

BRIEF FOR VCDF: ADF PARTICIPATION IN SYDNEY MARDI GRAS 2014

Command/Division: OVCF

Reference: Objective ID U4921479

Due Date: 02 Dec 13

Recommendations

That you:

- (a) Agree to the voluntary participation of ADF members in uniform at the Sydney Mardi Gras Parade in 2014 subject to similar conditions as the Mardi Gras Parade 2013.
- (b) Agree to the appointment of SQNLDR V. Chong as the Activity OIC for this proposed activity.
- (c) Agree that the draft administrative instruction provides an appropriate framework for control of this activity in 2014.
- (d) Agree in-principle to ongoing ADF member participation in uniform at the Sydney Mardi Gras Parade subject to an annual review with OVCF to confirm the activity is aligned with strategic cultural objectives.
- (e) Agree that all volunteer ADF band members if available will be supported to form a balanced ceremonial band or drum corps.
- (f) Note that financial approval will be sought from DPG for logistics costs in the order of \$2,600 to support ADF participation in the Mardi Gras Parade in 2014 and in subsequent years, as a public relations and diversity activity.
- (g) Note that assistance from a Sydney base will be sought to support this activity in 2014 and in subsequent years, commensurate with the level of support that might be provided for ADF sporting activities.
- (h) Note that ADF participation in the Mardi Gras Parade in 2013 delivered desired communication, diversity and morale effects.

Background

1. In 2013, participation in the Sydney Mardi Gras resulted in key diversity and inclusion messages being carried extensively in all forms of media at very low costs. 124 members marched in uniform and 54 members, employees, family and friends marched in civilian attire.

2. The Mardi Gras community festival receives media coverage every year and provides an opportunity to ensure that the ADF is seen to be an employer that is open to all Australians, and fully supportive of the entire spectrum of its diverse workforce. Annual representation at Mardi Gras is a key enabler for diversity and inclusion initiatives. Internally, it communicates a critical message of support and inclusion to ADF personnel struggling with sexual orientation or gender identity.

3. **Reason for Brief.** This brief seeks VCDF approval for ADF members to participate in uniform at the Sydney Mardi Gras Parade on 01 Mar 2014 and in subsequent years, to contribute to strategic ADF diversity and inclusion objectives.

Key Issues

4. **Objectives.** The objectives of participation in the parade are:

- a. to generate positive media coverage of Defence's respect for and inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people, in accordance with Defence's cultural intent: "We are trusted to defend, proven to deliver, respectful always."
- b. to send a strong message to serving ADF members that Defence leadership supports tolerance and inclusion of sexual orientation, gender and gender identity diversity, thus promoting an inclusive culture and fostering a greater sense of pride in Defence;
- c. to display ADF acceptance and inclusion of LGBTI personnel, and support personnel struggling with their sexual orientation or gender identity by participating in the national LGBTI community festival; and
- d. to provide an opportunity for non-LGBTI members to show support of their colleagues. This will improve workplace inclusion and team cohesion, and generate constructive dialogue to shape attitudes and behaviours consistent with Defence values.

5. **Conditions of Entry.** Similar restrictions to 2013 are recommended for the 2014 and subsequent activities. The 2013 restrictions have been revised as follows:

- a. Service and Defence protocols must be followed, including marching as a formed body in accordance with Service traditions and customs;
- b. the ADF contingent is to be positioned with other uniformed government agencies;
- c. participation of ADF and reserve members in the parade is voluntary; and
- d. participating members are to change out of uniform at the end of the parade.

6. **Appointment of Activity OIC.** SQNLDR V Chong was the activity OIC in 2013, responsible for delivering results for all aspects of the activity. SQNLDR Chong has volunteered to be Activity OIC again in 2014. A draft Administrative Instruction for control of this activity has been prepared at Attachment 1.

