Keeping it simple...

GW. Following the closure of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Directorate in the Joint Capability Co-ordination Division in 2011, what has been the vehicle for CBRN direction within the ADF?

ES. The Directorate successfully fulfilled its purpose of developing Joint CBRN defence policy, founded on endorsed strategic guidance and a rigorous appraisal of the likely threats. The focus then changed from developing concepts within Defence to delivering CBRN capability. The Army then took over from the Directorate as the lead capability manager for CBRN, with specialist staff in the engineer cell considering a number of force protection issues – one of which was CBRN. They work very closely with other members of the small Defence CBRN community to ensure a unified approach to delivering capability and addressing related policy, training and equipment issues.

GW. Much of the Australian Department of Defence’s doctrine is predicated on various 2009 documents, such as the White Paper. With another one due in the near future do you think you will see an increase or decrease in attention toward CBRN?

ES. The ADF keeps a close eye on what is happing around the world and I believe we will always have an interest in CBRN defence. Based on a variety of 2009 documents, Australia’s CBRN defence capability continues to be characterised by:

• A much greater emphasis on force protection activities, prior to a CBRN event.
• A closely integrated, whole-of-government approach to counter-CBRNE and CBRNE consequence management.
• The threat in asymmetric warfare is likely to involve low volumes of agent, with highly localised effects.
• A separation of special forces (counter-CBRNE) and conventional force (detection, identification and monitoring, or CBRNE defence) roles and responsibilities.
• A capability to simultaneously detect toxic industrial chemicals, such as ammonia or sulphuric acid, and traditional warfare agents, such as nerve or mustard.

We have yet to see what the next iteration of documents will direct, but I am confident that the small number of dedicated CBRN staff in Defence are agile enough to meet whatever challenges the strategic guidance sets us.

GW. Previously it seemed as if CBRN forces would be part of the Modular Engineer Force, and it was also predicted to have a dedicated CBRNE squadron in it. Is that still the case? Also, what role does CBRN have in Plan Beersheba and the Multi-Combat Brigades?

ES. The real challenge with CBRN attacks is that it is difficult to predict where and when they will occur. When designing CBRN defensive responses and organisations, we find that the simplest solutions normally work best. The ADF is therefore pursuing large numbers of highly compact CBRN defensive equipments to be dispersed widely throughout its forces. If an event did occur, we could then call on specialist CBRN engineer troops within each of the Combat Engineer Regiments in the Multi-Role Combat Brigades, to undertake more detailed sampling, identification, analysis and monitoring. This has replaced the original CBRN concept for a Modular Engineer Force. It provides a more realistic and agile response team to address CBRN issues. The raise, train and sustain function to be able to deliver the CBRN defence capability across the force has been developed under Plan Beersheba, based on a Ready, Readying and Reset Brigade.

GW. What is the status of CBRN Joint Project Phases 1A and 1B (conventional forces), as well as Joint Project 3025 (special forces). Have budgets for the programmes remained stable?

ES. Planning on the ADF’s two primary CBRN defence Joint Projects commenced in 2005. It would seem that CBRN technology doubles its capability (smaller size, greater detection, dual-use instruments) while the buying power of the dollar halves every seven years or so. The budgets for the projects have remained untouched, consistent with the ADF’s overall force protection requirements, although the final introduction into service times have been adjusted to align with other broader funding priorities. We have a very clear understanding of what CBRN equipment we need to meet government guidance and the ADF’s needs. The budget to achieve our objectives remains tight but manageable. The force has been helped to some extent by advances in technology that allow us to consider introducing more capable, multi-purpose equipment. For example, some detectors can now detect traditional chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals. This may mean purchasing one instead of two different types of instruments.

Updating ageing detection equipment under Phase 1A is complete. This will allow us to maintain our CBRN detection and monitoring capability until more advanced equipment is introduced in the coming years under Phase 1B. Furthermore, under Phase 1B, each soldier, sailor and airman in an area of operations can wear an individual chemical and a radiological detector. This dramatically increases our detection capability, shortens the warning times and allows the more specialised engineer troops to concentrate on identifying unknown agents.

