



EXERCISE TALISMAN SABRE 2013

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Australia conducts regular exercises with visiting foreign military forces, and Australia and the United States (US) have been conducting combined military exercises for the last three decades. Exercise Talisman Sabre is a biennial military exercise which combines Australian and US air, land and maritime forces. It is the largest joint military exercise undertaken by the Australian Defence Force.

Exercise Talisman Sabre is designed to train Australian and US forces to plan and conduct Joint Combined Task Force operations to support and strengthen Defence's capability to defend Australia and its national interests. This will be the fifth time Exercise Talisman Sabre has been conducted with Exercises held in 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2011.

Exercise Talisman Sabre 2013 (TS13) involves 23,000 Defence personnel and will be conducted in July and August 2013. The Exercise will take place at a range of Defence training areas mostly in Queensland and possibly the Northern Territory.

Based on fictional scenarios, the Exercise includes combined Special Forces operations, parachute drops, amphibious landings, land force manoeuvres, urban and air operations and the co-ordinated firing of live ammunition from a range of in-service weapons systems used by exercise participants. The fictional scenarios are designed to bring the different branches of the Australian and US military together in a combined environment.

Conducting the Exercise ensures Defence personnel are better prepared for deployment into areas of active conflict worldwide through added experience and confidence.

EXERCISE TIMING

Exercise TS13 is scheduled to take place from 15 July to 6 August 2013. Extensive planning is currently underway for TS13 with the consolidation and training of troops in preparation for the periods of intensive exercises.

Pre and post-exercise administration will occur around these dates which minimise impacts to exercise areas during and after the activity.





LOCATION OF ACTIVITIES

Exercise Talisman Sabre 2013 (TS13) will be conducted at designated Australian Defence Force (ADF) training facilities in Queensland, the Northern Territory, within the Australian Maritime Zones of Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone. The types of activities undertaken are dependent on the training area.

Central Queensland

The Shoalwater Bay Training Area is located north east of Rockhampton and north of Yeppoon and is recognised as Australia's single most important area for the conduct of amphibious and combined arms exercises due to its coastal location.

Activities at the training area will involve a combination of amphibious landing, parachute landings, land force manoeuvres, urban operations, and extensive fixed and rotary wing flying operations. Using areas within this training area, troops will practice the coordinated firing of live ammunition from a range of weapon systems delivered from land, air and sea platforms.

North Queensland

Several activities may also be held at the Townsville Field Training Area, west of Townsville. These activities include land force manoeuvres, coordinated firing of live ammunition, and fixed and rotary wing flying operations.

At Cowley Beach Training Area this may consist of force preparation activities and may involve rehearsal of an amphibious landing prior to maritime transit to Shoalwater Bay Training Area.

Coral Sea

A substantial component of TS13 will occur at sea with forces distributed over the Coral Sea within the Australian Maritime Zones of the Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone. This may include anti-surface, anti-air and anti-submarine warfare training, use of sonobuoys to locate submarines, use of sonar for sub-surface vessel detection, clearance diving and logistics training at sea including mid-frequency active sonar.

Some gun and missile firing will also occur at sea. The use of these weapons on impact areas will be consistent with standard operating procedures for other exercises.

Saumarez Reef, a dedicated training area within the Coral Sea, is likely to be used during TS13 for aircraft live fire practice.

Northern Territory (NT)

TS13 may use several training facilities in the Northern Territory including the Delamere Range Facility, Bradshaw Field Training Area and Mount Bunday Training Area. Limited activities are likely to occur in the Northern Australian Range Complex, with some activities potentially occurring in the Bradshaw Field Training Area in the lead up to TS13. These low level training activities will be similar to the usual activities which occur within the Bradshaw Field Training Area.

Other sites

- Port facilities in Queensland (Port of Cairns, Port of Townsville, Port Alma, Port of Gladstone and Port of Brisbane) and the Northern Territory
- RAAF Bases at Darwin, Tindal, Townsville, Amberley, Williamtown and Richmond for aircraft holding
- Rockhampton and Cairns Airports
- Defence sites at Townsville, Darwin, Rockhampton and Brisbane.





SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT MEASURES

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) is committed to sustainable environmental management in supporting its capability to defend Australia and its national interests.

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) prescribes the Commonwealth's role in environmental assessment, biodiversity conservation and the management of protected areas. Under the provisions of the EPBC Act, Defence activities that are likely to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance, require the approval of the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

The EPBC Act is the overriding legislation governing Defence activities, and Defence is required to comply with the EPBC Act to ensure protection of the environment and heritage.