7. **Ongoing review and approval of ADF involvement.** After each activity, a post-activity report will be submitted to provide VCDF with the outcomes of the activity and an assessment regarding whether continued involvement is aligned with ADF strategic cultural objectives. The post-activity report will seek VCDF approval for participation for the following year.

8. **Musical Support.** The volunteer drum corps contributed substantially to the success of the Mardi Gras Parade in 2013. Music support is essential to achieve positive external reputational effects from this activity. Such effects would be greatly enhanced by the use of a professional ADF band. Directors of Music from each service agree that the proposed 2014 activity should be supported on the same voluntary basis as 2013. If a suitably sized and balanced band of volunteers is not achievable then a drum corps similar to last year is to be scoped.

9. Current indications are that similar insufficient numbers of band members would be volunteers for the 2014 event, so to that end VCDF endorsement is sought for formal tasking of an available ADF band. A ceremonial band rather than a drum corps is considered appropriate support for the Mardi Gras Parade, a high profile public event worthy of ADF support as an 'activity in diversity', one with the potential to further promote the ADF as a leader in supporting a diverse culture in the workplace.

10. **Logistics Support.** Transport between a local Defence base and the Mardi Gras Parade ensures the safety and security of participating personnel, and mitigates reputational risks associated with ADF members in uniform in public. The parade also has entry costs for each participating contingent. The cost of approximately \$2,600 will be sought from Centre of Diversity Expertise.

11. **Results of participation in 2013 parade.** Participation in the 2013 Mardi Gras Parade achieved the following:

- a. **Communications.** The themes that ‘the ADF is open to all,’ the desire to ‘greater reflect the community the ADF serves,’ and intent to generate inclusive culture was covered positively in commercial television, radio and print media. Negative commentary was limited to social media.
- b. **Morale, Diversity and Inclusion.** Personnel participating in Mardi Gras felt strongly supported by the ADF leadership. Many personnel who were still coming to terms with their sexual orientation found the experience empowering and gained greater self-confidence. During the parade, members of the public said they would be keen to work for a progressive employer such as ADF because of importance placed on workplace inclusion.

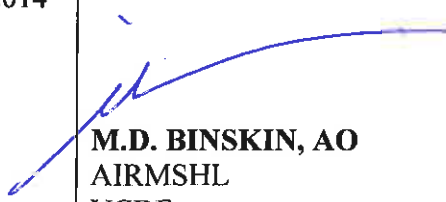
Consultation

12. **Services Consultation.** Staff Officers responsible for diversity policy within Navy (Deputy Director Diversity and Inclusion), Army (SO1 Workforce Reform) and Air Force (Deputy Director Air Force Workforce Diversity) have reviewed the contents of this brief. All services support the rationale and execution advises of this proposed activity. Army advises that a volunteer band or drum presence would be preferred to a directed task.

13. **Diversity Directorate – Defence People Group.** Director of Diversity Directorate has reviewed this brief and confirms that this activity aligns with corporate diversity objectives, and cultural change initiatives.

14. **Directors of Music.** The three service Directors of Music have approved paragraphs 8 and 9, which represent their collective views.

15. **SO1 Ceremonial OVCDF.** SO1 Ceremonial considers that the rationale and proposed execution of the intended activity is consistent with ADF protocol and ceremonial requirements.

47F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Agreed / Not Agreed (b) Agreed / Not Agreed (c) Agreed / Not Agreed (d) Agreed / Not Agreed (e) Agreed / Not Agreed (f) Noted / Please Discuss (g) Noted / Please Discuss (h) Noted / Please Discuss 		
V. CHONG SQNLDR Proposed Activity OIC Mardi Gras 2014 Tel: (03) 9256 3746 47F	 M.D. BINSKIN, AO AIRMSHL VCDF 10 Dec 13		
05 Dec 13 47F			
Branch/Section Head	N/A	W: -	Mob: -
Action Officer	SQNLDR V. Chong	47F	47F

Attachment:

- 1. Draft ADMININST – Sydney Mardi Gras 2014