CHAPTER 31

NATIONAL MEDAL

Introduction

31.1 The National Medal (NM) was established on 14 February 1975 and recognises 15 years
diligent service in organisations approved by the Commonwealth Government that protect life and
property at some hazard to their members. A clasp to the NM may be awarded for each successive
period of 10 years diligent service. The NM is described in Volume 2, Chapter 18. The Government
amends the list of approved organisations from time to time. The current list may be found on the
Government’s official honours and awards website in

Authority

31.2 The current authority National Medal Regulations 2011 can be found on the Department of the
Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) website shown above.

31.3 Further information can be found in the Chief Officer’s Manual for the National Medal and other
sources at the PM&C website above.

Qualifying conditions

31.4 Conditions applying to the award of the NM are complex and may be confusing. The conditions
detailed below are only a guide and specific inquiries should be directed to Directorate Honours and
Awards (DH&A).

31.5 Service prior to 20 April 1982. Along with other approved organisations, the NM may
normally be awarded to a member who has, on or after 14 February 1975 and before 20 April 1982,
completed 15 years diligent service as a member of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), either
continuous or aggregated. A clasp to the NM may be awarded for each successive period of 10 years
diligent service as a member of the ADF. However, because of the complexity of NM regulations exact
entitlements will be determined by DH&A on a case-by-case basis.

31.6 Service from 20 April 1982. The NM may be awarded for combined aggregate service with
the ADF and other approved organisations for service after 20 April 1982 where the member has made
an election to have all of the combined service recognised as qualifying service for the NM. Under this
provision, the member forfeits any further eligibility to a Defence long service award as it is a once only
election and once made, is irrevocable. Such a circumstance may be where a former policeman of six
years service enters the ADF on full-time service and elects, at the 15-year mark of combined police
and ADF service, to have their service recognised by the NM. Also, the opposite may occur where a
former ADF member enters the police force.

31.7 Dual award eligibility. During the same period a person may become eligible for both the NM
and a Defence long service award. For example, a policeman with 15 years service as a policeman
who was also a member of Reserve Forces for those 15 years may be eligible for both a Defence long
service award and the NM. Similarly, a member of the ADF for 15 years, who also has been a member
of an Australian Emergency Service for those 15 years, may be eligible for both awards. However,
members who have service before 20 April 1982, which has not been used for a NM, and who
subsequently receive a Defence Force Service Medal (DFSM), cannot then use their pre-20 April 1982
service as qualifying service for the purpose of the award of the NM. This service has already been
recognised by the DFSM.