

# Media Release

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## Joint Army, Navy, Air Force Approach to Deliver Single Point of Truth

**5 December 2011, Canberra:** Australia's Defence Force must follow the lead of the U.S. military in net centric operations and adopt an enterprise approach to the use of geospatial information and technology if they are to realise the vision outlined in their own geospatial strategy, according to one of the nation's leading Geographic Information System (GIS) specialists.

In the strategy, *A New Geospatial Domain*, released earlier this year, the Australian Department of Defence committed to a list of priorities that would deliver "geospatial information superiority and knowledge dominance for Defence, Government and our international partners."

Speaking from the U.S. at an annual gathering of high-profile international defence GIS specialists, Esri Australia Manager for Defence Simon Hill said an enterprise-wide approach to geospatial information was essential to the Australian Defence Force (ADF) meeting the paper's expectations.

"Australia has a flexible, agile Defence Force which relies on superior information for competitive advantage," Mr Hill said.

"The Department of Defence strategy recommends that to achieve knowledge dominance, the ADF must address the limited capability of systems and platforms that do not adequately consider geospatial information.

"The strategy contains a range of geospatial objectives that focus on the coordination of information collection and analysis capabilities across the various parts of Defence, including the Services.

"Key to meeting these objectives is the transformation of the nation's Army, Navy and Air Force into one geospatially enabled, networked force – what we refer to as an Enterprise GIS approach."

Mr Hill said an Enterprise GIS approach linked data from multiple systems and platforms and presented that data as a 'single source of truth'.

“Users can easily visualise information that may previously have been held in disparate tables or databases, and can clearly identify correlations and relationships that exist,” Mr Hill said.

“This enables quicker analysis, more robust planning and, ultimately, superior decision making – saving lives and money.”

Mr Hill said the approach was already being used extensively by U.S. Forces and NATO to ensure specialist operational knowledge was shared across joint forces – and not confined to silos.

“The ADF contends with a wide variety of information, including intelligence, control and command, logistics and personnel data,” Mr Hill said.

“An Enterprise GIS allows experts in specific fields to collaborate and share their knowledge rapidly and seamlessly with others – a crucial aspect of effective net centric operations.

“This enables everyone across the organisation – from troops in the field to senior leaders in the headquarters – to fight off the same map.”

Mr Hill said an Enterprise GIS environment would better enable the ADF to interoperate with its coalition partners on operations and exercises - an important capability in light of U.S. President Barack Obama’s recent visit down under.

“While in Australia President Obama declared the Asia-Pacific region to be of ‘huge strategic importance’ to the United States and announced a plan to considerably strengthen U.S. military ties with Australia,” Mr Hill said.

“As this develops, and nations come together to train in Northern Australia or fight in places like Afghanistan, they will bring their own systems and platforms.

“However, they will share the same points in time and space, which means geography and GIS provide the common ground that unites allied forces.”

Mr Hill said timely access to information gathered by other nations in the field of war could mean the difference between life and death, or victory and defeat.

“An Enterprise GIS approach to net centric operations means information can be shared much more efficiently during multinational military operations, which could save lives,” Mr Hill said.

“The technology behind Enterprise GIS is already available and can help meet the Defence Department’s goals of improving the integration and coordination of their collective geospatial capability.

“We just need to act.”

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**About Esri Australia**

Esri Australia has a 33 year history of providing location intelligence and data mapping solutions that help organisations make smart business decisions. The combination of local expertise and world-leading Esri GIS technology has helped thousands of government departments and commercial organisations to turn their data, information and knowledge into collective insight to reveal opportunity.

**About GIS**

A Geographic Information System is a key piece of technology used in thousands of organisations Australia-wide from the military and government, to the insurance and mining sector. Australia’s GIS industry currently stands at over \$2.1 billion and more than 300,000 organisations across the world use Esri GIS.