

Australian Peacekeeper

AUTUMN 2021

MAGAZINE



AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE





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Australian Peacekeepers Magazine attempts to provide insight into the experiences of peacekeepers, Defence members and war veterans and the issues that confront them together with encouraging informed debate regarding issues dealing with but not limited to Commonwealth compensation, pensions, superannuation and occupational health and safety that affect Peacekeepers and their families. We welcome input from members and would love to feature personal experiences in each issue. Please email the editor with any stories you would like to see printed. The views expressed in the articles are those of the particular author and not those of the Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA). The APPVA will not be legally responsible in contract, tort or otherwise for any statement made in the articles in this publication.

Cover pic: The AFP's International Deployment Group trained alongside ADF and US troops on Talisman Saber 2009.
Contents pic: Petty Officer Rhys Withers in an MRH-90 helicopter looks out over Elizabeth Reef in search of unexploded ordnance. *Defence images*



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President's report



Happy New Year members,

I trust this report finds you all well and in good spirits as we continue to adapt to a Covid impacted society, I hope everyone had a great festive season. A vaccine should be available in Australia shortly, I hope this will allow us to return to our normal way of life or as best as we can.

The APPVA is continuing to grow, in the corporate governance field the APPVA has received confirmation from the ACNC that our charity status remains current, a number of minor points were raised. The Executive had already started implementing policies and structures that formed some of the points recommended by the ACNC.

My vision for the APPVA is one that recognises all peacekeepers and peacemakers, our unique service to the Australian people and to the greater international community. I want us to be seen not only as ADF, Police and

other non-government organisations, but as a team under the one banner of the APPVA, supporting our colleagues, their families, no matter what uniform you wore or those who did not wear a uniform, we are all peacekeepers.

Australia Day celebrations were arranged in Canberra and in Perth, these events were a great success, it is the intention of the Committee to continue to hold such events on future days of commemoration. I would like to thank both Mike Romalis and Ian Lindgren for running the Australia Day events this year. I encourage all members to get involved or to even host one of these days.

The first Ex Service Organisation Round Table with DVA is due in February 2021, the DVA has indicated that only strategic matters would be put on the agenda for ESORT meetings. All day-to-day operational issues should be submitted to the Operational Working Party, Allan Thomas is our representative in that forum. Should you have an issue with entitlements or have ideas that would make things easier for veterans please let us know by way of your Regional Coordinator or to Mark Horner at secretary@peacekeepers.asn.au.

The APPVA Committee is currently looking at ways to allow the association to grow and prosper, this includes an

option for the APPVA to become a company limited by guarantee. More information on this will be forthcoming and encourage every member to read the information. The information will explain to you in plain English what it all means and how it would look.

Should you have a story or your own experience you would like to share with us, please send your story with any images in hi resolution to our editor at communicationsmanager@peacekeepers.asn.au. I want to emphasise that 'Peacekeeper' is your magazine and any suggestions or items of interest you have that may improve the publication, please do not hesitate to forward them to Kris our editor.

Should you have an interest or passion for issues that confront our veterans every day, I encourage you to let us know and if you are able become an active participant in helping us to serve you better.

I believe the APPVA is growing in a positive way, keeping up with current technology, corporate governance compliance and continuing to support our members and working with other likeminded ESO's to better serve the veteran community and their families.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Woods, JP

If you believe you can challenge the obstacles that lie in the path of the veteran community, and serve for the greater good, then become a regional coordinator to:

- provide representation of the APPVA at regional consultative forums and state veterans' minister's office,
 - represent your colleagues at the APPVA Committee and bring issues to DVA,
 - organise regional commemorative activities such as the APPVA contingent for ANZAC Day and other veteran commemorations as the representative of the APPVA,
 - keep members and likeminded organisations informed, and
 - organising regional social events.
- currently we have availabilities for ALL States and Territories excluding WA.

If you want to know more, contact our President, Rob Woods, our Vice President, Ian Lindgren or our Communications Manager, Kris Milne.



Peace and the Role of Police and Justice in Australia's Neighbourhood

Dr Martin Hess

Introduction: What is Peace?

Peace is not a simple concept, and often remains elusive, even in developed societies. The chant often favoured by contemporary protestors in western cities is 'no justice, no peace', which highlights the fact that notions of peace and justice are interlinked. Protestors in these domestic settings are demanding their views be heard or the protests and disruption, sometimes accompanied by violence and destruction, will continue. In these demands, protestors are demanding that justice must precede peace. In fact, police in many nations which founded modern liberal-democratic policing were known as peace officers. In an international post-conflict environment, however, it is peace which must precede justice.

In Eire the police are called 'An Garda Síochána', which translates as the Guardians of the Peace. Seen through a police lens, therefore, sustainable peace in an international

setting is not just the absence of conflict, but the presence of justice, which is the firmest pillar of order and good government, and must be protected from influences which can risk undermining or eroding peace. How is this to be achieved?

Security and Justice

Some speak of a security sector, but closer examination reveals that many of the elements within the security sector are actually justice sector actors, particularly the police, which generally spans both sectors.

The general state of normalcy for a healthy liberal democracy is that any person has the right to go about their lawful business, in any public place, their own private property, and at any time of day, without interference by other persons, including government representatives such as the police. This, of course, is aspirational, as breaches occur every day, and police respond to such breaches every day. It is the level and type of breaches which determine the manner in which

police respond. It is important to acknowledge that police do not have a 'victory mentality', namely that crime will be eliminated. Rather, crime levels are managed within community expectations.

Crime and the absence of peace

If the crime rate, particularly violent crime is at a level of community dissatisfaction, the police as security sector actors are generally postured for enforcement of law by coercive means, including forcible arrest, search and seizure. As justice sector actors, however, the police are generally postured for enforcement of the law by consent-based means, including procedure by summons and mutual agreement for attendance at court to answer for allegations of criminal activity. Police are community-based and responsive to community demands and circumstances. Whether the police favour a more security-based, coercive posture, or a more justice-based



Above and opposite: As part of a Public Protection Control exercise 2009 involving East Timorese security elements, soldiers from the International Stabilisation Force provide a display of their quick response capacity as part of the day's activities. *Defence image.*

consent-oriented posture, is generally in response to the prevalence and type of criminal environment at the time.

Intra-state v inter-state conflict

How does this translate to an international post-conflict environment?

In order to address this question, the nature of the situation requiring intervention in the first place. Much contemporary conflict requiring international intervention is intra-state based rather than inter-state based; ie it is community based rather than government based. Most international interventions, however, are planned, led and staffed by militaries, which are government-based and geared more for inter-state conflict than community-based conflict. If much intra-state conflict is community-based and has unfairness, inequity and injustice at its core, clearly, therefore, interventions based on such concepts, are key to both restoring peace and maintaining a sustainable peace. It is worth noting that many contemporary peacekeeping missions include police working alongside military to assist with transition to a more sustainable peace.

The Rule of Law

As a community-oriented activity, effective policing can play a major role in such justice-based interventions but cannot achieve this alone. Police are one component of a criminal justice system, which itself is part of a broader justice system, founded on a body of law. Other components include an accepted method of passing laws, ideally such as an elected legislature, a functioning, hierarchical and appealable court system and a human rights compliant corrections system. Clearly these take time to develop and evolve to suit local circumstances and can rarely be imposed by external sources. This is particularly so in relation to the body of law which, even in mature democracies, continues to be disputed and refined.

These laws should include certain inalienable principles such as the right to life and liberty as well as the use and



enjoyment of private property, plus a host of others which are encapsulated by the United Nations Charter of Human Rights. It is adherence to these principles which form the foundations for peace in the context of intra-state conflict.

If the rationale for international intervention, particularly military intervention in the name of peace, is to in fact make a better peace, then notions of post-conflict justice should shape the way both immediate conflict resolution is achieved and transition to a more consent-based society is managed. This requires recognition of the Security-Justice continuum, which transitions between a coercive to a consent-based model, as illustrated in the model below.

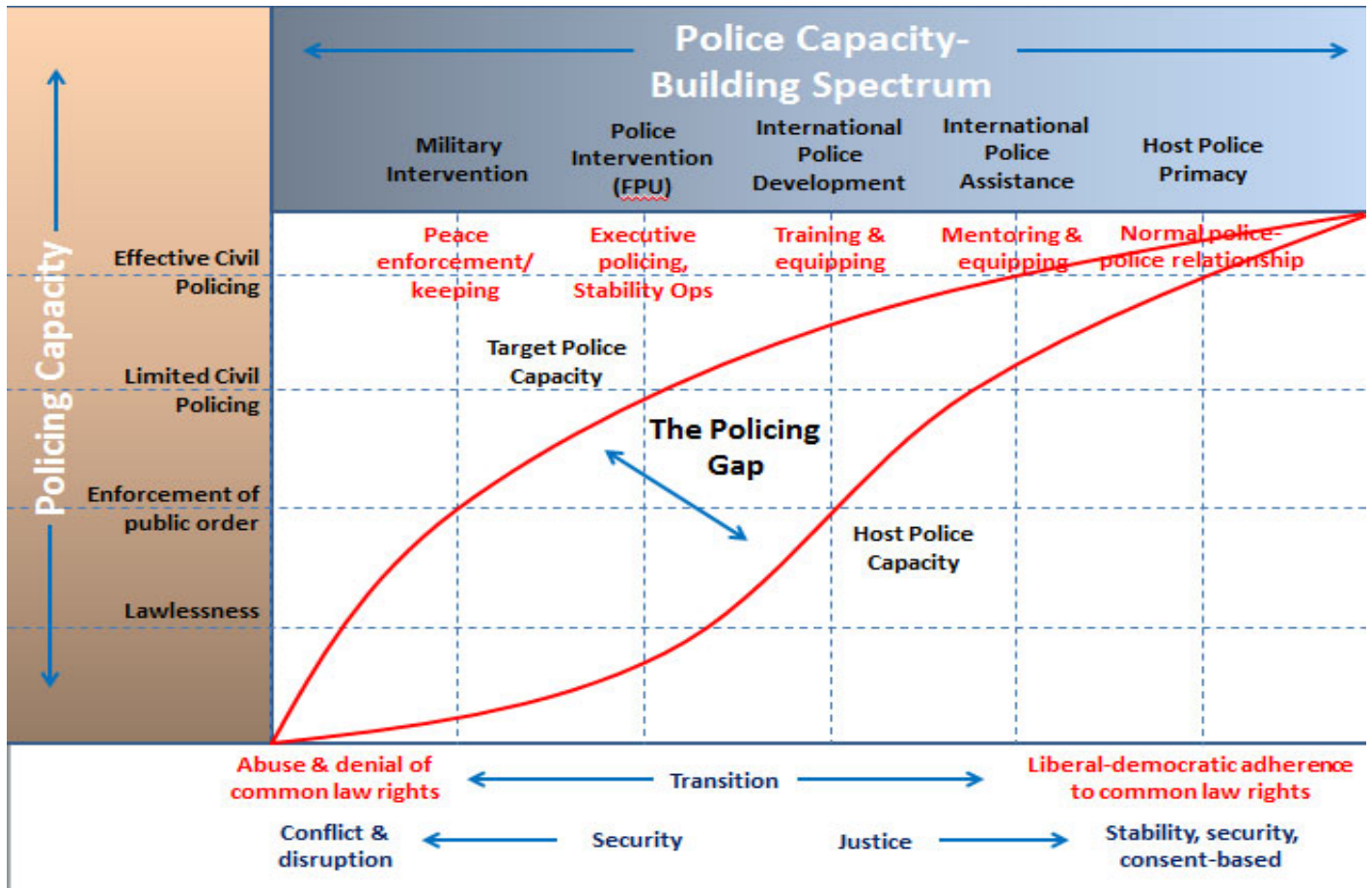
Transition

In terms of transition the objective should be to transition from a coercive-based international military guarantee of security, to an accountable, host nation consent-based civilian host-nation police guarantee of security, within a functioning criminal justice system which is both locally accepted and which operates within international norms. This also involves a transition from a situation where human rights are abused to a situation where they are respected and protected by force of law. This is difficult to impose from outside, and involves gaining the trust of the community concerned.

This is made even more challenging in communities which have been traumatised by conflict with origins in religious ethnic or racial tensions, political ideology or tribalism. It is in such circumstances that the rule of law, as opposed to arbitrary rule of man, is so important. A significant trust deficit is often the most significant feature of such societies, and it is this trust which is the most important to restore.

How this is achieved is easier said than done, and is often left to military forces in the first instance. It has been said that military force moves at the pace of technology and that peacekeeping moves at the pace of trust. In many discussions, there is also sometimes talk of peacemaking and peacekeeping. Peacemaking, namely the restoration of basic order from conflict, is generally the role of coercive military force, because military forces are the only entities with the capacity and capability to address such issues, often in logistically challenging environments.

It is also worth noting that police can play a pivotal role in transitional justice in post conflict environments such as in South Africa which became a role model and the standard upon which reconciliation was achieved in Timor Leste following pro-Indonesia outrages in 1999. This has also been used to resolve conflicts in other countries to prevent a relapse into conflict. It was also the Tension Trials in the Solomon



Islands once the ethnic violence had been subdued.

Sustainable Peace

Much discussion focusses on military intervention but this is only part of a relatively short-term solution to meet immediate security requirements—we should always bear in mind that it doesn't take long for such forces to be regarded as occupiers. To build sustainable peace requires not just the suppression of conflict but its replacement by locally administered and broadly accepted justice, including host nation police primacy. The parameters should always be a broad local acceptance and within internationally accepted norms.

This can be transitory and can relapse. It requires patience, time, understanding, effort, coordination, cooperation and political will, particularly on the part of contributing nations. Overall, it requires a strategic approach which deals with issues other than the immediate security situation at hand, including the restoration of

community trust. The objective of international intervention should be to plan to hand over authority for security from an international coercive presence to a host state consent-based guarantee of security. Trust and consent-based justice and policing are vital in this regard.

Principles

There are a number of broad principles which might be helpful when interventions in the name of peace are contemplated.

