

## **FACT SHEET**

### **CHIEF OF DEFENCE FORCE AND SECRETARY AWARD 2008 WINNER**

#### **Major Colin Bassett**

#### **EXERCISE TALISMAN SABER 2007 / Shoalwater Bay Training Area**

The Talisman Saber series of exercises are conducted biennially in Australia with the United States. Talisman Saber 2007 was designed to train Australian and US Forces in planning and conducting Combined Task Force operations, which will help improve ADF/US combat readiness and interoperability.

Exercise TS07 was conducted over several weeks, and included amphibious, land and air activities at arguably Defence's most pristine training area of Shoalwater Bay which includes parts of the Barrier Reef world heritage area and a range of significant areas of natural and cultural value.

Managing impacts to this training area is a paramount consideration during the conduct of military exercises. It is through the outstanding leadership and efforts of people like MAJ Bassett, Officer Commanding of the Forward Maintenance Area (FMA) North, that Defence is allowed to continue to use these environmentally significant locations for training.

Effective and environmentally sound waste management from the activities of thousands of military personnel concentrated at a few locations is fundamental to the successful environmental management of the exercise. Major Bassett led this effort promoting environmental compliance and engendering in his Unit the importance of their work to the overall success of the exercise.

Major Bassett's achievements included ensuring that the waste stream generated by thousands of participants at SWBTA was exceptionally well managed. This included the segregation and safe storage of hazardous wastes until they could be removed by a licensed contractor. Large amounts of recyclable materials were separated from general waste, reducing the total amount of waste generated by the exercise that would go to land fill. His unit also took responsibility for policing litter and facilitating any required clean up.

MAJ Bassett was responsible for the regulation of forces entering and departing the training area. This regulation function included ensuring that all vehicles had met stringent wash down requirements prior to gaining entry to the training area, protecting it from invasive weeds. He ensured that units had completed their damage repair obligations and had achieved environmental clearance from the Environmental Management Group prior to being released to return to their home locations. He also ensured that amnesty bins were available to collect any unused blank ammunition prior to forces leaving the training area. The successful completion of this phase of the exercise has been widely acknowledged as the best ever conducted during this type of exercise.

MAJ Bassett regularly liaised with the Environmental Management Group, and instilled a culture of proactive identification and resolution of potential environmental issues in his staff, and that of other units. His actions clearly contributed to the success of environmental management during the exercise.