FIRE

Defence take great care to minimise the risk of fires occurring as a result of these activities.

Fire Management Plans ensure annual surveys are undertaken at each training area to determine what activities can, and should take place in certain areas to reduce any threat of fire. The Fire Management Plans also prescribe where back burning is conducted and fire breaks are constructed to further reduce the threat of fire.

Live firing is also restricted to designated areas and Defence uses judgement and experience in firing different types of ammunition within different weather conditions. For example, some types of ammunition firing will be restricted during periods of high fire danger. In the instance of a small fire, management controls are onsite to ensure a quick and efficient response and in the unlikely occurrence of a larger fire, troops participating in the exercise may assist in fire fighting efforts.



NOISE

Specific activities undertaken in Talisman Sabre such as aircraft movements, detonation of munitions, amphibious craft and Defence convoys can result in additional noise.

Defence employs several strategies to manage the potential impact of noise on local residents and local habitat.

Every effort is made to reduce the effects of aircraft and vehicle noise. Abatement measures including restricting aircraft to designated training areas within reasonable hours of operation, and selecting flight paths to ensure aircraft are not concentrated over a particular area for a prolonged period.

Throughout the Exercise, munitions are detonated and live fire is used as part of on-ground activities. These take place within restricted hours and within specified areas, which are not accessible by the general public.

Vehicle traffic on civilian roadways will also be limited as much as possible.





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WASTE

With the influx of personnel and activities throughout the exercise, an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) ensures waste is managed in an environmentally sustainable way that does not negatively impact on the local environment.

The EMP outlines how waste will be managed prior to, during and after the exercise has taken place. At the close of the exercise, redeployment is managed by a policy of 'no footprint' with all exercise materials, equipment and debris removed.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Defence is committed to continued protection of flora and fauna within its training areas throughout Australia. With an influx of up to 23,000 personnel and the varying activities that occur throughout the exercise, the protection of flora and fauna is incorporated into all briefing information for exercise participants.

As part of Defence's ongoing environmental stewardship of training areas, the location of significant habitats and threatened species is studied to guide decisions on the location of activities within the training areas.

Within training areas different levels of access are in place for a variety of reasons including the protection of local flora and fauna. 'No-go' access restricts all entry to a particular land or sea area. 'Restricted' access allows personnel to enter land or sea areas, however, entry is conditional to following certain protocols such as no firing in particular areas. Any areas where threatened species exist are automatically assigned as 'no-go' for the entirety of the exercise.

Marine flora and fauna is also a major consideration when conducting the TS13 Exercise. Activities that are conducted within Australian waters are subject to thorough environmental protection under several Commonwealth Acts. The ADF Maritime Activities Environmental Management Plan also outlines what activities and areas can be accessed throughout the Exercise and specific mitigation measures for these areas. The proposed Coral Sea Commonwealth Marine Reserve has been considered as part of the environmental assessment. Activities conducted as part of the TS13 Exercise will not significantly impact on this reserve.

Marine craft have the potential to disturb marine fauna and mammals. In addition to Environmental Clearance Certificates, Defence have several maritime safeguards in place, which restrict marine craft activity to reduce any negative potential impacts on the marine environment. The safeguards must also comply with Commonwealth legislation which protects marine areas.

Both Australian and US procedures require sonar equipment to be powered down or shut down if whales are sighted and become too close to ships. All TS13 anti-submarine warfare exercises will be conducted away from known whale migratory routes, times and aggregation areas.

LAND AND WATER CONTAMINATION

Land and water contamination from live firing activity and from accidental release of contaminants (oils, fuels and chemicals) have been evaluated in the environmental risk assessment as a medium risk to the environment.

Risk reduction measures will be implemented to avoid or mitigate land and water contamination and these are detailed in the Environmental Management Plan. These mitigation measures are detailed in the Training Area Standing Orders (SOs) and are routinely implemented for regular training exercises to reduce the risk of land and water contamination.

Annual water quality monitoring is conducted at the Shoalwater Bay Training Area as part of the Landscape Monitoring Program. This annual program will continue to monitor water quality at impact areas during TS13.

QUARANTINE

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – Biosecurity (DAFF – Biosecurity) has established guidelines and resources for administering quarantine for ADF and foreign military activities which is managed by the DAFF – Biosecurity National Coordination Centre Military. DAFF – Biosecurity officers will travel to offshore locations to inspect US military equipment prior to arriving in Australia for the TS13 Exercise. This will assist in managing the quarantine risk offshore and meeting the short time frame requirements of the US military for clearance.





PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT REPORT

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) is committed to being a leader in sustainable environmental management. As part of this commitment, a detailed Public Environment Report (TS13 PER) and Environmental Management Plan (EMP) will be produced to support Exercise Talisman Sabre 2013.

Environmental management initiatives will be employed to appropriately manage any potential impacts of the exercise. These management initiatives will be included in military orders and directives to ensure both ADF and US compliance and aim to avoid and mitigate potential negative environmental impacts without adversely impacting on the training objectives of the exercise.

By embracing sustainability, Defence aims to produce sustainable outcomes across every aspect of its work including planning and implementation.

PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT REPORT (PER)

The PER identifies potential environmental impacts and risks associated with conducting the exercise and outlines the systems and controls used by the ADF to reduce risks and mitigate impacts.

The TS13 PER aims to communicate Exercise Talisman Sabre 2013's planned activities to the Australian public and relevant stakeholders. Developing the TS13 PER demonstrates the ADF's overall commitment to the environment throughout and following the Exercise.

The PER is supported by several environmental management plans and controls to ensure all mitigation strategies are implemented and reported on throughout the exercise.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE PER

The community is encouraged to review the draft PER and make a submission. The feedback received will be used by Defence to guide and inform the final Public Environment Report. Copies of the draft PER are available to download at www.aurecongroup.com/talismsabre2013 or by contacting the project team to request a copy. Your submission regarding the PER can be made via the freecall hotline (1800 724 862), email address, website or reply paid post.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (EMP)

The TS13 specific Environmental Management Plan (EMP) outlines the environmental issues to be managed and provides clear guidance on responsibilities and environment management processes and planned controls including exercise monitoring and incident management. The EMP describes the direction and responsibilities to mitigate the potential environmental impacts identified in the environmental risk assessment.

The overarching EMP is a document which provides guidance on environmental management requirements for the entire Exercise. It includes current Defence environmental controls, specific requirements for the Exercise and a framework for implementation, corrective action and review.





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ADF AND US COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS

As Talisman Sabre 2013 (TS13) occurs within Australia's territorial land and waters, Australia is responsible for leading the environmental planning, management and compliance during TS13. On Australian land and waters, both Australian and US Forces are responsible for complying with the environmental controls specified for TS13.

However, within International Waters the US Navy will meet their own obligations under their respective environmental legislation and conventions. Auditing will be carried out to ensure the Australian and US defence forces are complying with environmental management requirements as specified in the TS13.

RANGE STANDING ORDERS (RSO), BASE STANDING ORDERS (BSO), STANDING INSTRUCTIONS (SI)

RSOs, BSOs and SIs regulate the conduct of Defence activities at a specific Defence training area or base, which include environment and heritage requirements. These provide controls for activities within a certain scope.

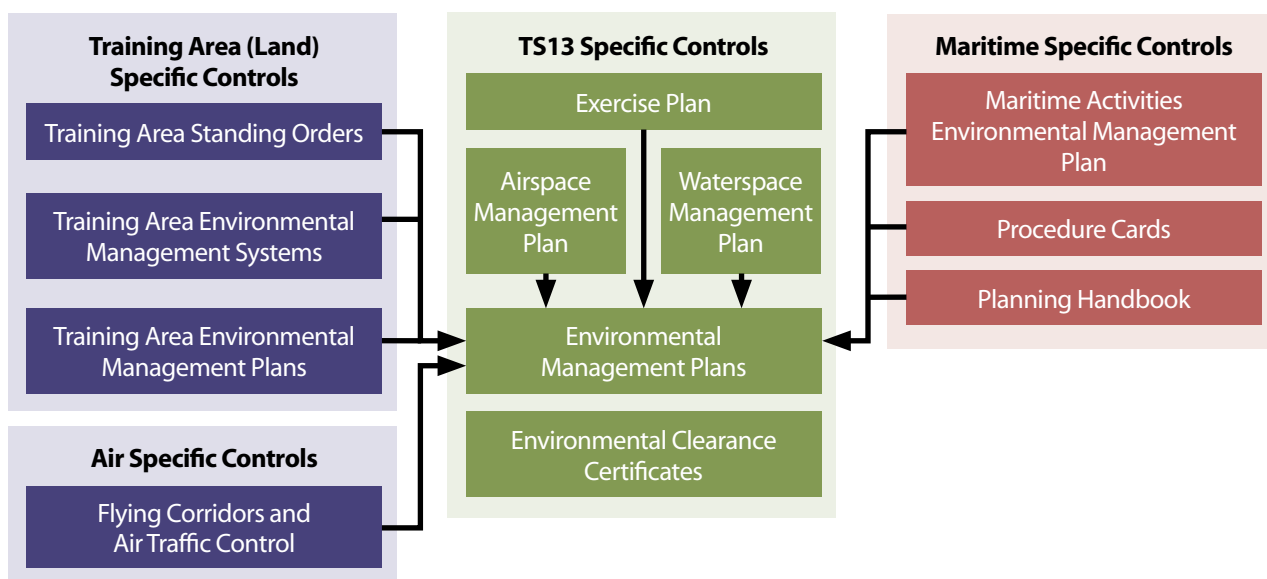
Environmental Clearance Certificates (ECC) regulate the conduct of Defence activities that lie outside the scope of RSOs, BSOs and SIs. The majority of activities to be conducted during TS13 already occur within the training areas and are therefore part of standing orders. Only a small number of ECCs are required to cover TS13 activities.

