



Australian Government

**Australian Government response to the Foreign Affairs, Defence
and Trade References Committee report:**

Inquiry into Australian support for Ukraine

Introduction

On 24 February 2022, Russia launched its illegal and unjustified full-scale invasion of Ukraine. It was a sharp escalation of the conflict which had commenced in 2014 with Russia's seizure of Crimea and parts of east Ukraine. Russia's ongoing aggression continues to impose immense human, economic and environmental costs on Ukraine. But the conflict also has global implications, including for Australia and the Indo-Pacific. North Korea's deployment of combat troops to Russia makes stark the interconnectedness of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific.

The Australian Government is unwavering in its support to the people of Ukraine in the face of Russia's unprovoked and unjustifiable war. In the almost three years since Russia's full-scale invasion, Australia has provided significant assistance to Ukraine, which has been recognised by the Government of Ukraine and our international partners. Australia has delivered this support by working closely across government, and in consultation with Ukraine and international partners in pursuit of two key objectives: 1) helping Ukraine to end the war on its own terms and 2) holding Russia accountable for its actions. In pursuit of these objectives, a coordinated whole of government effort has been central to the Government's approach.

To date, Australia has committed more than \$1.5 billion in assistance to Ukraine. This includes: \$1.3 billion in material and financial assistance to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) - provided from Defence stocks and disposal processes, procurement from Australian defence industry and through grants to credible partnered funds; \$85 million in humanitarian assistance; \$66 million to support Ukraine's reconstruction and recovery and over \$63 million to bolster Ukraine's energy security. Additionally, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) continues to contribute to partner-led efforts to build AFU capability. The deployment of a Royal Australian Air Force E-7A Wedgetail airborne early warning and control aircraft to Europe from October 2023 to April 2024 contributed to protecting a key logistics node for Ukraine assistance.

Australia has also prioritised visa applications from Ukrainian nationals. Between 24 February 2022 and 30 November 2024, the Department of Home Affairs had granted over 20,300 visas to Ukrainians; of which nearly 19,300 visas have been used to enter or re-enter Australia. Australia has also provided \$21.3 million for the allocation of additional temporary visas, extended access to Medicare and community support. The Australian Government is also

offering a permanent stay in Australia, on a case-by-case basis, to Ukrainian nationals in Australia who hold a Temporary (Humanitarian Concern) subclass 786 visa.

In step with international partners, Australia has enacted a comprehensive suite of measures to impose costs on Russia and those enabling its war. We have imposed more than 1,200 targeted financial sanctions and other trade measures, including a machinery export ban.

The uncertain security environment in Ukraine following Russia's full-scale invasion necessitated the relocation of Australian Embassy staff from Kyiv in February 2022. In the intervening period, DFAT has regularly assessed the risk posed by the security environment and mitigation measures that would enable Australian officials to return to Kyiv. On 18 December 2024, Foreign Minister Wong announced that Australia would reestablish a permanent presence in Kyiv by the end of January 2025. Australia's Ambassador has now returned permanently to Kyiv.

The Government welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee Inquiry report into Australian support for Ukraine. This response highlights how the Government is delivering for Ukraine, including through recommendations contained in the report. A central tenet of Australia's support continues to be consideration of whether proposed measures are in line with Government expectations and consistent with Australia's national interests and capability.

Australia will continue to work closely with Ukraine and our partners to support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to maintain pressure on Russia to end its illegal and immoral war.

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the Australian Government should:

- i. develop and commit to a consistent objective and mission statement in our support for Ukraine across all departments, ensure all government agencies are working to those same objectives, and ensure that all of Australia's assistance, support and diplomacy is designed to achieve these objectives;
- ii. commit to a comprehensive package which reflects Australia's ongoing commitment to Ukraine's defence, humanitarian needs and support, including multi-year sustainable Australian support;
- iii. develop an integrated National Security Strategy spanning foreign affairs, defence, and national resilience, noting that the Russian invasion of Ukraine is one of a number of threats to global security and stability, and the stability of the Indo-Pacific region; and
- iv. take steps to increase public awareness of the threat to Australia by the increasingly coordinated, aggressive actions of totalitarian regimes, and the need for collective defence cooperation by democratic nations.

Government Response to Recommendation 1

The Government **agrees** in part.