Firstly, for trust-based peacekeeping to be sustainable, there needs to be a 'peace to keep'. This often involves coercive means and military force, or the threat thereof which is a highly effective means to achieve this. In any conflict, however, the belligerents not only need to be neutralised, they also ideally need to be made to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem. All participants therefore need to negotiate in good faith for buy-in in a better, more peaceful post-conflict outcome. This trust-based

approach requires compromise and is largely the domain of diplomats and politicians.

Secondly, there must be local 'buy-in'. Sustainable peace in this context therefore demands there be a means by which the community can change those who govern them without bloodshed, and there must also be a mechanism by which disputes can be resolved without recourse to violence.

Finally, sectors other than the immediate 'security sector' need to be involved in the transition. This includes the justice sector with all of its elements including the police, as well as the forces of international investment, to encourage the lack of economic activity which often lies at the heart of the instability, which is often the reason for the intervention in the first place.

Australian Regional Police Missions and Operations

Australian policing has been involved in a number of long-term missions



SGT John Carroll Caption: Australian Federal Police Officers assist Australian Defence Force personnel in crowd control outside the Dili Port, under the watch of international Media. *Defence image.*

worthy of note in this regard. Firstly, East Timor, now Timor Leste, beginning with the UNAMET electoral mission in 1999, the Australian Police remain in a post-UN police development mission, nearly a decade after the withdrawal of the UN in 2012. This is known as the Timor Leste Police Development Program (TLPDP). Secondly, the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) in the Solomon Islands, which was not a UN intervention but was led by Australia and in which Australian Police remain in a police development program, known as the Solomon Islands Police Development Program (SIPDP). These two missions have been specifically aimed at both training police in a technical sense, but also restoring and building trust between the police and the community, which is so vital in building sustainable peace. They have lasted approximately twenty years and peace, prosperity, and the security and stability which underpin them, have largely been restored, but there is still much to be done to address poverty and youth unemployment in both of these nations. It is often youth, particularly males, who are most susceptible to engage in criminal

activity, including ideologically-based or violent criminal activity.

Decisions to engage in international and regional interventions are ultimately made at the political level, thus preferably bi-partisan political will, and an appetite for long-term engagement are fundamental for sustainable peace, based on justice and the rule of law. Two of the major incentives for this are primarily the national interest, and secondly an appetite for international good citizenship. In terms of effective policing, Australian policing has been effectively involved in a number of other smaller missions in the South West Pacific, in countries such as Vanuatu, Samoa and Tonga, as well as a much larger mission in Papua New Guinea, known as the Papua New Guinea Australia Police Partnership (PNG-APP). Strictly speaking these are not post-conflict missions, but are police capacity-building missions, which not only develop policing effectiveness in a technical sense, but also engender a more consent and trust-based relationship between the police and the communities they serve. This in turn serves the national interest of each participant country, including Australia, by better police-to-police relationships,

thus discouraging the development of more serious criminal activities in Australia's near neighbourhood.

The epitome of this sort of cooperation is the Samoa-based Pacific Transnational Crime Network (PTCN), formed in 2002. The PTCN provides a police-led proactive criminal intelligence and investigative capability designed to combat transnational crime, including ideologically based violent crime in the South West Pacific through a multi-agency and regional approach. This is proactive peacekeeping through justice-based consent-based prevention rather than responses based on coercion.

Summary and Conclusion

In summary, peace is not just the absence of conflict, but the presence of justice. Police can make a significant contribution to these efforts, but to be truly effective, there must be a peace to keep, local buy-in and an environment which encourages international investment. This relies on trust and confidence. The building of sustainable peace, requires not just military or police, but also other pillars of government, law and justice. These need to be both accepted at the local level, and also operate within the parameters of international norms. Australia's regional police missions and operations have played a significant role in serving both the national interest and fulfilling our appetite for international good citizenship. This demonstrates that the price for the maintenance of peace is not just eternal vigilance but a willingness to acknowledge that the threats to peace do not necessarily represent a foreign government, wear a uniform and use or threaten physical aggression, but can often hold criminal intent and seek anonymity and freedom from scrutiny, both of which are made much easier in situations where peace does not prevail. The absence of conflict and the presence of justice, encouraging peace, order and good government are aspirational goals in which effective international policing can play a major role.

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Did the Richardson intelligence review get it right?

The 1,300-page unclassified version of the review of the legal framework of Australia's national intelligence community (NIC), delivered to the government in December 2019 and released a year later, offered 203 recommendations for reform. Thirteen of them were classified. The government's response, also released in December 2020, indicated agreement—in whole, in part or in principle—with 86 of the 90 unclassified recommendations.

Not since Robert Hope's transformative royal commissions in the 1970s and 1980s has there been such a wide-ranging review of Australia's laws governing intelligence and security. However, there's much to lament in what the latest review says, and doesn't say, about the oversight arrangements for and transparency of the NIC, especially regarding parliamentary scrutiny.

One of the review's main tasks was to consider whether improvements were needed to ensure that the legislative framework provides for accountability and oversight that is transparent and as consistent across the agencies as is practicably feasible.

The review, undertaken by former Australian Security Intelligence Organisation chief Dennis Richardson and supported by a secretariat in the Attorney-General's Department, found that the oversight of the NIC is 'strong, effective and working well'.

However, in our submission to the review, we highlighted a number of areas for reform, especially to the Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS), the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor (INSLM) and the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS). The issues we raised—some of which were also raised by others—haven't been substantively addressed in the unclassified version of the report. The

reasons for this are not clear, at least not in the public version of the report.

One of the most striking judgements in the review is its rejection of the recommendation of the 2017 independent intelligence review to extend the IGIS's jurisdiction to cover all 10 NIC agencies. The IGIS currently has jurisdiction over the six agencies that make up the Australian intelligence community (AIC), which does not include the Department of Home Affairs and the Australian Federal Police. The review concluded that '[t]he IGIS should not have oversight of the Department of Home Affairs or the AFP as recommended in the 2017 IIR'. According to the review:

The NIC is significantly more disparate than the AIC. Unlike the AIC, the NIC does not have a common philosophical base at the heart of its legislation. Equally, all NIC agencies cannot and should not be treated the same in legislation. This holds true for oversight. A 'one size fits all' approach is not appropriate.

Disparate or not, some overlap of oversight bodies' responsibilities is useful to ensure that no gaps arise in coverage as noted elsewhere in the review. The intelligence functions of the 10 agencies in the NIC may not be equivalent, but Australia's intelligence and security architecture should require consistent oversight treatment by the IGIS. And given that it is a national intelligence community, perhaps there should be a common philosophical base at the heart of the legislation—a missed opportunity by the review?

The review also noted that the demands on the IGIS are growing, and its rigorous oversight can only continue to provide assurance if it is adequately resourced. The office's resources are already stretched and, given the many findings and recommendations in the review related

to the IGIS, its responsibilities are likely to be stretched even further unless additional resourcing is provided.

Encouragingly, the review noted that several submissions (including ours) raised concerns about the timeliness of government responses to the INSLM's recommendations and suggested that the government be legislatively required to table timely responses. Accordingly, the review recommended, 'As a matter of good practice, the Government should provide a publicly available response to the INSLM's recommendations within 12 months of the INSLM's report being tabled in Parliament.'

Regrettably, though, our calls to remove barriers to more effective parliamentary scrutiny so that the PJCIS can be appropriately equipped for its future work seem to have fallen on deaf ears.

Most notable among our suggestions for reform was that the PJCIS's legislative power be widened to include the ability to analyse the NIC's operations and conduct its own motion inquiries. The review recommended, 'The remit of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security should not be expanded to include direct oversight of operational activities, whether past or current.' This is a blow to the elected representatives of the people and the integrity of Australia's intelligence and security architecture.

As highlighted in a recent report from the Australia Institute, 'Australia's parliamentary oversight of its intelligence community is weak compared to that of other countries in the Five Eyes. Most significantly, parliamentarians in the UK, USA and Canada have oversight over the operations and activities of intelligence agencies, which Australia and New Zealand lack.'

Alarming, in direct contradiction to the recommendations of the 2017



review and the Richardson review, the government rejected changes to allow the PJCIS to request the IGIS to conduct an inquiry into the legality and propriety of particular operational activities, and report to the PJCIS, the prime minister and responsible minister.

The review found that the approach recommended by the 2017 IIR could enhance already strong oversight arrangements while preserving the complementary but distinct roles for executive and parliamentary oversight. It would also provide a mechanism for the PJCIS to bring matters of public concern to the IGIS's attention and increase its visibility over the IGIS's review of such matters.

However, according to the government:

Even if the IGIS is not obliged to conduct an inquiry, the remit of the PJCIS should not be expanded to include oversight of agencies'

operational activities by requesting the IGIS to inquire into and report on particular operations. It remains appropriate for ministers to primarily oversee operations and be accountable to Parliament ... These existing arrangements appropriately balance accountability with the need to protect sensitive operations and capabilities, and further oversight by the PJCIS is not necessary.

In rejecting the recommendations of both the IIR and the Richardson review, the government is further eroding the NIC's accountability and oversight mechanisms.

While Richardson and the secretariat should be lauded for their efforts, did the review 'get it right', to quote Justice Hope, on intelligence oversight and transparency? As far as the PJCIS is concerned, the review is a missed opportunity—neither an evolution nor a revolution.

As the review states, 'The world,

Australia and the NIC have plainly changed in the 40 years since the Hope Royal Commissions'. The government's decision not to accept the recommendation to change the powers of the PJCIS is therefore surprising. Without effective parliamentary scrutiny, the confidence and trust of the Australian people in the work of the NIC will corrode.

Clearly what's required, as Justice Hope's biographer Peter Edwards has previously called for, is that the next independent intelligence review, expected in 2022–23, be upgraded to a royal commission. Perhaps then the role, powers and resources of the PJCIS will be considered and it will be appropriately equipped to safeguard the democratic values, rights and liberties of all Australians.

Kate Grayson is a teacher and an independent researcher who previously served as an adviser to the late former Senator Russell Troad. Anthony Bergin is a senior fellow at ASPI. Image: Pippa Buchanan/Flickr.

A high-wing, fixed-wing aircraft with a large, curved wing and a tail boom. It is flying over a rugged, mountainous landscape under a cloudy sky. The aircraft has a sensor pod mounted on the nose and a camera or sensor pod mounted on the wing. The text "AEROSONDE" is written in large, bold, blue letters, and "Future Ready." is written in white letters below it.

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Helping Australia's first responders deal with the trauma they see daily

Australian first responders dealing with fires, crimes, crashes and pandemics are in danger of being overwhelmed emotionally and they are three times more likely than other Australians to consider suicide.

That statistic has long worried former Victoria Police chief commissioner Graham Ashton, who will be announced tomorrow as chairman of Fortem Australia, a not-for-profit organisation providing mental health support to members of first responder agencies and their families.

Agencies include state and territory paid and volunteer emergency services, such as fire and rescue, police, ambulance, and rural and community-based firefighting services, along with national organisations such as the Australian Border Force and the Australian Federal Police.

Ashton headed Victoria Police from 2015 to 2020 after a long career in the AFP.

During his 40 years in law enforcement, Ashton developed a strong concern about the need to address mental health issues in policing. He ordered a major review of the adequacy of mental health and wellbeing services in Victoria Police, which was followed by a series of

reforms within the police and the start of efforts to improve support for police veterans.

Ashton retired on 1 July and was asked to join Fortem to use his experience to help develop and expand services for a broader range of first responders and their families.

Fortem, which means 'strong' in Latin, was established by John Bale, co-founder of the Soldier On mental health support group for defence personnel. 'Graham was instrumental in leading mental health reform with Victoria Police and brings to Fortem this understanding of how vital connection and support are for wellbeing and mental fitness', Bale says.

For a time, Soldier On broadened its orbit to take in first responders confronting mental health issues but found that those issues and the levels of support already available were significantly different.

'Defence is a massive organisation', says Ashton. 'What will emerge from the work of Fortem is that the issues in the first responder area are so significant that they need their own focus, not just to be part of, or pinned to, Defence.'

He says the whole concept of mental health and other support for

law enforcement personnel and other first responders is not as mature as it is in the military sector.

Ashton says that everyone in the community will at some stage have issues with mental health, major physical health issues, death of loved ones or workplace issues.

'First responders are living their lives like everyone else, but on top of that they are working in a stressful environment where their safety can be at risk and where they are often dealing with very traumatic things. That amplifies the operating environment they're in beyond that which we all have to deal with on a daily basis.

'It's an area that has needed attention for decades and it's very pleasing that Fortem exists with a dedicated focus to address these issues. Fortem has come along at the right time and I think it can make a big impact.'

Bale says that every day, more than 300,000 first responders are at work keeping communities safe. They are backed up by their families—partners, children and parents. All of them hold vital, challenging roles. 'We help them to be well, and stay well, through mental fitness support services and wellbeing activities.'

Fortem connects with first responder communities to have a positive impact on their overall wellbeing. 'We support first responder families to improve and protect their mental fitness, we connect families to strengthen family bonds, we activate community and individual awareness and education, we collaborate with organisations to foster a collective effort to improve wellbeing, and we deliver evidence-informed, community-based health and wellbeing support programs specifically designed to address the unique challenges faced by the first responder community.'

These programs are delivered



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virtually as well as in person. A team of psychologists works in person, by phone and online to help first responder families, assessing and triaging needs. The specialists also run group programs on mental fitness designed for first responder families.

Ashton says a significant first step for Fortem is to provide independent clinical support to agencies and the workers within those agencies. 'Sometimes there is not the trust between the employee and the employer in relation to mental health so that they'll seek support or treatment. But they may be attracted to an independent agency.'

Another vital role for Fortem is in raising awareness and acceptance of mental ill-health.

'In the first responder world, the culture has long been that you are the person who is expected to cope. So when things become difficult, you are not culturally encouraged to speak up.'

Ashton says that in the first responder community, that stigma is alive and well.

'It's a stigma in terms of their workmates, in the workplace. It's a stigma in the community, and some of them think it's a stigma within their family as well.'

'Fortem can work on its own and also with other organisations to address that stigma issue in our sector so that we can get people more willing

to seek support earlier for difficulties they may be encountering.'

Police work can be extremely stressful, as is working in fire or ambulance or in rescue services, says Ashton. 'You're often dealing with people at the most vulnerable time in their lives. You are trying to bring some sense of normality and order and progress to the issue that they are suddenly trying to deal with.'

