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Australia Bolsters Naval and Air Capabilities with Global Partners

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Australia's defense posture is undergoing significant transformation with new naval partnerships, pilot training initiatives, and advancements in missile defense demonstrated during Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025. These efforts reflect a broader strategic aim to enhance deterrence and interoperability across the Indo-Pacific.

A major development is Australia's selection of Japan's Mogami-class guided missile frigate design for its SEA 3000 General Purpose Frigate program. Valued at approximately AU\$10 billion, the program aims to expand and modernize the Royal Australian Navy's surface fleet. This decision, outlined in the Australian government's Surface Combatant Fleet Review, will boost maritime capability, with potential future collaboration around Japan's Aegis System Equipped Vessel (ASEV) being explored. The

ASEV, outfitted with the SPY-7 radar and up to 128 vertical launch system cells, is considered a potential replacement for the aging Hobart-class destroyers. It would provide Australia with enhanced air and missile defense, particularly important in response to emerging threats in the region.

At the same time, the Australian Army is moving forward with the transition from its Eurocopter Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter to the U.S.-made Boeing AH-64E Apache Guardian. The first three Australian Apache pilots are currently undergoing training at the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence in Fort Novosel, Alabama. Their qualification is expected to pave the way for the successful integration of the Apache fleet into Australian service by 2026.

Further strengthening Australia's defense capabilities, Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025 served as a key proving ground for interoperability and joint missile defense operations. The exercise involved over 35,000 personnel from 19 nations, including key allies such as the United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom. During the event, Australian defense contractor Serco delivered missile practice targets that were successfully used in live-fire training. Lockheed Martin confirmed the involvement of Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force and the U.S. Navy's Arleigh Burke-class Flight III destroyers in integrated drills focused on multi-domain coordination.