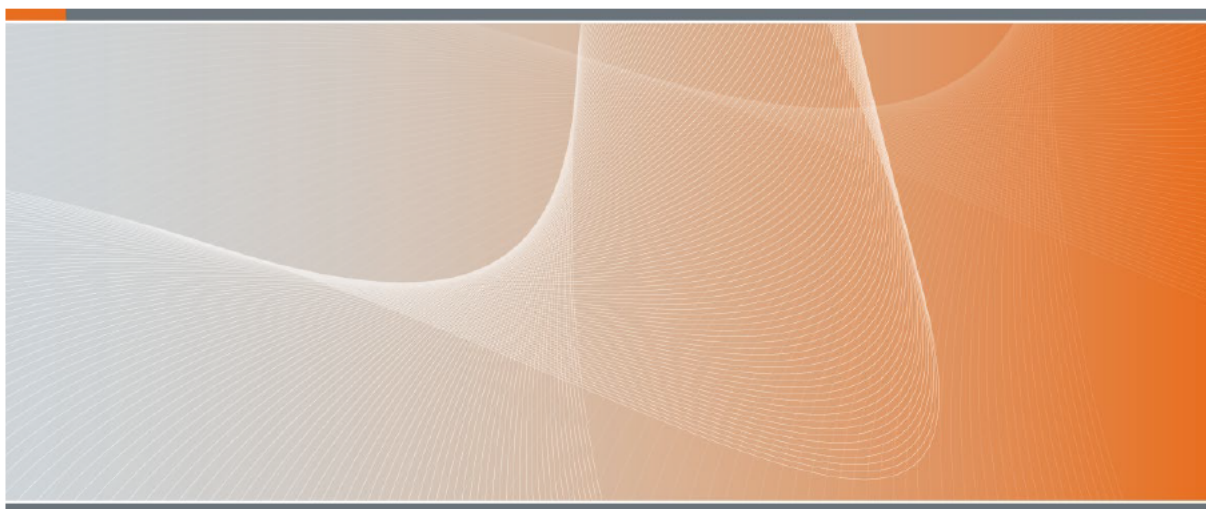




Australian Government
Department of Defence

DEFENCE MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION POLICY



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Steven Groves
Acting Associate Secretary

Department of Defence
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Defence Media and Communication Policy

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DEFENCE MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION POLICY

Issued by:	This Defence Media and Communication Policy (the 'Policy') has been issued by the Associate Secretary.
Purpose:	<p>This Policy describes Defence's agreed approach for engaging with the media and governs all media and communication activities. This Policy is supported by a range of products on the Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication Division intranet page, including the Defence Communication Strategy and the Defence Media and Communication Guide, which must be read and adhered to, in conjunction with this Policy to enable Defence personnel to meet the expected outcomes.</p>
Scope and applicability:	<p>This Policy is an administrative policy framework document. It applies to all Defence personnel.</p> <p>The terms of a relevant contract may extend the application of this Policy to a person/s engaged under a contract.</p> <p>Defence Instruction – Administrative policy should be read in conjunction with this Policy. In accordance with Defence Instruction – Administrative Policy, the Secretary and the CDF expect Defence personnel to comply with this Policy.</p> <p>Defence personnel who award or manage contracts should consider whether there is a specific and documented reason to include the requirement to comply. If so, include such terms in the contract.</p>
Management:	This Policy will be reviewed within five years from its date of issue. A review may occur sooner to ensure it continues to meet the intended policy outcome/s.
Availability:	This Policy is available at the Defence policy documents website. Its currency cannot be guaranteed if sourced from other locations. It is not available for public release.
Policy domain:	Administration and Governance.
Accountable officer:	Associate Secretary.
Policy owner:	First Assistant Secretary Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication.
Policy contact:	Assistant Secretary Media and Communication.
Cancellation:	The publication of this Policy cancels any earlier editions of the Media and Communication Policy.
Definitions:	Definitions that apply to this Policy are at Annex A .

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DEFENCE MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Defence aims to build public confidence and support for its mission, priorities, policies, activities and operational outcomes through the provision of effective communication and media engagement. This Defence Media and Communication Policy (this 'Policy') enhances Defence's reputation by enabling proactive, high quality, and well-coordinated media and communication products and activities in support of our ministers, the Government and the department.

1.2 Defence's media and communication function operates on a centralised control, decentralised execution model to deliver against the [Defence Communication Strategy](#) in accordance with this Policy.

1.3 This Policy acknowledges the unique and distinct Service brands, and the fundamental link to recruitment and warfighting efforts. This Policy supports Defence to manage its reputation through effective media and public engagement, with appropriate consideration of the associated risks.

POLICY RATIONALE

1.4 Public awareness and understanding of Defence policies and activities:

- a. builds public confidence and support for Defence's mission, priorities, policies, activities and operational outcomes; and
- b. strengthens Defence's credibility and reputation.

1.5 Unauthorised disclosure of information and online behaviour of Defence personnel can:

- a. pose a risk to national security;
- b. harm Defence personnel, information and national interests;
- c. negatively impact Defence's reputation, Australia's international relationships, and the level of confidence the Australian community, the Government and industry has in Defence; and
- d. put Defence personnel and their friends and family at risk of targeting from criminal and terrorist organisations, ideologically motivated groups, foreign intelligence services and other individuals seeking information about Defence capabilities.

1.6 Unauthorised [endorsement](#) of, and association with, [external parties](#), real or perceived, may compromise Defence's impartiality, integrity and credibility.

1.7 The participation of the Prime Minister or a Defence portfolio minister in Defence events or activities provides the opportunity to reinforce strategic messaging.

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1.8 Provision of accurate and authorised information to journalists and media organisations in a timely manner may help to prevent public perceptions of Defence being disproportionately shaped by speculation, misinformation or unbalanced reporting.

1.9 Achievement of media and communication outcomes will enhance confidence in Defence's ability to support its strategic priorities.

1.10 Effective, timely and authorised communication during a [crisis](#) or [issue](#):

- a. protects life, public safety and property;
- b. preserves the integrity of the Department of Defence and the Australian Defence Force (ADF); and
- c. enables the continued operation of Defence's core business.

1.11 Consistent application of Defence's brands helps:

- a. tell our story;
- b. uphold our reputation;
- c. enhance awareness of the work we do; and
- d. influence how Defence is perceived and valued by its people, stakeholders and the community.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1.12 Defence personnel comply with this Policy and requirements of the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#).

1.13 Defence personnel respond to requests for media and communication products and activities within assigned deadlines.

1.14 Where appropriate, media are provided opportunities to engage in what we do, including interacting with Defence senior leadership and being embedded in regional exercises and deployments.

1.15 Information provided by Defence is accurate, represents a whole-of-Defence view, and is aligned with [Defence Values and Behaviours](#), policies and strategic communication objectives and plans.

1.16 Defence personnel actively incorporate the One Defence ethos by engaging early and effectively with relevant areas across the department to provide a single, well-coordinated and consistent enterprise response.

1.17 Effective, high-quality and well-coordinated media and communication products and activities in support of our ministers, the Government and the department that:

- a. articulates the Government's defence policy and strategy; and

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- b. builds public confidence, understanding and support for its mission, priorities, policies and activities and operational outcomes.

