



Australian Government  
Australian Civil-Military Centre

# AUSTRALIAN CIVIL-MILITARY CENTRE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

December 2024

## Australian Civil-Military Centre Update

It has been a very busy end to the year. In recent months, ACMC has supported a number of capacity building initiatives in the Pacific and South East Asia, released new research, and helped build Australian Government capability in Lessons Management and the Protection of Civilians. We co-led the 10th annual meeting of the Regional Consultative Group on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination for Asia-Pacific and hosted an interagency delegation from Papua New Guinea.

Closer to home, we recently welcomed Chief of Joint Operations, Vice Admiral (VADM) Justin Jones to ACMC to update him on the Centre's work. We farewelled Marc Purcell who had been CEO at ACFID – a key ACMC partner – almost since ACMC was established. Marc has been a steadfast and valued friend of the Centre for the last 15 years and we wish him all the best in his future endeavours. We also farewelled two ACMC staff: Group Captain Andrew Gilbert and Mr Rob Graham and acknowledged their long and dedicated Defence careers. We wish them well for the future.

In closing this year, I hope everyone has a safe and happy festive season and I look forward to working with you in 2025. I'm anticipating another busy and productive year.

**Nicola Rosenblum**  
Executive Director  
Australian Civil-Military Centre

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## Strengthening Australian and PNG approaches to disaster management

ACMC, in collaboration with Townsville City Council's Local Disaster Management Group, hosted a disaster management workshop with a visiting delegation of disaster and emergency response officials from Papua New Guinea. The workshop aimed to deepen ties between Australia and PNG in disaster response.

"Australian and PNG representatives brought a wealth of practical and policy experience. The workshop was an important opportunity to share insights on disaster management frameworks and capacity building, especially at an interagency level. There is a lot we can learn from each other," ACMC Deputy Executive Director Dave Proctor said.

"PNG is regularly impacted by natural hazards such as cyclones, floods, earthquakes and volcanic activity, often in remote locations which present a range of challenges. This visit was an opportunity for Australia and PNG to discuss how we are facing these challenges" said Mr Proctor.



## Regional Consultative Group on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination for Asia-Pacific

ACMC co-led the 10<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Regional Consultative Group on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination for Asia-Pacific (RCG) in Thailand in December. The RCG is the region's premier forum for Governments, civil society, militaries and police to exchange knowledge and experience on civil-military-police coordination. The RCG meeting was conducted in Thailand commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Boxing Day tsunami.

"In the intervening years since that sad day, there has been a significant uplift in crisis preparedness and response across the region, with well-developed national disaster management organisations to help populations prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises," Ms Rosenblum said. "But despite best efforts, natural disasters are becoming more frequent and more severe, placing more communities at risk. This makes coordinated civil-military-police responses more important than ever."

ACMC's Dr Natalie McLean convened a workshop in the margins of the RCG, with the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (CPCS), on innovative approaches to community security and policing.





## Building capacity to learn lessons

In recent months, ACMC conducted activities to build Lessons Management capacity in Canberra, Sydney and Hobart.

In September, ACMC hosted a three day Civil-Military Lessons Symposium in Canberra, which included a focus on how Artificial Intelligence might improve learning before, during and after crises.



Chief of Joint Operations, VADM Jones officially opened the symposium, which featured 100 representatives from Defence, Australian Government agencies, jurisdictional emergency management organisations, the United States and New Zealand authorities and NGOs.

“It is no longer enough to learn from past responses to crises. The increasing frequency of disasters means we need to be agile and learn before, during and after events; to be constantly reviewing how agencies can work better together,” VADM Jones said.

ACMC also conducted a five day ‘Facilitate Lessons Management Process’ course in Sydney in October and piloted our ‘Participate in a Lessons Process’ course in Hobart in November.