The Government is unwavering in its support to the people of Ukraine in the face of Russia's unprovoked and unjustifiable war. The Australian Government has worked consistently and in close consultation with Ukraine and international partners in pursuit of two key objectives: 1) supporting Ukraine to end the war on its own terms; and 2) holding Russia to account for its actions. All areas of the Australian Government are working toward the same international objectives, evidenced in Australia's response to Russia's war in Ukraine where relevant departments have worked to align approaches consistent with the above objectives.

To date, Australia has contributed comprehensive, sustained and targeted assistance to Ukraine of more than \$1.5 billion since Russia's full scale invasion on 22 February 2022. This includes \$1.3 billion in military assistance, \$66 million to support Ukraine's reconstruction and recovery, \$85 million in humanitarian and over \$63 million in energy security assistance.

The 2024 National Defence Strategy (NDS) notes Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine as one of a number of challenges for international security. The NDS states that the concept of '*National Defence*' is a coordinated, whole-of-government and whole-of-nation approach to meet the strategic challenges Australia faces, including the threat of conflict and the prospect of coercion. It is a broad concept that harnesses all arms of Australia's national power.

The Australian Government has consistently and publicly articulated: the importance of holding Russia to account; Australia's support for Ukraine; and the need for strengthened cooperation with partners. The NDS also recognises the importance of investing in strong global partnerships in order to protect Australia's economic connection to the world and support for the global rules-based order.

Public statements by the Prime Minister and Ministers, and their participation in international meetings, serve to deliver a consistent message of support for Ukraine and condemnation of Russia. These engagements also raise awareness of the risks of Russia's actions to Australia and our region.

Recommendation 2

The committee recommends the Australian Government appoint a Coordinator-General to lead coordination of Australia's assistance and support to Ukraine across all agencies. The person tasked with this lead coordination role should report directly to the National Security Committee of Cabinet, and should be provided with adequate resources and staff to ensure they can act as the central coordination point for government and other stakeholders in relation to Australia's support for Ukraine.

Government Response to Recommendation 2

The Government **notes** this recommendation.

PM&C serves the Prime Minister and Cabinet as the focal point of Government decision-making. It convenes and provides guidance to policy agencies.

PM&C's role is to ensure all parts of the Australian Government are working toward the same international objectives, including on support for Ukraine.

Officials within Global Interests Branch — reporting to Senior Executive Service (SES) officers at PM&C — are responsible for ensuring whole-of-government support for Ukraine is coordinated and effective. This team provides advice to the National Security Committee of Cabinet and the Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCNS) as required.

It also ensures coordination and convenes regular meetings at all levels including Band 2 inter-departmental committee meetings (chaired by PM&C); and regular coordination meetings at Director level and below.

In providing advice to the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Global Interests Branch ensures Australia's whole of government support to Ukraine reflects Australia's capacity and comparative strengths, and aligns with Ukraine's priority needs.

Recommendation 3

The committee recommends the Australian Government re-open the Australian Embassy in Ukraine, and ensure Australia is represented at the highest levels at future global meetings that discuss Ukraine's defence, peace, and reconstruction.

Government Response to Recommendation 3

The Government **notes** this recommendation, and notes the Embassy has reopened.

On 18 December 2024, Foreign Minister Wong announced that Australia would reestablish a permanent presence in Kyiv by the end of January 2025. Australia's Ambassador has now returned permanently to Kyiv.

The Government takes the safety of Australian personnel very seriously, consistent with its obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*. The uncertain security environment in

Ukraine following Russia's full-scale invasion necessitated the relocation of Australian Embassy staff from Kyiv in February 2022. In the intervening period, DFAT has regularly assessed the risk posed by the security environment and mitigation measures that would enable Australian officials to return to Kyiv, including enhanced security and IT arrangements.

The Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister have each visited Ukraine in the three years since Russia's full-scale invasion, and announced packages of support.

In addition, the Government ensures Australia is appropriately represented at the highest levels at global meetings that discuss Ukraine's defence, peace, and reconstruction. For example, Australia was represented at the first Ukraine Peace Summit (15-16 June 2024 in Lucerne, Switzerland) by the Hon Bill Shorten MP, supported by DFAT officials. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Tim Watts MP, and Australia's Ambassador to Ukraine each participated in one or more of Ukraine's ten thematic conferences that took place between September and October 2024, based on President Zelenskyy's Peace Formula.

Recommendation 4

The committee recommends that the Australian Government support the lifting of restrictions on the ability of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to strike military targets in Russia as part of the defence of Ukraine from the Russian invasion.