1.18 Defence's credibility and reputation is strengthened through proactive and open communication and engagement with the media and the public.

1.19 Media and public engagement is authorised, apolitical and complies with legislation, policy and guidance. Defence protects classified and private information, operational security, international relationships and the safety of Defence personnel and their families. Defence personnel do not criticise or question the role or policy of the Government and the department to the media (including social media) or any other organisations.

1.20 Ministers and senior leaders are provided opportunities and support to communicate the work of Defence.

1.21 Defence's communication activities are evaluated to learn lessons and inform future communication efforts.

1.22 Defence brands are applied consistently; encapsulate who we are as an organisation; encompass our ethos and [Defence Values and Behaviours](#); and embody our traditions and history.

1.23 Defence maintains impartiality and protects its credibility by not providing any express or explicit [endorsements](#) of any [external party](#), its products, services or personnel, except when authorised in very exceptional circumstances.

1.24 Defence personnel understand their communication responsibilities and accountabilities.

DEFENCE MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION POLICY PRINCIPLES

1.25 The principles described in this Policy inform Defence personnel when engaging with the media and drafting media and communication products. The application of these principles, in conjunction with adherence to the requirements of the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#), will ensure Defence meets the expected outcomes of this Policy.

PRINCIPLE 1 – RELEASING OFFICIAL CONTENT OR MAKING PUBLIC COMMENT ON BEHALF OF DEFENCE MUST BE AUTHORISED

1.26 Defence personnel must only release [official content](#) or make [public comment](#) on behalf of Defence that is:

- a. authorised for release in accordance with clearance authorities set out in the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#);
- b. not protected by a security classification, or a protective, confidentiality or privacy marking;

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- c. not likely to compromise operational security, an individual's privacy without their prior consent, Australia's international relationships, commercial-in-confidence, the safety of Defence personnel or their families, or risk the waiving of legal professional privilege;
- d. compliant with relevant legislation, policy and guidance¹;
- e. consistent with the position of the Government and the department;
- f. apolitical in nature and will not be used for political purposes in any way contrary to Defence's apolitical standing;
- g. about a major matter of policy, procurement or Service deployment which has been previously announced by the Government;
- h. not speculation; and
- i. in accordance with the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#).

MANAGEMENT OF MEDIA ENQUIRIES

1.27 Unless previously authorised, Defence personnel approached by the media for comment, must not comment on the matter and immediately refer the enquiry to [Defence Media](#). Requests from the public are to be referred to the [Defence website](#) and suspicious contacts are to be reported to the [Defence Security and Vetting Service](#).

DEFENCE MEDIA CONTACT REGISTER

1.28 Centralised visibility of contacts between journalists and media organisations with Defence officials supports a coordinated enterprise approach to Defence's strategic messaging as well as Defence's information security practices.

1.29 All Defence personnel must record Defence-related media interactions in the [Defence Media Contact Register](#) unless an authorised exemption applies, as described in the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#).

SOCIAL MEDIA

1.30 [Official Defence social media accounts](#) must comply with Defence's strategic messaging and [Defence Values and Behaviours](#).

¹ Some legislative schemes provide for release of information separately to this Policy and the Defence Media and Communication Guide. Where those schemes are used, consideration should be given to whether the Defence Media and Communication Guide might also be followed, to deal with any public comment that follows the release of information.

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1.31 Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication (MECC) Division will set the overarching policy framework for, and provide the necessary support to manage and monitor [official Defence social media accounts](#).

1.32 Groups and Services are responsible for managing their respective [official social media accounts](#), as described in the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#) and the [Social Media Playbook](#).

DIGITAL MEDIA

1.33 Defence digital media (including [imagery](#) and audio) intended for public release must be cleared through approved and appropriate internal channels before release, as described in the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#).

1.34 MECC is the central coordinating authority within Defence that receives public affairs [imagery](#) and associated products and coordinates final clearances for public release.

1.35 Outlined in section 82 of the [Defence Act 1903](#), anyone making a sketch, drawing, photograph, picture or painting of any [Defence installation](#) in Australia must obtain prior approval from the authorised decision maker in Defence, as described in the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#).

1.36 [Imagery](#) for public release must remain an accurate representation of the subject matter. Minor adjustments of digital [imagery](#) such as cropping and tone/colour are permitted provided the integrity of the original image and context is maintained.

1.37 In circumstances where the original or alternative images are not suitable for public release, minor alternations to images are permitted only where it is necessary to manage operational and national security risks, protect the privacy of individuals or prevent viewer distress. [Imagery](#) is not to be altered for any other reason unless authorised in accordance with the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#).

1.38 Where an image is altered, the reason for the alteration and the name of the official authorising the alteration is to be clearly recorded in the associated metadata in accordance with Defence's handheld [imagery metadata standard](#). The original unaltered image is to be appropriately classified and retained as part of Defence's official records.

ENTERTAINMENT AND NON-NEWS PROJECTS

1.39 [Entertainment and non-news projects](#) provide an opportunity for Defence to promote its strategic messaging beyond news media channels.

1.40 MECC will consider all requests for Defence support to [entertainment and non-news projects](#) on a discretionary basis against a range of criteria, as described in the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#).

- a. The lead Group or Service is responsible for managing approved entertainment and non-news projects, as described in the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#).

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DEFENCE ENDORSEMENT OF EXTERNAL PARTIES

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GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS

1.46 Defence's government advertising and information campaigns will comply with the [Australian Government Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by non-corporate Commonwealth entities](#) and the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#).

ACCESSIBILITY

1.47 Defence's communication efforts will take into account accessibility considerations for our diverse audiences.

UNAUTHORISED DISCLOSURE

1.48 Unauthorised disclosures of classified, personal or sensitive information to the media or public can:

- a. pose a risk to national security;
- b. harm Defence personnel, information and Australia's national interests;

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- c. negatively impact Defence's reputation and the level of confidence the Australian community, the Government and industry has in Defence;
- d. put Australia's international relationships and information sharing arrangements at risk; and
- e. put Defence personnel and their friends and family at risk of targeting from criminal and terrorist organisations, ideologically motivated groups, foreign intelligence services and other individuals seeking information about Defence capabilities.

1.49 Unauthorised disclosures will be reported to the Defence Security and Vetting Service for investigation and where appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken. Matters will be referred to the Australian Federal Police where an incident involves actual or suspected criminal activity, such as the unauthorised disclosure of classified information.

PRINCIPLE 2 – COMMUNICATION IS RESPONSIVE

1.50 Defence personnel must respond to requests regarding media and communication products and activities as a high priority and within directed deadlines.

PRINCIPLE 3 – MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE PROVIDED

1.51 Where appropriate, Defence will proactively seek and provide opportunities for media to engage in what we do, including interacting with Defence senior leadership and being embedded in operations, exercises and activities.

PRINCIPLE 4 – COMMUNICATION IS COORDINATED

1.52 Defence personnel actively incorporate the One Defence ethos by engaging early and effectively with all relevant areas across the department to provide a single, coordinated and consistent enterprise response.

1.53 MECC is the coordinating authority for apolitical media and communication for Defence portfolio ministers and the Defence enterprise.