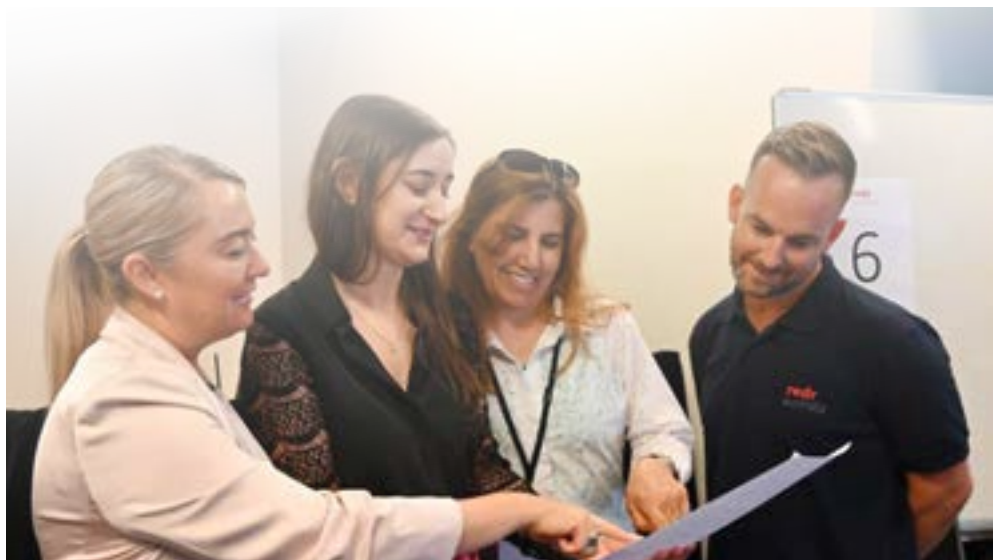
## ACMC course considers evolving challenges in the Protection of Civilians

ACMC convened a Protection of Civilians (POC) course to examine how to safeguard human lives and dignity in situations of armed conflict. The course featured presentations from Lieutenant General (LTGEN Retd) John Frewen, RedR CEO Dr Helen Durham, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Australian Red Cross, the University of NSW and the United States Civilian Protection Center of Excellence.

The course built participants’ awareness of core POC principles and frameworks and included sessions focussed on the Laws of Armed Conflict, the gendered impact of war, cultural property protection and the implications of climate change for POC.

“Even in conflict, civilians are entitled to safety and humane treatment. It’s important that we discuss the rules and frameworks under International Humanitarian Law, and think of how they might be applied in future scenarios. ACMC courses provide a unique opportunity for policy and operational staff from across government and beyond to discuss these issues together,” said Ms Rosenblum.

The course culminated in a simulation exercise facilitated by RedR Australia that tested participants on how they would respond to organising an evacuation of civilians affected by conflict.



## Strengthening civil-military coordination for future public health emergencies

ACMC released a research publication of operational guidance to strengthen civil-military coordination in preparing for and responding to a future pandemic or public health emergency – domestically or overseas.

LTGEN Frewen launched 'Considerations for Civil-Military Interactions in Public Health Emergencies' at the International Committee of Military Medicine Conference in Brisbane in September. LTGEN Frewen led Defence's COVID-19 taskforce and was the Coordinator-General of Australia's COVID vaccine rollout.

"The severity and complexity of crises is increasing. We are also seeing concurrent events, as Australia experienced in 2020, with major bushfires, widespread flooding and the COVID-19 pandemic," LTGEN Frewen said. "Now, more than ever, we need to strengthen coordination and collaboration between civil and humanitarian agencies and military organisations."

The new publication provides clear actionable guidance at the field level to build a more nuanced understanding of the roles and capabilities of militaries in outbreak response, facilitating better preparedness and more aligned operational responses in an emergency.

The publication is available at:

<https://acmc.gov.au/resources/publications>



## ACMC support to Ex LONGREACH 24 in Fiji and Solomon Islands

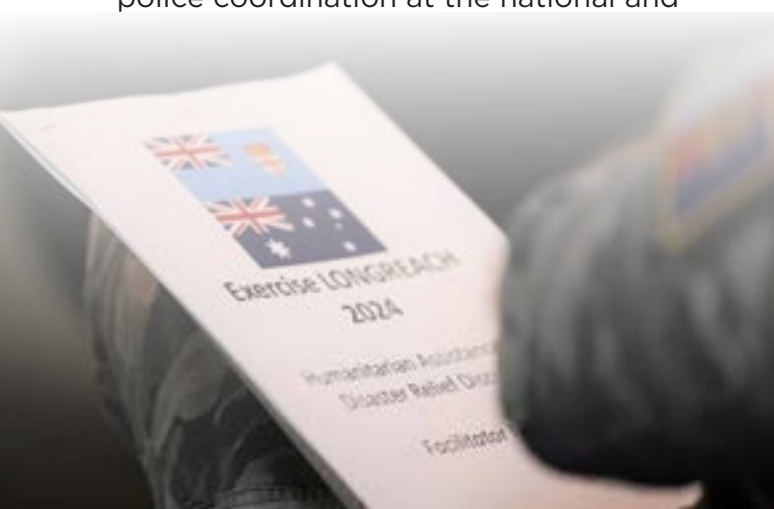
In November, ACMC's Damian Eaton supported Exercise LONGREACH 24 in Fiji and the Solomon Islands. Ex LONGREACH is a bilateral Humanitarian Assistance / Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise designed to build the capacity and capability of government, non-government and international organisations to respond to natural disasters in the Pacific.

