

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Timely Australian Peacekeeper Exhibition at the UN

“One of the great aptitudes that Aussies have, [that] I know about Australians, it is really easy to tap this great vein of compassion and empathy,” **General Peter Cosgrove, AC MC**, commander of the international peacekeeping forces (INTERFET) in East Timor, 1999.

Australia’s other heroes will be featured in an exhibition “Australian Peacekeepers at the United Nations, in New York April 2009. The exhibition will focus on individual stories of service men and women, including peacekeeping personnel from the Australian Federal Police and Victoria Police.

Current portraits of Australian peacekeepers’ will be exhibited alongside images and stories from their period of service, displaying an intimate and moving portrait of their personal experiences, commitment and service.

“It is fitting that this exhibition will be on show at the UN over ANZAC Day,” said Australian Ambassador to the UN, Robert Hill.

The exhibition’s artist, Ms Sharyn Meade interviewed peacekeepers who served in Namibia, Cambodia, Rwanda, Cyprus, the Solomon Islands and Timor Leste for the exhibition.

Meade said that our peacekeepers really are Australia’s other heroes. “I wanted to bring greater insight to the experiences of that important group [peacekeepers] to the Australian and international communities,” she said. “Many have had to confront humanitarian crises and human right’s abuses.”

“As many veterans have stated, ‘we remember the wars, but we should also remember those that help keep the peace’,” said Meade. “All of our peacekeepers are worthy of attention. Their experiences are very emotional, quite moving and incredible stories in their own right.

Meade said the qualities and values we attributed to the original ANZACs have moved down through generations of serving men and women in Australia. “Our peacekeepers seem to be the natural inheritors of the ANZAC ideals, taking Australia’s concept of a civil society out to the world, including equality, fairness, mateship, giving someone a fair go, education and civil rights. These are all things that make our society what it is.”

“Having seen what they have during their service overseas, Australian peacekeepers have a great sense of what they value as Australians and they consider it something extremely worthwhile.”

The “Australian Peacekeepers” exhibition is one part of Ms Meade’s larger photographic project on Australian service men and women, from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, following the ANZAC ideals through Australia’s involvement in conflicts. Meade is also undertaking two projects linking Australian service to the world: the New ANZUS Legacy, featuring Australian and American veterans; and Bomber Command, highlighting the service of Australians and Commonwealth personnel in Britain during World War II.

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The Australian Peacekeepers at the United Nations, New York will open on April 20, 2009 and run until May 1 at the Secretariat Lobby, United Nations Building, New York.

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