PRINCIPLE 5 – DEFENCE SPOKESPEOPLE ARE TRAINED

1.54 MECC and military public affairs officers will provide appropriate media training and public affairs support for authorised [Defence spokespeople](#), as described in the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#).

PRINCIPLE 6 – EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES ARE REGISTERED, PLANNED AND EVALUATED

1.55 All Defence operations, exercises, events and activities that have actual or potential media or public interest must be recorded in the [Defence Activity and Engagement Tracker](#) (the 'Tracker') by the lead Group or Service within assigned deadlines as described in the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#).

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1.56 The lead Group or Service is to ensure that high-profile, large-scale, priority or significant Defence operations, exercises, events and activities that have actual or potential media or public interest are to have an appropriately cleared communication plan, military public affairs plan or [public affairs guidance](#), where appropriate, that aligns with the [Defence Communication Strategy](#) and is prepared within assigned deadlines, as described in the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#).

1.57 Consistent with the [Defence Communication Strategy](#), high-profile, large-scale, priority or significant communication activities will be evaluated against the achievement of communication objectives in the communication plan, military public affairs plans or [public affairs guidance](#).

1.58 Evaluation of activities will be conducted by the lead Group or Service and finalised within assigned deadlines, as described in the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#).

**PRINCIPLE 7 – MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION SUPPORT FOR THE
PRIME MINISTER AND DEFENCE PORTFOLIO MINISTERS IS
PRIORITISED**

1.59 All Defence personnel will prioritise media and communication planning and support for all Defence events attended by the Prime Minister, a Defence portfolio minister, or another Government minister representing, ensuring they are at the centre of planning and support for these events, as described in the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#).

PRINCIPLE 8 – DEFENCE BRANDING IS CONSISTENT

1.60 Defence will apply its authorised brands, emblems, badges, symbols and iconography consistently and in compliance with relevant legislation, policy, branding principles and guidelines.

1.61 The Associate Secretary is the authority for the Department of Defence brand, which is to be used in accordance with the [Guidelines on the use of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms](#), issued by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

1.62 The Vice Chief of the Defence Force (VCDF) is the authority for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) brand and the respective Service Chiefs are the authority for the Navy, Army and Air Force brands.

**PRINCIPLE 9 – DEFENCE PERSONNEL PARTICIPATING IN UNOFFICIAL
MEDIA ACTIVITIES WILL COMPLY WITH SECURITY AND
PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

SOCIAL MEDIA

1.63 Defence personnel using unofficial social media accounts will uphold their security and professional responsibilities as described in the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#) and the [Personal Social Media Guide](#); and comply with legislation, policy, guidance and [Defence Values and Behaviours](#).

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ENTERTAINMENT AND NON-NEWS PROJECTS

1.64 Defence personnel who are considering participating in [entertainment and non-news projects](#) in a private capacity (not on behalf of Defence) must obtain appropriate approval prior to submitting an application to an [external party](#), conducting an audition or appearing in an [entertainment and non-news project](#) irrespective of whether their participation is undertaken while off-duty or on leave, as described in the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#).

KEY ROLES, FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.65 **MECC Division**, within the Associate Secretary Group, is the coordinating authority for apolitical media and communication for Defence portfolio ministers and the Defence enterprise. MECC provides media, communication and public affairs expertise and services across the department to support Defence leaders, managers, commanders and personnel to promote Defence and protect and enhance its reputation.

1.66 **Military Public Affairs (MPA)** capabilities support MECC to deliver against the [Defence Communication Strategy](#). The primary role of MPA elements within Defence is to support Defence operations, exercises and single-Service public affairs outcomes.

1.67 Where media and communication assistance is requested by MECC to support ministerial requirements, Service Chiefs are to prioritise and task their MPA capabilities accordingly.

1.68 **Commanders and Managers** are responsible for media and communication activities as described in the [Defence Media and Communication Guide](#), including:

- a. providing accurate and appropriately cleared information when required and authorised;
- b. facilitating access by journalists and media organisations to Defence personnel and activities when required and authorised;
- c. prioritising media and communication planning and support for all Defence events attended by the Prime Minister, a Defence portfolio minister, or another Government minister representing;
- d. delivering media and communication activities and responses within required timeframes;
- e. providing welfare support to individuals subjected to negative media [commentary](#) or coverage; and
- f. providing welfare support to individuals subjected to negative media commentary or coverage.

1.69 Group Heads and Service Chiefs are responsible for:

- a. managing the reputation of their respective Group or Service;

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- b. managing and coordinating their respective media events;
- c. managing crisis and issues relevant to their Group or Service; and
- d. managing all elements of approved entertainment or non-news projects.

Annex:

A Definitions

ANNEX A

DEFINITIONS

The following terms are defined in [Defence Instruction – Administrative policy](#):

Accountable officer
Administrative policy
Administrative policy framework
A person/s engaged under a contract
Australian Public Servant employee
Commander
Defence
Defence civilian
Defence locally engaged employee
Defence member
Defence personnel
Framework documents
Manager
Period of effect
Personal information
Policy domain
Policy owner
Provision
Sensitive information
Supervisor

For the purpose of this Policy, the following additional definitions apply:

Commentary	Anything serving to illustrate a point; comment.
Communication	A process that conveys shared meaning between individuals or between organisations and individuals.
Content	Information contained in any communication, whether in audio, text, graphics, images etc.

Crisis

A [crisis](#) in Defence is an unplanned event, situation or matter of public concern that requires targeted attention, management, intervention or response beyond business-as-usual processes. A [crisis](#) is likely to occur quickly and has the potential to disrupt Defence's normal operations and activities. [Crisis](#) may undermine our reputation or challenge the public's sense of appropriateness, tradition, values, safety, security or the integrity of Defence. The focus of Defence's [crisis](#) communication efforts is to quickly and effectively address stakeholders, minimise physical and reputational damage, and return to normal business.

Defence installation

As defined in the [Defence Act 1903](#).

Defence spokespeople

Defence spokespeople are those authorised to speak on behalf of Defence. They are a subject matter expert for the topic of the media engagement, who voluntarily agree to speak on behalf of Defence.

Embedded MECC communication team

Communication teams that are part of Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication (MECC) Division, who are embedded within each Group and Service.

Endorsement

[Endorsement](#) occurs when the Department of Defence provides its support publicly to an external party (such as an organisation, including charitable and not-for-profit organisations; private company; defence industry; individual; product, including [publications](#); service; event or activity etc.) that may, or may not, result in a commercial benefit.

An [endorsement](#) may encompass verbal or written statements, such as a testimonial; [imagery](#) of Defence personnel, equipment or facilities; Defence logos; or any other characteristic that may lead people to believe there is an association between Defence and an [external party](#).

Entertainment and non-news project

[Entertainment and non-news projects](#) include, but are not limited to:

- a. television and radio programs (including participation in reality programs and competitions), scripts, short films, feature films, documentaries;
- b. corporate videos, music videos, podcasts, blogs and artworks;
- c. written products such as songs, poems and books (novels, textbooks, children's literature etc.);
- d. community service announcements and other such projects.

External party

Such as another government entity; organisation, including charitable and not-for-profit organisations; private company; defence industry; individual; event or activity organiser etc.

Imagery

Collectively, the representations of objects reproduced electronically or by optical means on film, electronic display devices, or other media (such as still frame image files, motion video tape or files, hardcopy photographs etc.).