ACMC involvement in the LONGREACH series of exercises strengthens civil-military-police coordination at the national and

sub-national level, and builds upon the strong working relationship developed with key stakeholders during activities conducted in Fiji and the Solomon Islands over the past three years.

During Ex LONGREACH 24 (Fiji), conducted as part of the Vuvale Partnership, participants from a range of Australian and Fijian civilian, military and police organisations conducted a table-top exercise to improve understanding and interoperability within the Fiji Disaster Management Framework. The multinational, interagency nature of the exercise was enhanced by representatives from the New Zealand Defence Force, Japan Self-Defense Force and our colleagues at the US Centre for Excellence in Disaster Management.

Ex LONGREACH 24 (Solomon Islands) involved more than 60 participants from 25 different Australian and Solomon Islands actors and focused on knowledge sharing and collaboration in preparation for the Tropical Cyclone Season.



## Preparing for humanitarian challenges of maritime conflict

In September, ICRC and ACMC hosted a panel discussion on how to protect civilians at sea during times of conflict.

Ms Rosenblum moderated the panel, which included ACMC Deputy Executive Director and former Chief of the Royal New Zealand Navy, Rear Admiral (Retd) David Proctor, ICRC Regional Maritime Legal Adviser Andre Smit and ICRC Regional Delegate to the Armed Forces, Snowy Lintern.

“When we think about protection of civilians during conflict, we often consider land-based scenarios,” Ms Rosenblum said.

“Notions of protecting civilians, managing detainees, and caring for the sick and wounded while at sea are more complicated than on land. Expert panel discussions like this are an opportunity to consider what more we can do to mitigate humanitarian consequences in the maritime domain and ensure all parties meet their obligations under international humanitarian law.”



## Preparing for future HADR challenges in the Indo-Pacific

ACMC attended a conference hosted by the US Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM) at INDOPACOM in November, celebrating its 30th anniversary. The forum brought together regional, national and civil society organisations to consider future challenges for humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR) in the Indo-Pacific.

ACMC's Nicola Rosenblum and Peter Giugni led a session on civil, military and police coordination in the Pacific and how Australia is working with partners to build regional capabilities. Other sessions focussed on building climate resilience, regional humanitarian coordination and major lessons from regional responses. ACMC signed an MOU with CFE-DM in July during a visit to Australia by Director Joseph Martin.





## ACMC's role in building community resilience

ACMC highlighted new research on security sector reform to build community resilience at the 2024 ACFID annual conference in Sydney. The conference theme was 'Solidarity and Resilience – the Power of the Collective'. ACMC's Jules Frost delivered a presentation with Dr George Varughese from UNSW.

"The concepts of community resilience, safety and security extend beyond mere physical protection or security sector enforcement. Successful transformation of community resilience, security and safety initiatives hinges on establishing robust partnerships between those addressing the

root causes of conflict and those involved in national and regional security frameworks," Ms Frost said.

"Inter-agency capacity and preparedness means that when a crisis occurs government, non-government and civil society organisations are ready to work together effectively and engage with and support communities in need."

"Fostering such partnerships can generate opportunities to normalise the integration of community security into broader national security strategies, leading to more sustainable peace and stability," Ms Frost said.



## Humanitarian Futures Forum

ACMC has participated in the Humanitarian Futures Forum 2024 hosted by the Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in partnership with Singapore's Changi Regional Humanitarian Coordination Centre. The forum invited regional experts to meet and discuss the emerging issues including: the humanitarian impacts of climate crisis, digital humanitarianism, and the emerging humanitarian landscape. The Forum marked the launch of a commemorative book on the 20th anniversary of the Boxing Day tsunami.