GW. With the capability documents now delivered, what are the plans for...
JP 2110 Phase 1B and what implications will these have? Have events overtaken it in terms of security risks and budgets?
ES. Joint Project 2110 has retained its utility as a means for updating conventional forces CBRN defensive equipment in the next few years. The next focus for the project team will be to develop a business case to examine possible new types of equipment that will address emerging threats over the next 20 years. Refreshing existing equipment may not suffice. The adaptability and forward-looking nature of the original JP 2110 documentation has helped ensure the project has not been overtaken by events.

GW. The previous White Paper looked to build Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction capability up until 2030, is that still the case? How is the capability analysis process going?
ES. Preparing for a variety of CBRN events up until 2030 is a sound timeframe. It allows the ADF equipment procurement and sustainment process to take a systems approach, rather than simply focussing on individual items of equipment. Personnel involved in the CBRN equipment process decisions are also aware that our adversaries are smart, do not have a lengthy procurement process and are unlikely to attack when, where and how we expect them to. Defence is fortunate that it has clear strategic CBRN guidance in a relatively discrete area, with a small CBRN community that all know each other. The capability analysis process is proceeding well, as it can be pursued logically from first, defendable principles to delivery and though-life support.

GW. Through organisations such as DSTO, Australia has been an active member of ABCA/AUSCANUKUS. Do you still see this being the case, and can you see yourself shifting to net consumer rather than provider?
ES. The CBR Memorandum of Understanding provides the means for Australia, the United Kingdom, United States and Canada to define and establish the general principles that will apply to the initiation, conduct and management of information exchange harmonisation and alignment efforts, as well as CBR projects. It provides the means for the participants to acquaint each other with any CBR issues in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of national CBR defence programmes and to promote a concerted action to identify and close important gaps in their CBR defence capabilities. It may be used, at the discretion of the participants, as a mechanism for the acquisition of equipment. Where it is
determined to use this memorandum of understanding, such acquisition of equipment will be documented in a specific CBR project arrangement. Although it is grounded in the scientific community, it has representation from the policy, intelligence, medical and capability delivery areas. The focus of the American, British, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Armies' Program is on interoperability, defined as: the ability of alliance forces and, when appropriate, forces of partner and other nations to train, exercise and operate effectively together in the execution of assigned missions and tasks. Both organisations are excellent venues for formally sharing CBRN information and are likely to continue to meet in the future. Australia is likely to remain an active participant of these organisations, rather than a consumer or provider.

GW. Much of the northern hemisphere has been fixated on the events of the Arab Spring in places such as Egypt, Libya and Syria. What have been the Australian centres of gravity?

ES. The Australian Defence Force's centre of gravity remains to:
• Deter and defeat armed attacks on Australia.
• Contribute to stability and security in the South Pacific and East Timor.
• Contribute to military contingencies in the Asia-Pacific region.
• Contribute to military contingencies in the rest of the world.

Defence will maintain a realistic capacity and capability to undertake timely CBRN defensive operations ranging from dealing with toxic industrial materials, though to CBR events and nuclear war – both in Australia and overseas. As with a variety of force protection issues, the government may require the ADF to undertake operations in a CBRN threat environment either as a single nation, leading a coalition or in concert with our allies and coalition partners.

GW. CBRN forces in Europe and North America are being rolled into other activities in the face of changes to budgets, such as the Bundeswehr and their military fire service. Can you see a similar process happening within the ADF, and what shape do you think they might take on in the next five years?

ES. Since 2000, first responders in Australia have had an increasing capability to deal with CBR incidents on the continent. Unlike some overseas countries, the first responder budget to support equipment procurement and training is not linked to the defence budget. Defence has continued to develop its procedures to allow it to participate as part of a multi-agency approach to incidents involving police, fire and ambulance services however. Which agencies would be involved in an incident depends on the nature of the incident, its location and the response forces available. The ability of the ADF to communicate effectively across all agencies has been a high priority.
WHEN MINUTES MATTER MOST

Respond faster and remain focused on the mission

Certified to NFPA 1994, Class 2, durable multi-threat suits made with GORE® CHEMPAK® ultra barrier fabric help you respond quicker with enhanced operational capabilities and reduced heat stress in HOT ZONE environments.


www.GoreChempak.com/multithreat
W. L. GORE & ASSOCIATES, INC.
Technical Fabrics
800.431.GORE (4673)

CHEMPAK, GORE and designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates © 2012 W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc. Warning: No products, including garments, footwear or gloves, offer absolute protection, even when new, and their protective performance will decline with wear, tear, abrasion, and other damage associated with use.