Government Response to Recommendation 4

The Government **notes** this recommendation.

The Government supports Ukraine's right to defend itself against Russian aggression, consistent with international law.

Recommendation 5

The committee recommends that any future requests from the Ukrainian Government for Australian coal shipments be responded to with high priority, acknowledging the serious threat to the Ukrainian population of energy shortages and Australia's ability to assist with this challenge.

Government Response to Recommendation 5

The Government **notes** this recommendation, and notes that Australia affords Ukraine maximum flexibility in meeting their energy needs through support to the Ukraine Energy Support Fund.

The Government is unwavering in its support to the people of Ukraine in the face of Russia's unprovoked and unjustifiable war. The Government is in close and regular contact with the Ukraine Government in Canberra and Kyiv to ensure we provide timely support that meets the needs of the Government and people of Ukraine. This close and regular contact has enabled Australia to provide more than \$1.5 billion in support to Ukraine.

The Government has provided the equivalent of \$63.4 million in energy support since Russia's invasion. This includes \$30 million to the Ukraine Energy Support Fund (\$20 million announced in May 2024 and \$10 million announced in December 2024). These contributions allowed for Ukraine's Energy Ministry to respond flexibly to its highest priority energy needs, including fuel, equipment, repairs or reinforcements of Ukraine's critical energy infrastructure.

Additionally, as part of Australia's \$85 million in humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, we have provided \$35 million to the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund, managed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. This includes \$10 million announced on 31 May 2024. The Ukraine Humanitarian Fund, supports winterisation efforts including the provision of fuel and cash assistance to address energy needs.

Recommendation 6

The committee recommends that the Australian Government become a Participant or Associate Member of the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine (Register of Damage for Ukraine) as a matter of priority.

Government Response to Recommendation 6

The Government **agrees** to this recommendation.

Australia strongly supports accountability for Russia's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine. The losses and damage suffered by Ukraine as a result of Russia's violations of international law require full reparation by Russia, in accordance with the international law of State responsibility.

Australia co-sponsored and voted for the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/ES-11/5 on 14 November 2022, which recognises the need to establish an international mechanism for reparation for damage, loss or injury, and recommended the creation of an international register of damage arising from Russia's invasion.

Separately, Australia has worked with like-mindeds and partners in international institutions to ensure accountability for Russia's invasion of Ukraine. For example:

- Australia joined 42 international partners to refer the Situation in Ukraine to the International Criminal Court for investigation (2 March 2022);
- Australia co-sponsored the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution to establish an independent Commission of Inquiry (COI) into violations and abuses of human rights, and violations of international humanitarian law (4 March 2022);
- Australia has joined the 49-member Group of Friends of Accountability (launched on 25 March 2022), which aims to promote and coordinate accountability measures on the most serious crimes under international law committed in Ukraine and facilitate information sharing;
- Australia has filed an intervention in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) case brought by Ukraine against Russia (30 September 2022);
- Australia has joined a Core Group of Ukraine and like-mindeds to explore options to hold Russia's leadership accountable for the illegal, immoral invasion of Ukraine (25 January 2023).

Recommendation 7

The committee recommends that the Australian Government identify as a matter of priority all Russian assets in Australia that are subject to sanctions, and assess what legislative changes are required to enable the transfer of these assets or associated income to Ukraine.

Government Response to Recommendation 7

The Government **notes** this recommendation.

Since 2022, Australia has implemented over 1,200 sanctions against Russian individuals or entities for its involvement in Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Australian sanctions law imposes strict prohibitions on dealing with designated persons or entities, including to require financial institutions and other entities to freeze assets owned or controlled by these persons or entities.

Asset holders are required by law to provide the Australian Federal Police (AFP) with specific information about controlled assets. See regulation 42 of the Charter of the United Nations (Dealing with Assets) Regulations 2008 and regulation 24 of the Autonomous Sanctions Regulations 2011. Australia utilises a range of tools and powers to ensure that regulations are being followed effectively, and to monitor and enforce compliance.

Under Australian sanctions law, Russian assets can be frozen, however asset seizure is not provided under legislation. Any proposal to seize assets through the sanctions framework would raise complex legal and policy issues.

In consultation with the Attorney-General's Department and the AFP, DFAT continues to assess the legal and policy options and implications and legislative changes that would be required in order to seize assets of persons and entities designated under Australian sanctions laws or to seize the profits of these assets held by financial institutions in Australia. The Government continues to engage international partners on this issue, including to better understand how these matters are considered under other countries' legal frameworks.

