

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST NO. 558/21/22

This document has been generated pursuant to section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act) in response to FOI request 558/21/22.

This document outlines Defence processes or internal advice as outlined on the Ministerial and Executive Communication intranet page regarding the provision of information to Defence Portfolio Ministers Offices.

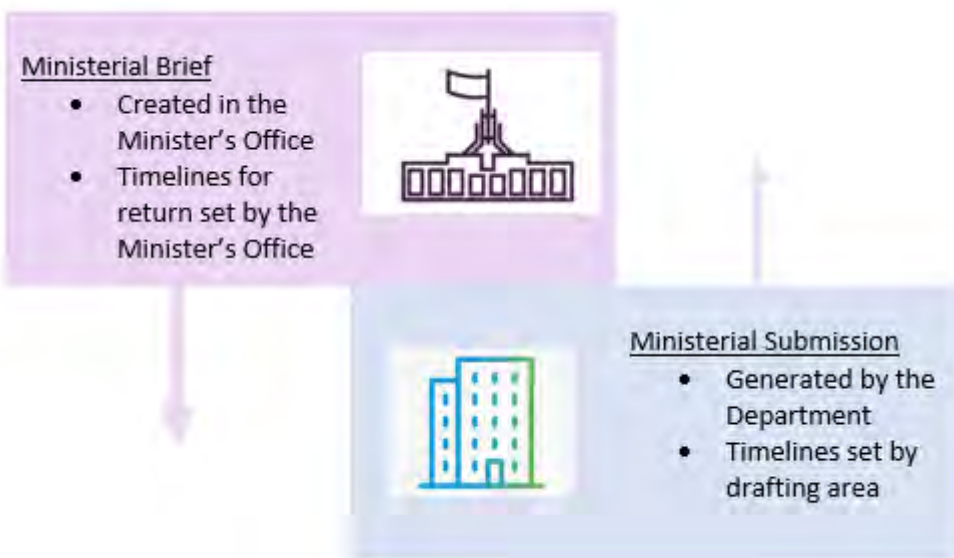
Ministerial Briefs and Submissions

Ministerial briefs and submissions are the primary mechanism for how Defence provides formal advice to, or requests action from, our Ministers and their Offices.

Ministerial Briefs and Submissions seek to inform the Minister's Office on a particular topic and can also seek agreement from the Minister for a particular decision or course of action.

Ministerial Briefs are requested by a Minister's Office. Ministerial Submissions are instigated by the Department.

Timelines for Ministerial Briefs are set by the Minister's Office whereas timelines for Ministerial Submissions are set by the drafting area within Defence.



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Action Requested by Date

Ministerial briefs and submissions **must** include an 'Action Requested by' date and 'Reason for Urgency' on the front page. These fields should not be left blank.

Action Requested by	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Critical date by which the Minister must action the brief or submission.This is not the same as the clearance due date.
Reason for Urgency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">If the submission or brief provides less than 10 working days before the critical date for consideration, the Reasons for

	<p>Urgency must explain the ramifications if the Minister does not action by the proposed date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there is no reason for urgency, this reason should be give as 'Routine'.
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Clearance timeframes

Clearance timeframes do not run concurrently. If a submission requires multiple clearances, the total clearance time needs to be accounted for.

The Defence Senior Executive and the Ministerial offices must be provided with sufficient time for consideration of advice prior to the Action request by date. The following clearance timeframes have been agreed by the Executive and Ministerial Offices.

	Urgent items	Routine items
Ministers	5 working days	10 working days
Secretary	3 working days	5 working days
Chief of Defence Force	24 hours	3 working days
Secretary and Chief of Defence Force	5 working days	7 working days
Associate Secretary	24 hours	3 working days
Vice Chief of Defence Force	24 hours	3 working days

Urgent items

Some key points to remember when working on urgent taskings:

- If you are working on an urgent and unavoidable submission, engage with the **Ministerial Team**, the **Executive Support team** and the relevant Ministerial Offices as early as possible.
- If the submission requires clearance from, or to go through the Secretary/Chief of Defence Force, please ensure that you engage with their Offices as early as possible to ensure that priorities can be managed appropriately.
- Make sure the PDMS date data fields are correct when setting up PDRs. This will ensure that your urgent item is readily available. If you have questions on how to do this, please contact the Ministerials Team for support.
- Please call the Ministerials Team when submitting an urgent item. We can reprioritise our work to ensure that your item spends as little time as possible between the executive clearance process.

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In Defence, Ministerial briefs and submissions use the same templates which are found in **PDMS**. Templates are updated regularly and sourcing templates directly from PDMS means you will always have the most up-to-date version.

Templates requirements have been approved by all Ministers and under no circumstance, should they be changed. Guidance is provided in the templates to assist drafters.

Key points to note:

- Only 1 space following a full stop is required for all templates and letters.

- The Clearance Officer is the officer who signed the brief.
 - Contact Officers are, at minimum,
 - SES Band 1 or
 - 1 Star Ranked Officers or
 - subject matter experts who can confidently discuss the subject from a Defence perspective and with authority.
 - Contact Officers should include mobile numbers for after hours contact.
 - All brief/submission templates are the same across all Ministers.
 - Meeting and Event Briefs do not have a signature block (the clearance officer section remains in the template).
 - If the Minister's Office declines the invitation, it will be included in the PDMS processing instructions and the PDR will be assigned to the Group Coord for closing. Note the brief will not be signed by the Minister or Chief of Staff.
-

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Some Ministerial Submissions or Correspondence may require a 'For Information' copy to be provided to another Minister or Official. In this circumstance there are some key things to consider:

- Only the Minister primarily responsible for the subject matter should be listed 'For Action'.
- Where the subject matter of a submission or brief relates to a Minister's responsibilities but the primary accountability for decision making falls within another Minister's portfolio, an information copy is provided.
- Information copies are distributed by the Group Coord and/or the Ministerials Team when a brief or submissions is provided to the Minister's Office.

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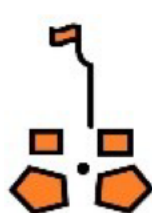
A one page [Ministerial Submission and Brief Placemat](#) is available to help you prepare your brief or submissions.

A quality assurance checklist is [available](#) to help you review the final content.

The Ministerial and Parliamentary Branch offer a range of [training resources](#) which may assist in document drafting, the processes of government and policy development.

The [Administrative Policy](#) team within Governance and Reform also offers a range of resources to assist Departmental officers in administrative policy development.

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Ministerial Team

Executive Support

Defence.Ministerials@defence.gov.au

Executive.Support@defence.gov.au

Parliamentary Team

Cabinet Liaison

Parliamentary.Business@defence.gov.au

CLS@defence.gov.au

Ministerial Support

PDMS Support

Ministerial.Support@defence.gov.au PDMStraining.andsupport@defence.gov.au

Ministerial Correspondence



Responses may be from the Minister, a member of their staff or a Departmental Official.

Ministerial correspondence is tasked by the DLO at the request of the Minister's Office.

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Ministerial correspondence is actioned and processed through **PDMS**. Each Minister's unique template can be found on PDMS and the correct template will be automatically loaded into the PDMS Tasking. The **Ministerial Correspondence Placemat** will help you prepare your correspondence.

A few key points to consider are:

Templates change regularly - use the latest PDMS templates to ensure you are working on the current version.

- Letters should be kept to one page.
- You may refer to a website or online resource to support your response.
- Avoid repeating talking points or 'cut and paste' lines from other official documents.
- Keep it simple and impartial.
- Refrain from using acronyms, jargon or technical terms.
- All drafted information must not exceed PDR classification.

Once the Minister or their Office has signed the correspondence, it is scanned into PDMS and reassigned to the line area for filing. The Ministerial team will dispatch the hardcopy signed letter.

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Due dates are critical and signify the need for a respectfully prompt response to someone who has written to the Minister. The following table indicates timeframes for preparing responses to Ministerial correspondence. These timeframes have been agreed by the Ministerial offices.

Due date from registration	Correspondents
-------------------------------	----------------

Minister for Defence	5 working days	
Minister for Defence Industry	5 working days	MPs and Senators, Premiers and Chief Ministers, Heads of State, Heads of Government, heads of significant stakeholder organisations and prominent people
Assistant Minister for Defence	7 working days	
Minister for Defence Personnel	10 working days	
Ministerial response: Medal-related	20 working days	Media outlets
Departmental response	20 working days	Members of the public and small organisations, correspondence from MPs and Senators on behalf of a constituent if they have requested the response to be a direct reply to their constituent

PDMS milestones

When submitting Ministerial correspondence, there are three key PDMS milestones line areas are expected to take into account:

Clearance Due	Date the response is due to Clearing Officer
Parliamentary Due	Date the response is due to the Ministerial Team
Ministers Office Due	Date the response is due to the Minister's Office

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On rare occasions, it may not be possible to provide a final response to correspondence by the required due date. In this situation, interim replies must be prepared.

All interim replies need to be drafted by the line area and processed through to Ministerial Services by the initial due date.

Interim replies must:

- clearly outline why an interim reply is needed
- explain the delay in providing a final response
- identify any action currently being undertaken
- state the projected date for the completion of the final reply.

If requested by the Minister, the Interim reply must also be accompanied by a covering submission.

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A request for an extension for a Ministerial product should be rare and supported only by a legitimate reason, well before the due date. Generally, extensions will not be granted if they are sought on the due date. A request for an extension for a Ministerial product should be rare and supported only by a legitimate reason, well before the due date. Generally, extensions will not be granted if they are sought on the due date.

Please consider your Ministerial correspondence ahead of time to ensure that your Group or Service is not captured and highlighted on the overdue report which is provided each week to the Senior Leadership Group.

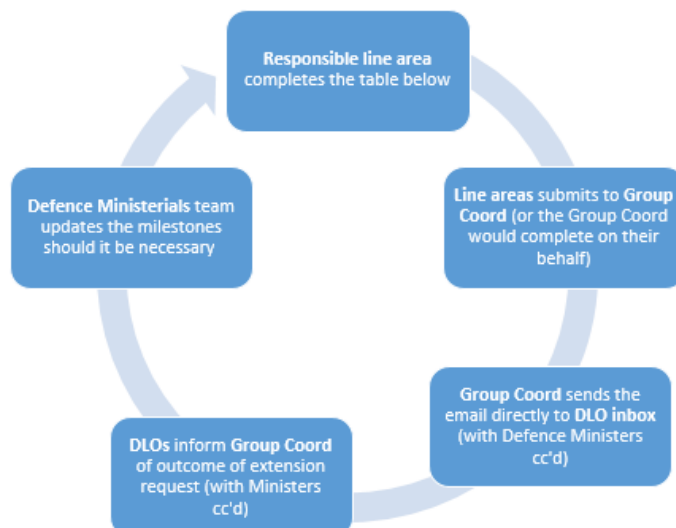
Reasons for extensions may be:

- The matter is more complex than originally thought.
- Input is required from other Department or Agencies.
- Input is being sought from various other areas of Defence.
- Outcomes are pending from senior level meetings.

Extension process

Requests for extensions should be emailed via Group Coord teams to the DLO inbox (copy in **Ministerials Team**) for approval. The DLOs will advise the Group Coord of the outcome of the extension request and the Ministerial team will update PDMS milestones as required.

The Ministerial Offices request that the following table is provided with extension requests to clearly set out the request details. Extension process Requests for extensions should be emailed via Group Coord teams to the DLO inbox (copy in Ministerials Team) for approval. The DLOs will advise the Group Coord of the outcome of the extension request and the Ministerial team will update PDMS milestones as required. The Ministerial Offices request that the following table is provided with extension requests to clearly set out the request details.



PDR Reference number	MB19-000000	
PDR Title	Enter PDR Title	
Current Milestones	Clearance due:	DD/MM/YY
	0000hr	

	Parliamentary due: DD/MM/YY 0000hr
	Minister's Office due: DD/MM/YY 0000hr
Proposed Milestones	Clearance due: DD/MM/YY 0000hr
	Parliamentary due: DD/MM/YY 0000hr
	Minister's Office due: DD/MM/YY 0000hr
Departmental Extension Approving Officer	Name
(Name and Title)	Title
Reason for Extension	Reason for Extension

For extension requests relating to Parliamentary submissions please contact the [Parliamentary Team](#).