Someone involved in a car accident resulting in death or injury will remember that for the rest of their life, he says.

A police officer attends that event

and then they go to the next one, and the next one. They do that as a matter of course, but it can have a cumulative effect. The stress builds up and it can be challenging in terms of maintaining good mental health.

'My own experience is of having been a first responder and then being in charge of first responders as a senior police officer, and also in having some lived experience in relation to good mental health', Ashton says.

'I suffered a period of burnout in 2017 and I was very public about that. I've got lived experience. I've been managed and I've taken a strong interest in managing and leading employees who had difficult times in their own mental health and more broadly for members of families.'

Fortem's initial focus has been helping the recovery of personnel and families from the Black Summer bushfires.

'It's good that Fortem has both a clinical and a wellbeing focus', says Ashton. 'It's able to provide on-the-ground clinical support, which is locals helping locals, and it's very much also about ensuring that it can look after wellbeing and do the proactive work as part of that.'

'As a new agency, we'll also learn a lot from this work that we'll be able to apply in the years to come.'

Brendan Nicholson is executive editor of The Strategist.





A pair of ARH Tiger helicopters from Australian Army 1 Aviation Regiment come into land at RAAF Base Darwin during Exercise Diamond Storm. *Defence image.*

Extravagance amid plenty: replacing the Aussie Tigers

Early replacement of the Australian Army's 22 Airbus Tiger attack helicopters looks like a severe mistake. More defence capability—more urgently needed capability—could be bought by spending the money elsewhere.

The Tigers don't need replacing. And 2021 looks like bad timing to be recommitting to the concept of the manned attack helicopter. It would have been better to wait.

Defence Minister Linda Reynolds announced selection of the Boeing AH-64E Apache for this project on 15 January. So there's now next to no chance that the acquisition will be stopped. But it's still worth reviewing and remembering as a class-A example of loose spending of a plentiful defence budget—an unjustified extravagance as China becomes ever more capable of upending the East Asian order and, potentially, directly threatening Australia.

Reynolds omitted any mention of how much the planned 29 Apaches would cost—as well she might, since the figure noted in the 2020 force structure plan is a hefty \$3.4–5.1 billion.

Apaches will bring a greater ability to gather battlefield information, strike behind enemy lines and support infantry in combat. ASPI's Malcolm Davis sets out the type's advantages here. But the project, Land 4503, is not merely adding those helicopters and their capabilities to the Australian Army; it is also subtracting what's already in service.

The Tigers are not obsolete. They are performing well. Their running costs are high but stable and, we can reasonably hope, will fall over time as operators and suppliers find new ways of attending to problems. Thanks to years of poor fleet performance, the airframes are still fresh, so a steep

late-life rise in costs is many years away. The training and support setup for the Tiger is in place. Soldiers are increasingly familiar with what they can do with these machines.

So Land 4503 is nothing like a typical procurement case, in which old equipment is unviable, increasingly unserviceable, suffering from terminally rising running costs and imminently unsafe.

Meanwhile, seeing better ways of spending \$3.4–5.1 billion is not hard.

In the early 2020s, just about every Australian defence procurement decision can be judged against a gold-standard alternative: promptly buying more Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightnings, an easy move that would yield an obvious and powerful increment to national defence capacity. The force structure plan puts the cost of inducting the currently planned 72 F-35As at \$17 billion. So a crude pro rata calculation using the \$4.25-billion midpoint of the Land 4503 allocation tells us that Australia could have 18 additional F-35As, enough for another squadron, instead of getting 29 Apaches minus 22 Tigers.

In fact, acquisition of 18 fighters would probably not use the whole Land 4503 budget, since F-35 production costs are falling as volumes increase and since Australia has paid for the overheads of operating the type. There would be money left over to cover necessary additions to bases and training capacity (but maybe not running costs).

A discussion such as this risks descending into an author's wish list. So let's instead consider government-identified priorities for defence acquisitions—projects which, we can see, could be brought forward or expanded with the Land 4503 money. Such projects are those for land-based anti-ship missiles, air-launched strike

capability and deployable defence systems against ballistic and high-speed missiles. All look far more likely to get the attention of the Chinese military than an upgraded attack-helicopter force.

The odds are that the army is thinking of the Apaches mainly for expeditionary operations, not for defending Australia. This underlines a considerable advantage of the AH-64E over the Tiger: ease of operation alongside the US Army, which also uses the Boeing type. It's not a conclusive argument, however. If the Tiger isn't considered easily deployable to, say, the Middle East, there's an easy solution: don't deploy it; rely on friends' battlefield airpower instead. No ally expects Australia to turn up with everything needed for a jointly executed mission.

Finally, the timing of this acquisition is historically bad. The manned attack helicopter is not an obsolete concept but it has been heading that way. Improved ground-based defences are raising risks for these hefty machines just as drones are increasingly capable of performing battlefield aviation missions.

No one is yet giving up on the manned attack helicopter, and indeed it may turn out to have decades of viability ahead of it, working with drones that take the greatest risks. But Australia doesn't need to make that judgement now. Because the country has a force of attack helicopters that will be serviceable for a decade or more, it can afford to wait and watch technical developments. It doesn't immediately need to make a 30-year recommitment to the attack-helicopter concept, as it will by ordering 29 Apaches in the early 2020s.

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Thomas M. Kane 'Military Logistics and Strategic Performance', 26 July 2012.



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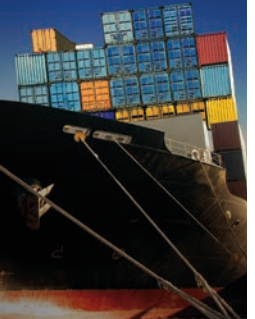
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Invaluable place for a yarn

Soldiers and visitors to the Puckapunyal Military Area will benefit from a yarning circle, which was opened by Indigenous Elder Aunty Joanne from the local Taungurung Land and Waters Council during last year's NAIDOC Week activities.

A yarning circle is a culturally appropriate place to meet and hold ceremonies, and also is the practice of speaking and listening from the heart.

Aunty Joanne, who has been instrumental in providing support, guidance and advocacy to Army's Indigenous soldiers, trainees and APS staff at Puckapunyal, said the yarning circle was invaluable for mentoring the cultural wellbeing of Army's soldiers.

"I am pleased to have been able to work together with the cooperation and respect between the Puckapunyal Army people and the local Aboriginal networks over the past year," she said.

"This has been reflected by the thoughtful siting and construction of this yarning circle."

Senior ADF Officer Puckapunyal, Colonel David McCammon, said the initiative enabled further cooperation between Army and local Indigenous groups.

"It is important that we continue to nurture our soldiers and officers while they are posted to or attending courses at Puckapunyal," Colonel McCammon said.

Prior to a site being established at Puckapunyal, the Army School of Transport held a yarning circle, led by Elders Aunty Joanne and Uncle Shane.

Trainees and Elders exchanged stories, and guidance was offered and exchanged on various cultural aspects.

This was followed by a smoking ceremony to help the trainees move on to the next part of their careers.

At this time, the trainees presented two Indigenous-themed paintings to the school, which acknowledged the trainees' backgrounds and future service within Army and the Royal Australian Corps of Transport.

Commanding Officer of the Army School of Transport, Lieutenant Colonel Clarke Brown, said the paintings were a great initiative and would help future Indigenous trainees knowing that others had travelled their journey.

"The importance of knowing others who have been here before was highlighted when a trainee told me that she felt more a part of the Indigenous community and more connected to her Indigenous heritage since joining Army," Lieutenant Colonel Brown said.

"It is very important to understand and appreciate the cultural sense of community Indigenous members bring with them."

Uncle Shane said it was a great



(l-r) Australian Army Privates, Brodie Lawton and Karleisha Blair, from Army School of Transport, are wrapped in traditional possum cloaks that are worn in the presence of traditional land owners, at Puckapunyal, Victoria. Below: Brodie Lawton *Defence images*.

opportunity for the Taungurung people to be involved with other mobs from all over Australia and it was an honour to be part of the trainees' journeys.

Local formation Indigenous liaison officer Major Peta Langbehn said the establishment of a yarning circle highlighted the local support measures available and the positive connection with local Indigenous Elders.

"Uncle Shane and Aunty Joanne have excelled in the support they have been able to provide," Major Langbehn said.

"Yarning circles provide a way and place for people to meet, conduct ceremonies, connect with each other, and provide a support network.

"We look forward to continuing to work with our local Elders, such as Aunty Joanne and Uncle Shane, to be able to offer support to our Indigenous soldiers and APS in a culturally appropriate way."



Australia's security guarantee to Timor-Leste

Australia gives security guarantees to two nations that have land borders with Indonesia—Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste.

The word 'guarantee' rightly makes Oz politicians, diplomats and lawyers cautious, even nervous: never say forever, never say never, and try never to provoke Indonesia.

Perhaps 'commitment' is enough of a promise to PNG or Timor-Leste. 'Guarantee' has a cast-iron quality that could underwrite delinquency by Port Moresby or Dili. The guarantor faces the moral hazard of risks taken by those enjoying the guarantee.

Defence Department officials tend not to quibble over 'commitment' versus 'guarantee'; they read what the strategic guidance says about Oz geography and interests and plan accordingly.

Australia's obsession or fixation with PNG dates back to the 1880s. But the de facto security promise to East Timor is new, born amid the extraordinary drama of the 1999 independence referendum.

As Timor wrenched free of Indonesia, Canberra was anxious and amazed at the role it had to play—proud at how it all turned out, but mightily relieved it became a successful international mission and not war with Indonesia.

For the Howard government, the Timor outcome was unbidden and unintended. When John Howard wrote to Indonesia's president in 1998 urging an 'act of self-determination', he emphasised that 'Australia's support for Indonesia's sovereignty is unchanged'. Lots changed quickly after that.

The crisis wind in 1999 kept blowing the Howard cabinet into new territory. By its actions, Australia made a commitment to what would become the new nation of Timor-Leste, and its sovereignty. Unintended consequences can be long-lasting as well as emphatic.



"Operation Stabilise" 1999 An Australian soldier, from the Townsville based 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment (3CER), looks on as a group of young Timorese boys give the soldiers working in the market place their sign of approval. *Defence image.*

The 2000 cabinet records released on 1 January by the National Archives show Australia starting to grapple with its role in Timor's future security. In August 2000, cabinet's national security committee considered post-independence scenarios for East Timor.

The submission by Foreign Minister Alexander Downer (prepared by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in partnership with Defence) is an early sketch of what the paper calls a 'bilateral security guarantee'.

Canberra was taking the measure of its enduring obligation to a 'desperately poor' Timor.

Cabinet agreed that Australia's objectives for the post-independence period included 'a secure and stable East Timor, the prompt withdrawal of Australian Defence Force (ADF) peacekeepers, and a security environment between East Timor and Indonesia'. At this point, in the opening paragraph of the minute of cabinet's decision, we hit the first of more than 20 black bars—phrases

and paragraphs in the minute and submission that are blacked out because they'd 'cause damage to the security, defence or international relations of the Commonwealth'.

Journalists are ever here to help, so let's play the game of fill in this blacked-out bit: cabinet didn't want Timor-Indonesia relations marred by confrontation, destabilisation and threat.

Such a reading draws on a paragraph on the other side of the next black bar, discussing engagement with Jakarta 'to promote a benign security environment ... in order to alleviate border tensions', and the need for 'active Indonesian efforts to reduce the militia threat'.

Cabinet agreed that Australia's interests would be served by supporting the early establishment of an East Timorese security force. However, the submission said, some international security presence might be needed in East Timor after independence:

Australian participation, if any,

in such a presence would be determined by factors such as cost, pressure on the bilateral relationship with Indonesia, our relations with East Timor, and domestic public expectations. It would not be in Australia's best interests for a post-independence presence to comprise ADF personnel without other international participation,

Australia, the submission argued, should do everything possible to avoid a scenario in which it alone responded to future East Timorese appeals for security assistance: 'Australian interests would not be served by an ADF presence in an independent East Timor in the absence of other international participation and certainly not any ADF presence lacking appropriate UN cover.'

All that led to a final section of the submission headed 'A bilateral security guarantee'. Only one paragraph long (including two black bars), it states:

Australia's future bilateral security relationship with an East Timorese state will remain an over-arching issue. Our long-term interests in East Timor's security and territorial integrity require careful consideration of how we can best promote these interests. In this respect, any scenario involving ongoing Australian participation in maintaining East Timor's security



"OPERATION Tanager" 26 Jul 01. An Australian Digger chats to a small girl in East Timor. *Defence image.*

beyond independence even as part of a larger UN presence raises the possible expectation of an ongoing bilateral security relationship (including the idea of a bilateral security guarantee) with East Timor. This is an issue which will require careful management and will need to be factored into any final consideration of options for dealing with East Timor's future security needs.

As so often in defence, discussion soon shifted from overarching rumination to issues of equipment. By December, the national security

committee was pondering whether to provide 300 M-16 rifles and ammunition to start the initial basic training of the East Timor Defence Force. Cabinet agreed to supply the 300 rifles and additional weapons in future if other donors couldn't or wouldn't.

The submission from Defence Minister John Moore said Australia supported the creation of an East Timor military which was 'modest and affordable; lightly armed; and capable of engaging constructively with both Indonesia and Australia'.

DFAT's comment on the submission said Canberra should keep the pressure on the UN to get the rifles from other nations. So much did the department want the UN to take responsibility it urged that Australia shouldn't indicate any willingness 'as this would diminish the incentive for the UN to seek weapons from elsewhere'.

In a comment hinting at the possibility of Timor engaging Indonesia in conflict rather than constructively, DFAT urged that Australia 'not provide weapons that exceed the capacity' of the Indonesian military.

And that's the thing about Australia's security guarantees to Timor-Leste and PNG: Indonesia is always there, on the other side of that land border. Both bilateral guarantees are balanced within triangular relationships.



1st Combat Signal Regiment during the Timor Leste Defence Cooperation Program visit to Robertson Barracks on the 3rd and 4th of May 2017. *Defence image.*

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Creating a future-ready ADF

As the role of robotic and autonomous systems becomes more important within the Australian Defence Force, building trust in autonomous systems is critical to the technology's uptake.