Recommendation 8

The committee recommends that the Australian Government improve tracking of petroleum-based products made with refined Russian oil, and apply autonomous sanctions as required in order to prevent the sale of Russian oil and petroleum products in Australia.

Government Response to Recommendation 8

The Government **notes** this recommendation.

Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Government has implemented trade sanctions on Russian energy exports, including bans on the import to Australia of Russian oil, refined petroleum, coal and gas. The Government has also imposed targeted financial sanctions on key persons and entities in Russia's energy sector. Australia's imports of Russian crude and refined petroleum products from Russia have now ceased, having fallen from \$75 million in 2021 (pre imposition of trade sanctions).

The Government cannot independently track liquid fuel movements nor confirm the origin of these products once they have been substantially transformed in a third country. Import bans on Russian oil imposed by Australia's international partners, including the United Kingdom and the United States, similarly do not target substantially transformed products. Such a tracking mechanism would require agreement from the countries and companies involved in global liquid fuel trade. We continue to engage international partners on this issue.

Recommendation 9

The committee recommends that the Australian Government ensure relevant agencies are appropriately resourced to identify and address foreign interference and disinformation activities in Australia, including from Russian actors, and to respond to community and diaspora concerns regarding these activities.

Government Response to Recommendation 9

The Government **agrees** to this recommendation.

The integrity of Australia's democratic institutions is a fundamental pillar of our national sovereignty, the protection of which requires a committed and concerted effort from government. Australia has robust and tested frameworks and safeguards in place to protect its democratic institutions at the federal, state and territory, and local level.

For example, the Counter Foreign Interference Taskforce (CFI Taskforce) leads Australia's operational response to espionage and foreign interference and works to identify, assess, investigate, disrupt, and where possible, prosecute acts of foreign interference and espionage. Operational agencies apply a range of treatment options to disrupt activities of concern, which may involve criminal charges where legal thresholds are met. CFI Taskforce continues to actively investigate threats and allegations of foreign interference in Australian diaspora communities. The AFP has developed a Foreign Interference in the Community Factsheet to support Australian communities understand what foreign interference is, what it may look like and how to report it.

The AFP actively engages with community and humanitarian groups through AFP Community Liaison Teams, to build trusted relationships, establish confidence in law enforcement, and ascertain and understand community sentiment.

Additionally, the Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce, supported by the Electoral Integrity Intelligence Forum are constituted by relevant agencies across Federal Government, working together to provide information and advice to the Electoral Commissioner on foreign interference that may compromise the real or perceived integrity of federal electoral events, including elections, referendums and by-elections.

The Government, through the Department of Home Affairs, has developed a holistic approach to engagement on community interference. The Community Interference Cross Agency Engagement Program coordinates engagement with eleven identified at risk communities across the states and territories effected through local plans developed with local stakeholders.

The Program focuses on raising awareness of foreign interference, reporting mechanisms and strengthening community resilience to foreign interference. Engagement is focused on

communities that have raised foreign interference concerns, but is also informed by an understanding of the global and domestic threat environment.

When appropriate, engagement may be jointly conducted by the Department of Home Affairs, the AFP, state and territory police, state and territory officials and DFAT to leverage expertise to amplify messaging. The Department of Home Affairs has engaged with the Ukrainian community at their request, under this program.

Recommendation 10

The committee recommends the Australian Government publicly attribute the role that the People's Republic of China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) are playing in supporting Russia in its invasion of Ukraine, and ensure Australia's foreign policy settings reflect the reality of the cooperation of these four authoritarian states in sustaining the war and risking further conflicts in other parts of the world.

Government Response to Recommendation 10

The Government **agrees** to this recommendation.

The Government has consistently conveyed that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a fundamental breach of international law, including the UN Charter, and has called for all countries to support a comprehensive, just and lasting peace on Ukraine's terms.

The Government has joined our like-minded partners to publicly express its deep concern that some countries, including North Korea and Iran, as well as Belarus, are directly supporting Russia's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine. Working with our partners, the Government has imposed sanctions on individuals and entities involved in the supply of military goods and services to Russia from North Korea, Iran and Belarus.

