A combined Australian and United States Defence training exercise involving more than 21,000 Defence personnel will provide a significant boost for local businesses and inject millions of dollars into the Northern Territory economy, Chief Minister Adam Giles said today.

Mr Giles said Defence in the Northern Territory was strategically and economically vital for Australia, with nearly a tenth of Australia’s permanent defence personnel based in the NT and about $1.5 billion spent by Defence annually here.

“Exercises like Talisman Sabre 2015 are important for our military forces to improve their combat training and readiness, but they are also important for local businesses as well,” he said.

“Over 21,000 personnel will take part in Talisman Sabre across the Top End over the next few weeks with an estimated 25 major naval vessels and 195 aircraft operating near Darwin, and over 4500 US Marines coming onshore for further training.

“This is the Australian Defence Force’s largest combined military exercise and this year New Zealand and Japan will also have a role to play.

“There will be significant opportunities for Northern Territory businesses as large volumes of fuel, supplies and support are required for naval vessels, aircraft and troop movements to and from training ranges.

“Much of this will be procured locally, and along with personal expenditure of troops on rest and recuperation, will make a major economic contribution to the Northern Territory across a range of industry sectors.”

Mr Giles said today’s public open day at the Darwin Showgrounds gave the public a chance to view Defence equipment and learn more about the exercise.

“The activities of Defence personnel over the next few weeks will be closely managed, and Territory Government Departments are working with Defence over the use of beaches and boat ramps to ensure the protection of the environment,” he said.
“Defence is such an important contributor to the Northern Territory, and the jobs created from having Defence businesses contracted in the Territory means more families, more population and more money flowing through the local economy.”

Media Contact: Marnie Hobson 0409 527 909