Intranet

An internet protocol (IP) network belonging to an organisation, usually a corporation, and accessible only to organisation members, employees etc., or people authorised by them.

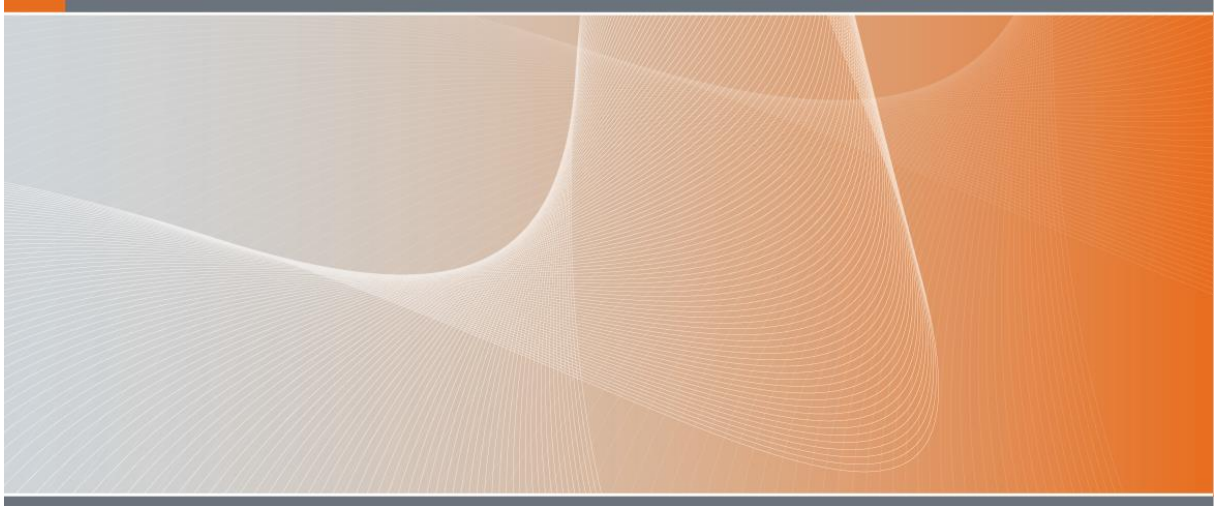
Issue

An [issue](#) in Defence is an event, situation or matter of public concern that emerges over a period of time or is of a less-severe nature than a [crisis](#). It could be an unfolding situation where the details are not yet known, or a persistent situation that remains of concern over a period of time. It is possible that a benign situation, or an [issue](#), could turn into a [crisis](#) as the situation escalates, intensifies or broadens. The focus of Defence [issues](#) management is the same as [crisis](#) communication, with less urgent timeframes and, while communication planning may be proactive, Defence may take a reactive rather than a proactive posture for media engagement.

Media	A publication or broadcast program that provides news and feature stories to the public through various distribution channels such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television or online.
Military public affairs officer	Defence members who deliver Joint, Service-specific, operational, exercise and regional media and communication effects.
Official content	All content released by Defence is considered official.
Official Defence social media account	Any social media account that uses Department of Defence resources or is operated by Defence personnel in a manner that could be reasonably considered as representing the department, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) or their Groups or Services.
Public affairs guidance	Drafted by a public affairs officer to support operational incident reporting by providing a recommended public information approach.
Public comment	Public comment by Defence personnel is the provision of official content to individuals or organisations external to Defence or for use in Defence publications . This includes, but is not limited to, social media, Defence media releases, contractor media releases and website testimonials, media responses, interviews, podcasts, background briefings, informal briefings, documents, letters to the editor, opinion pieces, articles, journals, academic/educational/research papers, public briefings, speeches, lectures, presentations, seminars, workshops, conferences, commentary , imagery , audio, internet sites, mobile networks and self-contained works.
Publications	Hard copy or soft copy documents intended for, or likely to be made available to the public, State authorities or foreign countries by way of free issue or sale. They include books and booklets (monographs or serials, hardback or paper bound), periodicals, journals, departmental and committee reports, instructional handbooks and manuals, posters and display material, binders for documents published in loose-leaf format, broadsheets, pamphlets, folders, leaflets, forms of advertising and business cards.
Public information	Text, audio or imagery content that has been cleared for public release or comment.

Regional manager for public affairs	Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication Division has a team of out-posted Regional Managers for Public Affairs (RMPA) who work collaboratively across Australia. RMPAs foster and maintain relations with local media and other key stakeholders. RMPAs work with Defence Establishment leadership, military public affairs personnel and others in the coordination of proactive engagement, media enquiries, issues , incidents, operations and events in their region.
Responsible officer	An SES Band 2 or 2-Star officer in the relevant Group or Service who is accountable for the content of an official Defence social media account and its adherence to this Policy.
Social media	Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content, or to participate in virtual communities and networks. Social media includes, but is not limited to: social media networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, SnapChat etc.); social review sites (e.g. Yelp, Tripadvisor, Goodreads, Google Reviews etc.); image-sharing sites (e.g. Instagram, Flickr, Pinterest etc.); video-hosting and live-streaming sites (e.g. YouTube, TikTok, Zoom, Skype etc.); community blogs (e.g. WordPress, Tumblr, Blogger etc.); discussion sites and professional military education websites (e.g. Whirlpool, Quora, Reddit, The Cove, Forge etc.); messenger sites (e.g. Messenger, Signal, WhatsApp etc.); collaborative sites (e.g. Wikipedia etc.); and dating sites (e.g. Tinder, RSVP, Bumble etc.).
Unofficial social media account	An unofficial social media account is one operated by Defence personnel in a personal or private capacity for non-Defence related positions, organisations and activities, not associated with their service or employment in Defence.
Websites	A set of related webpages located under a single domain name. Are external to the department.

DEFENCE MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION GUIDE



Cleared by Rowena Bain

First Assistant Secretary Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication

Department of Defence
CANBERRA ACT 2600

12 May 2022

Version 1.1 (issued 16 May 2022)

Defence Media and Communication Guide

DEFENCE MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION GUIDE

Issued by:	This Defence Media and Communication Guide (the 'Guide') has been issued by the First Assistant Secretary Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication.
Purpose:	This Guide describes Defence's agreed approach for engaging with the media and governs all media and communication activities. This Guide is supported by a range of products on the Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication (MECC) intranet page , including the Defence Communication Strategy , and the Defence Media and Communication Policy , which must be read and adhered to, in conjunction with this Guide to enable Defence to meet the expected outcomes.
Scope and applicability:	This Guide applies to all Defence personnel and must be adhered to in accordance with the Defence Media and Communication Policy .
Management:	This Guide will be updated as required.
Availability:	The latest version of the Guide is available on the MECC intranet page . The document's currency cannot be guaranteed if sourced from other locations. The Guide is not for public release.
Guide contact:	Assistant Secretary Strategic Communication.
Definitions:	Definitions that apply to this Guide are at Annex A .
Clearance authorities:	A list of clearance authorities for media and communication products and activities relating to this Guide is at Annex B .