The Government has raised with China our concern about dual-use goods exports to Russia. The Government has publicly called on China to refrain from helping Russia continue its war in any way, including to cease support to Russia's defence industrial base, including in joint statements with the United Kingdom and United States. The Government continues to look to China, which has a special responsibility as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, to use its influence to end Russia's illegal and unjustifiable war in Ukraine.

Australia joined likeminded and NATO partners to express concern with deepening Russia-DPRK military cooperation in June, July, November and December 2024. Additionally, in joint statements following 2024 ministerial meetings with the United States, New Zealand, the ROK, Japan, the Philippines, Malaysia and the United Kingdom, Australia raised its concern with Russia-DPRK cooperation, and called on China to use its influence with Russia to help end the war. Australia has also condemned Iran's transfer of ballistic missiles to Russia for use in its ongoing aggression against Ukraine in August, October, December 2024. The Government has used, and will continue to use, all tools at its disposal to raise its concerns and impose costs on countries that support Russia's illegal war. This includes ministerial communications and speeches, joint statements with like-minded partners, bilateral engagement, pressure in multilateral settings, sanctions and trade measures when it is in our national interest to do so.

Recommendation 11

The committee recommends that the Australian Government ensure that Australia keeps pace with international partners in sanctioning entities and individuals providing support to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including provision of weapons and componentry used to manufacture weapons.

Government Response to Recommendation 11

The Government **agrees** to this recommendation.

Australia coordinates closely with international partners on sanctions, including Canada, the European Union, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Sanctions frameworks, processes, legal thresholds differ between countries, meaning each partner maintains a unique set of designations.

The Government's sanctions response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine is unprecedented, with more than 1,200 sanctions listings made since February 2022. Government sanctions packages have included persons and entities involved in supplying weapons and military components to the Russian Armed Forces.

Recommendation 12

The committee recommends that the Australian Government expediently responds to requests from the Ukrainian Government for specific military and defence equipment and materiel, acknowledging that the Ukrainian authorities with direct knowledge of the battlefield situation are best placed to decide whether the equipment sought from Australia can be used effectively in the defence of Ukraine.

Government Response to Recommendation 12

The Government **agrees** to this recommendation.

The Government remains committed to supporting Ukraine's self-defence and providing military assistance to Ukraine that is relevant, practical, aligned with Ukraine's needs, consistent with international law, and with no adverse impact on ADF preparedness. The Government, through Defence, will continue to engage closely with Ukraine, particularly its Ministry of Defence and the AFU, to inform options for further military assistance. Defence has refined its decision-making processes to enable a more proactive approach to identifying options to support Ukraine.

The Government is prioritising Ukraine as a potential recipient of surplus and disposal items and has refreshed formal guidance in Defence confirming this approach. Building on opportunities identified by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) independent performance audit *Australia's Provision of Military Assistance to Ukraine, presented to Parliament* on 29 June 2023, Defence has: established an internal consultation process, chaired at the senior executive level, to coordinate current and future Defence support for Ukraine; and, a dedicated coordination unit to provide a focal point for Defence on Ukraine and to work with stakeholders on supporting the provision of credible and practical military assistance.

Recommendation 13

The committee recommends that the Australia Government adopts a default position that Defence materiel being retired or otherwise disposed of will be gifted to Ukraine unless there is a compelling case against this for an individual asset.

Government Response to Recommendation 13

The Government **agrees** to this recommendation noting that not all Defence materiel being retired or otherwise disposed will be appropriate or suitable for gifting to Ukraine.

The Government highlights that a sizeable portion of Australian military assistance for Ukraine to date has been sourced through disposals processes. Noting material for gifting also requires comprehensive considerations around equipment condition, sustainability, export controls (ITARs), and logistics, it is not feasible to default all disposal materiel to Ukraine. However, the Government is prioritising Ukraine as a potential recipient of surplus and disposal items and has refreshed formal guidance confirming this approach.

The Government, through Defence, has also refined decision-making processes outlined above on Defence materiel being retired or otherwise disposed of, enabling a more proactive approach to identifying and assessing equipment for potential gifting to Ukraine. For equipment that has been in service with the ADF, this assessment will also consider the ADF's experience with the equipment, its condition, the logistical feasibility of shipment, and the ADF's own preparedness needs. These actions underscore the Government's commitment to supporting Ukraine while ensuring alignment with Australia's needs and interests.