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Ministerial Team

Executive Support

Defence.Ministerials@defence.gov.au

Executive.Support@defence.gov.au

Parliamentary Team

Cabinet Liaison

Parliamentary.Business@defence.gov.au

CLS@defence.gov.au

Ministerial Support

PDMS Support

Ministerial.Support@defence.gov.au PDMSsupport@defence.gov.au

Media releases and media alerts

A media release or media alert can be used to announce a Defence policy or program, awards, achievements, exercises or operations, acquisitions and personnel changes etc.

Defence issues two kinds of media releases: departmental and ministerial. Departmental releases convey Group or Service-specific messages whereas ministerial releases are used to make announcements about major projects, decisions or operations.

Consult with [Defence Media](#) if you are unsure about whether your release should be ministerial or departmental. Defence Media requires a three-day turnaround to review and facilitate clearance of media products.

For information on how to draft a media release and style preferences, please download our [factsheet](#), and view the [Templates section](#) for a guide on how to structure your release/alert.

Examples of media releases are also available in the [Defence News & Media](#) section of the external website.

The media release clearance process flowchart will be available on this page in the coming weeks.

[Media alerts approval process - flowchart](#)

[Media release approval process - flowchart](#)

[Media release approval process - Minister's office request - flowchart](#)

[Media release approval process - Ministerial Submission - flowchart](#)

Media enquiries

All media enquiries are received into the Department in writing via media@defence.gov.au.

Defence personnel who are approached or contacted by a journalist must refer them to the Defence Media team. Do not respond to questions or engage in conversations with journalists on Defence issues.

Responding to journalists in a timely manner is a priority for Defence.

Defence's ability to influence and inform media coverage through timely responses can reduce the level of misrepresentation and inaccuracy of facts in the public domain.

When the Department receives a media enquiry, Defence Media will contact the relevant Group/Service and nominate a deadline for response as per the [media enquiries triage matrix](#). This deadline is usually within 3-hours (or less).

The [Joint Directive 01/2020 by the Chief of the Defence Force and Secretary](#) outlines that all responses to media enquiries must be cleared by a SES Band Two or 2-Star as a minimum..

Defence Media will facilitate additional clearances within the Department and Minister's office and provide a response to the journalist.

For further information regarding media enquiries, dealing with the media and logging interactions with the media on the [Media Contact Register](#), please refer to the [Defence Communication Policy](#)

[Media enquiries triage matrix_February 2020](#)

[Priority 1 media enquiry flowchart](#)

[Priority 2 media enquiry flowchart](#)

HOW-TO GUIDE: DRAFTING MEDIA RELEASES & ALERTS

Departmental media releases and media alerts

Departmental media releases and media alerts are drafted by the relevant Group or Service or local Regional Manager Public Affairs Officer (RMPA).

Departmental media releases and media alerts can be distributed nationally by Defence Media or locally by the RMPA. It is important media releases and media alerts are sent to Defence Media for approval prior to being distributed.

Ministerial media releases and alerts

Each Ministerial Office has different preferences for media releases. This includes the style of writing, format of release, timings when due to the Office, and whether a release should be drafted at all.

Defence Media may send draft media materials directly to the relevant Office either concurrent or separate to Ministerial Advice.

Ministerial releases may be tasked either through Defence Media or PDMS.

The process for media releases and media alerts is:

1. Group/Service or RMPA draft and gain One-Star/SES Band 1 clearance
2. Defence Media review and provide clearance
3. Based on the subject matter, Defence Media will seek OVCDF, OSEC or OCDF approval
4. Defence Media will notify the relevant Minister's office for their information before distribution
5. Defence Media or the RMPA will distribute

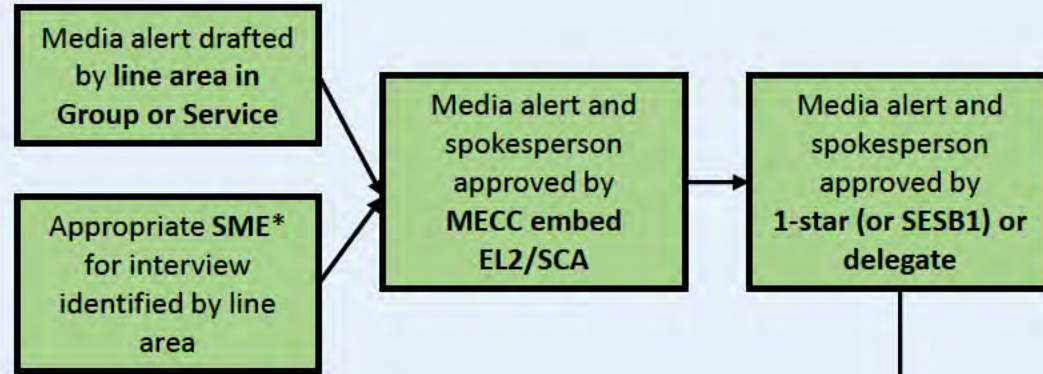
How to write a media release:

A comprehensive variety of media release templates are available on our [Templates page](#).

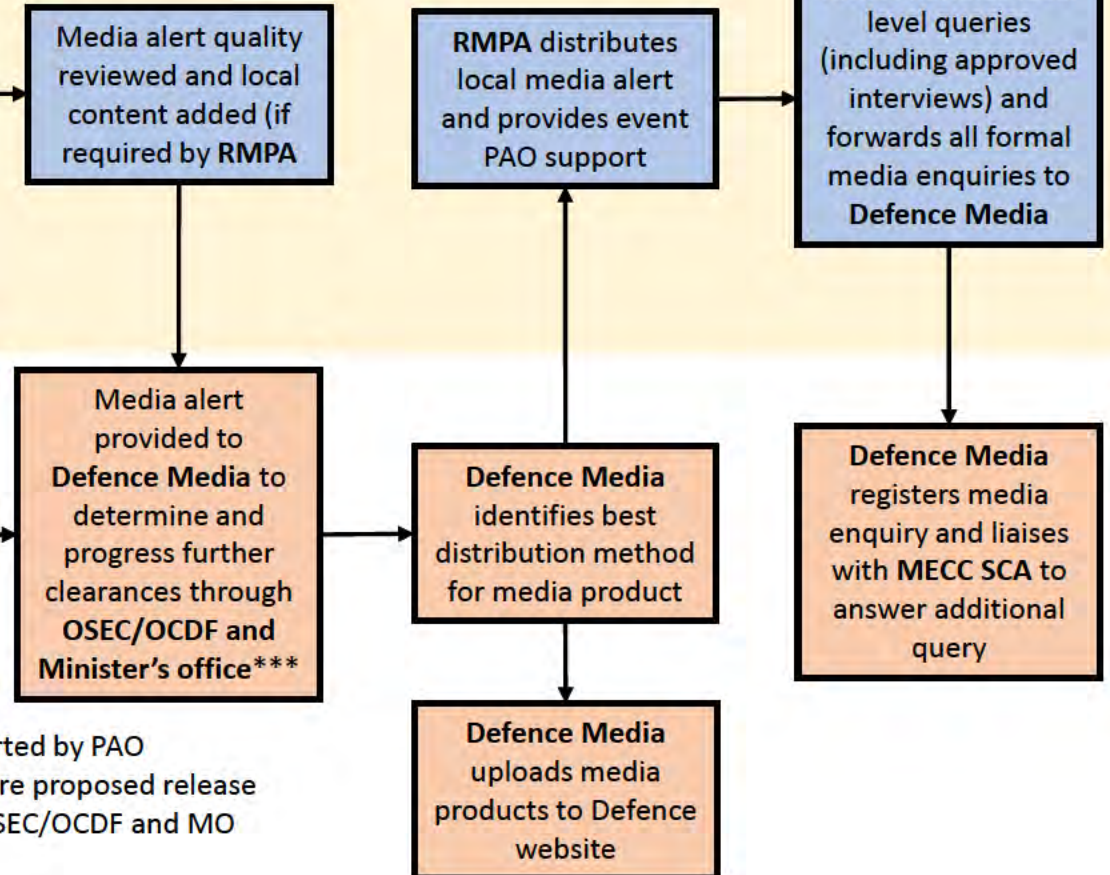
- Assemble your facts – who, what, where, how, when and why.
- Use plain English and active language, and ideally limit the media release to one page
- Quote the highest ranked person relevant to the media release
- Media releases are written in the past tense; only use present/future tense inside quotes.
- Ensure all names and titles are correct
- See examples in the [Defence News & Media](#) section.

Media alerts approval process

Groups and Service



Regional Manager Public Affairs



Defence Media

*Spokesperson should be a subject matter expert (SME), be appropriately media trained or supported by PAO

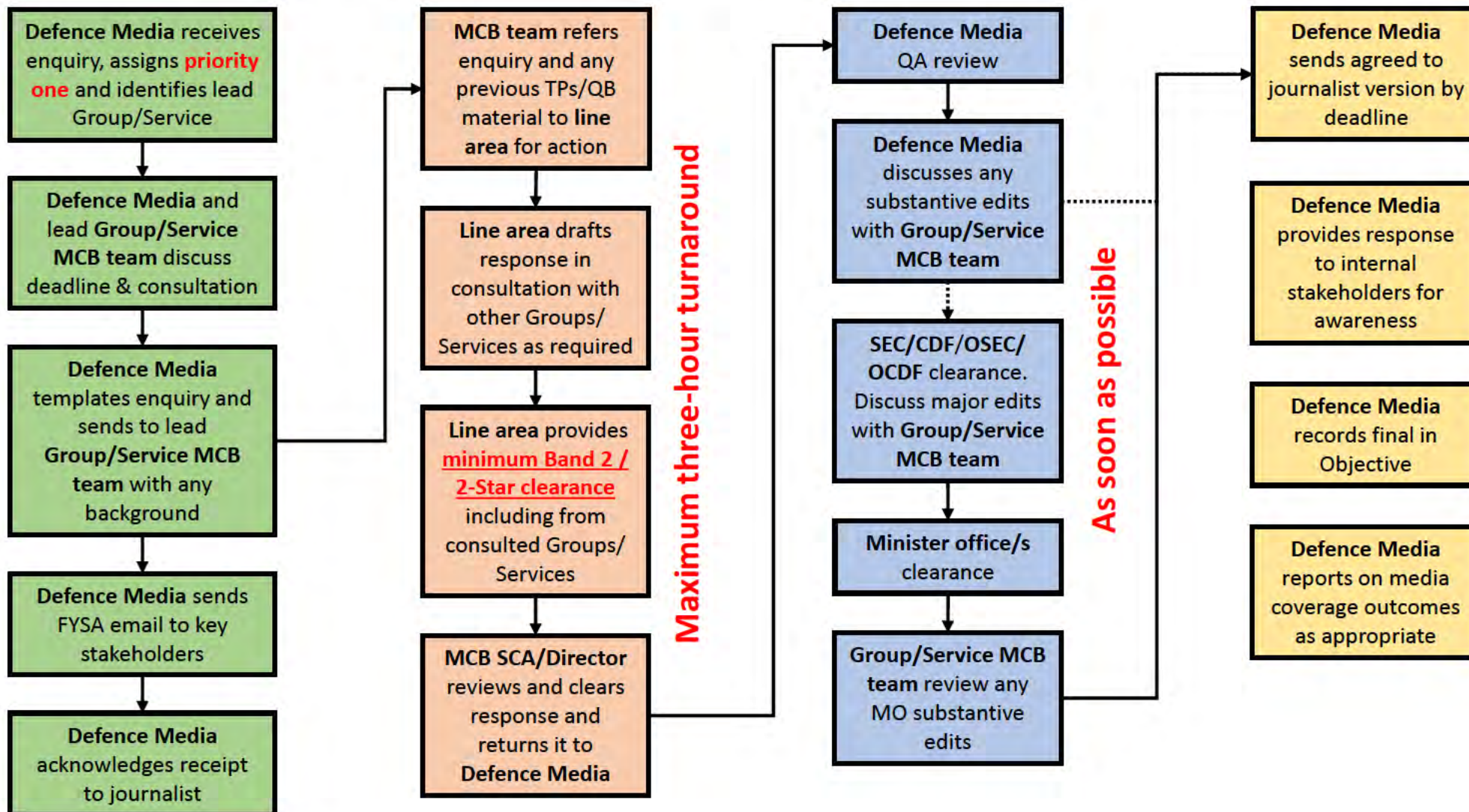
**Media products sent to Defence Media by MECC SCA in Group/Service no later than 3 days before proposed release

***If there is a proposed spokesperson for the event/media issue, additional clearance through OSEC/OCDF and MO may be required.