Defence Media and Communication Guide

AMENDMENTS

Version Number	Date	Chapter	Amendment
1.1	16 May 2022	9	Updated Defence branding guidance

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Defence Media and Communication Guide

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Defence aims to build public confidence and support for its mission, priorities, policies, activities and operational outcomes – as determined by overarching government strategic objectives – through the provision of effective communication and media engagement. This Defence Media and Communication Guide (the 'Guide') draws its authority from the [Defence Media and Communication Policy](#), which applies to all Defence personnel. The Guide provides further detail to Groups and Services to enable proactive, high quality, and well-coordinated media and communication products and activities consistent with the strategic intent articulated in the [Defence Communication Strategy](#) and in support of our ministers, the Australian Government and Defence.

1.2 Media and public engagement must be authorised and managed appropriately, consistent with the position of the Government and Defence. All Defence personnel must ensure the information they provide is accurate, coordinated and authorised; represents a whole-of-Defence view; and is aligned with [Defence Values and Behaviours](#), policies and strategic communication objectives and plans.

1.3 Defence's communication activities and interactions with the media aim to demonstrate that Defence is clear in its purpose, proactive, transparent, coordinated, focused and responsive. Public comments should strengthen Defence's credibility and reputation. At the same time, Defence must protect classified and private information, operational security, our international relationships and the safety of Defence personnel and their families. Defence personnel must not engage directly with the media (including via social media) or any other organisation without prior approval, regardless of whether they are providing positive or negative commentary. The media and communication function in Defence is aligned with the One Defence model of operation. This requires early and effective engagement with all relevant areas across Defence to provide a single, coordinated and consistent enterprise voice.

1.4 Commanders and managers maintain and improve Defence's reputation by providing accurate and timely information, and by facilitating access by journalists and media organisations to Defence personnel and activities when required and authorised. Failure to provide accurate and authorised information to journalists and media organisations in a timely manner may result in public perceptions of Defence being disproportionately shaped by speculation, misinformation or unbalanced reporting. Failure to achieve media and communication outcomes may reduce confidence in Defence's ability to support its strategic priorities. All Defence leaders are to prioritise media and communication activities and responses within required timeframes.

1.5 Group Heads and Service Chiefs are responsible for managing the reputation of their respective Group or Service. This Guide acknowledges the unique and distinct Service brands, and the fundamental link to recruitment and warfighting efforts. This Guide supports Defence to manage its reputation through effective media and public engagement, with appropriate consideration of the associated risks.

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MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION IN DEFENCE

1.6 Defence media and communication operates on a centralised control, decentralised execution model to deliver against the [Defence Communication Strategy](#) in accordance with the [Defence Media and Communication Policy](#) and this Guide. [Media and Information Disclosure Branch](#) (MIDB) and [Strategic Communication Branch](#) (SCB), within [Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication \(MECC\) Division](#) in the Associate Secretary's Defence Executive Support Group are the coordinating authorities for apolitical media and communication for Defence portfolio ministers and the Defence enterprise.

1.7 MIDB and SCB work together to provide communication, media and public affairs expertise and services across Defence to support Defence leaders, managers, commanders and personnel to promote Defence and protect and enhance its reputation. This model provides a strong strategic centre with communication specialists embedded throughout Defence, working collaboratively to support and advise the Groups, Services, senior leaders and regions.

MEDIA AND INFORMATION DISCLOSURE BRANCH

1.8 Defence's central media team, [Defence Media](#) within MIDB, is Defence's primary contact for the media. Other functions undertaken within MIDB include Defence News Bureau (including Service newspapers, social media, and digital media); speechwriting for ministers, the Secretary and the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF); events management; entertainment and non-news projects; daily Defence talking points; question time briefs; freedom of information; and official histories.

Regional Managers for Public Affairs

1.9 MIDB has a team of out-posted [Regional Managers for Public Affairs](#) (RMPAs) who work collaboratively across Australia. RMPAs foster and maintain relations with local media and other key stakeholders. RMPAs work with Defence Establishment leadership, Military Public Affairs (MPA) personnel and others in the coordination of proactive engagement, media enquiries, issues, incidents, operations, exercises and events in their region.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION BRANCH

1.10 SCB produces Defence's strategic media and communication policy and guidance, including the [Defence Communication Strategy](#), [Defence Media and Communication Policy](#), and this Guide. SCB is also comprised of embedded communication specialists in the Groups and Services and provides oversight to taskforce media and communication functions as required.

MILITARY PUBLIC AFFAIRS

1.11 MIDB and SCB are supported in delivering against the [Defence Communication Strategy](#) by Military Public Affairs (MPA) capabilities within each Service, Joint Operations Command (JOC) and Military Strategic Commitments (MSC) Division within the Vice Chief of the Defence Force (VCDF) Group. The primary role of MPA elements within Defence is to support Defence operations, exercises and Service public affairs outcomes. MPA personnel are to engage with the relevant embedded SCB communication specialists and RMPA on planned

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media and communication activities within their Group or Service to ensure appropriate government and Defence awareness.

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CHAPTER 2 – ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MEDIA

2.1 Media engagement encompasses a range of activities such as the management of media enquiries, interviews with the media, proactive media engagement and providing media embed opportunities.

2.2 Social media issues are covered in [Chapter 6 – Social Media \(Official\)](#) and [Chapter 7 – Social Media \(Unofficial\)](#); and entertainment and non-news project enquiries are covered in [Chapter 5 – Entertainment and Non-News Projects](#).

MANAGEMENT OF MEDIA ENQUIRIES

2.3 All enquiries and requests from the media must be referred to [Defence Media](#) for coordination and clearances of responses unless engagement is otherwise devolved to Groups or Services under a pre-approved communication or public affairs plan.

2.4 Defence Media determines the priority of media enquiries in accordance with the [Media Enquiries Triage Matrix](#) and will ensure relevant ministers' offices are promptly advised of all media enquiries received by Defence.

- a. **Priority 1** media enquiries are considered urgent, sensitive or about a media topical issue. These are usually from mainstream journalists with shorter deadlines. Priority 1 media enquiries must be drafted, cleared and sent to the relevant minister's office for approval **within three hours** of Defence's receipt, unless an earlier deadline is specified by Defence Media;
- b. **Priority 2** media enquiries are general or routine requests for information or interviews regarding the work of Defence. Deadlines for priority 2 enquiries are determined by Defence Media. In some circumstances, Defence Media will seek advice from the relevant Group or Service on the complexity of the request to inform the deadline.

2.5 Group Heads and Service Chiefs are to ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place to inform Defence Media as quickly as possible of any delays to meeting the specified deadline. Where a deadline cannot be met due to the complexity of the enquiry, evolving circumstances or operational security reasons, a cleared holding statement must be provided to the journalist within the original deadline. A final response should be provided as soon as possible. Defence Media will liaise with journalists to manage expectations and with the relevant minister's office for visibility.

2.6 When possible, Defence Media, in consultation with SCB communication teams embedded in the relevant Group or Service, will respond to an enquiry directly using cleared talking points or a holding statement that have been cleared in accordance with [paragraphs 2.10-2.11](#).

2.7 Where information required to answer a media enquiry requires coordination across a number of Groups and Services, Defence Media will appoint a lead Group or Service to take responsibility for coordinating and developing the response. Any

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change to the lead Group or Service should be negotiated between Groups and Services and advised to Defence Media.