Autonomy gives a robot the ability to become a teammate and work with human operators and other robotic systems.

Achieving such a capability would be incredibly beneficial, but its realisation remains elusive.

Army released its Robotic and Autonomous systems strategy in 2018, RAAF has sought to accelerate the use of AI and autonomy through Plan Jericho and the Navy is pursuing multiple acquisition programs that rely on autonomy.

Defence scientist Robert Hunjet said the promise of autonomous systems has been discussed for decades.

"Teleoperation - the concept of a remote-controlled vehicle, drone or tank - is not representative of autonomy as the vehicle has no ability to make its own decisions or task itself," Dr Hunjet said.

In order to make these machines truly smart enough, Defence is undertaking research in areas including contextual awareness, active perception, path planning, multi-agent system control and swarming.

Improving a robot's ability to work intelligently requires more than investment in machine learning. It is also about enabling systems to work together.

"With recent advances in drone technology, the concept of swarming has attracted a lot of interest," Dr Hunjet said.

"We observe swarming in nature, for example in the way birds flock and fish school. The individuals interact only with others in close proximity and the cascading effect of these local interactions provides a global behaviour through the swarm as a whole.

"Within robotics, we can emulate the creation of global behaviours

in a similar fashion through local interactions with neighbouring systems, offering a potential scalable approach to generate mass with minimal computational complexity or communications overheads."

Interaction between entities no doubt plays a large part in human trust. As such, the interface between a human operator and a machine should be designed to assist the human and reduce cognitive load.

In order to be considered robust, autonomous systems must be able to operate in difficult or contested situations. Algorithms must be stable in the face of unexpected system inputs.

Defence is also investigating approaches that would allow robotic systems to share their position and orientation information with others that would then fuse these estimates with their own data, enabling enhanced positioning accuracy.

Dr Hunjet said building trust in autonomous systems was critical to the technology's uptake.

"Interaction between entities no doubt plays a large part in human trust. As such, the interface between a human operator and a machine should be designed to assist the human and reduce cognitive load," he said.

Research is aiming to address how AI might be able to explain its decisions to a human operator in a manner that takes into account the operator's state.

That is, the machine would seek to provide an appropriate level of detail based on its understanding of the operator's current cognitive load.

Trust is also gained through observation of repeated good performance. To ensure its technology works effectively and as expected, Defence is conducting research into verifiable autonomy.

The concept of verification from the perspective of test and evaluation is also something to consider. With many AI-based systems being specifically designed to learn and evolve, they do not necessarily behave in the same manner when presented with the identical inputs, such as sensor information. In such systems, traditional regression-based approaches to testing are not appropriate.

Future testing processes may need to be more akin to the issuance of a driver's licence, where a curriculum is designed and competency assessed, allowing for future improvement while performing a task. This concept is known as machine education.

Collaboration is at the heart of Defence's pursuit of autonomy for future robotic platforms. Defence funds collaboration with Australian academic institutions and international partner organisations through its trusted autonomous systems strategic research initiative.



Australian innovation central to Babcock Australasia's LAND125 bid

Australian Industry Capability (AIC) and innovation are at the forefront of Babcock Australasia's bid to equip Australian soldiers with next generation technology as part of LAND125 Phase 4.

The LAND125 Phase 4 project will provide Australian soldiers with 'best of breed' products, systems and emerging technology so they can defend the nation armed with the latest, disruptive advances in modern warfare.

The project will deliver an Integrated Soldier System (ISS) integrating all elements and subsystems that are used, worn or carried by soldiers in any operational context or environment for up to 72hrs without resupply.

Babcock Australasia's Executive Director – Strategy and Future Business, Graeme Nayler, said Babcock is grateful to all Australian industry partners who responded to its call to bring next generation technology to the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

"Australian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and training providers are integral to Babcock's proposed solution, with up to 42% of the project's requirements able to be either designed or manufactured in Australia," Mr Nayler said.

"Babcock has approached LAND125 Phase 4 in an innovative way that is beneficial for Defence, looking at 'best of breed' products and enabling Australian SMEs to integrate their world-leading product into the ISS for an optimal cost."

To enable the integration of specialist products by different providers, Babcock has introduced a digital development environment as part of its solution.

"A challenge for industry, in developing a solution for the ISS ready to respond to a Request for Tender (RFT), is obtaining access to a soldier

who is accurately configured and kitted out the way they are on operations," Mr Nayler said.

"By designing and configuring the solution in virtual reality, Babcock's approach will also ensure development cost savings across the complete ISS design and integration.

"This will enable us to 'mix and match' equipment from different suppliers, to visualise and explore the impacts on the overall integrated system.

"This technology creates a pathway for AIC to happen, allowing us to configure and integrate the soldiers' equipment, elements and subsystems in virtual reality.

"Our engineers are able to better understand the equipment interfaces and potential human factors issues before they arise."

Babcock Australasia's Head of Business Development, Mick Burgess, said Babcock continues to deliver on its commitment to AIC to generate sovereign industry capability for the ADF.

"In partnership with Defence, Babcock brings extensive, proven expertise in technology integration and asset management to the LAND125 Phase 4 project, delivering an ISS to equip Australian soldiers now and into the future," Mr Burgess said.

"AIC is embedded in the Babcock operating model. We are committed to building local capacity as well as capability in technology, engineering, design, sustainment, supply chain and training across Australia and New Zealand.

"Babcock has the supplier networks, the experience and the capacity to deliver this long-sought after capability which will maximise soldier performance both individually and in small teams."

The Warrior's Lament

I am the warrior you sent away
Forgotten but on ANZAC and
Remembrance Day
I have trodden battlefields across the
globe,
From Gallipoli to PNG, from Poziers to
Tarin Kowt

I have dodged bullets hot and sharp
Suffered rocket rain in the dark
I have seen the carnage of the war
Held broken bodies & more

I have endured these hardships carved
like stone
To ensure that sons & daughters safe
at home
Can in peace & comfort sleep
Frolicking in the sun long friendships
keep

Now I march with medals jangling on
the chest
Actions both heroic & compassionate
rising in my breast
Through the crowds which cheer but
once a year
As my mind recoils from memories of
horror and fear

But where are the helpers for the
broken body
The healers for the dented soul so
shamed and shoddy
With surfacing memories of pain & fear
Dreading the silence that brings the
terrors near

And now instead of a normal life
I seem to bring a sense of stress and
strife
To those I love & fought for so dear
And all I want is for them to hold me
near

I do not want to hear a medical
diagnosis
Or another flaming boffin's prognosis
But just for people to respect the
sacrifice
And not to create more discord & strife

So in the end I plead
Don't think less of those who fought for
peace
Instead rise to the challenge to maintain
Respect for Country, and faith in God
again

Rev S.P.G. Neuhaus RFD
25 April 2020

Multi-billion dollar infantry fighting vehicle program, LAND 400 Phase 3

The Morrison Government's multi-billion dollar investment in Army's close combat vehicles has reached a significant milestone with the delivery of six prototype test and evaluation vehicles from the project's two shortlisted tenderers.

The \$18.1 - 27.1 billion LAND 400 Phase 3 Program will provide the Army with an advanced, cutting edge Infantry Fighting Vehicle capability.

Hanwha Defense Australia and Rheinmetall Defence Australia have each delivered three prototype vehicles – two for test and evaluation activities and one for blast testing – as part of the two-year Risk Mitigation Activity.

Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC said the delivery of the prototype vehicles is a crucial step in the project, allowing

Defence to assess the shortlisted tenderers' performance claims focusing on the highest areas of technical risk.

"These significant activities include Australian soldiers participating in user evaluation and testing, with a particular focus on the armour, firepower and mobility of the platforms," Minister Reynolds said.

"The Risk Mitigation Activity will undertake important analysis on each vehicle's ability to integrate with other key ADF land, sea and air capabilities, including amphibious lift.

"The Infantry Fighting Vehicle will be a state-of-the-art tracked armoured vehicle, capable of carrying six soldiers in addition to a crew of three. These advanced vehicles will provide increased protection, mobility, and firepower for the ADF."

The project will acquire up to 450 Infantry Fighting Vehicles and a Manoeuvre Support Vehicle capability comprising up to 17 vehicles.

"When delivered, the Infantry Fighting Vehicle will allow Army to successfully sustain mounted close combat operations against emerging and future threats as part of the joint force," Minister Reynolds said.

"The delivery of these vehicles is part of the Morrison Government's unprecedented \$270 billion investment over the next decade to upgrade the capability and potency of the ADF."

The Risk Mitigation Activity will include detailed testing and evaluation of the tendered vehicles and provide Defence with the objective quality evidence to inform a Government decision in 2022.

Hanwha Redback Infantry Fighting Vehicle picture taken at the Australian Automotive Research Centre, Anglesea, Victoria, prior to delivery to Defence. *Defence image.*





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Invictus Games pushed back to 2022

Beginning of February Prince Harry paid tribute to 'key workers on the front line' in emotional video announcing that 2020 Invictus Games will be pushed back AGAIN until 2022 due to the coronavirus pandemic

The 2020 Invictus Games was pushed back in March last year due to pandemic.

The event was due to take place in the Hague, Netherlands, from May 9 to May 16, but organisers postponed the event until May 2021 following the Covid outbreak.

Now bosses behind the event have postponed again, this time until Spring 2022

The Duke of Sussex featured in the uplifting video, shared to announce the latest postponement of the games - in which wounded, injured or sick armed services personnel from around the world compete in a variety of sports.

The latest postponement announcement was posted alongside a video featuring Invictus competitors sharing their support for key workers and promising to be ready to compete once the pandemic is over.

In the video, Prince Harry, who created the games, said: 'To the key workers on the front lines in the battle against the pandemic, we are with you.'

Announcing the postponed of the 2020 Invictus Games on their website today, organisers said: 'The Organising Committee are conducting plans to reschedule the Invictus Games to Spring 2022, and a date will soon be confirmed.'

'Options to deliver a Games this year, including digitally or later in 2021, were not taken forward by the respective boards of the Organising Committee or the Invictus Games Foundation on the basis of identifying the best opportunity to deliver a physical Games in The Hague which would bring the Invictus community together.

'The competitor recovery journey and the wish to provide them with as much certainty as possible lay at the heart of the decision-making.'



His Royal Highness Prince Harry with Invictus Games training squad member Leading Aircraftman Wade Roberts at the Invictus Games 2018 Sydney. *Defence image.*

Wouter Bakker, Captain of the Dutch Invictus Games team said: 'Given the current Corona situation, the news comes as no surprise.

'A digital variant or organising the event without an audience would not feel like an Invictus Games to me and does not do justice to the spirit of the Games. I, as well as my teammates, think that moving the event to the Spring of 2022 is the best decision.

'This will end the uncertainty that all participants are in and we can properly prepare and focus on next year.'

Organisers say a series of activities to keep the Invictus Community together and demonstrate its continued resilience will be held between May 29 and June 5 this year. More details will be announced in due course, organisers say.

In a joint message, signed by Invictus organisers and its patron, Prince Harry, those behind the games have vowed that 'this does not mean support for the Invictus community will go dark in the meantime'.

In the statement, they added: 'We are Invictus: from the communities that host and cherish the Games, and the competitors who display unshakeable resilience and commitment as they prepare for and participate in the Games, to the families and network of supporters who support these men and women on their journey to competition.'

For so many around the world, the Invictus community included, COVID-19 has changed our expectations, hopes, and plans.

'But our unwavering mission is one bound by resilience and community—and that mission will continue to shine through between now and Spring 2022, when we hope to see everybody in person again in The Hague.

'For now, we are planning programming, opportunities to connect safely during the foreseeable future, and ways to infuse the spirit of Invictus in your own communities over the coming year. We're excited to share more soon.'

Prince Harry created the Invictus games in which wounded, injured or sick armed services personnel and their associated veterans take part in nine sports.

The name 'Invictus' comes from the late Roman sun god by the same name. He was also named the 'Unconquered Sun' - which is where the games takes its 'unconquered' message.

The first event was held in 2014 in London, before a follow-up event was held in the United States two years later.

The last games was held in 2018 in Sydney. Organisers had planned the 2020 event to take place in the Netherlands in May that year, but it was postponed in March following the outbreak of the Covid pandemic.

Alongside the postponed 2020 event, a 2023 event is scheduled to take place in Dusseldorf in Germany.



Invictus Games 2020 Team Australia competitors and support staff at the team announcement at Victoria Barracks, Sydney, NSW. *Defence image.*

Huge boost for missile program

With ranges hundreds of kilometres greater than the current inventory, new anti-ship and surface-to-air missiles are being considered as part of a \$1 billion investment into advanced guided weapons for Navy under Project SEA 1300 Phase 1.

The project includes long-range maritime strike missiles, extended-range surface-to-air missiles and advanced lightweight torpedoes.

Head Navy Capability Rear Admiral Peter Quinn said this investment would maintain Navy's capability edge into the future.

"Guided weapons are an integral part of the ADF's ability to ensure military advantage by holding adversary forces and infrastructure at risk at greater distances from Australia," he said.

The project combines multiple weapons development and acquisition activities and will be synchronised with naval shipbuilding and combat system development programs being delivered by Australia's skilled combat system enterprise workforce.

The Standard Missile family of

weapons integrates seamlessly into the Aegis combat system, the backbone of Navy's integrated air and missile defence capability.

Rear Admiral Quinn said compatibility of weapons and systems across the Joint Force and with Australia's allies was the key focus of the project.

"Coordinating these programs ensures our Navy will remain a lethal and highly responsive deterrent as we keep pace with changes to threats and technology," Rear Admiral Quinn said.

The commitment announced by Defence Minister Linda Reynolds on January 25 is part of a planned investment of up to \$24 billion over the decade.

"The planned acquisitions will build a lethal and highly responsive Navy for decades to come," Senator Reynolds said.

"These new capabilities will provide a strong, credible deterrent that will ensure stability and security in the region.