Media enquiry process – Priority one

FOI 558/21/22
Document 1

Received → Group/Service → Senior clearance → Response



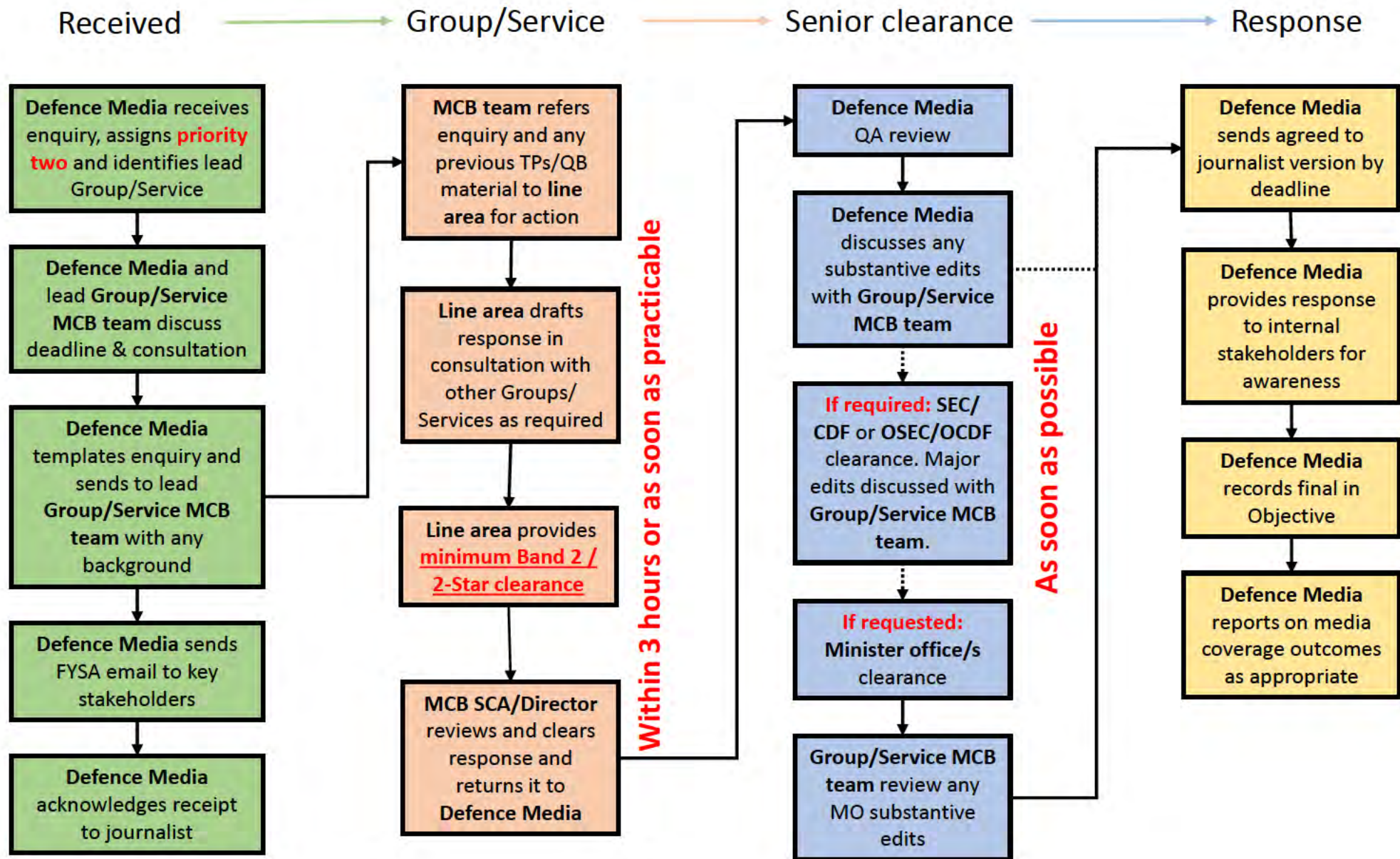
Priority One

Urgent, sensitive, or media topical issues

- Enquiries received by/from Ministers' offices or requests for ministerial statements.
- Mainstream media requests when there is an expectation that a journalist will imminently publish a news story on a Defence issue.
- Incidents - relating to Defence personnel, assets, exercises etc. (first response will generally be a holding statement)
- Questions that relate to national security and issues that have international implications.
- Questions regarding Defence announcements/reports/reviews/allegations/statistics that could impact Defence.
- Questions that relate to issues where we have previously cleared briefs and talking points.

Media enquiry process – Priority two

FOI 558/21/22
Document 1



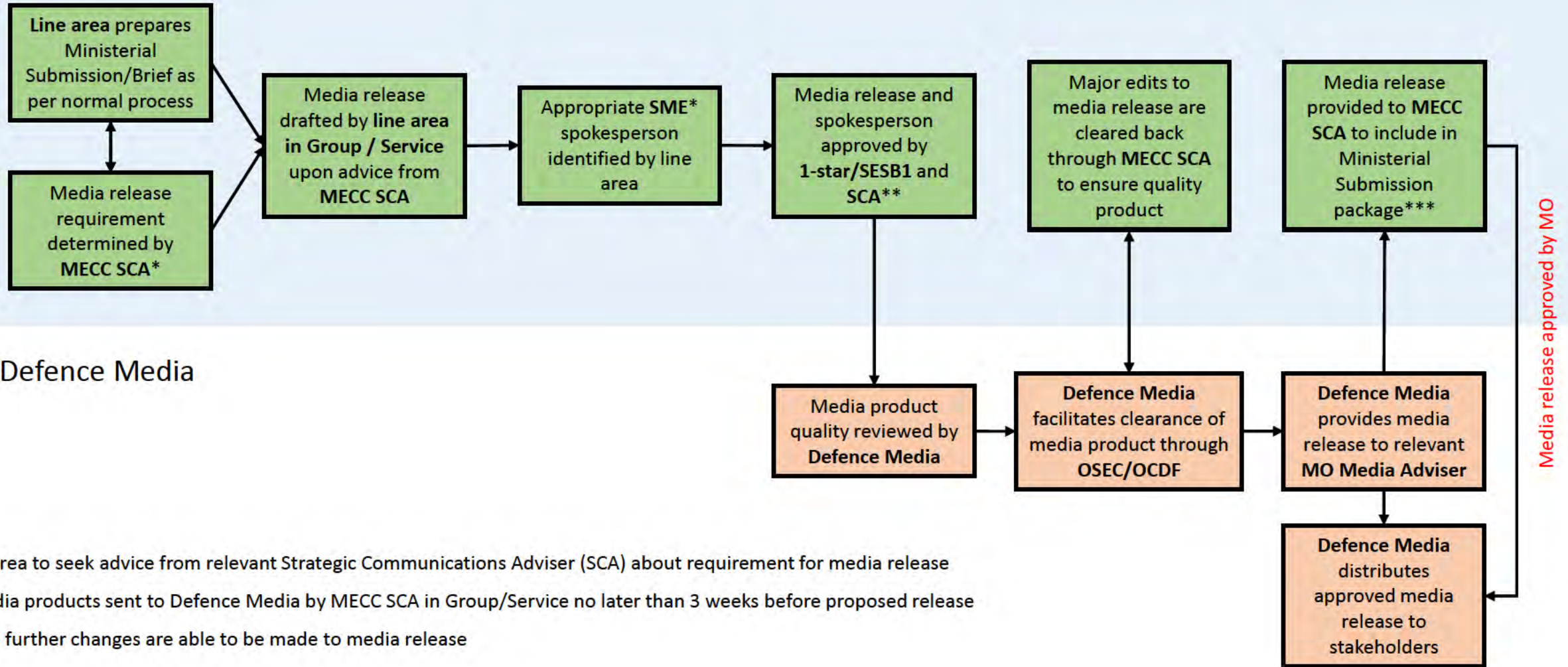
Priority two

General media enquiries

- Request for general information regarding the work of the department.
- Requests for interview with Defence personnel.
- ADF support to other countries/states, including whole-of-government support.
- Media embeds – Group or Service lead or Operational
- Requests to visit a Defence facility.
- Industry publication requests/requests for editorial/monthly magazines/periodicals.

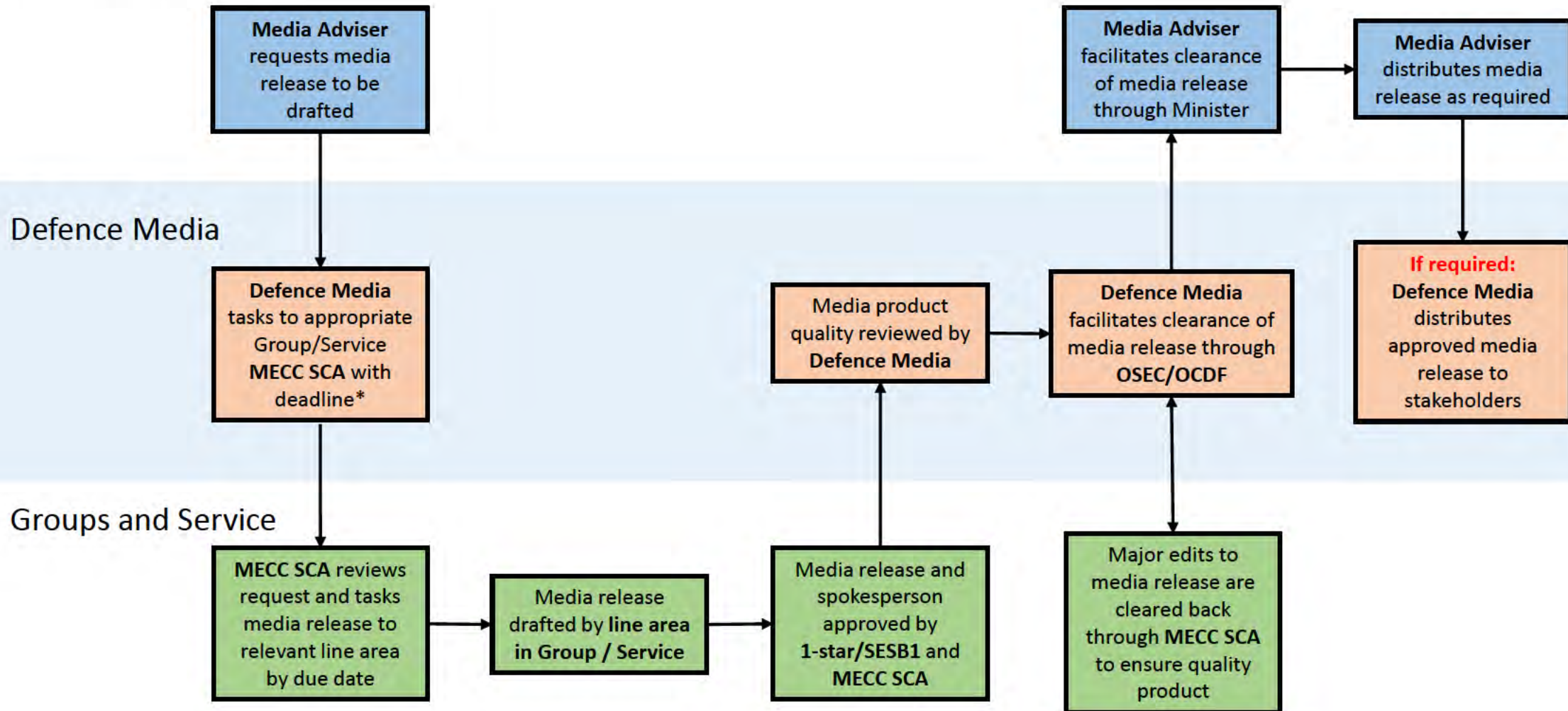
Media releases approval process – Ministerial Submission