Recommendation 14

The committee recommends that the Australian Government urgently directs the Department of Defence to develop plans to provide Ukraine with:

- additional Bushmaster protected mobility vehicles;
- Hawkei reconnaissance vehicles;
- the retiring M1A1 Abrams tanks;
- the retiring Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopters;
- other retired or unused military equipment; and
- innovative defence capabilities, some of which have been provided previously, including drone, counter-drone, x-ray, de-mining, 3-D printing, communications, and other equipment.

Government Response to Recommendation 14

The Government **notes** this recommendation.

The Government remains committed to supporting Ukraine's self-defence and providing military assistance to Ukraine that is relevant, practical, aligned with Ukraine's needs, consistent with international law, and with no adverse impact on ADF preparedness. This has included the Government's decision and announcement to provide Ukraine with 49 M1A1 Abrams main battle tanks.

The Government will continue to assess options of further military assistance, including in close consultation with Ukraine, and as disposal plans are developed for particular platforms. The Bushmaster, Hawkei and Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter are all in-service platforms – the latter critical to support capability and workforce requirements until the introduction of the AH-64 Apache attack helicopters into service. The disposal plan is yet to be determined, which will include options for gifting, and will be considered in due course.

The Government, through Defence, will continue to assess future options of support through procurement from Australian defence industry, with any such procurement carefully aligned to Ukrainian Ministry of Defence and AFU needs.

Recommendation 15

The committee recommends the Australian Government commits to replenish, via new orders from manufacturers or through enhanced acquisition plans, all new Australian Defence Force commitments to Ukraine with the exception of assets being retired where replacement capabilities are already acquired.

Government Response to Recommendation 15

The Government **notes** this recommendation.

The Government is committed to ensuring Defence and ADF preparedness and capability is maintained and enhanced, consistent with the NDS.

Recommendation 16

The committee recommends that the Australian Government urgently join Australia to the Demining Coalition for Ukraine.

Government Response to Recommendation 16

The Government **notes** this recommendation.

The Government notes that the De-mining Capability Coalition is one of eight capability coalitions under the Ukraine Defense Contact Group (UDCG). The Demining Capability Coalition, led by Lithuania and Iceland, is focused on developing the demining capabilities of the AFU.

While Australia is not in a position to join the Coalition at this time, Australia, through Defence, has provided demining materiel to Ukraine in previous military assistance packages. ADF demining equipment, worth \$12 million, was included in the package announced during the Prime Minister's visit to Kyiv, Ukraine, in July 2022, and as part of the \$20 million defence industry package announced on 25 October 2023.

Australia's focus within the UDCG capability coalitions remains the Drone Capability Coalition, led by the United Kingdom and Latvia, of which Australia is a member, recognising also Australia's provision of drone systems and components in previous military assistance packages. In addition to our involvement with this coalition, the Government will continue to focus on the provision of meaningful military assistance aligned with the key needs of the AFU, together with support for the AFU through the ADF's contribution, under Operation KUDU, to partner-led activities in Europe.

Recognising the importance of mine action in Ukraine, Australia (through DFAT) has contributed \$85 million in humanitarian assistance to Ukraine since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022. This includes \$35 million to the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund, which responds to critical humanitarian needs, including through mine action activities.

In 2023, Australia also entered into a four-year multi-million-dollar partnership with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, which operates globally as well as in Ukraine. These funds support the clearance of contaminated land, the delivery of risk education to affected populations, and the provision of assistance to the victims of landmines.

Australia continues to be represented at global meetings on mine action in Ukraine, including most recently the 2024 Ukraine Mine Action Conference (UMAC2024). Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Tim Watts MP, provided a video message at UMAC2024. Senior Australian Government representatives attended in person.

Recommendation 17

The committee recommends Australia deepen cooperation and liaison between Australia and NATO partners, as well as the Australian Defence Force and the Armed Forces of Ukraine to ensure Australia learn from Ukraine's defence and response to Russia's invasion.

Government Response to Recommendation 17

The Government **agrees** to this recommendation.

The Government recognises the importance of understanding relevant lessons from the conflict in Ukraine, recognising the differences in strategic and operational environment to that in the Indo-Pacific. Australia, through Defence, has existing strong engagement with international partners, including Ukraine and with NATO - including as an operational partner to NATO's Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine command. Our international engagement supports sharing and learning with regard to the lessons of the war in Ukraine.

Recommendation 18

The committee recommends the Australian Government strengthens support for Australia's defence industry to provide equipment to Ukraine, and to develop innovative technologies relevant to modern warfare as highlighted by Ukraine's defence against the Russian invasion.