"The project also seeks opportunities to broaden Australia's weapons

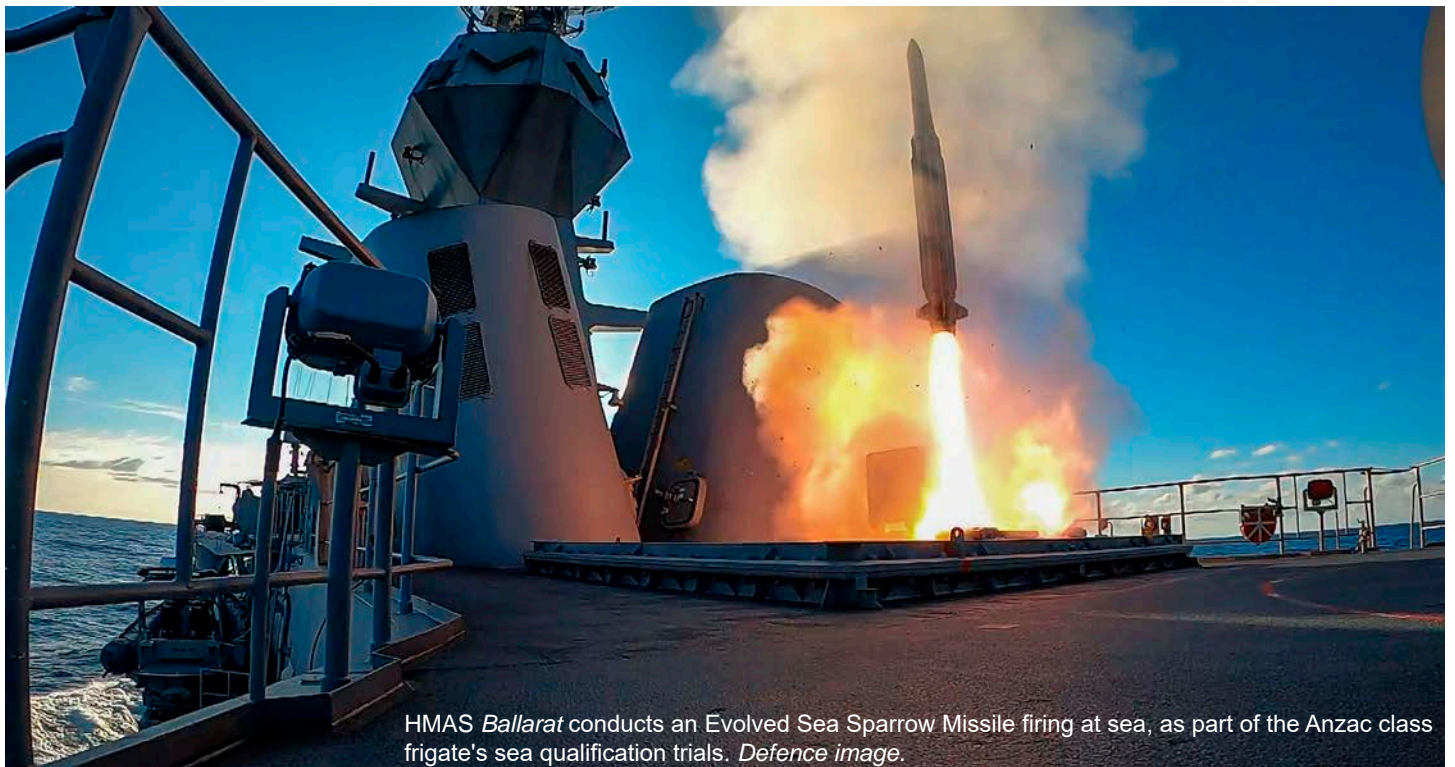
manufacturing base, reinforcing this government's long-term commitment to Australian industry and delivering sovereign capabilities."

Defence is planning for the introduction of new long-range air defence weapons, replacement of the current anti-ship missile with an advanced maritime and land strike capability and development of the next generation light weight torpedo through an armaments cooperation program with the United States Navy.

While no down selection of a long range anti-ship missile has yet been made, the first weapon to be introduced will be the Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile (ESSM) Block 2, which is being developed in conjunction with Australia's allies through the NATO Sea Sparrow Consortium.

The ESSM Block 2 fields an advanced dual-mode seeker to maintain Navy's short-range integrated air and missile defence capability edge.

With production having commenced in 2019, the ESSM Block 2 is expected to be initially employed in the Anzac-class frigate in the next few years.



HMAS *Ballarat* conducts an Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile firing at sea, as part of the Anzac class frigate's sea qualification trials. *Defence image.*

Sailors hear tale of gallantry at airport

When Leading Seamen Alisha Mosley and Alan Williams arrived at Brisbane Airport ready for duty on Operation COVID-19 ASSIST, they could not have imagined what they were about to experience.

They were checking passes of interstate arrivals on 29 November when a passenger called out to them.

“A man coming off a flight from Melbourne called out to Leading Seaman Williams and myself asking if we wouldn’t mind coming over,” Leading Seaman Mosley said.

“As soon as we saw the Victoria Cross as part of the mounted replica medals, we realised that whoever this guy was, he was fairly important.

“He introduced himself as Terrance Quinn, the great-nephew of Ordinary Seaman Teddy Sheean, VC.”

On 1 December, the family of Teddy Sheean was presented with the Victoria Cross of Australia, awarded posthumously to Ordinary Seaman Sheean for his actions aboard HMAS *Armidale* (I) during World War II.

The family agreed for the original medal to be displayed at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Mr Quinn shared the incredible story of his great-uncle, the only member of the Royal Australian Navy to receive the Victoria Cross.

Leading Seaman Alisha Mosley holding replica medals of Ordinary Seaman Edward ‘Teddy’ Sheean VC at Brisbane Airport.

Leading Seaman Alisha Mosley holding replica medals of Ordinary Seaman Edward ‘Teddy’ Sheean VC at Brisbane Airport.

Leading Seaman Mosley said she would never forget the experience.

“It was an incredible honour to meet Mr Quinn and hold Teddy’s replica medals. Unforgettable,” she said.

Earlier this year, after a long campaign, an expert panel recommended to the Australian Government that Ordinary Seaman Sheean be considered for the Victoria Cross.

On 12 August, Governor-General

General (Ret’d) David Hurley announced that Queen Elizabeth had approved the awarding of the medal to Ordinary Seaman Sheean for his actions during World War II.

Shortly before 2pm on 1 December 1942, HMAS *Armidale* was attacked by at least 13 Japanese aircraft, and a torpedo later struck the vessel’s port side.

As the vessel listed heavily to port, the order was given to abandon ship.

The survivors leapt into the sea and

were machine-gunned by Japanese aircraft.

Once he had helped free a life raft, Ordinary Seaman Sheean scrambled back to his gun on the sinking ship.

Although wounded in the chest and back, the 18-year-old sailor shot down one bomber and kept other aircraft away from his comrades in the water.

He was seen still firing the gun as *Armidale* slipped below the waves.

Only 49 of the 149 men who had been on board survived the sinking and the ensuing days in life rafts.



Leading Seaman Alisha Mosley and Leading Seaman Alan Williams with Terrance Quinn, Great Nephew of Ordinary Seaman Edward ‘Teddy’ Sheean VC at Brisbane Airport. *Defence image.*

Signal of achievement

Defence scientist Dr Sylvie Perreau was presented with the 2020 Minister's Award for Achievement in Defence Science on December 11 for her work in improving the security of wireless communications.

Dr Perreau has created algorithms and equipment that allow wireless signals to be successfully delivered and understood by their intended recipients, countering incidental interference from the physical environment, like signal reflections, refractions and echoes from buildings, vehicles or trees, as well as jamming technology used by hostile adversaries.

She initially developed signal-processing techniques to restore mobile phone signals distorted by the physical environment.

Since joining Defence Science and Technology Group (DSTG), she has expanded on that work.

"Joining DSTG definitely improved the outcomes of my research," she said.

"I was very keen to start talking to clients to understand what their problems were and then get a team together to work on these classified problems.

"The results are something I'm very pleased with."

Minister for Defence Senator Linda Reynolds said the award recognised outstanding contributions made by Australian Defence scientists to ADF capability.



Dr Sylvie Perreau, winner of the Defence Science and Technology Group 2020 Minister's Award, Edinburgh, South Australia. *Defence image.*

"Dr Perreau has made significant contributions to the protection of ADF personnel, contributing to Defence capability both technically and through liaison roles," Senator Reynolds said.

"As a member of the Science in Australia Gender Equity Self-Assessment Team and Defence Science and Technology Group's Disability Inclusion Group, Dr Perreau exemplifies Defence values and behaviours and is an all-encompassing member of the Defence workforce."

Minister for Defence Industry

Melissa Price, who presented the award, said Defence scientists had been integral in supporting Australia's capability edge for more than 100 years.

"The ability to devise innovative solutions to address complex Defence challenges is a rare talent, and the contribution that Defence scientists make is vital in safeguarding our nation," Ms Price said.

The Minister's Award for Achievement in Defence Science was established in 1988.

Project building community of AI experts

Australians with expertise in artificial intelligence have rallied to a call from Defence and the Office of National Intelligence (ONI) for solutions to key Defence and security challenges.

The call went out as part of the Artificial Intelligence for Decision Making (AIDM) initiative aimed at growing Australia's AI capability and fostering a national community focused on developing innovative AI solutions for Defence and national security.

More than 200 proposals were

received.

Tim McKay, of the Department of Defence, said the response was overwhelming and demonstrated the depth and breadth of AI expertise across Australia.

"The quality of the submissions was excellent – far above what we expected," Dr McKay said.

More than half the submissions were from universities, a quarter came from industry, and the remainder came mostly from individuals, with a small

number coming from publicly funded research organisations.

"Through this process, we've managed to uncover talent and expertise that we may otherwise never have discovered," Dr McKay said.

Associate Professor Peter Vamplew, from the School of Engineering at Federation University, which has a number of researchers involved in AIDM-funded projects, agreed.

"In my view, the AIDM initiative has achieved exactly what it was intended

to in that it has led to an expanded, cross-university project that involves staff who haven't had prior defence collaborations," he said.

For some, the opportunity to work on a Defence-related project may influence their career.

Scott Johnson, a student at Federation University, described the opportunity as "rewarding and quite possibly life-changing" as it exposed him to ideas and people who had ignited a revived interest in AI research.

"What was once something I'd only read about may become my future career," he said.

For the ONI, the initiative has provided an opportunity to engage with new, high quality partners on meaningful data challenges.

"Intelligence is a highly data-driven business," an ONI spokesperson said.

"Appropriately, harnessing artificial



intelligence and machine learning has great potential to support the important work of the national intelligence community's world-class analysts."

Defence and ONI hope to make an announcement about another AIDM opportunity before the end of the year.

Cyber teams put their skills to the test

A team from Australia's Joint Task Force 633 (JTF633) in the Middle East placed third in the region and sixth overall in this year's Cyber Warrior Challenge held from December 1-2.

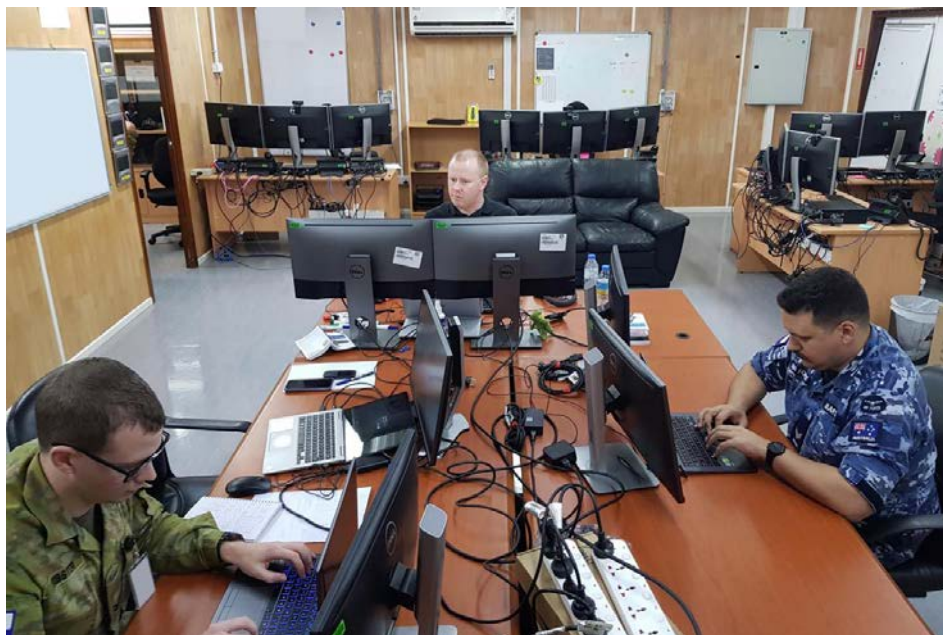
The team, made up of members of JTF633's Theatre Security Operations Centre and Theatre Communications Element, competed against more than 35 coalition and regional teams in the event, which included categories ranging from web and network security through to reverse engineering and digital forensics.

The teams completed challenges such as zip-file cracking, secret message discovery and effectively using Structured Query Language.

The JTF633 team was made up of Flight Lieutenant Kaitlyn Lyons, Joel Palmer, Corporals Aaron Bartlett and Mitchell Webster, and Leading Aircraftman Benjamin Lewis.

Flight Lieutenant Lyons said a benefit of the competition was the reinforcement of the relationships between United States Army Central, coalition and regional partner cybersecurity personnel.

"It is safe to say that the level of



Corporal Mitchell Webster, left, Joel Palmer and Corporal Aaron Bartlett competing in the 2020 Cyber Warrior Challenge. *Defence image.*

skill and threat awareness among some of the prime players here in the Middle East has been raised," Flight Lieutenant Lyons said. Corporal Bartlett said while the team's results in the competition were an achievement, linking with other specialists across the region was a highlight.

"Being able to come together with people I normally would not have had the opportunity to work with, while learning to apply a diverse range of skills and abilities to solve problems cooperatively, was a great experience," Corporal Bartlett said.

Fijian school support hits home for medic

HMAS *Adelaide* sailed into Sydney Harbour on February 2, marking the completion of a significant recovery operation in Fiji following the devastation caused by Cyclone Yasa on December 20.