Groups and Service



Media releases approval process – Minister's office request

Minister's office



*Deadline negotiated with MECC SCA - media release due to Defence Media no later than 2 days before deadline to MO

Media releases approval process – Departmental or Ministerial media release

Groups and Service

Media release
requirement
determined by
MECC SCA*

Media release
drafted by **line area**
in **Group / Service**
upon advice from
MECC SCA

Appropriate SME**
spokesperson
identified by **line**
area

Media release and
spokesperson
approved by
minimum
1-star/SESB1 and
SCA***

Major edits to
media release are
cleared through
MECC SCA to
ensure quality
product

Defence Media
distributes
approved media
release to
stakeholders

Defence Media

Defence Media
reviews media
release and
appropriateness of
distribution

Defence Media
facilitates clearance of
media product through
OSEC/OCDF

Defence Media
provides media
release to relevant
MO Media Adviser

Defence Media
provide final
version to line area
and confirm
accuracy and
distribution time

Media Adviser
seeks clearance
from Minister and
office

*MECC SCA to give consideration as to appropriateness of departmental or ministerial media release

**Spokesperson should be a subject matter expert (SME) and be appropriately media trained or supported by PAO

***Media products sent to Defence Media by MECC SCA in Group/Service no later than **3 weeks** before proposed release



Australian Government

Defence

Submission

For decision

(Delete whichever is not applicable)

PDMS Ref. Number MS21-001375

(Mandatory Field)

To Minister for Defence**For Info** (Delete if not applicable)
Minister for Defence Industry
Minister for Defence Personnel
Assistant Minister for Defence**Subject** Subject**Timing** Relevant date and reason for required ministerial action; or 'At your convenience'.**Recommendations** (Mandatory Field, make sure Recommendations fits on first page & are simple and clear)

That you:

1. **type** recommendation here; and agreed / not agreed
2. **type** recommendation here. noted / please discuss
3. **sign** Attachment A signed / not signed
- 4.
- 5.

Minister for Defence

Signature.....

Date:...../...../2022

Minister's Comments				
Timely	Yes	No		
Relevance	Highly Relevant	Relevant	Not Relevant	
Length	Appropriate	Too Short	Too Long	
Quality	1	2	3	4
				5

Key Issues (Mandatory Field)

Type the body of the submission here.

1. Number paragraphs for easy referencing.
- Use "Body text bullet" format if you require bullet points.
 - Third level indent
 - Fourth level
 -

Background (Mandatory Field)

2. Type the body of the submission here.

Consultation – internal/external (Mandatory Field)

3. List the divisions and/or agencies consulted here (including a contact officer), along with a brief summary of issues discussed.

Consultation – Secretary/CDF (Mandatory Field)

4. Include advice on whether the Secretary/CDF was/were consulted on the approach in the submission.

Relationship to Prime Minister's Priorities (delete if not required)

5. If the submission relates to a priority identified by the Prime Minister through Charter Letters and related discussions (including objectives, major policy initiatives, election commitments, and proposed concrete and deliverable actions), this should be clearly referenced.

Sensitivities (Mandatory Field)

6. Include a short description of any additional sensitivities here.

Financial/systems/legislation/deregulation/media implications (Mandatory Field)

7. Include a short discussion of implications here.

8. The Chief Finance Officer must be consulted and clear any submissions where there are significant financial implications.
9. If there are media implications [Defence Media](#) must be consulted and clear media related products.

Attachments

Attachment A Attachment Title Here

Attachment B Attachment Title Here

Authorising Officer
Cleared by: (Band 2/2 Star clearance is strongly recommended for all offices and mandatory for MINDEF)
Name Here
Position
Division/Branch
Date: Enter date cleared (mandatory)
Mob: XXXX XXX XXX (mandatory mobile number)

Contact Officer: Name, Position, Section/Branch, Ph: XX XXXX XXXX.

Through: Secretary CDF

CC: Secretary, CDF, Assoc Sec, VCDF, FASMECC

**Australian Government**
Defence**Background Brief**

For Information

PDMS Ref. Number MS21-001375

(Mandatory Field)

To **Minister for Defence**

Adviser **Surname, Name**

For Info (Delete if not applicable)
Minister for Defence Industry
Minister for Defence Personnel
Assistant Minister for Defence

Subject **Subject**

Purpose (Mandatory Field)

1. Provide details on why you are preparing this background brief for the Minister (or his/her staff).
 - For example, 'Your office requested additional details relating to the matters raised in the letter from Mr X'.
2. This template should be used where a decision is not required to be made by the Minister. Formal advice, where an acknowledgement is required, should be submitted to the Minister through a Ministerial Submission.
3. Number paragraphs for easy referencing.
 - Use bullet points from the template styles if required (MB/MS 2nd level).
 - MB/MS 3rd level indent
 - MB/MS 4th level level
 -

Key Issues

4.

Background (Mandatory Field)

5. Type the body of the submission here.

Consultation – internal/external (Mandatory Field)

6. List the divisions and/or agencies consulted here (including a contact officer), along with a brief summary of issues discussed.

Sensitivities (Mandatory Field)

7. Include a short description of any additional sensitivities here.

Options available to Minister

8. Include a short description of any options available to the Minister here. Delete if not applicable.

Attachments

Attachment A Attachment Title Here

Attachment B Attachment Title Here

Authorising Officer
Cleared by: (Band 2/2 Star clearance is strongly recommended for all offices and mandatory for MINDEF)
Name Here
Position
Division/Branch
Date: Enter date cleared (mandatory)
Mob: XXXX XXX XXX (mandatory mobile number)

Contact Officer: Name, Position, Section/Branch, Ph: XX XXXX XXXX.

Through: Secretary CDF

CC: Secretary, CDF, Assoc Sec, VCDF, FASMECC.

**Australian Government**
Defence**Event Brief**

For Information

PDMS Ref. Number MX-XXXXXX

To **Minister for**
For Info **Minister for Defence** *(mandatory if not To)*

Minister represented by:

Subject**Meeting time and date****Minister's Arrival Time****Location**

Minister's Role

- Discuss with MO if necessary e.g. Launch, deliver speech etc.

Has the Minister met with this person/organisation in the past?

Yes/No; add details.

Key Messages

1. This should include messages on the Government's key objectives.
2. Include recent and/or relevant announcements where applicable.

Background

3. Must cover any contentious issues; Defence data (e.g. staff numbers); funding; policy implementation as well as information on the individual or organisation.

Media

4. List of media invited/attending. Provide any relevant media releases from the organisation/person as an attachment.

Consultation

5. Please ensure other appropriate areas of the Department are consulted in the development of this brief and list the areas that provided input.<Insert text here>

Attachments

- Attachment A** Event Running Sheet *(mandatory) making sure all bio details are present in the brief*
- Attachment B** Biography (including photo) *(mandatory) making sure all bio details are present in the brief*
- Attachment C** Minister's talking points *(Choose 'Supporting Document – Talking Points' for appropriate template, noting clearance requirements)*
- Attachment D** Location Map & Directions
- Attachment E** Official Programme (where relevant)

Authorising Officer
Cleared by: <i>(Band 2/2 Star clearance is strongly recommended for all offices and mandatory for MINDEF)</i>
Name Here
Position
Division/Branch
Date: Enter date cleared <i>(mandatory)</i>
Mob: XXXX XXX XXX <i>(mandatory mobile number)</i>

Contact Officer: Name, Position, Section/Branch, Ph: XX XXXX XXXX.

Through: Secretary CDF

CC: Secretary, CDF, Assoc Sec, VCDF, FASMECC

Event Running Sheet

Event

Date
Start and Finish Time
Arrival Time
Location

Media	Yes/No	Dress
Setup	(Examples: Minister is to make an address from a lectern or not; audio; standing/seated; cocktail function etc.)	
Electorate:	The event is located in name of location and electorate. Name of MP has held name of electorate since year and holds the electorate by xx% (details to be found at www.aec.gov.au)	

Attending

Host •
Key VIPs •

Arrival Details
Drop off point:
To be met by:
Meeting point
Car park location:
Minister accompanied by:
Additional notes

Background

1. Succinct background relevant to the event,
2. eg details of people the Minister might meet or sit next to.
- 3.

Running Order		
Time	Activity	Notes
10:15 am	Minister arrives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Met by John Smith• Meet and great with approx. 4 or 5 individuals who are working at desks
10:25 am	Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr Smith introduces the Minister and invites him to addresses the gathering
10:27 am	Address	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Minister addresses the gathering (3 minutes)
10:35 am	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doorstop briefing (private room)
10:45 am	Minister departs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minister will be accompanied by Mr Smith to carpark
Contact		
Host	Name and mobile phone number	
Adviser	Name and mobile phone number	

Biography

<p>Photo here</p>	<p>Name:</p> <p>Title</p> <p>Organisation</p>
<p>Brief work history:</p> <p>Personal details (if known):</p>	

SUBJECT

MINISTERIAL TALKING POINTS / DISCUSSION POINTS *(Delete One)*

- **Talking Points** refer to a product used for addressing the media, the public or any forum where a Ministers' remarks can be reasonably assumed to have the potential to enter the public domain.
- **Talking Points** *that accompany a Media Release* must be cleared by Defence Media.
- **Talking Points** *without an accompanying Media Release* do not need to be cleared by Defence Media but must be cleared by your MECC Embedded Communication Director/Strategic Communications Advisor, and a copy provided to Defence Media for information.
- **Discussion Points** refer to a product which is intended to be used to support the Minister in a meeting (such as with a vendor or colleague) where the points discussed may reasonably be assumed to remain private.

- **Discussion Points** **do not** need to be cleared by Defence Media but should be discussed with your MECC Embedded Communication Director/Strategic Communications Advisor.
- [Contact details for your MECC Embedded Communication Director/Strategic Communications Advisor \(SCA\)](#) are available on the intranet
- To be written in the first person, appropriate for the Minister to speak exactly as written.
- Ensure that it is something that the Minister actually could/would say.
- Keep clear and concise, with no acronyms.
- Ensure any facts written are substantiated by data.
- Formatting should be 16 point Arial, 2.0 line spacing.

Contact officer: (Please ensure that the contact officer will be available during the period the brief is being considered by the Minister's Office)

Contact officer phone:

Clearance	Name	Appointment	Date and time
Cleared by: (Group/Service)		SES Band 1 / 1 Star or above (Band 2/2 Star clearance is strongly recommended for all offices and mandatory for MINDEF)	
MECC Embedded Communication Director/Strategic Communication Adviser		(delete row if not required – <u>Discussion Points only</u>)	
Cleared by: Defence Media		(delete row if not required)	

OFFICIAL

FOI 558/21/22
Document 4
ATTACHMENT D:

Location Map & Directions

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

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Document 4
ATTACHMENT E:

Official Program

OFFICIAL

**Australian Government**
Defence**Meeting Brief**

For Information

PDMS Ref. Number MX-XXXXXX

To **Minister for**
For Info **Minister for Defence** *(mandatory if not To)*

Subject**Meeting time and date****Minister's Arrival Time****Location**

Person/Organisation

- Include key information about person/organisation attending meeting.
- A brief biography with a photo of each person attending is at Attachment A – Biography.

Has the Minister met with this person/organisation in the past?

Yes/No; add details.

Purpose of Meeting*Please provide information in succinct bullet points.*

1. What is the person/organisation seeking?
 - Bullet points
2. What are the Government's objectives?
 - Bullet points

Key Messages

3. This should include messages on the Government's key objectives.
4. Include recent and/or relevant announcements to the people the Minister is meeting.
5. Include recent and/or relevant announcements where applicable.
6. Include any key and relevant issues that are running (for example, policy issues on which we are working).

Background

7. Please provide succinct background on each of the key issues (e.g. any contentious issues; key relevant Defence statistics; funding; policy implementation etc.).