Government Response to Recommendation 18

The Government **notes** this recommendation.

The Government, through Defence, has provided \$102 million in military assistance to Ukraine through procurement from Australian defence industry. The Government, through Defence, will continue to assess future options through this approach and with any such procurement carefully aligned to Ukrainian Ministry of Defence and AFU needs.

The NDS articulates the fundamental importance of innovation and technology in national defence and the Government is committed to ensuring the delivery of next generation capabilities to the ADF. The Government recognises the importance of drawing relevant lessons from the conflict in Ukraine, including on technological evolution.

Recommendation 19

The committee recommends that the Australian Government, in line with recommendation 1, urgently develop a central point of contact for Australian aid and medical organisations seeking to provide assistance and aid to Ukraine.

Government Response to Recommendation 19

The Government **notes** this recommendation.

Assistance to Ukraine provided by the Australian Government is coordinated by PM&C.

Responsibility for coordination of assistance not instigated by the Australian Government to countries, including Ukraine, does not rest with the Australian Government. The Government works closely with the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), the peak organisation for Australian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in international development and humanitarian action. In some cases the Australian Government partners with Australian NGOs as part of the government's humanitarian response.

Humanitarian activities in, and assistance to, Ukraine are coordinated by the Government of Ukraine and the United Nations under the Humanitarian Response Plan. This ensures humanitarian support is delivered to those most in need in accordance with humanitarian principles. The operating context in Ukraine is complex and high risk, and Australian organisations should consider DFAT's travel advice.

Recommendation 20

The committee recommends that the Australian Government urgently make new commitments for humanitarian assistance for Ukraine as part of a comprehensive, multi-year strategy.

Government Response to Recommendation 20

The Government **notes** this recommendation.

Australia has provided humanitarian funding to Ukraine to help meet the needs of the Ukrainian people each year since Russia's invasion in February 2022. The Government is in close and regular contact with the Ukraine Government in Canberra and Kyiv to ensure we provide timely support that meets the needs of the Government and people of Ukraine.

Australia's humanitarian assistance totals \$85 million to date, including the announcement of \$10 million on 31 May 2024 to the Ukrainian Humanitarian Fund, managed by the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The Ukrainian Humanitarian Fund supports action to increase access to essentials such as water, food and shelter.

The Government continues to work with the international community and Ukraine to help address Ukraine's humanitarian needs.

Recommendation 21

The committee recommends that the Australian Government prioritise using Australian non-government organisations and businesses to deliver Australian Government-funded aid, medical aid and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine wherever possible.

Government Response to Recommendation 21

The Government **notes** this recommendation.

The Government is unwavering in its support to the people of Ukraine in the face of Russia's unprovoked and unjustifiable war. The Government is in close and regular contact with the Ukraine Government in Canberra and Kyiv to ensure we provide timely support that meets the needs of the Government and people of Ukraine.

Australia considers a range of possible implementing partners prior to selection. Decisions on partner selection are based on an assessment of the humanitarian context, needs of the affected people, partner capabilities and their operational reach.

Australia's aid program has been untied since 2006. This approach is consistent with the Government's commitment to openness in trade and competition. An untied aid program ensures activities deliver value of money, are cost-effective and use the best placed implementing partners in order to ensure the greatest impact.

Recommendation 22

The committee recommends that the Australian Government provide long- term certainty to Ukrainians already in Australia on temporary visas who wish to stay in Australia or are unable to safely return to Ukraine due to the ongoing war.

Government Response to Recommendation 22

The Government **agrees** to this recommendation.

The Minister for Home Affairs is making an offer of permanent stay in Australia to Ukrainian nationals who hold a Temporary Humanitarian Stay (subclass 786) visa, on a case-by-case basis.

A Resolution of Status (RoS) visa may be granted to an individual who accepts the offer of a permanent stay. The RoS visa is a permanent visa. Ukrainian nationals who are granted a RoS will be able to stay in Australia permanently with the same rights as a permanent resident. This includes access to eligible social security payments; the National Disability Insurance Scheme and higher education assistance.

RoS visa holders are also eligible to become Australian citizens once they meet residency and other requirements. They can also sponsor family to come to Australia under the family visa stream of the Migration Program. The Government is considering further options to support Ukrainian nationals on temporary visas who did not accept the Government's offer of temporary humanitarian stay before 31 July 2022.