On board was Penrith infantryman turned medic Corporal Ben Maddaford, of the 1st Close Health Battalion in Brisbane, who provided medical support to 6th Engineer Support Regiment personnel reconstructing the local primary school on Galoa Island in the north of Fiji.

"I conducted daily COVID-19 temperature checks, monitored the wet bulb temperature and provided advice to commanders in regards to work/rest regulations to limit the risk of an injury," he said.

"I was also there for any injuries or illnesses you'd normally see a doctor for."

Corporal Maddaford said his

medical support on Operation Fiji Assist was similar to what he did in Australia, but the island location provided new challenges.

"Instead of bringing all our equipment, we had to carefully plan what assets the soldiers on the ground might need," he said.

"Everything had to be brought to the island on boats and then walked ashore so we could only carry a limited amount of medical equipment and supplies."

He said it was a good feeling to be part of the team rebuilding the school, but there was also an unexpected connection to the place.

"Usually when you deploy it's easy to focus on the work because there aren't reminders of your family," he said.

"But when I walked into the kindergarten at Galoa and saw all the kids toys, it really hit home that I was



Corporal Ben Maddaford on Galoa Island during Operation Fiji Assist. *Defence image.*

missing Christmas with my wife and my three-year-old daughter."

Although it was difficult being away from his family, Corporal Maddaford said the hard work was worth it.

"Seeing the school finished and knowing we're leaving something behind for the locals is really special."

Peacekeeping an opportunity to serve with pride

A strong family connection to service was the driving factor for Corporal Vanessa Bunker's military career.

She is deployed as a peacekeeper with the Multinational Force Observers (MFO) in the Sinai under Operation Mazurka.

"I have a number of family members connected to Australia's military forces, with my grandfathers serving in the Army and Navy during World War II and an uncle who served as an officer in the Navy for 20 years," Corporal Bunker said.

"One of my cousins also serves in the Army, so it was an easy decision to choose a Defence career."

Originally from Tahmoor, NSW, Corporal Bunker works as a personnel clerk with four others.

"Among our responsibilities are personnel statistics for all deployed 1700 members in the MFO, through to Arab Republic of Egypt residential cards, base identity passes and medals and awards," she said.



Royal Australian Air Force Corporal Vanessa Bunker in Egypt.

"We also compile all reported incidents for the south & north camps."

Corporal Bunker said the familiarity of the role was an advantage.

"The job itself is very similar to what I do back home as it is an admin-based role with a few extra new things that I

have not done before," she said.

"The biggest difference is working with military and civilian members from so many different countries."

This is her second operational deployment overseas and Corporal Bunker said the experience with the MFO had been beyond her expectations.

"I really enjoyed my first deployment to the Middle East in 2015 as it was my first time travelling out of Australia," she said. "Serving with the MFO is an experience not many people get the chance to do, so to find myself here is amazing – even with the threat of COVID-19."

Posted to No. 17 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force base Tindal in the Northern Territory, Corporal Bunker said not being home with her partner John and her fur-kids was hard.

"I do miss them a lot, but considering the sacrifices made by my grandfathers and their own uncertainties about coming home, knowing I will be seeing them again gives me something to focus on," she said.

Memorial service honours Peacekeeper

A memorial service was held in Lebanon on January 18 to honour Australian Army Captain Peter McCarthy who was killed by a landmine 33 years ago while serving as a peacekeeper.

Captain McCarthy, a Royal Australian Corps of Transport officer, was aged just 31 when the Jeep he was travelling in hit an anti-tank landmine on January 12, 1988, during a routine peacekeeping patrol in southern Lebanon.

Personnel from the Observer Group Lebanon (OGL) and United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) gathered for the commemoration service at Captain McCarthy's memorial, located at the site of the incident on what is now called McCarthy Hill.

OGL Chief Operations Officer, Australian peacekeeper Squadron Leader Michael Fox, said the annual commemoration was a reminder of the dangers faced by all peacekeepers.

"Peter's passing marked the fifth death of an Australian Peacekeeper

while on duty," SQNLDR Fox said.

"He, and those who lost their lives before and since, are reminders of the dangers faced every day by Australian personnel maintaining the equilibrium in locations that are littered with the detritus of war, or are still simmering politically."

Captain McCarthy was on patrol with Canadian Major Gilbert Cote when he died. During the morning, the pair drove to a high-observation point on a hill near the village of Chamaa in southern Lebanon, several kilometres from the UN headquarters.

He, and those who lost their lives before and since, are reminders of the dangers faced every day by Australian personnel maintaining the equilibrium in locations that are littered with the detritus of war.

The frequently used point provided excellent views north to the city of Tyre, south to the Israeli border, and west over the waters of the Mediterranean.

On the way, their Jeep had been run off the road by an Armoured Personnel

Carrier (APC) while coming around a blind curve.

The men in the APC helped Captain McCarthy and Major Cote pull the vehicle upright and they continued to the observation point.

When they were returning down the hill, the Jeep struck the landmine, which was probably intended for Israeli or South Lebanese army vehicles that occasionally used the track.

Major Cote was thrown from the vehicle and seriously wounded.

Captain McCarthy, who grew up in the New South Wales town of Quirindi, was one of 13 Australians attached to the UNTSO mission at the time of his death.

He was posthumously awarded the RSL's ANZAC Peace Prize in 1988, sharing the honour with the Australian Defence Force.

Later that year, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the UN Peacekeeping Forces, honouring all those, like Captain McCarthy, who served the cause of peace.



Australian Defence Force personnel of the Observer Group Lebanon gathered at the McCarthy Hill memorial that commemorates Royal Australian Corps of Transport officer, Captain Peter James McCarthy. *Defence image.*

Welcome Back to Everyman's and to 2021

We enter a new year full of hope for a transition back to normality, and for us in Everyman's, and a return to being able to see our ADF members again as we used to pre COVID. Of course, this pandemic has affected the lives of Defence personnel as much as anyone, and to that end, Everyman's is here for every one of them. At the end of last year, I had the privilege of being able to read a publication called "*The Friend of the Soldier*," (of course the same goes for Sailors and Air Force men and women) by a former Chief Commissioner of Everyman's. It was at times, a funny story, at others, a testimony to pushing through in hardship with a Godly determination. The author of the book recounted the days he spent as an Everyman's REP in Vietnam among many other experiences he had over many years. On his 12 month rotation to Vietnam, he saw the very real hardships faced by

our serving members. He remembers the young lieutenant who he was only speaking to that morning, returning dead in the helicopter that afternoon. He remembers the good cheer that greeted him as he went out to the troops operating the big guns outside the main camp. He remembers the biggest and toughest of blokes descending into tears, as finally someone came along who they could off load to.

I can testify that many years later, very little if anything has changed when it comes to this side of the Everyman's work. Whilst the world around us changes, the basic human needs, fears, hopes and joys do not. We will not ever know the full impact COVID has had on Defence families, but in Everyman's we get a sense that we will soon know a fair bit of it. We will inevitably speak with and be alongside Airmen and Airwomen, Sailors and Soldiers. We want to be able to have

all the resources we can to get out so we can get out to them and help them. This year, 2021 is a year we call all strive to make a better one in the light of the year just gone. As you are giving this year, (some financially, some of their time and help) please again consider how you can help Everyman's continue with what they did in Vietnam, on the Malay Peninsula in 1942, and on up to this very day. Our need for good Brew Trucks, Brew Truck accessories, and even strong trailers for rugged training areas remains a challenge, particularly after the lean COVID year of 2020, which saw our donations drop significantly. We would love you to get back behind us again with giving for resources that will be a blessing to our ADF ultimately. Also for those whose hearts are for prayer, please remember us always for safety, empathy, and wisdom on all occasions.



Australian NGOs Stand with Local Partners in Wake of TC Yasa



Australian NGOs are preparing to support local people in response to Tropical Cyclone Yasa as assessments of damage and destruction take place across Fiji.

ACFID's NGO members are liaising with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on the extent and nature of the response, and determining how to best support local responders on the ground in Fiji.

A State of Natural Disaster has been declared in Fiji and the National Disaster Management Office has reported that over 23,000 people were evacuated and took shelter in 450 evacuation centres overnight.

Tragically, extensive damage and fatalities are now being reported by the National Disaster Management Office.

ACFID CEO, Marc Purcell, commented:

"Local NGOs are already delivering support to people affected by Yasa, and the role for Australian NGOs right now is to assist their partners and local people in the most effective way possible.

"Local people are best placed to know what's need and where, so we need to shape support on reports coming back in.

"The multiplying effects of

COVID-19, and Tropical Cyclone Harold in April, have depleted supplies in many Pacific countries and created further restocking challenges. The immediate priority is getting the required supplies to the right place."

Australian NGOs have been working closely with their partners, local governments and communities in Fiji on long-term disaster preparedness and resilience. The Australian Humanitarian Partnership – a partnership between the Australian Government and Australian NGOs – has been a critical part of those efforts.

Purcell described how the Australian public can support the relief effort: "We are asking the public to show their generosity with cash donations to approved appeals. Cash is fast, flexible, and is used to meet the immediate and changing needs of those affected.

"Unsolicited goods sent to disaster zones consistently end up in landfill and hinder response efforts. We cannot afford for supply chains to be congested when COVID-19 has forced tight restrictions."

ACFID's thoughts are with its sister peak-body, the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (PIANGO), based in Suva.

Purcell added: "The thoughts of ACFID and its members are with our dedicated friends at PIANGO as they respond to TC Yasa at the end of a difficult year."

Members of the public can view a list of consolidated ACFID-member appeals at: <https://acfid.asn.au/content/tropical-cyclone-yasa-fiji-emergency-appeal>. All ACFID member appeals listed have been checked and meet ACFID Code of Conduct requirements.

acfid.asn.au



Soldiers help protect homes from fire

The efforts of soldiers in battling a blaze that razed the 134-year-old Puckapunyal Military Area (PMA) primary school late last year were not in vain, as the outcome could have been much worse.

The children will start the new school year in temporary facilities, but the actions of local residents, including staff from the Combined Arms Training Centre (CATC), and 16 fire crews prevented the fast-moving December 6 fire from spreading to married quarters and surrounding bushland.

CATC operations officer Major Matt Whitwell was about to take his children on a bike ride on the day of the fire when he noticed a cloud of smoke coming from the direction of the school.

“Not having heard any sirens or

activity around the married quarter area, I decided to go up to the school and see if it was a controlled burn or not,” he said.

A single Ventia (Defence-contracted fire and rescue) fire truck was on the scene with firefighters preparing hoses and equipment.

“I asked if they needed any assistance, and was told that other crews en route would need an escort,” Major Whitwell said.

“I saw one firefighter was flat out on his radio as well as helping another firefighter remove his oxygen cylinder from the breathing apparatus.

“I asked one of Wilson Security guards to head to the front gate, and started helping them with the cylinder.

“As I was doing so, I heard a shout

from behind me.”

Running towards Major Whitwell were Warrant Officer Class 2 Bernie Maus, from the School of Armour (SoARMD), and United States Marine Corps (USMC) personnel on exchange, Master Sergeant Ricky Farrell and Gunnery Sergeant Ryan Accornero.

They helped roll out fire hoses to near the school’s main buildings, connect them to the fire trucks, and continue changing oxygen cylinders as required by the fire crews who were working to contain the blaze.

“By the time it had taken us to do this, the fire had become a furnace, spreading very quickly along the length of the school buildings, and was getting incredibly hot,” Major Whitwell



Combined Arms Training Centre soldiers Major John Ozols, left, Major Matt Whitwell and United States Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant Ryan Accornero help firefighters battle a blaze at Puckapunyal Primary School on December 6 last year. *Defence image.*

said.

“Thick smoke was everywhere and making it hard to breathe in some areas and embers were landing on us and burning our clothes.”

The fire had become a furnace, spreading very quickly along the length of the school buildings.

School of Artillery Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Benny Gray and Major John Ozols from the School of Armour arrived and cleared the netball and volleyball courts to give the trucks better access to the fire.

Major Whitwell said Master Sergeant Farrell and Major Ozols located a fire hydrant on the edge of the netball courts and began running out lengths of hose to the yet-unburnt end of the main building.

“Our job then was to help the fire crews attacking the fire from the front by replacing damaged or burnt hoses with new sections of hose to give them as much reach as possible,” Major Whitwell said.

While doing so, Major Ozols identified a hose that was laid out and not in use, which he turned on and directed towards the fire, soon backed up by Major Whitwell and Gunnery Sergeant Accornero.

“We were soon replaced by

three to four firefighters who took the hose from us, but we kept busy replacing burnt hoses, extending and reconnecting new hoses and assisting the firefighters wherever we could,” Major Whitwell said.

An electrical fault was later identified as the cause of the fire.

The outcome could have been much worse.

“Because of to the strength and direction of the winds at the time, there was a genuine concern from us and the firefighters that the fire would jump from the school,” Major Whitwell said.

“But because of the exceptional efforts of the Ventia team and Country Fire Authority volunteers, this potentially catastrophic situation was averted,” Maj Whitwell said.

Major Whitwell said there were plenty of positives to come from the experience, including working alongside the firefighters.

He said witnessing their courage, professionalism and determination was very rewarding.

“I also have a distinct memory while fighting the fire: looking to my half-right into the building and seeing a firefighter inside the building, only about one or two rooms along from where the firefront had reached,” he said.

“I was later told they were trying to clear the remaining offices to ensure no-one was trapped inside, and to recover anything of value along the way.

“I believe they were able to save the Grade 6 students’ graduation trophies and certificates.”

PMA station officer Michael Simpson was thankful for the efforts of the soldiers who alleviated the strain on the firefighters.

“Your actions, and those of your colleagues on the day are a true reflection of the values that exist within the Puckapunyal community, and all military personnel who without question, were prepared to help others,” Mr Simpson told the soldiers.

Senior ADF Officer Puckapunyal and CATC Commandant Colonel David McCammon said he was proud of the effort of the Australian and US exchange soldiers who pitched in, and for the community support received from local towns and Victoria Police, State Emergency Service, Ambulance Victoria and Rescue Victoria.

“We’ve made arrangements to keep the children at school together onsite at the PMA until the school rebuilds – the bonds in this community will remain strong,” he said.