Consultation

Please ensure other appropriate areas of the Department are consulted in the development of this brief and list the areas that provided input.

8. <Insert text here>

Attachments

Attachment A Biographies

Attachment B Talking Points

Authorising Officer
Cleared by: <i>(Band 2/2 Star clearance is strongly recommended for all offices and mandatory for MINDEF)</i>
Name Here
Position
Division/Branch
Date: Enter date cleared <i>(mandatory)</i>
Mob: XXXX XXX XXX <i>(mandatory mobile number)</i>

Contact Officer: Name, Position, Section/Branch, Ph: XX XXXX XXXX.

Through: Secretary CDF

CC: Secretary, CDF, Assoc Sec, VCDF, FASMECC

ATTACHMENT A:

Biography

<p><i>Photo here</i></p>	<p>Name:</p> <p>Title</p> <p>Organisation</p>
<p>Brief work history:</p> <p>Personal details (if known):</p>	

ATTACHMENT B:

Discussion Points

SUBJECT**MINISTERIAL TALKING POINTS / DISCUSSION POINTS (DELETE ONE)**

- **Talking Points** refer to a product used for addressing the media, the public or any forum where a Ministers' remarks can be reasonably assumed to have the potential to enter the public domain.
- **Talking Points** *that accompany a Media Release* must be cleared by Defence Media.
- **Talking Points** *without an accompanying Media Release* do not need to be cleared by Defence Media but must be cleared by your MECC Embedded Communication Director/Strategic Communications Advisor, and a copy provided to Defence Media for information.
- **Discussion Points** refer to a product which is intended to be used to support the Minister in a meeting (such as with a vendor or colleague) where the points discussed may reasonably be assumed to remain private.

- **Discussion Points** do not need to be cleared by Defence Media but should be discussed with your MECC Embedded Communication Director/Strategic Communications Advisor.
- Contact details for your MECC Embedded Communication Director/Strategic Communications Advisor (SCA) are available on the intranet
- To be written in the first person, appropriate for the Minister to speak exactly as written.
- Ensure that it is something that the Minister actually could/would say.
- Keep clear and concise, with no acronyms.
- Ensure any facts written are substantiated by data.
- Formatting should be 16 point Arial, 2.0 line spacing.

Contact officer: *(Please ensure that the contact officer will be available during the period the brief is being considered by the Minister's Office)*

Contact officer phone:

Clearance	Name	Appointment	Date and time
Cleared by: (Group/Service)		SES Band 1 / 1 Star or above <i>(Band 2/2 Star clearance is strongly recommended for all offices and mandatory for MINDEF)</i>	
MECC Embedded Communication Director/Strategic Communication Adviser		<i>(delete row if not required – <u>Discussion Points</u> only)</i>	
Cleared by: Defence Media		<i>(delete row if not required)</i>	

Minister Responsible Minister

PDR Number MCXX-XXXXXX

Subject <Subject>

Initiator

Action Officer:

Phone: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Clearance Officer:

Phone: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Through

Group/Division <Division/Branch>

Date response provided to MO:

Copies/referral required: ☐

Department Comments: (Can include contextual notes, timing extension requests etc.)

Advisor/DLO comment	Return to Department for:
	Redraft Y/N
	NFA Y/N

**MINISTER NAME
MINISTER FOR PORTFOLIO**

Ref No: MCYY-XXXXXX

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Mx First name Surname Post nominal
Title/Position
Address Line 1
SUBURB STATE POSTCODE

Dear Name

Thank you for your correspondence of [date] concerning [matter]. I appreciate the time you have taken to bring this matter to my attention.

OR

Thank you for your representation of [date] on behalf of [full name], concerning [matter].

OR

Thank you for your correspondence of [date] to the Minister for [full title, name], concerning [matter]. Your correspondence has been referred to me as the responsible portfolio minister.

I apologise for the delay in responding. (If required)

Body of document

- Minister dot point style
 - Minister second level dot point

Heading (If required)

I have copied this letter to [title and name]. (If required)

Closing

Thank you for raising this matter. *Or:* Thank you for bringing [name of constituent/organisation]'s concerns/query to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Five Lines

MINISTER NAME

Graham, Bronwyn MRS

Sent: Thursday, 17 June 2021 12:45 PM
To: Responsible Group/Service
Cc: Responsible Band 2; Responsible Band 1
Subject: FOR XXXX ACTION - Priority 1 media enquiry - 21-0XXX - NAME OF ENQUIRY - Deadline Date Time

Categories: Meaghan

Good [morning/afternoon] [name/group/service],

Thank you for your time on the phone. As discussed, please see the below media enquiry for your action.

Line areas must ensure they consult with other line areas as required, on their proposed response before sending to Defence Media ahead of the listed deadline. Please list the line areas consulted in the clearance table below.

Detailed background to assist those clearing the response must be provided in the table below, at same time as the proposed response, ahead of the listed deadline.

[ANY IMPORTANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION]

21-0XXX - Title	
PRIORITY 1	
Deadline to Defence Media:	Time, Date
Journalist deadline:	Time, Date
Journalist/outlet:	Insert name, publication
Responsible Group/Service:	Insert lead Line Area
Final Clearance:	OMINDEF/OADEFMIN/OMINDI/OMINDP/Department/OSEC/OCDF
Question: Insert question from journalist	
Response: <u>The following statement can be attributed to a Defence spokesperson:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please prepare a statement, not question/answer format unless agreed prior with Defence Media. • Please ensure information provided is unclassified and for public release. • By default all responses are attributed to 'a Defence spokesperson'. Please indicate if the response should be attributed to a specific representative. 	
Background (for journalist) – Not for attribution Please insert relevant background for the journalist.	
Background (Defence Media to provide groups/services to assist preparing a response): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to previous enquiries • Relevant news clips from recent media coverage • Background on the journalist and publication if appropriate 	

- Say 'nil' if nothing is available

Background (Groups/Services need to provide background to assist clearing of responses, particularly for Minister's office. This is NOT for public release/NOT for journalist):

It is the responsibility of the business area to provide background into the media topic/issue using the questions as a guide.

- Is it clear that the response answers the question? If information in the response to the journalist is being deliberately omitted, specify the answer and explain why we don't want to provide it.
- If the issue is potentially sensitive, explain why
- If further information is available in a QB or QON, copy it into the background. If the information is long, use a summary and an attachment. Don't just refer only to another document.
- Is this information already in the public domain? If so, where?
- Has the media previously asked questions on this topic? If so, what was the response?
- Was this mentioned in Parliament or at senate estimates recently?
- Was this as a result of a policy decision or legislative change?
- Is this in relation to a recent incident that occurred in Australia or overseas?
- What other groups or services seen this request? If so, what was their instruction?

CLEARANCES

	Name	Appointment/Role	Contact Number	Date and Time
Drafting officer				
Contact officer				
Additional line area consulted and contact				
Additional line area consulted and contact				
Additional line area consulted and contact				
Strategic Comms Advisor				
Group/Service 2 Star or above				

Kind regards,

Defence Media | Department of Defence

E: media@defence.gov.au

IMPORTANT: This email remains the property of the Department of Defence. Unauthorised communication and dealing with the information in the email may be a serious criminal offence. If you have received this email in error, you are requested to contact the sender and delete the email immediately.

Graham, Bronwyn MRS

Sent: Tuesday, 7 January 2020 9:14 AM
To: Responsible Group/Service
Cc: Media; Responsible Band 2; Responsible Band 1
Subject: FOR XXXX ACTION - Priority 2 media enquiry - 21-0XXX - [NAME OF ENQUIRY] - Deadline [Date], [Time]

Categories: UNCLASSIFIED

Good [morning/afternoon] [name/group/service],

Thank you for your time on the phone. As discussed, please see the below media enquiry for your action.

Line areas **must** ensure they consult with other line areas as required, on their proposed response before sending to Defence Media ahead of the listed deadline. **Please list the line areas consulted in the clearance table below.**

Detailed background to assist those clearing the response **must** be provided in the table below, at same time as the proposed response, ahead of the listed deadline.

[ANY IMPORTANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION]

21-0XXX - Title	
PRIORITY 2	
Deadline to Defence Media:	Time, Date
Journalist/outlet:	Insert name, publication
Responsible Group/Service:	Insert lead Line Area
Final Clearance:	OMINDEF/OADEFMIN/OMINDI/OMINDP/Department/OSEC/OCDF
Question: Insert question from journalist	
Response: <u>The following statement can be attributed to a Defence spokesperson:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Please prepare a statement, not question/answer format unless agreed prior with Defence Media.</i> <i>Please ensure information provided is unclassified and for public release.</i> <i>By default all responses are attributed to 'a Defence spokesperson'. Please indicate if the response should be attributed to a specific representative.</i> 	
Background (for journalist) – Not for attribution Please insert relevant background for the journalist.	
Background (Defence Media to provide groups/services to assist preparing a response): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses to previous enquiries Relevant news clips from recent media coverage Background on the journalist and publication if appropriate Say 'nil' if nothing if available 	

Background (Groups/Services need to provide background to assist clearing of responses, particularly for the Minister's office. This is NOT for public release/NOT for journalist):

It is the responsibility of the business area to provide a brief background into the media topic/issue using the questions as a guide.

- Is this information already in the public domain? If so, where?
- Has the media previously asked questions on this topic? If so, what was the response?
- Was this mentioned in Parliament or at senate estimates recently?
- Was this as a result of a policy decision or legislative change?
- Is this in relation to a recent incident that occurred in Australia or overseas?
- Have any of the groups or services seen this request? If so, what was their instruction?

CLEARANCES

	Name	Appointment/Role	Contact Number	Date and Time
Drafting officer				
Contact officer				
Additional line area consulted and contact				
Additional line area consulted and contact				
Additional line area consulted and contact				
Strategic Comms Advisor				
Group/Service 2 Star or above				

Kind regards,

Defence Media | Department of Defence

E: media@defence.gov.au

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QUESTION BRIEF (QB)

TOPIC: Subject

ISSUE/S OF THE DAY

- *Address key issues in public arena (no more than two points).*
- *Ensure all information is public domain or agreed for release.*

- *Address additional key issues.*
- *Provide succinct responses to questions requested by the Minister's office.*
- *Avoid using acronyms.*

BACKGROUND AND CHRONOLOGY

- *Provide key points to the background and history of the issue.*
- *Do not repeat information.*
- **MAXIMUM TWO PAGES** (whole document).

MEDIA

<u>Date</u>	<u>Outlet</u>	<u>Reporting</u>
DD Month YYYY	e.g. The Australian	· <i>Provide a high level summary of reporting</i>
		· <i>Include Streem link</i>
		· <i>If syndicated, only include once, but make note of syndication</i>

Lead Division

Contact: (FAS)

Division:

Phone: **(MUST PROVIDE A MOBILE NUMBER)**

Action Officer: (Drafting Officer)

Date last Updated: 13/07/2022 - 1:17 PM

Date first prepared: 24 August 2016

Originating Source: (MO/Dept)

QUESTION BRIEF (QB)

TOPIC: Subject

Contributing Division/S

Contact: **(FAS)**

Division:

Date first prepared: 24 August 2016

Phone: **(MUST PROVIDE A MOBILE NUMBER)**

Action Officer: **(Drafting Officer)**

Date last Updated: 13/07/2022 - 1:17 PM

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST NO. 558/21/22

This document has been generated pursuant to section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act) in response to FOI request 558/21/22.

Names and positions of officials who would be aware of what is provided to Ministerial Offices

and authorise its provision. *Information is to be interpreted as any product provided to a Ministerial Office which may include (but not limited to) briefs, submissions, advice, media, Freedom of Information requests, talking points etc.*

Name	Position
Rowena Bain	First Assistant Secretary Ministerial and Executive Coordination
Bree James	Acting Assistant Secretary Ministerial and Parliamentary
Bronwyn Graham	Assistant Secretary Media and Information Disclosure
Emma Funnell	Assistant Secretary Strategic Communications

Note: The above personnel are responsible for coordinating the provision of information to Ministerial Offices where it has been authorised by the relevant SES or Star ranked subject matter official within the Department. The nature and volume of material provided may mean that the above personnel do not provide specific approval in each instance.