2.8 Media responses must be drafted or informed by subject matter experts, who retain ownership of the issue and responsibility for accuracy. Media responses must adhere to [paragraph 3.8 in Chapter 3 – Releasing Official Content or Making Public Comment on Behalf of Defence](#).

2.9 Backgrounding media or journalists for any reason requires appropriate clearance facilitated by [Defence Media](#), in consultation with the relevant Minister's office and embedded Strategic Communication Branch (SCB) communication specialists, as well as the Secretary, the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) if required.

CLEARANCE OF MEDIA ENQUIRIES

2.10 All responses to media enquiries must be cleared at the Group or Service level by the responsible SES Band 2 or 2-Star officer (at a minimum) for operational security, fact and policy. Where the responsible 2-Star officer is absent from duty, clearance from the responsible 1-Star officer (at a minimum) is sufficient. Defence Media will then facilitate central clearances through the Secretary's office and CDF's office, and where necessary, the relevant minister's office.

2.11 All media enquiries must be cleared in accordance with [paragraph 2.10](#), except for where the media enquiry or interview request is specifically limited to the content included in an SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer-approved communication plan, military public affairs plan, public affairs guidance, talking points or a holding statement, and is received up to 48 hours after the conclusion of the media activity. Media enquiries outside this criteria must be cleared in accordance with [paragraph 2.10](#).

DEFENCE MEDIA CONTACT REGISTER

2.12 Centralised visibility of contacts between journalists and media organisations with Defence personnel supports a coordinated enterprise approach to Defence's strategic messaging as well as Defence's information security practices. All Defence personnel must register all interactions with media that relate to Defence in the [Defence Media Contact Register](#), including unsolicited approaches by the media, unless an authorised exemption applies. Failure to do so may result in administrative or disciplinary action.

- a. **Authorised exemptions:** Defence personnel employed as communication or public affairs specialists, that have completed appropriate awareness training in dealing with media as determined by the Assistant Secretary Media and Information Disclosure (ASMID), are exempt from recording their work-related or authorised media interactions in the Defence Media Contact Register. Personnel employed in these roles must maintain or create a record of each of their work-related media interactions, which includes all interactions relating to any Defence-related topics or information. Authorised media interactions include media enquiries cleared in accordance with [paragraphs 2.10-2.11](#) and other communication activities cleared in

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accordance with [paragraph 3.10 in Chapter 3 – Releasing Official Content or Making Public Comment on Behalf of Defence](#).

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT TRAINING

2.13 All SES and star-ranked officers are required to complete media training in order to be adequately prepared to engage with and answer questions from the media. Group Heads and Service Chiefs, in consultation with MIDB or SCB, will determine when SES and star-ranked officers require refresher training, and which other non-SES and non-star-ranked individuals within their organisations also require training. This should be based on the individual's role, and the level of interaction and experience they have in engaging with the media.

2.14 Defence spokespeople are to be provided with public affairs support by MIDB or SCB communication specialists or Military Public Affairs Officers (MPAO).

2.15 Further information is available on the [media training intranet page](#).

DEFENCE ACTIVITY AND ENGAGEMENT TRACKER

2.16 The [Defence Activity and Engagement Tracker](#) (the 'Tracker') is a comprehensive database of all of Defence's upcoming media engagement activities, including any matter of actual or potential media or public interest.

- a. MIDB will manage the Tracker and use the content as a basis for engagement with ministers' offices to consider upcoming media and public engagement opportunities for ministers. Each week, following agreement from ministers' offices, FASMECC will distribute the list of agreed media and public events for the next three weeks to the Defence Senior Leadership Group.
- b. Activities registered in the Tracker are to be aligned with the [Defence Synchronisation Tool](#).

2.17 The responsible SES Band 2 or 2-Star officer is to ensure that all events and activities of actual or potential media or public interest are added to the Tracker. Groups and Services are responsible for regularly reviewing and updating the Tracker with as much detail as possible, including specifying all planned activities and communication products. Changes to planned activities and events must be communicated to FASMECC, ASMID or the Assistant Secretary Strategic Communication (ASSC) as soon as possible. Embedded SCB communication specialists within Groups and Services can support these requirements.

2.18 Operations, exercises, events and activities that have actual or potential media or public interest must be recorded in the Tracker, including, but not limited to physical or virtual attendance, or pre-recorded video in support of:

- a. planned media events or announcements;
- b. operations, including deployments and returns from operations;
- c. exercises, readiness milestones or similar;

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- d. graduations; major unit parades and ceremonies; community engagement, including open days or public displays. Less prominent unit activities (such as ceremonies, family days etc.) are to be recorded in the Tracker where the relevant commander identifies actual or potential media or public interest;
- e. grant, contract or sustainment capability milestones and associated announcements, in particular where industry may make an announcement; and
- f. internal Defence activities such as conferences, program launch events and significant staff events.

2.19 All planned activities must be added to the Tracker by the lead Group or Service no later than three weeks before the date of the activity.

- a. The entry must specify all planned activities (including descriptions of what the activities are, date, time, location etc.) and communication products (such as, but not limited to, a communication plan, military public affairs plan, public affairs guidance, media alert, media release, talking points, media conference, imagery, social media content, Service newspaper article etc.).
- b. Where ministerial attendance or a ministerial media release is recommended, the lead Group or Service is to engage with Defence Media and develop materials in accordance with [paragraph 2.28](#).
- c. Activities added to the Tracker may also require an accompanying communication plan, military public affairs plan or public affairs guidance, which must be prepared in accordance with [paragraphs 2.37-2.46](#).

2.20 When activities are identified that are to occur in less than three weeks' time, the responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer (at a minimum) is to ensure that, at the earliest opportunity, the activity is added to the Tracker and alert FASMECC, ASMID or ASSC. This can be facilitated by embedded SCB communication specialists within Groups and Services and RMPAs.

2.21 Requests for access to the Tracker should be directed to the relevant embedded SCB communication specialist, RMPA or [Defence Media](#).

MEDIA EVENTS MANAGEMENT

2.22 It is the responsibility of the lead Group or Service to manage and coordinate all aspects of media events. All media events must be cleared by the responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer (at a minimum).

2.23 Where an event requires coordination across a number of Groups or Services, embedded SCB communication specialists are to agree on an approach (in consultation with the relevant Group Head or Service Chief), including appointing a Group or Service to take responsibility for coordinating the event.

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2.24 The Enterprise Business Committee (EBC) endorses a list of [National Commemorations and Events of Significance and Importance](#) on an annual basis (such as Anzac Day, National Science Week etc.). Each event is assigned a lead Group or Service who is responsible for managing related communication and public affairs arrangements.

- a. Communication plans or military public affairs plans/guidance for these events are to be completed by the lead Group or Service in accordance with [paragraphs 2.37-2.46](#).

2.25 Defence involvement in public displays, events or recruitment activities is to be managed by the relevant Commanding Officer or event organiser who is responsible for providing all Defence participants with a briefing on media and public engagement, consistent with government and Defence policy. This advice is to be developed in consultation with relevant embedded SCB communication specialists, out-posted RMPAs or Military Public Affairs Officer (MPAO) in their chain-of-command.