Padre’s Ponderings - Soaring

They that wait .. on the wall in the entrance way of my house hangs an original oil painting of an eagle. This is an amazing painting in that the focus is on the head of the eagle, you are drawn to its eye however the background has a golden hue which frames it like sun striking the hills behind. The eagle is holding its wing like a shield and appears to be looking into the distance. The eagle is looking and waiting, alert to danger, with cloaked power and strength emanating from it, – much like peacekeepers.

Upon the Lord ... one of the things that I have found in life that despite where I am the Lord is there looking over me and protecting me. When I get weary of doing the right thing, He renews my strength enabling me to get up and not only start to walk again but

to rise up as if on wings like an eagle. He allows me to tap into His strength.

One of the amazing things about eagles, they soar, they do not flap and as such they do not waste energy on anything but what is necessary. When storms approach they see this as an opportunity to soar even higher, see further and achieve more. This ability to see further is something that we all wish we could achieve.

Recently my wife, Cath, gave me a small drone and through it I am now able to experience some of the amazing sense of freedom and clarity of vision that an eagle has, to see things in a perspective that previously I did not have. The other amazing thing I have discovered in life is the higher you are the smaller your problems appear – they get put into perspective.



It reminds me that God is bigger and mightier than my problems – I just have to trust Him and if I am flapping around, to pause, look to Him and climb onto His back and let Him carry me high above the issues of life.

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:31

Royal Australian Mint unveils RAAF theme for the 2021 Gallery Press and Mintmark Suite coins

To welcome in the New Year, the Royal Australian Mint has unveiled the new theme for the 2021 Gallery Press and Mintmark Suite coins.

The highly anticipated theme – Centenary of the Royal Australian Air Force – will be featured on the coins pressed on the Mint’s public gallery press throughout the year.

Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld AO DSC, the Chief of Air Force, joined Royal Australian Mint staff onsite in Canberra to unveil the theme and press the first coin of 2021.

“The opportunity to have Air Force members and aircraft featured on the 2021 Royal Australian Mint coin sets, is a superb way to honour the sacrifice and service of our people over the past 100 years.

“Air Force’s contribution to the Australian Defence Force is one to be commemorated, particularly for our people serving today and as we look forward to continuing to evolve into the future.”

Air Marshal Hupfeld also announced Lorraine Edgar from Charleville, Queensland as the lucky winner of the Mint’s nationwide First Coin of the Year

online ballot.

As the winner of the First Coin of the Year, Ms Edgar will receive a unique, one-of-a-kind coin set that includes the coin pressed by Air Marshal Hupfeld, along with the ‘C’ Mintmark and Privy coins, a Silver Proof coin and a certificate authenticating the coin.

The First Coin of the Year event is an annual tradition that sees keen coin collectors line up outside the Royal Australian Mint in Canberra on New Year’s Day in the hope that will get to press the first coin of the year.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, and to ensure the health and safety of staff and visitors, the Mint moved the event to an online ballot this year.

Cristy England, Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Royal Australian Mint remarked on the importance of ensuring this much loved event went ahead despite the unprecedented circumstances presented in 2020.

“This is such an important event for the coin collector community, and after an unparalleled year, we wanted to be able to keep the First Coin of the Year tradition alive, in whatever way possible.



“We are excited that so many people from across Australia embraced the new format of the First Coin of the Year event” said Ms England.

The newly released 2021 Gallery Press and Mintmark Suite coins are legal tender and celebrate the Centenary of the Royal Australian Air Force.

Three iconic Royal Australian Air Force planes are depicted on the reverse of the coin, alongside a wedge tail eagle which is also featured on the Air Force badge. The packaging of the 2021 Gallery Press coins includes the inspirational stories of some of the Air Force personnel from the last 100 years.

Queen’s Colour Presentation Parade

The different ceremonial flags or ‘Colours’ of the Australian Defence Force hold a revered position of honour. They are the embodiment of Service traditions, achievements and history. Each military unit has its own distinctive Colours, or flags, which were historically used in battle to signify the location of each unit. Although they are no longer carried into battle, Colours are still very symbolic, constituting a unit or Service’s honour and representing its devotion to duty.

To mark a special anniversary or event in a military force’s history, the Queen will occasionally present the unit or in this case Service with a new regimental flag, or ‘Colour’, as part of a formal ceremony. The Presentation

involves a parade and an inspection by the Queen, a Member of the Royal Family, or the Governor General.

The Royal Australian Air Force will receive a new Queen’s Colour on the occasion of its Centenary on 31 March 2021. Also on parade will be all of the colours, standards and banners of the Royal Australian Air Force and a flypast will take place. The event will take place in Canberra and will broadcast live on national television and online.

All Air Force 2021 events will be COVID-compliant and in line with state and territory requirements. Please



refer to this event page for updates.

This is a ticketed event. Due to COVID restrictions, the number of tickets available has not been finalised at this time.

Next Milestones in Australia's F-35 Program

The first F-35A aircraft has been inducted into BAE Systems Australia's (BAESA) maintenance depot as part of the next major milestone in the Joint Strike Fighter Program.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the F-35A fleet was now 33 strong and ready to deploy on operations.

"This is about protecting and securing Australia's interests but it's also creating jobs and driving investment right here in the Hunter and across the country too," the Prime Minister said.

"This induction demonstrates the world leading capability of our local defence industry here in Australia.

"We want to give as many opportunities to Australian companies as possible which is why there's already more than 50 local companies sharing in \$2.7 billion worth of contracts as part of the F-35 Program.

"As we recover from the COVID recession a key plank of our Economic Recovery Plan is our \$270 billion investment in Defence capability over the next decade and our \$65 billion commitment in air capabilities which includes the Joint Strike Fighter Program. This investment is keeping Australians safe and secure while creating more jobs and more opportunities for businesses."

After being selected as the maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade depot for the Southeast Asia region, the BAESA facility will host Australian F-35A aircraft and in future other nations' F-35 aircraft.

The Program is progressing on budget and on schedule and the aircraft is undergoing routine structural modifications to improve the airframe, ensuring it reaches full life, and align it with newer aircraft.

Minister for Defence Linda Reynolds CSC said up to four Australian F-35A aircraft were expected to undergo routine maintenance at BAESA's



RAAF F-35A Lightning II aircraft A35-003 from No 3 Squadron takes off for a sortie at RAAF Base Williamtown. *Defence image.*

facility this year, demonstrating the significant boost the

Program was having on the local Hunter economy.

"The Morrison Government is unashamedly committed to building a robust sovereign defence industry," Minister Reynolds said.

"We are building our sovereign defence capabilities. We now have 41 fully trained RAAF pilots, nine of whom trained on home soil at RAAF Base Williamtown. We also have more than 225 trained technicians as the RAAF's F-35A maintenance capability continues to develop."

This progress is being supported through the sovereign Training Support Services contract awarded to Lockheed Martin Australia, worth approximately \$70 million. It will see more than 70 personnel

employed at RAAF Base Williamtown and RAAF Base Tindal.

"This demonstrates the

extraordinary opportunities this program is providing for Australians and the economy, especially as it continues to bounce back from COVID-19," Minister Reynolds said.

Minister for Defence Industry Melissa Price said the program had helped the people of the Hunter region weather the impact of the economic impact of the pandemic.

"In 2020, job losses in the aeronautics industry due to COVID-19 resulted in the closure of Jetstar's aircraft maintenance facility here in Newcastle, and many other regional facilities," Minister Price said.

"BAESA recently hired 25 former Jetstar employees who had been made redundant as a result of the pandemic.

"Not only have these technical workers been retained in the local Hunter aviation industry, but they will also help Defence build its sovereign sustainment capability as the fleet continues to grow."

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Kudos for diver's brave efforts

In August 2017, Australian Clearance Diving Team-1 was called on to recover three missing marines from the wreck of a United States Marine Corps MV-22 Osprey, which was ditched in 60 metres of water near Rockhampton.

Over multiple days, Leading Seaman Clearance Diver Steven Palu worked to recover the remains from the wreckage, his efforts being recognised with a Conspicuous Service Medal in this year's Australia Day honours list.

The citation of his award tells of how Leading Seaman Palu, "suffering from the debilitating effects of the challenging environment", demonstrated courage, determination and dedication to duty.

Upon locating the wreckage, his "refusal to release the body of the marine" in the arduous conditions ensured the successful recovery

of one of the marines for return to a grieving family.

"We faced and overcame all the challenges presented during that deep dive. We had a job – we got it done," he said.

"I didn't do it alone. At that depth with periods of no visibility, my dive partner was tremendous.

In recent history, no Australian clearance diver had recovered human remains from a ditched aircraft at that depth.

"The ultimate truth here is that three marines were lost," Leading Seaman Palu said.

"Their loss will never be forgotten by me or the members of the clearance diving branch.

"To be a firsthand witness just shows how easily life can perish and how precious it really is."



Leading Seaman Clearance Diver Steven Palu was awarded the Conspicuous Service Medal in the 2021 Australian Day Honours and Awards list. *Defence image.*

Leading Seaman Palu dedicated the award to his wife and children.

"Without their support I could not even get out and do the job to the best of my abilities," he said.

"It's as much for me and my peers as for my family."

Clearance divers remove ordnance from reef



Leading Seaman Daniel Atkins looks out over Elizabeth Reef in search of unexploded ordnance on a MRH-90 helicopter from HMAS Adelaide. *Defence image.*

Navy clearance divers have helped reopen access to Elizabeth Reef, one of the world's most significant and biologically diverse coral reefs.

The reef is situated within the Lord Howe Marine Park 550km from the New South Wales coastline.

A team from Australian Clearance Diving Team One supported by the ship's company of HMAS Adelaide

and air support from an embarked MRH-90 helicopter, worked to locate and remove an unexploded ordnance from the reef at the request of Parks Australia.

Commanding Officer Adelaide Captain Jonathan Ley said the team had been tasked with investigating the unexploded ordnance after Elizabeth Reef was closed to recreational users and fishing vessels because of safety concerns.

"I was pleased that, in conjunction with our supporting assets, we were able to safely clear this unexploded ordnance," Captain Ley said.

"Clearance divers used landing craft and the MRH-90 to move the device and dispose of it, in deep water, while preserving the natural environment."

Captain Ley said the protection of the reef was paramount.

"In Navy we respect the oceans at all times and take great care in protecting our environment, in terms of sea life and reefs," he said.

Australian Clearance Diving Team One Officer in Charge of maritime explosive ordnance disposal Chief

Petty Officer Chad Buhlman said it was important to use a disposal method that would protect the environment and ensure the safety of the team.

The clearance divers used a standard maritime "raise and tow technique" to safely relocate the ordnance.

"Working in such a remote area we were fortunate to have Adelaide available as a platform to work from with access to air support, landing craft and satellite communications," Chief Petty Officer Buhlman said.

Clearance diver and second in charge of the operation Petty Officer Kaine Duncan was first to locate the unexploded ordnance on the reef.

He said its location could have posed a danger to visitors.

"The biggest challenge was always going to be locating the unexploded ordnance as it was blended into the reef, but once we had the location we knew it was going to be a successful operation," Petty Officer Duncan said.

With the unexploded ordnance safely removed, Elizabeth Reef can once again open to visitors.



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Image of UAV ship © Australian Department of Defence.

APPVA Life Memberships presented to Liz Hill and Paula Richards

Liz Hill and Paula Richards both recently received APPVA Life Memberships for extraordinary support to the APPVA and the veteran community. Both Liz and Paula work at the Veterans' Advocacy Centre (VAC) Alstonville and together with Allan Thomas, OAM founded the VAC over five years ago.

Liz Hill is a Wellbeing Advocate Level 2 and says "I am honoured to receive a Life Membership, and I'd also like to say that I am just one person in the organisation. It's our combined work across the APPVA that supports our members and anyone else seeking assistance.

The granddaughter of a Boer War veteran, daughter of a WW2 Navy veteran, and widow of 20yr RAN veteran, Liz's involvement with the veteran community has been lifelong initially supporting her father and then husband. Liz has been a Wellbeing Advocate for 25 years, and in 2005 was awarded the RSL Gold Badge of Merit for 15 years voluntary work prior to joining the APPVA. On Australia Day 2018 Liz was awarded the International Soldiers of Peace Medallion for service to veterans.

Paula Richards served in the WRAAC from 1983 and both of Paula's parents served in WW2. Paula approached APPVA to be a volunteer and has worked as a volunteer



Left: Paula Richards and right Liz Hill

Compensation Advocate Level 2 since 2009.

Paula's work has seen her travelling long distances to meet with clients to complete their claims, and she has also assisted the RSL at Lismore. Paula is a recipient of the International Soldiers of Peace Medallion for service to the veterans, also the APPVA National President award. Paula says, "I have always found my work as a level 2 Compensation Advocate interesting and rewarding. The part of my role which I have found most

enjoyable has been mentoring three new compensation advocates, with the aim of passing advocacy skills to the younger generation."

A volunteer with Overwatch, Paula also does a considerable amount of public speaking to raise awareness of Veteran issues and is a regular guest speaker at the Lismore Pain and Multidisciplinary Clinic.

We congratulate both Liz and Paula for their consistent and exceptional work supporting the APPVA and the veteran community.



AAFCONS (Army & Air Force Canteen Service) as a Commonwealth Entity and a member of the Defence family continues to invest in facilities and technologies to improve our products and services on base and on exercise.

Our organisation exists solely to provide Defence members with access to quality food and beverages and retail items and to support base welfare. AAFCONS gives back to Defence through welfare disbursements, price cuts and facility improvements. Last financial year AAFCONS disbursed \$534,985 to Defence welfare.

If you would like more information about our organisation please visit our website www.AAFCANS.gov.au and make contact- we'd love to hear from you!



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FUNDS FOR PARTNER EDUCATION

Posting soon or posted to a new location and looking for work? The Partner Employment Assistance Program (PEAP) can help.

PEAP aims to help eligible Australian Defence Force (ADF) partners with the immediate difficulties of finding employment when they are relocated with their partner as a result of their partner's service.

What the program covers

If you are an eligible ADF partner, you can apply for funding assistance of up to \$1,500 to access professional employment services and re-registration costs.

