

Northern Territory Defence Strategy 2026

Strong North, Secure Australia

A strong Northern Territory delivers a more a secure Australia. The Northern Territory Government will drive a disciplined, targeted and relentless advocacy effort to secure a greater Defence presence in the Territory.

Why the Northern Territory matters

The Northern Territory has strategic geography in the Indo-Pacific region, with the bases, barracks, training areas and ranges, infrastructure and industry to support the Australian Defence Force (ADF), allies and partners.

Defence in the NT:

- Represents approx. 10% of the economy supporting thousands of jobs
- Expands opportunities in construction, logistics, maritime, engineering and technology
- Strengthens long term economic resilience and regional security

What the strategy means

A Strong Northern Territory

- Establishes the NT as central to Australia's national defence and economic future
- Stronger, more confident local industry and economic growth

Higher Readiness, More Quickly

- A more forward positioned and responsive Defence posture
- Reduced transit times and improved availability of equipment where it is needed most

Keeping the ADF and Allies on Mission

- Industry capability in line with Defence requirements to maintain and sustain personnel, equipment, infrastructure and activity

Capable and Integrated Littoral Force

- Greater integration with allies and regional partners, with local industry and infrastructure positioned to support

In Hours and Days, Not Weeks

- A connected logistics network that enables faster deployment to and from the North

Burden Sharing on Australian Terms

- Australian, allied and partner defence presence integrated into planning and future investment



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Strategic Priority 1 - Maritime Sustainment

- Increase the number of naval vessels home ported in Darwin and seek multi-year maintenance commitments for ADF and Australian Border Force vessels.
- Expand Australian, allied and partner vessel maintenance in Darwin, leveraging the Northern Marine Complex and the Darwin Ship Lift.

Strategic Priority 2 - Army's Littoral Pivot

- Base new Army watercraft capabilities such as Landing Craft Medium and Landing Craft Heavy in Darwin.
- Support growth of the United States Marine Corps' Marine Rotational Force -Darwin (MRF-D), and facilitate regular US Army watercraft rotations for training, exercises and enhanced interoperability.

Strategic Priority 3 - Northern Theatre Logistics

- Expand pre positioning of platforms, equipment, fuel, munitions and spares in strategic locations across the Territory.
- Advance opportunities for combined logistics, maintenance and sustainment with the US and Japan.

Strategic Priority 4 - Northern Basing and Ranges

- Enable further investments to be made in bases, barracks, training areas and ranges to improve force projection capability.
- Develop integrated air and missile defence and counter UAS capabilities for RAAF Bases Darwin and Tindal.

Strategic Priority 5 - Innovation, Test and Evaluation

- Expand trials of autonomous air, land and sea capabilities in the Northern Territory, taking advantage of wide-open spaces and relevant environmental conditions.
- Focus on the development of simple, reliable ways for Defence, industry, researchers and allies to work together in the Territory.



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