by skimming along a suitable water source. It only requires approximately 400m to fill up, can scoop water sites as shallow as two metres, go around river bends and scoop in rough ocean conditions.

Being a twin turbo prop fixed wing aircraft, the Canadair 415 offers significant savings in operating costs and versatility in comparison to rotary wing aircraft.

16 years on his observations remain true. The more than 50 years' experience of using these aircraft in France and Canada as well as Spain, Italy, Croatia and Greece also strongly corroborates his assertions.