2.26 All planned and authorised media events must be recorded in the Tracker by the lead Group or Service in accordance with [paragraphs 2.16-2.21](#).

2.27 All unplanned and unauthorised media interactions relating to Defence must be registered in the [Defence Media Contact Register](#) in accordance with [paragraph 2.12](#).

2.28 Defence Media will consult ministerial offices when attendance by ministers is recommended, a minister has expressed interest in the event, or where ministerial visibility is recommended.

- a. Where ministerial attendance or a ministerial media release is confirmed, the lead Group or Service is to develop a [ministerial submission](#) in accordance with standard ministerial submission requirements, including timeframes, for the activity. For further information about ministerial media releases and talking points, refer to [paragraphs 2.51-2.52](#).

2.29 Evaluation of media events is to be prepared by the lead Group or Service in accordance with [paragraphs 2.49-2.50](#).

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION SUPPORT TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND DEFENCE PORTFOLIO MINISTERS ATTENDING DEFENCE EVENTS

2.30 The attendance of the Prime Minister or a Defence portfolio minister at Defence events or activities provides the opportunity to reinforce strategic messaging. To achieve this desired strategic effect, Group Heads and Service Chiefs are to ensure media and communication planning and support are prioritised for all Defence events attended by the Prime Minister, a Defence portfolio minister, or another representing government minister. This includes ensuring a full suite of relevant imagery (photographs and videos) and associated content (if required) is captured at the event.

- a. Early engagement with the relevant minister's office through MECC should occur prior to formally requesting participation from a Defence

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portfolio minister for a Defence activity. MECC can provide advice on programming, appropriate attendance, speaking times and ministerial preferences commensurate with previously run events.

- b. If ministerial support is requested by MECC, Service Chiefs are to prioritise and task their MPA capabilities accordingly. Requests for 1JPAU support will be sought in consultation with Military Strategic Commitments (MSC) Division.

2.31 Upon confirmation of the Prime Minister, a Defence portfolio minister, or their nominated elected representative's attendance at a Defence event, the responsible SES Band 2 or 2-Star officer (with assistance from the relevant embedded SCB communication specialist) is to develop the necessary communication products such as an event brief, communication plan, military public affairs plan or public affairs guidance in consultation with the relevant ministers' office and in accordance with [paragraphs 2.37-2.46](#). These products are to clearly establish requirements for imagery capture and associated content for the event, which is to be formally tasked to assigned elements.

2.32 Specialist public affairs and imagery support is to be provided to cover the Prime Minister's, Defence portfolio minister's, or their nominated elected representative's attendance at the Defence event. Depending on the nature of the event and the location, this support may be provided by communication specialists or military public affairs officers and/or imagery specialists, including:

- a. MECC;
- b. [1st Joint Public Affairs Unit](#) (1JPAU);
- c. Navy public affairs officers and Navy Imagery Units;
- d. Army Headquarters, functional commands and formations;
- e. [464 Squadron Military Public Affairs](#); and/or
- f. deployed or force-assigned public affairs elements on operations or exercises.

2.33 MECC will fund travel for Defence public affairs personnel identified in [paragraph 2.32](#) who are supporting the attendance of the Prime Minister, Defence portfolio minister or their nominated elected representative at Defence events.

2.34 Where public affairs support is provided by MPA personnel in non-operational environments, imagery and associated content is to be provided to the [Digital Media](#) section within the Defence News Bureau in MECC, immediately following any event (or as agreed) attended by the Prime Minister, Defence portfolio minister, or their nominated elected representative. This will allow the product to be processed and made available to the relevant minister's office in a timely manner. During operations, or other sensitive activities, distribution of content to the Digital Media section will occur in accordance with timings agreed prior to the event to ensure operational security is maintained and access to appropriate transmission systems is guaranteed.

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2.35 The order for releasing digital media content and imagery of ministerial visits on digital and social media channels is to be prioritised as follows:

- a. the Prime Minister,
- b. the most senior Defence portfolio minister in attendance,
- c. other Defence portfolio ministers, then
- d. Defence channels.

2.36 For further information about official social media, refer to [Chapter 6 – Social Media \(Official\)](#). For further information about digital media, refer to [Chapter 8 – Digital Media](#).

COMMUNICATION PLANS, MILITARY PUBLIC AFFAIRS PLANS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE

2.37 High-profile, large-scale, priority or significant, Defence operations, exercises, events, community engagement, activities and issues that have actual or potential media or public interest (as specified at [paragraph 2.18](#)) must have an accompanying communication plan, military public affairs plan or public affairs guidance, where appropriate.

2.38 Communication plans, military public affairs plans and public affairs guidance should be drafted by MIDB or embedded SCB communication specialists or MPAOs in the lead Group or Service, with support from an RMPA as appropriate, and accord with the [Defence Communication Strategy](#). If the communication plan, military public affairs plan or public affairs guidance involves other Groups or Services, they are to be consulted during the drafting stage and provided a final, cleared copy of the plan.

- a. A [Communication Plan Template](#), [Military Public Affairs Plan Template](#) (see Annex 3B) or a [Public Affairs Guidance Template](#) should be used to document all details of the event or activity, including identifying any potential sensitivities or risks relating to proposed activities, the risks of not meeting the communication objectives and how the outcomes will be evaluated. Consideration should be given to the appropriate communication channels and release strategy. The communication plan, military public affairs plan or public affairs guidance should nominate proposed spokespeople, and clearly outline opportunities for media engagement at both the ministerial and Defence level where appropriate. The communication plan, military public affairs plan or public affairs guidance should also specify if no media engagement is recommended or expected.

2.39 Communication plans, military public affairs plans, public affairs guidance, and their accompanying communication products must be cleared by the responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer (at a minimum) for operational security, fact, policy and suitability of any nominated spokespeople. Higher clearances are not required where the proposed spokesperson is a SES Band 2 or 2-Star officer or higher. Where an Australian Defence Force (ADF) chain-of-command has no 1-Star officer in the reporting line, these products can be cleared by the responsible Colonel (equivalent) at a minimum.

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2.40 All planning and communication materials supporting [national events of commemoration, significance and importance](#) endorsed by the Enterprise Business Committee (EBC) must be approved by the Associate Secretary.

2.41 Defence spokespeople identified by name in media releases should be pre-approved during the communication plan, military public affairs plan or public affairs guidance clearance phase to conduct media interviews.

2.42 Communication plans, military public affairs plans, public affairs guidance, as well as accompanying communication documents, are to be provided to an MIDB or SCB communication director or the senior MPA officer (J09) in Joint Operations Command (JOC) for clearance no later than three weeks prior to the activity.

2.43 Communication plans, military public affairs plans and public affairs guidance containing media products or spokespeople who are pre-approved to conduct media interviews must also be provided to the Director Defence Media for clearance, and to the Director Defence News Bureau for information, no later than three weeks prior to the event.

2.44 A final, cleared copy of the plan is to be saved in the relevant Group or Service Objective structure and provided to [Defence Media](#) and [Defence Communication](#) within MECC.

2.45 Media enquiries and interview requests that are subject to an existing SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer-approved communication plan, military public affairs plan, public affairs guidance, talking points or a holding statement must be cleared in accordance with [paragraph 2.11](#).