ADF MARITIME ACTIVITIES ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLANS

The ADF Maritime Activities Environmental Management Plans (EMP) provide guidance on environmental requirements for Maritime Activities. The Maritime Activities EMP includes the following implementation components: Planning Guides, Planning Handbooks and Procedure Cards.

SITE HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLANS (HMPS), SITE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLANS (EMPs), SITE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (EMSs)

These documents provide guidance on environmental management requirements for a specific Defence training area or base. Site HMPs, EMPs and EMS focus on the management of routine activities and the preservation of environmental values on Defence properties rather than the conduct of major exercises.





COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Defence is committed to sustainable environmental management in supporting its capability to defend Australia and its national interests. As part of Exercise Talisman Sabre 2013 (TS13), a Public Environment Report (PER) is produced that identifies potential environmental impacts and risks associated with conducting the exercise and outlines the systems and controls used by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to prevent risks and mitigate impacts.

Defence recognises the community may have an interest in the Exercise and its sustainable environmental management processes. Defence is therefore committed to ensuring the community and relevant stakeholders have an informed understanding of the mitigation strategies employed throughout the Exercise and the opportunity to raise any questions, concerns and considerations. Feedback is being sought on the draft PER to guide and inform the final PER.

The community is encouraged to review the draft PER and make a submission. The feedback received will be used by Defence to guide and inform the final Public Environment Report. The process of submissions is outlined below.



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Defence is committed to the community consultation process and ensuring the Exercise PER is a transparent process that offers stakeholders and members of the community relevant and timely opportunities to ask questions, consider the information and make an informed submission.

To support and promote the community consultation process on the Exercise and PER, Defence is providing the following:

- Freecall hotline
- Website
- Reply paid (free) post
- Email address
- Fact sheets on various aspects of the Exercise
- Static displays held at libraries in Rockhampton, Yeppoon, Townsville, Canungra, Ipswich and Darwin
- Public displays and community events
- Public notices / Media advertisements.





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HAVE YOUR SAY

HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE PER

Members of the community are encouraged to review the draft PER and make a formal submission during the consultation period from 24 September to 26 October 2012.

Copies of the draft PER are available to download at www.aurecongroup.com/talismsabre2013 or by contacting the project team to request a copy.

Your submission regarding the PER can be made via the freecall hotline (1800 724 862), email address, website or reply paid post.

As a member of the community, your feedback is important to Defence and will play an important role in guiding the final Public Environment Report.

CONTACT THE PROJECT TEAM

For further information on Talisman Sabre 2013 and the PER, please contact the project team.

Freecall – 1800 724 862

Email – Talisman.Sabre2013@aurecongroup.com

Freepost – Talisman Sabre 2013, Aurecon Australia, Reply Paid 85470, Brisbane QLD 4001

Visit – www.aurecongroup.com/talismsabre2013

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK FROM TALISMAN SABRE 2011

Following feedback received from Talisman Sabre 2011, Defence is now employing the following approaches to recognise and facilitate the community consultation process.

- The consultation period for TS13 has been extended to ensure all stakeholders and community members have ample time to complete an informed and timely submission.
- The project team will acknowledge receipt of all submissions outlining when a detailed response to concerns or questions in relation to the PER will be issued.
- Public displays and community events will be further promoted and held at easily accessible venues to ensure as many members of the community are able to access information and talk face-to-face with the project team.

