

## DG's Heads Up – CDRE Ranford Elsey



CDRE Ranford Elsey

# Support wave continues

Australian car manufacturers support Defence Reserves (ref: PARLSEC 083/2007)

In August, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence Mr Peter Lindsay announced that Australia's four major car manufacturers (Mitsubishi Motors, Ford, Holden, and Toyota) signed Defence Reserves-friendly leave policies.

"Historically a high number of Reservists have and continue to come from the automotive sector," Mr Lindsay said. "These companies have demonstrated their commitment to the Defence of Australia by developing supportive leave policies in conjunction with the Defence Reserves Support team."

All four companies say they "value and support all employees who are members of the Defence Force Reserves" and they have committed to

financially supporting their Reservists in their service to Defence by making additional payments, above and beyond that required, whilst making a commitment to honour the provisions of the Defence Reserve Service (Protection) Act.

Mr Lindsay went on to congratulate these companies for leading the way to develop leave policies, which represent best practice.

The Defence Reserves Support Council (DRSC) represent in all states and territories through their liaison officers who can provide specialist assistance to any organisation developing Reserve-friendly leave policies. They provide guidelines, in consultation with peak bodies, for all private sector. Federal, state, territory and local governments and their instrumentalities are covered under separate policies.

It is acknowledged that the business environment is complex and multi-

faceted. A single solution will not suit all circumstances. Accepting this, the aim of these guidelines is to provide a model of supportive arrangements and practices that is of general application.

### ADF Gap Year program

Prime Minister John Howard officially launched the ADF Gap Year program on August 9. To date, more than 500 applications have been received and over 30,000 hits have been registered on the website.

It is anticipated that ADF recruitment and retention will be enhanced through the program which represents a \$306 million investment in the youth of Australia. The ADF is tapping into the 34,000 Year 12 school leavers who typically take a break to travel or seek wider experiences following their final year at school before starting tertiary study or vocational training.

Navy has developed a stimulat-

ing, exciting and varied program for its Gap Year recruits which will see them undertake recruit training and spend some time at sea. The skills they acquire will be transferable not to mention the personal growth in maturity and the pay (between \$30,000 and \$46,000 over the year).

Not all participants will wish to join the Services at the end of 12 months but it's a great way to 'test the water' (in more ways than one) before making a four year commitment or seeking a commission through ADFA. Bonuses apply for those who continue or return to the ADF later. Another option is to join the Naval Reserve.

I encourage all Year 12 school leavers to seriously consider the ADF Gap Year option in the Navy or the other two Services. Whether they choose to continue or part company, the skills and experience gained will stand them in good stead for the future.

Defence Force Recruiting is accepting ADF Gap Year applications now, for entry later this year or early in 2008. More information is available at [www.defencejobs.gov.au](http://www.defencejobs.gov.au) or by texting Gap to 13 19 01.

### ADF members receive a pay rise

All ADF members received a 2.8 per cent pay rise on August 9. This was the second of four instalments under the current ADF workplace remuneration arrangement that will deliver salary increases totalling 12.6 per cent over three years.

# Incentives and rewards

## Reserves: What's in it for individuals and employers

Major General Greg Melick has been promoted to take up the position of Assistant Chief of Defence Force (Reserves) liaising between Defence, Reservists and their civilian employers. In this recent interview, the new Head of Reserve Policy says Reservists can make a difference to business and outlines how this people can work with employers for mutually beneficial outcomes.



MAJGEN Greg Melick

### How do you help civilian employers of Reservists when staff members are required for Defence service? Are there incentives for employers?

We help civilian employers in a number of deliberate ways. The Employer Support Payment Scheme introduced by the Government in 2001 can provide them with the Australian average weekly earnings for the period an employee is serving, after a short qualifying period. Medical specialists can receive significantly higher payments. With help from our office, many private and public sector employers have adopted Defence leave policies which enable their employees to take a form of leave for the period of their Reserve service and return to their jobs. The greatest incentive for Reserve service is service to Australia in uniform. This point should not be underestimated.

### Do employers have to release their staff for Defence service?

Technically the answer is "Yes". The Defence Reserve Service (Protection) Act 2001, makes it a criminal offence to hinder Reserve service. However, although that Act has been law for six years, it has never been used. We seek resolution of any

disputes with employers through discussion and apply a 'reality test' to these situations. I think the fact the Act is there is testimony to the importance the Government places on Reserve service. The compensating fact that it has never been used is evidence of our ability to successfully resolve release issues. We are conducting a review of the Act to ensure it continues to satisfy its objectives and examine ways its provisions could be extended to students who are Reservists.

### Do you arrange activities to help employers understand what Reservists do in Defence and the types of skills they develop during Defence service?

Yes we do. Committees of the Defence Reserve Support Council comprising Defence and employer members operate in each capital city and many regions. Their role is to work with industries and employers to build an informed and healthy relationship through social contact and information sessions. These committees work with Defence personnel to arrange "Executive Stretch" exercises where local employers experience for themselves the service training their Reserve employees receive. As another example, our national office

arranges "Bosslift" operations where we take employers to where their employees are serving to see what these Reservists actually do while in uniform.

Regarding skills gained through Reserve service, employers have said they experience workplace improvements from their Reserve employees in these areas; leadership and team work, problem solving, OHS awareness, work planning, risk management, people skills, written and verbal communication, self-discipline, project management, and of course physical fitness.

### What qualities do you look for when signing up people for the Reserves?

The same as any other employer, particularly honesty, integrity, and a willingness to learn. We teach all the other necessary personal and professional skills such as leadership and equipment competencies.

### What skills do Reservists bring to civilian workplaces and how can these help improve a business' bottom line?

On the most recent operation "Bosslift" to the Solomon Islands a group of CEOs discussed this very

issue. They concluded that Reserve service by their employees provided their companies with a personnel development program so good "money could not buy it" and this directly improves their business bottom-line. Can we make it better? Yes. Currently we are working to improve the way Reserve training is recognized in the civilian qualification environment.

### What roles can people fill in the Reserves and who are you looking for at the moment?

One of the most attractive features of Reserve service is the variety of employment available to individuals. It is not unusual for civilian employment to be directly transferable to one of the Reserves while another option is working in a Reserve area different to an individual's normal job. Who are we looking for now? Well engineers, technicians, and health professionals are most needed at the moment. People don't need to leave their civilian jobs to be a member of the ADF Reserves. Reserve service should contribute to Australia, and at the same time provide each Reservist with new opportunities and development.

More information on Defence Reserves Support is at [www.defence.gov.au/reserves](http://www.defence.gov.au/reserves)



RAN Reserve News  
Is produced by the Directorate of Defence  
Newspapers on behalf of the Director General  
Reserves – Navy  
Director Naval Reserve Support – National:  
CAPT Richard Phillips  
Editor: LCDR Antony Underwood

All editorial material including letters to the  
editor, suggested stories for publication  
and images should be emailed to:  
[navyreservenews@defencenews.gov.au](mailto:navyreservenews@defencenews.gov.au)  
or posted to: The Editor, Navy Reserve News,  
R8-LG-035, Russell Offices,  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Layout:  
The Green Giraffe Desktop Publishing  
Ph/Fax: (08) 6468 4487  
Mobile: 0433 951 330  
E-mail: [thegreengiraffe@inet.net.au](mailto:thegreengiraffe@inet.net.au)

Keep up with  
RANR changes  
— check the  
members'  
area:  
[www.navy.gov.au/  
reserves](http://www.navy.gov.au/reserves)