From: s47F on behalf of COS ADFHQ
To: s47F Bulkeley, Sally MRS; Caton, Richard CDRE; s47F GPCAPT; s47F MS; s47F ; s47F GPCAPT; Funnell, Emma MS; s47F CMDR; Graham, Bronwyn MRS; s47F GPCAPT; s47F MS; James, Bree MS; Keane, Patrick AIRCDRE; Kelly, David BRIG 1; s47F CDRE; Leggatt, Raymond CDRE; s47F CAPT - RAN; Marshall, Hayden AIRCDRE 1; s47F DR; s47F MR; s47F CAPT - RAN; s47F COL; s47F CAPT - RAN; s47F MISS; s47F MR 1; s47F s47F MR; s47F MS; Thauvette, Sally MS; s47F MISS; s47F COL; s47F GPCAPT; s47F MRS; s47F MR 9
Subject: 220401 - FOR INFORMATION - Caretaker Presentation/Guidance - COS ADFHQ Sync Meeting - 30 March 22 [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Friday, 1 April 2022 8:30:25 AM
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[220322 - PPT - Caretaker Guidance for Defence.pdf](#)

OFFICIAL

Good morning all,

As discussed in the COS ADFHQ Sync meeting on 30 March 22, please see the attached Caretaker presentation/guidance that was presented by MECC.

For your information.

Kind Regards,

s47F

Senior Executive Assistant to CDRE Richard Caton, Chief of Staff ADFHQ
Command Support Branch

PO BOX 7901 Canberra BC ACT 2610
Russell Offices | R1-2-D004 | ACT

☎: + s47F | ✉: s47F @defence.gov.au



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Australian Government
Department of Defence

FOI 558/21/22
Document 11

Federal Election 2022 - Caretaker Conventions

Guidance for Defence

Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication

Bree James – A / Assistant Secretary Ministerial, Parliamentary and Cabinet Branch



Australian Democracy

The term of a House of Representatives expires three years from the first meeting of the House. It can be dissolved earlier by the Governor-General - usually acting on the advice of the Prime Minister.

A half senate election is held at the same time as every general House of Representatives election.



shutterstock.com · 618197627

A writ is issued within 10 days of the dissolution of Parliament. It commands an electoral officer to hold an election and contains dates for the close of rolls, the close of nominations, polling day and the return of the writ.

Caretaker Period

The caretaker period *commences* upon the dissolution of the House of Representatives.

The caretaker period *ends* when the result of the election is clear or, if there is a change of government, when the new Government is sworn in.

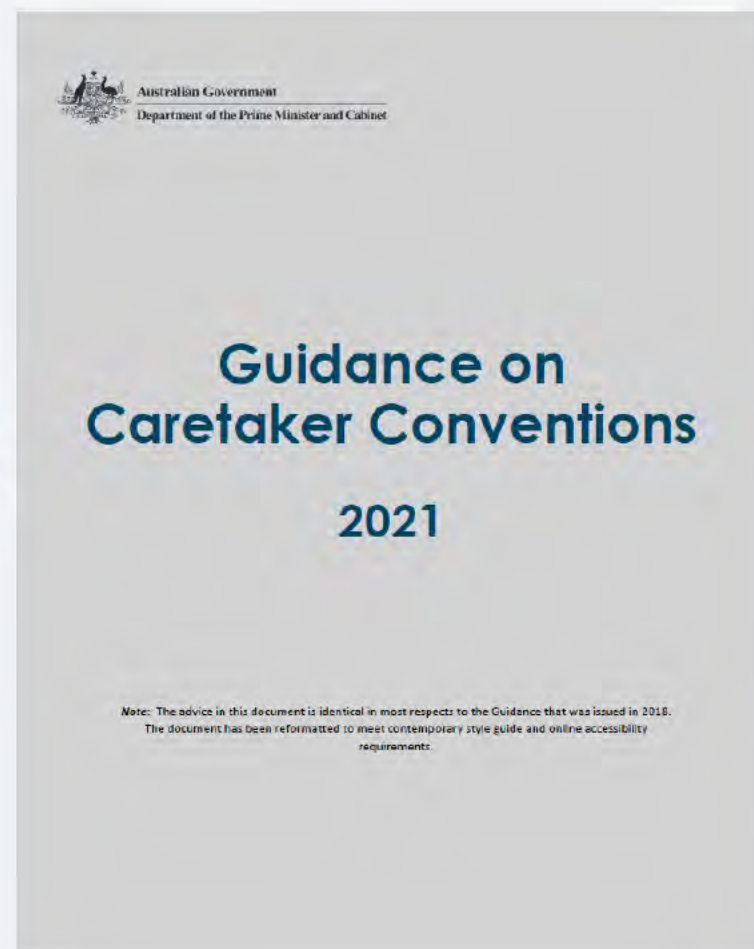
A hung-parliament is where no political party or coalition of parties has a majority in the House of Representatives. A new election may be called by the Governor-General.



Caretaker Conventions

The conventions and practices of the caretaker period are established by PM&C.

[Latest guidance: 2021](#) (available online)



Caretaker Conventions

Why do we have them?

With the dissolution of the House, there is no popular chamber to which the Executive government can be responsible; and

Every general election brings with it the possibility of a change of government.



Caretaker Conventions

They are conventions, NOT LAW, therefore actions are influenced by:

- Judgement
- Precedent
- Common sense



Conventions do not prevent the ordinary day to day business of government.

Governments can still take decisive action to deal with emergencies.

Caretaker Conventions

By convention, during the caretaker period, the government avoids:

- Making **major policy decisions** to commit an incoming government.
- Making **significant appointments**.
- Entering into **major contracts of undertakings**.



2022 Caretaker Conventions – in Practice

- How do we decide what a major policy decision is?
- How do we decide what a significant appointment?



2022 Caretaker Conventions – in Practice

- Procurement – Major contracts



- International visits and negotiations

2022 Caretaker Conventions – Defence sensitives

- Need to maintain apolitical status.
- Adopt practices that support the conventions.
- Avoid use of Commonwealth resources to advantage one political party over another.



2022 Caretaker Conventions – Policy decisions

- Policy advice generally comes to an end, but we can still provide factual data.
- Ministerial correspondence continues.
- Ministerial submissions - only when necessary.



2022 Caretaker Conventions – Engagement with Ministers' offices

Requests and advice

- ✓ Factual material
- ✓ Operational updates
- ✓ Visit briefs
- ✓ Messages of condolence
- ✓ Major reportable matters of significance
- ✗ Policy advice
 - except urgent operational requests
- ✗ Factual material that uses significant resources and clearly for use in campaign

2022 Caretaker Conventions – Base visits

Base visits can occur for

- Defence Portfolio Ministers, Shadow Defence Ministers and the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of both the Government and the Opposition.
- Senators and Senate candidates may request to visit any establishment in their State.
- Members of and candidates for election to the House of Representatives, where personnel employed at that establishment reside within their electorate.

MECC coordinates visits by parliamentarians

- Contact parliamentary.business@defence.gov.au



2022 Caretaker Conventions – Base visits

Defence bases may be used for political events subject to OMINDEF approval

- Major party political announcements.
- Familiarisation visits or briefings.
- Election campaigning on bases.
- All requests must be submitted via email to:
parliamentary.business@defence.gov.au

Media Coverage allowed:

- On base for Ministers, Party Leaders, Shadows.
- Doorstops off-base for other politicians.



2022 Caretaker Conventions – Media and Social Media

Media

- Minister's Media releases by should be drafted and released by the Ministerial Offices and posted on the Party's website – APH.
- Departmental media releases (cleared internally) can be released.
- Care should be taken to review the nature of information published in media (eg advertisements) that promote government policies (DFR advertising continues) etc....

Social Media

- Defence accounts continue to post apolitical content that relates to departmental activities and existing programs.

2022 Caretaker Conventions – Websites

Websites

Groups and Services with public-facing internet websites should:

- Review content to minimise political content.
- Post a notice “Election-related material is not available on this website. Such material may be found on party political websites.”



2022 Caretaker Conventions – Role of MECC

What is MECC doing to prepare for caretaker:

- Cabinet document muster.
- Finalising outstanding ministerial submissions.
- Providing advice on the Caretaker Conventions.
- Preparing Incoming Government Briefs (red and blue books).
- Tracking election policy commitments.

2022 Caretaker Conventions – Role of MECC

Post-election transition:

- Incoming Government Briefs ready for Minister as soon as result known.
- Briefing program for Ministers and staff.
- Support for setting up Ministerial offices and support to Ministerial staff in Canberra and interstate electoral offices.

2022 Caretaker Conventions – further advice

- PM&C 2021 Guidance on the Caretaker Conventions.
- Website guidance:
 - Intranet: MECC Site - Caretaker Guidance.
 - Internet: www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/government/guidance-caretaker-conventions
 - [Australian Electoral Commission \(aec.gov.au\)](http://aec.gov.au)
- MECC Advice:
 - caretaker.advice@defence.gov.au
- MECC website will not be updated until the Election is announced

Questions

Department of Defence

DEFGRAM 148/2022

Issue date: 11 April 2022

Expiry date: 08 July 2022

CARETAKER ANNOUNCEMENT

Federal Election 2022

1. The Prime Minister has announced that the Federal election will be held on Saturday 21 May 2022.
2. With the Federal election now called the Government has assumed a caretaker role. The caretaker period will continue until the election result is clear or until a new government is appointed should there be a change of government
3. During the caretaker period the business of government continues and ordinary matters of administration still need to be addressed. During this time 'caretaker conventions' aim to ensure that the actions of government do not bind an incoming government and limit its freedom of action.
4. In summary the conventions are that the government should avoid:
 - a. making major policy decisions that are likely to commit an incoming government;
 - b. making significant appointments; and
 - c. entering into major contracts or undertakings.
5. The conventions also apply to international negotiations and visits.
6. During an election, there are specific processes on who can visit Defence bases and establishments.
7. A suite of fact sheets has been developed to assist Defence personnel during the caretaker period. The fact sheets, available at [Caretaker Guidance](#), include:
 - a. Managing Ministerial requests, submissions and correspondence;
 - b. Visits to Defence bases and establishments during an election period by Ministers, Senators, Members and candidates;
 - c. Media, social media and websites;
 - d. Advice for Defence personnel on participation in political activities, and
 - e. Handling contracts, undertakings and international negotiations and visits.

8. For further guidance on caretaker conventions, please contact caretaker.advice@defence.gov.au.

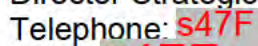
s22

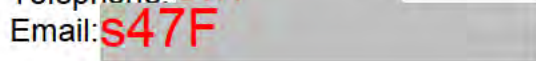

Bree James
Acting Assistant Secretary
Ministerial, Parliamentary and Cabinet Branch

Contact officer:

s47F


Director Strategic Issues Management

Telephone: s47F


Email: s47F


From: s47F
To: [James Bree MS](#); [Bain, Rowena MS](#); [Graham, Bronwyn MRS](#)
Subject: 2022 Federal Election – Caretaker period, IGB, transition staff and Cabinet documents
~~[SEC – OFFICIAL: Sensitive]~~
Date: Monday, 11 April 2022 7:51:01 AM
Attachments: [guidance-caretaker-conventions-2021.pdf](#)

~~OFFICIAL: Sensitive~~

Dear All,

Please note the below.

regards

s47F

IMPORTANT: This email remains the property of the Department of Defence. Unauthorised communication and dealing with the information in the email may be a serious criminal offence. If you have received this email in error, you are requested to contact the sender and delete the email immediately.

From: Yannopoulos, Matt MR
Sent: Monday, 11 April 2022 7:47 AM
To: SLG 3Stars <3stars@dpe.protected.mil.au>; SLG - SES Band 3 - Defence and ASD <slg-sesband3-defenceandasd@dpe.protected.mil.au>
Cc: Moriarty, Greg MR <greg.moriarty@defence.gov.au>; Campbell, Angus GEN <angus.campbell@defence.gov.au>
Subject: 2022 Federal Election – Caretaker period, IGB, transition staff and Cabinet documents
~~[SEC – OFFICIAL: Sensitive]~~

~~OFFICIAL: Sensitive~~

Good Morning,

The Prime Minister has announced that the Federal election will be held on Saturday 21 May 2022. Caretaker will officially commence today at 9.30am Monday 11 April 2022.

