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NEW SENIOR AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

Today the Prime Minister announced the new senior Australian Defence Force (ADF) leadership appointments which will take effect from 04 July 2008 and last for a period of three years.

I am very honoured to have been asked to extend my tenure as the Chief of the Defence Force by another three years.

I am very pleased with the new leadership team: Vice Chief of the Defence Force, Lieutenant General David Hurley; Chief of Navy, Rear Admiral Russ Crane; Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie; and Chief of Air Force, Air Vice-Marshal Mark Binskin. Rear Admiral Crane and Air Vice-Marshal Binskin will be promoted on appointment.

To this new team, I offer my congratulations. They are very experienced officers and have each proven themselves in demanding previous appointments. They each inherit Services that are in fine shape. I am confident this new leadership team will build on the fine work of their predecessors in ensuring Australia has a strong and capable Defence force.

I would like to thank the outgoing leadership team for their hard work and dedication. The three Service Chiefs, Vice Admiral Russ Shalders, Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, and Air Marshal Geoff Shepherd, have done an outstanding job in leading the Navy, Army and Air Force.

Vice Admiral Russ Shalders has served the Royal Australian Navy with distinction for over forty years. He has commanded the Navy at a time when they have been very busy both with operations and engagement exercises. He leaves the Navy poised to receive the Air Warfare Destroyer and the largest amphibious ships ever to serve the Royal Australian Navy, which will make it one of the most modern in our region.

Lieutenant General Peter Leahy has led the Army during our most diverse and intense period of operational engagement in 40 years. He has served two terms as Chief of Army and has been responsible for an unprecedented period of modernisation and growth under his plan to harden and network the Army and enhance the land force with two additional battalion groups. This leaves the Army perfectly postured to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. He will leave an outstanding legacy for the Army of the future.

Air Marshal Geoff Shepherd has led the Air Force for three years and leaves his service in great shape. Air Force recruiting and retention is at a very good level and there are no critical categories. Additionally, in 2003 Geoff was responsible for modernising Air Force's operational command and control. Geoff has ensured he leaves a balanced expeditionary Air Force capable of meeting Australia's air and space needs well into the future.

I wish them all the best and I thank them for their long and dedicated service to the ADF.



A.G. HOUSTON, AC, AFC
Air Chief Marshal
Chief of the Defence Force

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