

23 January 2011

Anna Bligh
Premier of Queensland
PO Box 15185
City East
Brisbane 4002

Dear Premier,

During the past weeks, our members have watched with concern the devastation caused to Queensland communities by the severe flooding, and we pass on to you and the people affected our sincere sympathy. Many of our members have donated to the Premier's Flood Relief Appeal.

We are concerned especially about the environmental and infrastructure flood damage suffered by areas that will be exposed to the Talisman Saber war games (TS11) in July. Civilian facilities, such as ports, airports and roads, will also be used by TS11 troops, causing unnecessary interruption and diversion of resources.

Given the reconstruction needs now facing your state, we believe TS11 should be cancelled. Australian military personnel have already made a contribution to recovery efforts. It would be perverse to expose flood damaged areas, including the Great Barrier Reef, to an intensive 300,000 strong military training exercise. This could undermine the ADF efforts which should rather be expanded.

There would be widespread support for cancellation of the exercise. We say this with confidence, based on the following facts:

The people of Australia see the reconstruction effort as our number one priority.

A 2009 Australian National University poll revealed that public support for disaster relief work by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) stands at 86 per cent, surpassing even support for the defence of Australia.

TS11 will cost an estimated \$70 million. The ANU poll tells us that 70 per cent of Australians favour spending less money on defence and a large majority (82 per cent) oppose tax increases to pay for more defence spending.

We ask you to join with us in an appeal to the Prime Minister to do this and to divert the money thus saved to the state's recovery program.

Yours sincerely,

Denis Doherty
AABCC National Co-ordinator