

Department of Defence

DEFGRAM NO 168/2000

15 June 2000

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ESTABLISHMENT OF DEFENCE DISABILITY STAFF NETWORK

The purpose of this DEFGRAM is to advise of the establishment of Defence Disability Staff Network within the Department, and to seek comments from interested staff, particularly people with a disability.

The Secretary of the Department of Defence is the Sponsor of the Network. The Network's meetings and activities are officially recognised Defence activities.

One of the key activities in the *Disability Action Plan 1999–2003* is for the Defence Equity Organisation (DEO) to establish a Disability Staff Network within the Defence organisation. Available evidence indicates that the needs of staff with disabilities are better served when there is an established forum through which relevant information could be channelled to and from staff and management.

The charter of the Network is to provide information to the Defence organisation for action on current issues and concerns, as well as the successes and frustration's of staff with disabilities in Defence. The Network would act as a reference group on issues affecting staff with a long-term injury, chronic illness or disability.

There will be Regional Networks feeding into a national forum that advises the Executive, through the DEO, on disability issues. It is expected that there will be a Regional Network in each State and in major Defence sites employing Australian Public Service staff. The Regional Network will comprise of elected representatives of staff with disabilities in each State. The National Disability Forum will be composed of representatives from each State, including the Defence Equity Coordinator (DEC) in each State.

The DEC in each State would be the ongoing point of contact (POC) for the Regional Network. Interested staff members are advised to contact their region's DEC:

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Regional Network meetings will be held in July and August to meet and brief all of the regional stakeholders and formally establish the Regional Networks. The first Network meeting will take place in Adelaide on 11 July 2000 at 10.00 am (venue to be advised).

Comments should be provided in writing or email to the DEO contact officer, Dr Ben Okai (email: ben.okai@cbr.defence.gov.au), by 30 June 2000.



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