Caretaker period

The caretaker period will continue until the election result is clear for a returning government or until a new government is appointed should there be a change of government.

During the caretaker period the business of government continues and ordinary matters of administration still need to be addressed. 'Caretaker conventions' aim to ensure that the Government's actions do not bind an incoming government.

Guidance on the management of Defence business during the caretaker period, including a number of fact sheets, is provided on a dedicated [Caretaker Guidance intranet page](#). MECC will also shortly issue a DEFGRAM.

Further information is also available in the attached PM&C Guidance on Caretaker Conventions.

MECC will be the central point of contact for advice during the caretaker period. A dedicated email (caretaker.advice@defence.gov.au) and hotline (02 5109 0385) has been established for your teams to contact.

s22



If you have any questions in relation to the caretaker period, IGB or the audit of Cabinet documents, please do not hesitate to contact Rowena Bain or Bree James in MECC.

Regards

Matt Yannopoulos
Associate Secretary
Department of Defence

R1-5-B164 | Russell Offices | Canberra | ACT 2600
P: (02) 6265 7911 | s22
E: matt.yannopoulos@defence.gov.au

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Ministerial submissions and briefs

Material relating to the day-to-day business of government can continue to be provided to Ministers. Only submissions that genuinely require the Minister's action or attention should be prepared during caretaker. Issues that may require the Minister's attention include:

- Legal cases
- Incidents
- Death of an ADF member/Letters of condolence
- Tabling of parliamentary documents
- Training exercises
- Quarterly performance reports
- Contract information
- Command arrangements

If you have an urgent Ministerial submission or brief requiring the attention of a Minister, please email defence.ministerials@defence.gov.au with an overview of why the item requires immediate attention and the reason the Minister needs to action during caretaker.

All submissions and briefs are to be submitted to Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication (MECC) Division for clearance through SEC and CDF.

No advance copies are to be provided to the Ministers' offices.

Provision of policy advice to Ministers' offices

In most instances, agencies should decline request from Ministers' Offices for policy advice during the caretaker period. However, it may be appropriate where there is an urgent domestic or international issue where policy advice should be provided to enable responsible ongoing administration or to protect Australia's interests.

Any advice being submitted should directly address the caretaker implications in the 'key issues' section of the submission.

Submissions already with the Ministers' Offices

MECC will return items in the Ministers' offices to the Group and Service coordination teams.

Unsigned Ministerial submissions and briefs

If your Ministerial submission or brief is returned unsigned from the Ministers' offices, MECC recommends closing the PDR. Groups and Services should re-assess these issues following the outcome of the election.

Ministerial correspondence

All correspondence will be actioned on a case by case as advised by the Ministers' offices or will be referred to the department.

- Correspondence for Ministerial signature should be completed within 5 working days.
- Correspondence for departmental signature should be completed within 10 working days.

All correspondence for departmental response will be drafted with standard words for signature by Bree James, Acting Assistant Secretary Ministerial, Parliamentary and Cabinet Branch.

Unsigned Ministerial Correspondence

At the commencement of caretaker, unsigned Ministerial correspondence assigned to the Ministers' offices will be returned to MECC for departmental response, or closed if overtaken by events.

Correspondence already assigned for departmental response should continue to be processed by the responsible line area.

Tasks still with the department

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At the commencement of caretaker MECC will provide the Groups and Services with a list of outstanding requests for briefs or information. Groups and Services should review this list and advise MECC which items should continue and which should be closed. MECC can assist with amending PDMS records.

Requests for information

Requests from Ministers' Offices

Ministers may continue to request factual material or information during the caretaker period.

MECC will review each request from the Ministers' offices and task requests for factual information to the Group or Service through PDMS. The response should only cover the information requested.

Refer direct requests for information from the Ministers' Offices to [MECC](#).

Requests from Parliamentarians

All requests for information from Parliamentarians (including Ministers, Senators, Members or candidates for election) must be referred by MECC to the Office of the Minister for Defence (OMINDEF) for agreement, prior to requested information being provided.

Defence is only to provide factual information to these requests.

Refer direct requests for information from Parliamentarians to [MECC](#).

Requests from other departments

During caretaker Defence should not provide policy advice, even across agencies, unless urgent or operationally critical.

Defence can only provide factual information, without narrative or interpretation.

Refer requests from other agencies to [MECC](#) before responding.

Parliamentary business

Any Questions on Notice (QoNs) taken at Senate Estimates must still be responded to during the caretaker period.

Parliamentary QoNs lapse with the dissolution of the Parliament, although these are often reinstated in the new Parliament. MECC recommends Groups and Services continue to prepare responses to Parliamentary QoNs in preparation for the new Parliament.

Reports of an administrative nature (such as the Defence Annual Report) can be tabled out of session during the caretaker period. If such a report contains information that is likely to be controversial, tabling should be delayed until after the caretaker period.

Responses to outstanding Parliamentary committee reports are to be taken up with the incoming Government. Consultation between Groups and Services on the drafting of committee reports should continue as appropriate during the caretaker period so that Defence is in a position to provide early advice to the incoming Government.

Cabinet documents

Successive governments have accepted the convention that Ministers do not seek access to documents recording the deliberations of Ministers in previous Governments. Cabinet documents are considered confidential to the Government that created them. In light of this, all hard-copy Cabinet documents printed by the Department must be returned to the Cabinet Liaison Services (CLS) section for stocktake purposes; this

includes Cabinet Submissions, Short-form Cabinet Papers, Memoranda, Minutes and Agendas. If the caretaker period results in a change of Government, all Cabinet documents will be destroyed.

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All pre-existing access to Cabinet documents via CabNet+ will be revoked at the commencement of the caretaker period. Temporary access to certain Cabinet documents may be granted in some cases; a compelling business case endorsed by a Band 1/1 Star must be provided in support of any access request.

Contact

If you have any questions or require clarification on any issues, you are encouraged to speak with your chain of command or seek advice through the Caretaker Advice Team.

Caretaker Advice enquiry line: 02 5109 0385

Caretaker Advice email: caretaker.advice@defence.gov.au

This guidance was prepared in accordance with the Guidance on Caretaker Conventions 2021 and in consultation with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Caretaker Factsheet 2: Visits to Defence bases and establishments by Ministers, Senators, Members and candidates during the caretaker period

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This factsheet outlines the process for visits to Defence bases and establishments by Ministers, Senators, Members and candidates during the caretaker period. This includes the approval process for the visit to occur and the protocols which apply for the visit.

Who can visit Defence bases and establishments during an election period?

Management of visits to Defence bases or establishments for elected officials and candidates during the caretaker period is balanced in the level of support and assistance provided to representatives from both the Government and Opposition.

All requests to visit a Defence base or establishment during the caretaker period must seek prior agreement from Defence, including the Office of the Minister for Defence (OMINDEF).

Requests made directly to a Defence base or establishment, or to ADF/APS personnel, must be referred to Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication (MECC) Division in the Associate Secretary Group who will liaise with OMINDEF to seek their approval for the visit to occur.

- Defence Portfolio Ministers, Shadow Defence Ministers, and the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of both the Government and the Opposition are allowed to visit any Defence base or establishment.
- Senators and Senate candidates may request to visit a Defence base or establishment in their State or Territory.
- Members of and candidates for election to the House of Representatives may request to visit Defence bases or establishments in the electorate in which they are standing, or in their neighbouring electorates where personnel employed at that establishment reside within their electorate.

Requesting a visit to a Defence base or establishment during an Election Period

MECC is the central coordination point for all visits during the caretaker period. MECC will:

- Liaise with OMINDEF to seek agreement prior to the visit occurring;
- Provide guidance to the requesting party and personnel at Defence bases and establishments on the process and protocol on visits; and
- Ensure the Secretary and Chief of the Defence Force are aware of all approved visits.

A minimum of five working days' notice should be provided by the requesting party to ensure the visit does not interfere with operational requirements or the normal running of a Defence base or establishment, and to ensure appropriate time for approval to be sought.

The following information should be provided to MECC to enable engagement with OMINDEF:

- Purpose of the visit, the intended audience and topics to be discussed;
- A complete list of all proposed attendees, including the capacity in which they are attending. Please also include details of any accompanying staff, media or other attendees;
- Any relevant background, including history of previous events or sensitivities; and
- Any intention to conduct photography or videography.

What activities can be undertaken during an Election Period?

Defence bases and establishments may be used for political events under the conditions outlined below. OMINDEF agreement must be sought prior to and on each occasion.

Official Defence functions, such as ANZAC Day Commemorations and Unit events, can continue as normal. If Ministers, Senators, Members or candidates are invited to official Defence functions, please ensure adherence to the conditions below.

Major party political announcements

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Defence Portfolio Ministers, Leaders and Deputy Leaders of Government, the Opposition, minor party spokespersons on Defence matters may request to visit a Defence base or establishment for the purposes of making an election commitment or another major announcement.

Imagery taken during visits to Defence bases or establishments must be approved by Defence and OMINDEF prior to use. Imagery should not give the impression that Defence personnel are promoting Government, Opposition, or minor parties' policies or are involved in political commentary/announcements.

Familiarisation visits or briefings

Parliamentarians and candidates may seek to visit a Defence base or establishment for the purposes of a familiarisation tour and a briefing on the role and functions of the base or establishment.

Any briefings that are conducted during a visit will be at the UNOFFICIAL level.

Defence personnel will not express opinions on Government policies, policy options or matters of a party-political nature. The role of Defence personnel is to provide factual and background information relating to roles, functions and capabilities.

Election campaigning on bases

Visits for campaigning purposes are not to interfere with the functions of the base or establishment. For this reason, no campaign activities are to take place within working areas.

Campaign activities by parliamentarians or candidates for election may be conducted within recreational or single-living-quarter areas, and where married quarters are situated within establishment boundaries and are not normally accessible to the public, with the specific approval of the Officer in Charge of the establishment.

Base commanders (Base Support Managers and Senior ADF Officers) should consider whether election campaigning might better be facilitated by an area, such as a theatre, being made available out of working hours to parliamentarians or candidates to address personnel attending on a voluntary basis.

Where a candidate seeks permission to enter a base or establishment for the purpose of addressing personnel, or for a briefing, MECC must be immediately advised. Where a candidate simply wishes to enter to distribute election material, the Officer in Charge can give permission for this to occur.

Polling places

Where polling places are located within Defence base or establishment boundaries, candidates and their booth workers will be given access to the polling places on Election Day and freedom of opportunity to issue how to vote cards and to conduct scrutineering activities.

Base commanders should ensure arrangements are made to secure the base and meet WHS requests appropriately.

Official visits during an election campaign

For major official functions, such as troop farewells and welcome-home parades, Defence will sponsor and organise an appropriate event in the normal manner.

It will generally be appropriate for Government Defence Minister/s, their Opposition counterparts, and the member or candidate of both major political parties to be invited.

Media coverage

Accompanying media will be allowed access to Defence bases and establishments during visits by the Prime Minister, the Opposition Leader, their respective Deputies, the Minister for Defence, the Minister for Defence Industry, the Minister for Defence Personnel, the Assistant Minister for Defence, and Opposition counterparts.

Media will generally not be allowed to accompany other parliamentarians or candidates for election onto Defence bases or establishments.

Media doorstops should occur outside of the Defence establishment or base boundaries. Please contact Defence Media via email at media@defence.gov.au if this is requested.

Media are permitted on base during official visits or functions hosted by Defence in accordance with normal procedures. Defence personnel should not provide comment on or discuss policy announcements.

Imagery

To comply with the Caretaker Conventions, imagery taken during visits to Defence establishments must not give the impression that Defence personnel are promoting Government, Opposition, or minor parties' policies or are involved in political commentary/announcements.

Audio recordings, photography and/or videography is not permitted unless prior agreement has been provided by OMINDEF. This includes taking recordings and imagery as well as using them in the media, on social media or online. Requests to take photos or to record audio or video should be emailed to digital.media@defence.gov.au

ADF/APS personnel are prohibited from being part of the audience during policy launches/announcements. Where it is unavoidable, personnel should not be identifiable.