JOIN THE TALISMAN SABRE COMMUNITY DATABASE

If you would like to receive updates and future information on the Talisman Sabre 2013 Exercise, please contact the project team to register your contact details and interest.





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How is public safety managed?

Strict management and controls will restrict public access to the training areas throughout Exercise Talisman Sabre 2013 (TS13).

Defence will work with local communities to ensure access around the training areas is clearly marked and easily identified and will consult with local Emergency Services to ensure the preparedness and safety of communities.

Temporary restricted areas will also be established for both marine and airspace, which prohibits public access for the duration of the exercise to ensure public safety.

How is the risk of fire managed?

Each of the training areas involved in TS13 has a fire management strategy and ongoing fire management program that includes maintenance of fire breaks and prescribed burning to protect human life, protect assets and promote biodiversity. The training area Standing Orders (SOs) specify requirements for fire prevention and response, which training area users must use.

The awareness inductions provided to TS13 participants will include the topics of fire prevention and response.

Are experimental technologies or weapons used throughout the exercise?

The purpose of the exercise is to test interoperability between the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and United States (US) Forces and to refine defence procedures, not to test weapons. New technologies, for example in communications, surveillance, management and reporting systems may be trialled.

Experimental weapons will not be used. Depleted uranium munitions will not be used during TS13. Depleted uranium munitions are not in the ADF inventory and are not permitted to be used by foreign or domestic forces within Australia.

Some non-lethal weapons, such as those used in electronic warfare to detect enemy communication, may also be used.

Will nuclear vessels be used throughout the exercise?

Nuclear submarines and nuclear aircraft carriers will be deployed during TS13 and will operate within specific designated areas of operation. Members of the US Navy operating nuclear power plants have a high record of safety and professionalism.

There are a number of provisions for emergency response in the event of a release of radioactive materials from a nuclear warship. Emergency response provisions for a release in a port or anchorage is addressed through the Defence operations manual (OPSMAN 1): visits to Australia by nuclear-powered warships. OPSMAN 1 provides clear guidance on the actions required by Commonwealth and State agencies during nuclear warship visits to ports. The US Navy also utilises a quality assurance program called SUBSAFE designed to maintain the safety of the nuclear submarine fleet.

What environmental measures will be put in place to ensure the protection of local areas?

For all aspects of the exercise, extensive consultation takes place between the ADF, US Forces and Australian Government environmental agencies to identify and minimise potential environmental impacts through the development of the Talisman Sabre 2013 Environmental Management Plan.

At the close of the exercise, redeployment is managed on a 'no footprint' policy, with all exercise materials, equipment and debris removed and all disturbances such as tracks and ditches rehabilitated.

Dedicated Defence personnel ensure the ADF and US's compliance with environmental procedures, response to incident management and organise for pre and post checks on environmental conditions.

Defence is proud of its environmental management record and routinely monitors its environmental performance during exercises and daily activities by collecting key environmental data.





LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Defence understands its responsibilities to environmental management and is committed to complying with Commonwealth environmental legislation and regulations and ensuring State and Territory legislation is thoroughly considered when planning and conducting Exercise Talisman Sabre 2013 (TS13).

COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATION

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999) (EPBC Act) prescribes the Commonwealth's role in environmental assessment, biodiversity conservation and the management of protected areas. Under the provisions of the EPBC Act, Defence activities that are likely to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance, require the approval of the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

The EPBC Act is the overriding legislation governing Defence activities, and Defence is required to comply with the EPBC Act to ensure protection of the environment and heritage.

Other commonwealth legislation guiding Defence's activities include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984
- Australian Heritage Council Act 2003
- Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Amendment Act 1991
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Amendment Act 2005
- Protection of the Sea (Civil Liability) Act 1981
- Protection of the Sea (Powers of Intervention) Act 1981
- Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983
- Australian Maritime Transport Safety Authority Act 1990
- Control of Naval Waters Act 1918
- Defence Act 1903 and Defence Regulations
- Native Title Act 1993
- Quarantine Act 1908

The Australian Government proposes to proclaim a new Coral Sea Commonwealth Marine Reserve adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The ADF will comply with all relevant new legislation. All six zones in the proposed Coral Sea Marine Reserve will permit general transit shipping and Defence activities. Accordingly, it is not expected that the proclamation of the new Marine Reserve will significantly affect the scheduled marine and air operations for TS13 in the Coral Sea.

STATE LEGISLATION

Defence aims to comply with State, Territory and local government legislation and policies to the extent that they do not conflict with Commonwealth legislative obligations or compromise operational objectives or capability.