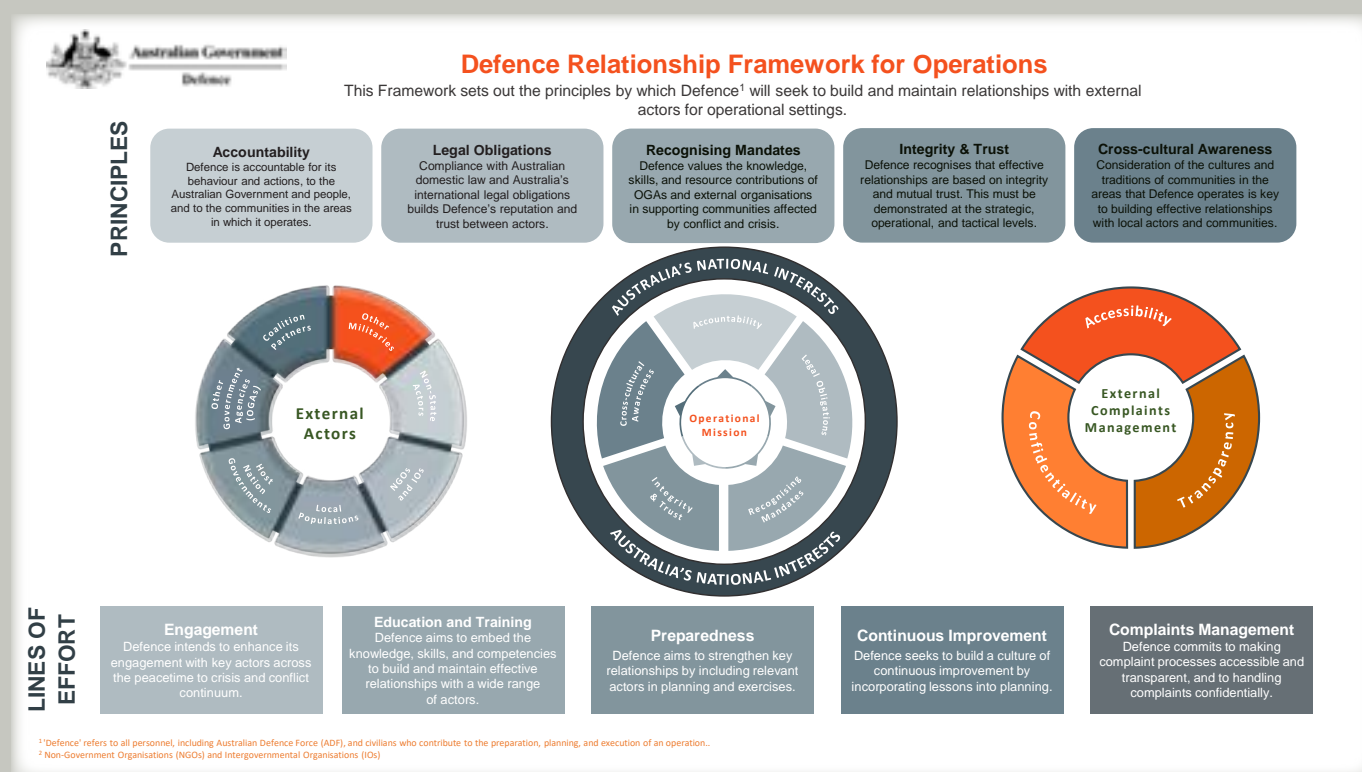


## Defence Relationship Framework for Operations

ACMC is supporting implementation of the Defence Relationship Framework for Operations (DRFO) which aims to improve the way Defence engages external organisations during the planning, conduct and review of military operations.

More than 20 years of high operational tempo featured many stories of successful relationships, but also highlighted challenges in how Defence engages with external actors on operations. Some of these challenges came from a lack of clarity about respective mandates and accountabilities.

The increasing complexity of our operational environments requires Defence to improve the way we manage external relationships. ACMC developed DRFO through extensive consultation across Defence and external organisations and it has been approved by the Defence senior leadership.



## Defence Doctrine internet page launched

ACMC, in partnership with Defence Doctrine Directorate, has launched an Australian Defence Force (ADF) Doctrine webpage on the ACMC internet site to give external stakeholders a better understanding of Defence's operational principles and processes.

Developing an understanding of Defence capability across domestic and international governments, non-government and multi-agencies, partners and allies; will be essential to the success of future operations.

The site currently hosts Defence's capstone doctrine (ADF-C-O Australian Military Power) and, over time, will include other publications which outline Defence's considerations when planning and working in multi-jurisdictional and multi-actor environments during crises.

Visit the ACMC Defence Doctrine internet page: [Defence Doctrine](#) or for further information email [acmc.enquiries@defence.gov.au](mailto:acmc.enquiries@defence.gov.au).