Professional employment services can include:

- development of a personalised resume and/or resume coaching
- identification of transferrable skills employment options and job placement advice
- job search techniques and strategies

- development of an online employment profile
- application and selection criteria coaching
- preparation & presentation coaching for interview.

Professional re-registration costs include:

- mandatory fees for professional reregistration when moving interstate under state or territory legislation.

Eligibility

The program's key eligibility requirements are that you are a recognised ADF partner and are accompanying your partner on posting to a new location.

ADF members must have received their first posting notification following completion of their initial training. Applications can be made following the receipt of a posting order and should be lodged within 12 months of the effective posting date.

How to apply

After the ADF member has received their posting notification, interested partners should read the PEAP guidelines and eligibility criteria available at www.defence.gov.au/DCO/Family/Partners/PEAP.asp.

Partners of ADF members wishing to undertake higher education courses can apply for funding support through various Government loan programs.

More information can be found at the Department of Education and Training page: www.education.gov.au/government-loans-students.

For more information about PEAP, go to the Defence Community Organisation website at

www.defence.gov.au/dco.

If you have any questions after reading the PEAP guidelines, contact the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608 or email defencefamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au.

(Source: DCO website)

WHAT IS THE DEFENCE TRANSITION MENTOR PROGRAM

The Defence Transition Mentor Program provides support to primary and secondary students of Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families, particularly during their transition into and out of a school on posting or during parental absences due to deployment, exercises or courses.

Defence families can change location sometimes up to every 2-3 years and due to differences in curriculum, subject selections and intake age requirements there can be considerable differences in their educational program from one school to the next and particularly from one state to another.

Additional to these pressures, the Defence family is also required to re-establish community connections and create new friendships and support networks every time they are relocated. The move can also impact the spouse as they may have to change jobs/careers each time they relocate, with possible financial pressures adding to the stresses already placed on the family.

This program was implemented by the Department of Defence, through the Defence Community Organisation, as a commitment to support its members and their families. They recognise that the education of Defence dependants may be negatively impacted by their mobile lifestyle and so have sought to provide this innovative resource to facilitate a more supportive educational environment for mobile ADF families.

What does a Defence Transition Mentor do?

A Defence Transition Mentor provides assistance to students and their families. This may include:

- Co-ordinating appropriate welcoming and fare welling strategies for young people of Australian Defence Force families.
- Supporting students to develop



Clancy, Ethan and Conner check out some of the crocodile information during the DCO Welcome to Katherine Expo. *Defence images.*

their self-confidence and resilience.

- Encouraging young people to explore options and make the most of opportunities.
- Assisting young people manage the challenges of transitions.
- Referring students where necessary to appropriate student support services.
- Identifying the issues and needs of individual students.
- Developing and implementing programs and resources that address issues and needs.
- Monitoring students' day to day social and emotional well-being.
- Supporting young people at school during times of parental absence from home for service requirements.
- Facilitating student participation in cultural, sporting, academic and personal development programs.

What is the Defence Community Organisation?

The Defence Community Organisation (DCO) offers a broad range of targeted programs and services to support ADF personnel and their families to balance the demands of military service with personal and family commitments.

Your local DCO is staffed by a Education Liaison Officer, Social Workers, Military Support Officers, Family Liaison Officers and administrative staff who are available to assist the members and family through the provision of:

- Support in the time of crisis
- Information on Defence matters in general
- Advice on community, recreational and interest groups
- Deployment support



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MacKillop has all the advantages a large school can provide: lots of different people to be friendly with, a wide range of curriculum options, extensive facilities, great teachers, and a huge range of sport and co-curricular choices.

From day to day, however, the two-campus structure means students enjoy a learning environment where they are known, understood, and can navigate their way through the adolescent years with encouragement and support.

MacKillop's Principal, Mr Michael Lee, said his school seeks to welcome

all different kinds of students and their families into its community.

"The gifted and the challenged are well represented in our classrooms, and all different faith, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds find success here," Mr Lee said.

"MacKillop students are able to succeed because the school is highly strategic in its staff recruitment. Our teachers are passionate about the school's vision, well-qualified, come from a range of backgrounds, and firmly believe that each student has a right to learn, to be challenged intellectually, and to be given opportunities that broaden their experiences and perspectives. The best thing about MacKillop is its teaching staff."

As a co-educational school, MacKillop can truly be a school for all. Boys and girls learn together, promoting collaboration, a mutual



respect for gender difference, and a learning community that best reflects the society its students belong to and are being prepared to lead.

St Mary MacKillop College is based in Canberra's Tuggeranong Valley and welcomes students from Canberra's south and the surrounding regions of New South Wales.

If you are interested in enrolling a student at MacKillop, please visit www.mackillop.act.edu.au for more information.



Greg Grace a Defence School Transition Aid, works with 6 year old Sydney Fry in the library of Leanyer Primary School, Darwin.

- Mobility support
- Professional counselling for personal, relationship & family problems
- Various courses, information sessions and support groups
- Specialist education advice and assistance
- Special needs recognition and review
- Employment assistance
- Childcare assistance

What is a Regional Education District Liaison Officer (RED-LO)?

Regional Education Liaison Officers (REDLOs) are professionally trained teachers who understand both the different State and Territory education systems and the Defence lifestyle. They can advise Defence families and children on education issues, particularly related to relocating. REDLOs can assist with changing schools between the various State and Territory primary, secondary and tertiary education systems.

REDLOs provide the key link for families to access the type of support that meets the needs of their particular child. REDLOs are also linked to schools and education systems, working to raise

the issues that affect Defence families and ensure that equity of educational opportunity is available to all mobile Defence children.

Our recent relocation has impacted on our child's learning. Can I get education assistance?

If an ADF member moves to a new location and has school aged children, they may be entitled to 14 weeks of tutoring in any subject that has been identified by the school as representing a gap in the child's learning.

Please remember that this, as a rule, is only available within 18 months of your relocation date, so if you think your child could use some extra support please contact the school as soon as possible. Alternatively, you can contact your Regional Education District Liaison Officer. Paperwork will need to be completed and authenticated by the school prior to submission.

We will be relocating to another location. When should I notify the school?

It is advisable to check with the school and the conditions of acceptance that

would have been signed at the time of your enrolment of your child/children. However, most schools will require one terms notice.

Parent Meetings

A lot of schools will welcome parent involvement and are happy to arrange a meeting to discuss any aspect of the student's wellbeing and educational journey.



FLTLT Brendon Knopke of Defence Recruiting Darwin with family at the DCO Welcome to the Top End Expo.

Research helps Veterans reintegrate into civilian life

Veterans have a greater chance of successfully transitioning thanks to world-first research funded by RSL Queensland.

The six-year Service to Civilian Life study – conducted by the Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation (GMRF) – has produced a groundbreaking new tool to measure adjustment after military service: the Military to Civilian Adjustment and Reintegration Measure (M-CARM).

GMRF Associate Director of Mental Health Research and Principal Researcher Dr Madeline Romaniuk said the study aimed to understand why some veterans transition to civilian life easily while others struggle, and to use this knowledge to develop methods to support veterans more effectively.

The M-CARM measures a variety of factors that are associated with successful adjustment from Defence service back to civilian life.

“For some, the journey from military service to civilian life can be a daunting prospect. ‘Civvy Street’ may seem at odds with the culture and familiar structure of Defence and can leave some veterans feeling a very real sense of loss; more than just a job, they lose their tribe, their purpose and their identity all at once,” Dr Romaniuk said.

“The psychological toll this takes can be devastating. Previously published research from the Departments of Defence and Veterans’ Affairs found that almost half of those transitioning will have a diagnosable mental health condition within the first five years following discharge.”

The Service to Civilian Life study is one of the world’s largest qualitative research projects into the transition process and was funded by RSL Queensland as part of a \$14 million commitment to veterans’ mental health research.

The study identified the key protective factors for successfully

reintegrating to civilian life and methods to target these factors.

This led to the development of the M-CARM, a scientifically robust method of measuring an individual’s psychological adjustment post service.

“This means we can use evidence-based yet personalised assessment and training methods to support former Defence members – facilitating the best chance of success after service,” Dr Romaniuk said.

RSL Queensland General Manager of Veteran Services Robert Skoda said the GMRF partnership delivered valuable insights for shaping the organisation’s service delivery.

“Understanding the underlying challenges of transition and reintegration, and the effect these have on Defence families, is critical if RSL Queensland is to provide appropriate and effective services,” Mr Skoda said.

“Our partnership with GMRF is a key pillar in our ongoing strategy to ensure a bright future and enduring legacy for all Australian veterans and their families.

“Over the past eight years, we have partnered with them to deliver world-first studies under two key research initiatives, helping us refine the services we deliver and how we deliver them.”

He said earlier this year, RSL Queensland had confirmed a new five-year partnership with GMRF to conduct comprehensive research into the impact of service on Defence families and expand existing studies into veteran health, transition and reintegration.

“There is limited Australian research into the impact of service on families and how they can successfully address the challenges they face.

“This new initiative aims to build upon our previous research and gain a better understanding of the challenges facing veterans and their families.”

GMRF CEO Miriam Dwyer said she was extremely proud of the enduring and ongoing partnership with RSL Queensland.

“Seeing the positive impact of applying research findings to enhance frontline services is a source of great pride for the entire GMRF team. It is a clear demonstration of ‘research in action’.”

Tim Thomas served in Afghanistan and East Timor as an Australian Special Forces Commando. Returning to civilian life in 2010 was a struggle for the 47 year old, after the high pressure and adrenalin charged tours on the front lines.

“I had it in my head that I would die over there, so when I didn’t and I came home I thought ‘What am I going to do now? I had no formal qualifications, and I was used to high stimuli. I wasn’t coping well, I kept having problems with workmates and had a lot of family drama. There was a lot of pain, a lot of loneliness and I thought about suicide,” said Thomas.

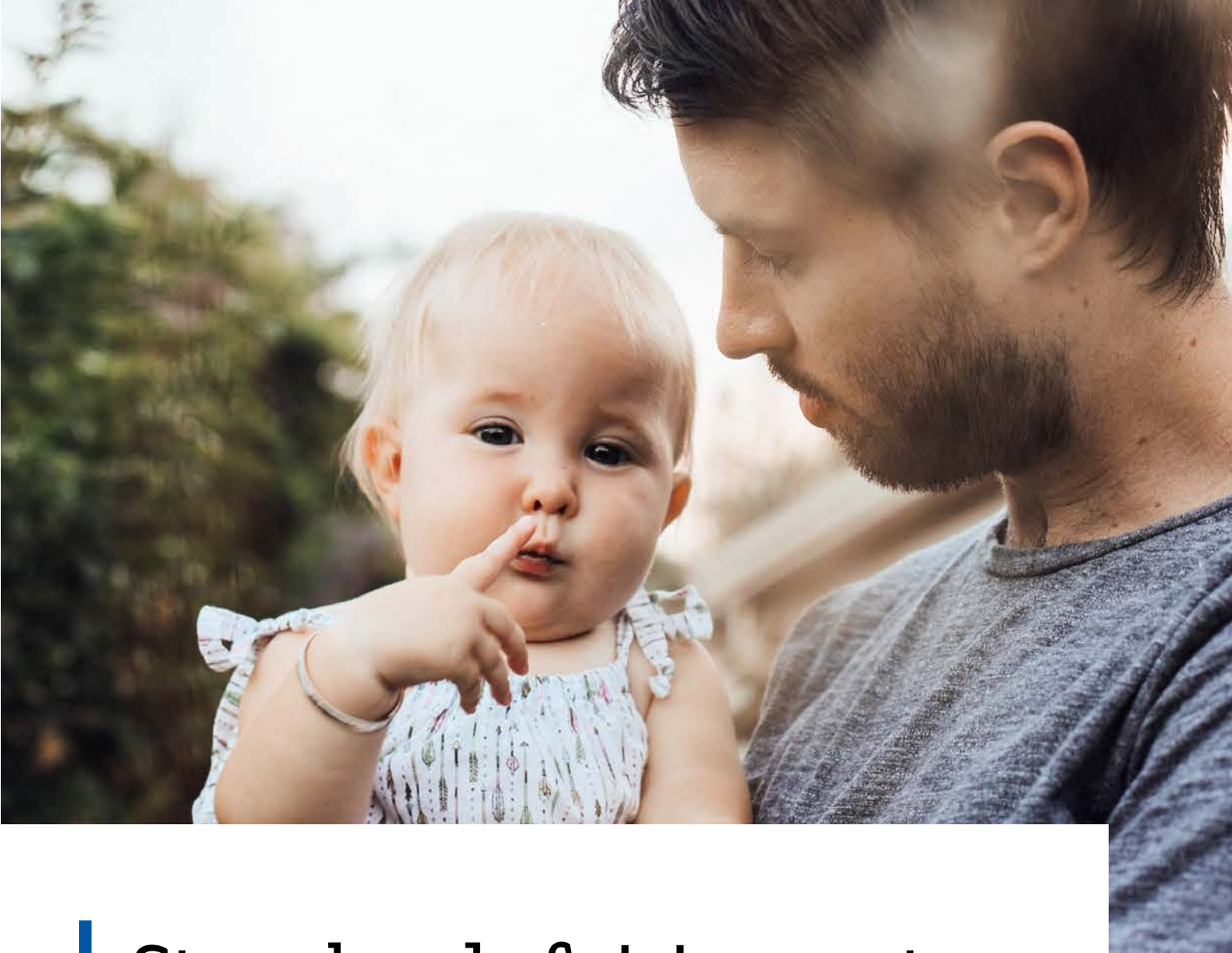
Thomas is a Veteran Advisor for the GMRF and was involved in the M-CARM research project, saying he “wanted to contribute and give voice to the silent and unseen struggles of ex-service members.”

“We haven’t been able to measure the success or failure of the transition process till now. We are good at turning people into soldiers but not so great at putting them back into the community. I see this tool as a critical step for helping veterans who have transitioned from Defence. By identifying your needs, you can more easily reach out and ask for help,” said Thomas.

The proud father of two is now self-employed and running his own coffee shop business in Brisbane.

The M-CARM tool is available at www.m-carm.org.

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