Other parliamentarians or candidates are permitted to be accompanied by a small group of advisers which may include a staff member with a camera/smartphone. Candidates should advise their escorts on base that they wish to take imagery and seek permission to ensure that appropriate security is observed concerning Defence equipment and personnel.

Examples of acceptable imagery of Defence personnel include Defence personnel:

- Greeting or providing a familiarisation tour/briefing to the visitor; or
- Demonstrating the features of Defence equipment in footage that is clearly separate from the filming of the party political proceedings.

Contact

Parliamentary Business Team, MECC

Email: parliamentary.business@defence.gov.au

This guidance was prepared in accordance with the Guidance on Caretaker Conventions 2021 and in consultation with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

How should media be handled?

Media releases and speeches

With the exception of significant or exceptional matters or incidents, media releases or speeches by Ministers should be drafted and released by the Ministers' offices and posted on the Party's website.

Defence can provide factual information to Ministers' offices to assist with media releases and speeches if requested.

Media releases and transcripts can continue to be prepared for exceptional matters and for some official Defence events or functions. These may be issued as either a Departmental or Ministerial release, as appropriate, and posted via normal Departmental channels.

Ministerial transcripts can continue to be provided where the speaking engagement relates **primarily** to the Minister's portfolio. Political elements of the transcript are to be excluded from any transcript request.

Departmental releases may continue to be released but must be cleared through Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication (MECC) Division's Media and Information Disclosure Branch in the usual way.

Media inquiries

Media queries relating to significant portfolio matters will be approved by the Ministers' offices. Media queries relating to routine departmental matters will be finalised within the department and provided to the relevant Minister's office for information.

Questions related to policy issues or election commitments should be answered by the standard response:

'As this is currently an election issue, it would be inappropriate for the Department of Defence to make any comment'. Please direct your enquiry to the relevant Ministerial office.

Should any matters such as operational incidents arise during the period that attract media interest, Defence will consult with the Ministers' offices in the usual way.

Advertising and information campaigns

Care should be taken to review the nature of information published in any Defence magazine, newspaper, information bulletin and social media presences. Active distribution of material should be avoided if it promotes Government policies or emphasises the achievements of the Government or a Minister.

Campaigns that are of a routine nature, such as Defence Force Recruiting, would normally continue throughout the caretaker period, with the agreement of the Opposition. Groups or Services should contact MECC to seek advice from Ministerial Offices prior to campaigns being released.

Digital Media

During the caretaker period, Defence will continue to post imagery to the Defence image gallery for use in accordance with the [Defence copyright statement](#).

Defence photographers might take imagery of Parliamentarians or political candidates at Defence establishments where visits relate to official portfolio business or operational matters that are apolitical in nature and in the public interest. Release of this imagery to the respective Parliamentarian or candidate is subject to MECC approval and associated conditions of use. Imagery of Parliamentarians or political candidates will not be published to the Defence image gallery unless the aforementioned conditions are met.

Use of photography and vision taken independently by Parliamentarians or political candidates for visits to Defence establishments or otherwise involving Defence personnel must be approved by MECC before being used in the public domain.

Imagery is to be submitted to digital.media@defence.gov.au for MECC review.

Social Media

During the caretaker period, Defence accounts will continue to post apolitical content that relates to departmental activities and existing programs.

Defence social media accounts must adhere to the caretaker principle that APS and ADF personnel have no involvement in any political matters.

All staff who manage a social media account must review its functions and settings at the start of the caretaker period to identify ways to minimise political content associated with their presence, even if not directly attributable to the Group/Service. To achieve this, account managers will:

- Exercise care when posting new content to the account for the duration of the caretaker period,
- Review hashtags and handles on posts, retweets and shares to avoid inadvertently linking to political material, and
- Closely monitor public contributions and hide, delete or block comments that are political in nature, or disable the comments function.

Defence social media accounts will publish the following pinned posts:



Twitter (thread) [pinned tweet]

With the announcement of a federal election, the #AusGov is now in a caretaker period. #AusGov resources are not used to communicate political material. This account is moderated to ensure political material is not placed on the site. <1/2> [pinned tweet]

More information can be accessed here: [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#) <2/2>.

Facebook and LinkedIn [pinned post]

With the announcement of a federal election, the #AusGov is now in a caretaker period. #AusGov resources are not used to communicate political material. This account is moderated to ensure political material is not placed on the site. More information can be accessed here: [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#).

Instagram and YouTube [in text in every social media post/video]

[Post description]

With the announcement of a federal election, the #AusGov is now in a caretaker period. #AusGov resources are not used to communicate political material. This account is moderated to ensure political material is not placed on the site. More information can be accessed here [\[caretaker webpage\]](#).

[Relevant post hashtags]

Websites

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During the caretaker period additional steps are required to ensure Defence resources are not used to support any particular political party.

Groups and Services that own public-facing internet websites should review their websites at the beginning of the caretaker period to identify ways to minimise political content associated with their presence, even if not directly attributable to the Group/Service. This could include:

- Ensuring there are no recent Ministerial statements that include negative references to the Opposition; and
- Checking the wording of any icons and links on their websites to ensure that they cannot be interpreted as promoting a Government policy.

Groups and Services should only add the following material to their websites during the caretaker period:

- Portfolio-related announcements consistent with usual practice,
- Purely factual material, and
- Information on existing policies and programs, unless the information includes attacks on the Opposition or other political material.

Groups and Services should also post a notice on their public facing website:

- “Election-related material is not available on this website. Such material may be found on party political websites.”

Contact

If you have any questions or require clarification on any issues, you are encouraged to speak with your chain of command or seek advice through the Caretaker Advice Team.

Caretaker Advice enquiry line: 02 5109 0385

Caretaker Advice email: caretaker.advice@defence.gov.au

This guidance was prepared in accordance with the Guidance on Caretaker Conventions 2021 and in consultation with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.



Can I be involved in political activities?

Defence supports the rights of ADF and APS personnel to engage in political activities as Australian citizens. It is essential that Defence personnel remain politically neutral. In participating in political activities, your and Defence's ability to impartially service the Government of the day must not be called into question. Defence personnel must avoid giving the impression that any political activities are undertaken in an official Defence capacity.

In particular, Defence personnel need to be mindful not to:

- Use your rank or Defence position when identifying, describing or referring to yourself;
- Wear uniform or items that could be used to identify the individual as being part of the Defence organisation; or
- Engage in conduct in such a manner that would identify Defence with a political party.

Can I be a candidate for election?

If any Defence personnel intend to be a candidate for election, they must carefully review and comply with existing Defence policies on these issues.

ADF personnel should refer to the guidance set down in:

- [MILPERSMAN](#) Part 7 Chapter 5 – Political Activities of Defence Members; and
- [PACMAN](#) Chapter 2 Part 4 – Members who are candidates for election.

ADF personnel must resign or transfer to the inactive Reserve in order to become a candidate for election. A current member of the active Reserve may become a parliamentary candidate, provided they cease any continuous full-time service or part-time service in which they are engaged.

APS personnel should refer to the guidance set down in:

- [DPG Policy No. 6.1.2](#) – Political activities of APS employees.

APS employees must resign from the APS before the date of their nomination to the Divisional Returning Office (for the House of Representatives), or the Australian Electoral Office (for the Senate).

In the case of **External Service Providers**, contesting an election while being engaged and providing services to Defence, regards must be made to their specific terms of service. Careful judgement must be exercised in determining case by case whether it is appropriate that their engagement should continue.

Defence personnel who will be candidates for election but who have not yet formally nominated with the Australian Electoral Commission and taken the necessary steps to remove the constitutional restrictions can still make public comments and participate in political activities as a private citizen. They should still adhere to the requirements and responsibilities listed under the existing Defence Instructions.

If not elected, there are provisions for Defence personnel to be reinstated into the ADF or re-engaged with the APS. Be aware that there are certain requirements and time limits within which this needs to be completed.

Contact

If you have any questions or require clarification on any issues, you are encouraged to speak with your chain of command or seek advice through the Caretaker Advice Team.

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Caretaker Advice email: caretaker.advice@defence.gov.au

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Are contracts and undertakings affected during caretaker?

Defence can continue to progress contracts and issue requests for tender during the caretaker period. However, major contracts are not normally progressed through to signature and, where a major tender is to be advertised, potential tenderers are warned about the implications of the election and the possibility that the tender might not be completed. The default position should be to defer such contracts until after the election.

When considering whether a contract or undertaking qualifies as 'major', consider the dollar value of the commitment and whether the commitment involves a routine matter of administration or the commitment implements or entrenches a policy, program or administrative structure which is politically contentious. A further consideration is whether the commitment requires Ministerial approval.

What is the definition of 'major contracts'?

There are a number of considerations that may impact the answer, including:

- The value of the contract;
- Whether the Minister is required to give approval for the contract, or gave approval prior to the Caretaker period commencing;
- If the value is significant, whether the incoming Government could potentially not agree to the contract; and
- Whether there may be any political sensitivities associated with the contract.

Does caretaker mean there is a staff freeze?

Routine APS recruitment, including advertising, selection process and offer/on-boarding (ongoing or non-ongoing, engagement or extension) can normally continue during the caretaker period subject to the usual APS rules and internal departmental requirements. However, line areas should carefully consider the need for the recruitment action in caretaker, noting that an incoming Government's priorities may change and Defence might be expected to adjust/rearrange itself to meet those new priorities.

What happens with international negotiations and visits?

The Government ordinarily seeks to defer such negotiations or adopts observer status until the end of the caretaker period. If it is necessary for Ministers to participate fully in negotiations, other parties in the negotiations should either be advised that any outcomes will need to be authorised by the incoming Government or Ministers could seek the Opposition's agreement to negotiating positions. Groups and Services should provide any requested advice with this in mind.

The Prime Minister will, if necessary, determine whether visits by foreign dignitaries involving Government hospitality should proceed during the caretaker period.

Contact

If you have any questions or require clarification on any issues, you are encouraged to speak with your chain of command or seek advice through the Caretaker Advice Team.

Caretaker Advice enquiry line: 02 5109 0385

Caretaker Advice email: caretaker.advice@defence.gov.au

This guidance was prepared in accordance with the Guidance on Caretaker Conventions 2021 and in consultation with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

From: [James, Bree MS](#)
To: [MECC-MP Branch](#)
Cc: [Graham, Bronwyn MRS](#); [Funnell, Emma MS](#)
Subject: Caretaker has now commenced [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Monday, 11 April 2022 9:37:44 AM
Attachments: [DG148_22.pdf](#)

OFFICIAL

Good morning all

As the Prime Minister has announced that the Federal election will be held on Saturday 21 May 2022. Caretaker has officially commenced at 09.30am today.

The caretaker period will continue until the election result is clear for a returning government or until a new government is appointed should there be a change of government.

Guidance on the management of Defence business during the caretaker period, including a number of fact sheets, is provided on a dedicated [Caretaker Guidance intranet page](#). There was a DEFGRAM published this morning outlining details and can located at:

As you know, a dedicated email (caretaker.advice@defence.gov.au) and hotline (02 5109 0385) has been established for the department to contact so please ensure you all provide those details if you are approached from anyone in the department for specific advice during this time.

If you have anything highly sensitive or contentious brought to your attention, you can contact me directly for advice on **s22**, please do not wait to email me. Just give me a call to discuss.

Kind Regards,

Ms Bree James
A/Assistant Secretary

Ministerial, Parliamentary and Cabinet Branch
Department of Defence
Russell Offices, R1 - Level 5 – A047 | PO Box 7902 | CANBERRA BC ACT 2610
P: **s22** E: bree.james@defence.gov.au

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**Australian Government****Defence****MINISTERIAL TALKING POINTS****Issue Title****Background**

Key issues only including DPMs accountabilities and key risks. Keep whole document to two pages

Talking Points

- -
- -

Contact officer:

Contact officer phone:

Clearance	Name	Appointment	Date and time
Cleared by: (Group/Service)			
MECC Embedded Communication Director			
Has a copy been provided to Defence Media for Information?			