



15th June, 2018 **Almost 50 Tongan Marines from His Majesty's Armed Forces and troops from 2nd Battalion, Royal Australia Regiment, have exercised their ability to land humanitarian aid ashore during an amphibious exercise on Pangaimotu Island.**

The exercise was coordinated aboard HMAS Adelaide, which is in Nuku'alofa with HMAS Melbourne for Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2018, a major regional engagement activity between the Australian Defence Force.

VIPs, including Australian High Commissioner Andrew Ford and Deputy Prime Minister Semisi Sika, observed personnel from both forces launching via landing craft and helicopters.

The exercise tested the ADF and HMAF's ability to safely load troops and vehicles aboard the landing craft in HMAS Adelaide's dock and project them ashore on the beach.

Commander of the Joint Task Group Captain Jim Hutton said the exercise was valuable to both forces given the common need to work together.

"This part of the world faces an ever-present risk of natural disasters, particularly during the storm season, and we know that Australian forces and His Majesty's Armed Forces may be called up to work together to support one another or one of our regional partners."

“Exercises like today’s amphibious landing at Pangaimotu Island help us maintain and boost our shared readiness to respond if the need arises.”

HMAS Adelaide is a Landing Helicopter Dock based in Sydney. The ship can project personnel, vehicles and aircraft ashore and support humanitarian missions with considerable space for emergency stores, accommodation, and hospital facilities.

Yesterday the Australian Minister for Defence, the Hon Sen Marise Payne, gifted five Unimog trucks to HMAF aboard the ship. HMAS Adelaide and HMAS Melbourne will depart Tonga with the Royal Tongan Marines on Saturday for exercises in Hawaii.

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