2.46 An evaluation of communication activities is to be prepared by the lead Group or Service in accordance with [paragraphs 2.49-2.50](#).

MEDIA EMBED OPPORTUNITIES

2.47 Defence provides extended opportunities for the media to visit Defence operations, exercises and activities. These are known as 'media embed' opportunities and are an important part of Defence's relationship with the media and a way of promoting and demonstrating the work of Defence to the public. Defence proactively seeks opportunities for media to visit exercises, embark on ships, or accompany an operational deployment, where appropriate.

2.48 Approval for any media embed opportunity requires clearance from the responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer (at a minimum). Media embed opportunities must be recorded in the Tracker by the lead Group or Service in accordance with [paragraphs 2.16-2.21](#). The lead Group or Service is responsible for providing essential background and situational briefings to the media embed as part of the activity and the provision of administrative (including legal arrangements or agreements), logistical and life support requirements as relevant and reasonable. Media embeds are to be managed in accordance with [Australian Defence Force Procedure \(ADFP\) 3.13.2 Military Public Affairs](#).

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EVALUATION OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

2.49 The responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer or their authorised decision maker is to ensure that an evaluation of high-profile, large-scale, priority or significant communication activities is to be finalised by the lead Group or Service within four weeks of the activity being held. Activities should be evaluated against the achievement of communication objectives articulated in communication plans. The [evaluation template](#) (found within the Defence communication plan template) on the intranet can be used as a suggested format.

2.50 The evaluation document should be provided to all relevant stakeholders for comment before it is provided to the responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer or their authorised decision maker for clearance and saved in the relevant Group or Service Objective structure.

MINISTERIAL MEDIA RELEASES AND TALKING POINTS

2.51 Media releases and talking points for inclusion in a ministerial submission or brief must be drafted or informed by subject matter experts (or the appropriate delegate), who retain ownership of the issue and responsibility for accuracy. Consideration should be given to information that has been released publicly such as through media releases, media responses, speeches, freedom of information, question time briefs and questions on notice etc. Embedded SCB communication specialists within Groups and Services can support subject matter experts with these requirements.

- a. Prior to drafting a ministerial media release, the lead Group or Service should consult with their embedded SCB communication specialist or MPAO as to whether a media release is an appropriate communication channel and who the appropriate ministerial and/or Defence spokesperson should be.
- b. All ministerial talking points and media releases must be reviewed by the subject matter expert and cleared by the responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer as per standard clearance processes for ministerial submissions or briefs.
- c. Where ministerial talking points have an accompanying media release, the talking points and media release must be sent to [Defence Media](#) who will facilitate clearance through the office of the Secretary and/or the office of the CDF and provide back to the embedded SCB communication specialist for inclusion into the brief.
- d. Ministerial talking points that have no accompanying media release must be reviewed by the subject matter expert and cleared by the responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer and the embedded SCB communication director or strategic communication adviser. A copy should be provided to [Defence Media](#) for information.

2.52 Requests from ministerial offices for contingency talking points and media releases on issues, incidents and activities, will be coordinated through [Defence Media](#) and the relevant SCB embedded communication specialist.

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SUPPORT FOR PERSONNEL AFFECTED BY NEGATIVE MEDIA COMMENTARY OR COVERAGE

2.53 Defence personnel may be subject to negative media commentary or coverage either as part of their official duties, or where an individual's personal social media profiles become subject to negative and harassing commentary.

2.54 Commanders and managers are the primary source of welfare support to individuals subjected to negative media commentary or coverage. MIDB and SCB will work with commanders and managers to discuss how to best support Defence personnel affected by negative media commentary or coverage.

2.55 The [PeopleConnect](#) intranet page contains information on support available to Defence personnel, including the Employee Assistance Program and mental health resources.

SPEECHWRITING SUPPORT TO DEFENCE PORTFOLIO MINISTERS, SECRETARY AND CDF

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CHAPTER 3 – RELEASING OFFICIAL CONTENT OR MAKING PUBLIC COMMENT ON DEFENCE MATTERS

3.1 All content released by Defence, or Defence personnel, is considered official. Defence's external messaging must be consistent and delivered to the public in a coordinated, appropriate and timely way by trained and authorised Defence spokespeople.

3.2 Public comment by Defence personnel is the provision of official content to individuals or organisations external to Defence or for use in Defence publications. This includes, but is not limited to, social media, media releases, media responses, interviews, podcasts, background briefings, informal briefings, documents, letters to the editor, opinion pieces, articles, journals, academic/educational/research papers, professional military education parties, public briefings, speeches, lectures, presentations, seminars, workshops, conferences, commentary, imagery (including photographs and videos), audio, internet sites, mobile networks and self-contained works.

- a. When official content is authored by Defence personnel, who have approval from their chain-of-command to identify themselves as a Defence employee, this information represents the views of the Government and Defence – not an individual's view – and must be apolitical in nature.
- b. Defence personnel are not authorised to make public comment without approvals if doing so identifies them in any way as a Defence official – even if the views they express are their own.
- c. All activities with actual or potential media or public interest (see [paragraph 3.2](#) above) must be recorded in the [Defence Activity and Engagement Tracker](#) (the 'Tracker') in accordance with [paragraphs 2.16-2.21 in Chapter 2 – Engagement with the Media](#).

3.3 Defence personnel releasing official content or making public comment on behalf of Defence must be authorised to do so and ensure content and comments are consistent with the position of the Government and Defence. Defence's communication efforts will take into account accessibility considerations for our diverse audiences.

3.4 Unless previously authorised, Defence personnel approached by the media for comment, must not engage in conversation specific to the matter and immediately refer the enquiry to [Defence Media](#).

- a. Defence involvement in public displays, events or recruitment activities is to be managed in accordance with [paragraph 2.25 in Chapter 2 – Engagement with the Media](#).
- b. Defence personnel must also register all unplanned and unauthorised media in the [Defence Media Contact Register](#) in accordance with the [Defence Media and Communication Policy](#) and [paragraph 2.12 in Chapter 2 – Engagement with the Media](#).

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3.5 Defence spokespeople must be a subject matter expert for the topic of the media engagement, who voluntarily agree to speak on behalf of Defence. Defence spokespeople are to be provided with appropriate media training in accordance with [paragraphs 2.13-2.15 in Chapter 2 – Engagement with the Media](#).

NOTIFYING MINISTERS OF ISSUES THAT MAY BECOME PUBLIC

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APPROVAL TO RELEASE OFFICIAL CONTENT OR MAKE PUBLIC COMMENT ON BEHALF OF DEFENCE

3.8 Defence personnel must only release information that is:

- a. not protected by a security classification, or a protective, confidentiality or privacy marking;
- b. not likely to compromise operational security, an individual's privacy without their prior consent, Australia's international relationships, the safety of Defence personnel or their families, or risk the waiving of legal professional privilege;
- c. compliant with relevant legislation, policy and guidance;
- d. consistent with the position of the Government and Defence;
- e. apolitical in nature and will not be used for political purposes in any way contrary to Defence's apolitical standing;
- f. about a major matter of policy, procurement or Service deployment which has been previously announced by the Government;
- g. not speculation; and
- h. authorised for release in accordance with the [Defence Media and Communication Policy](#) and this Guide.

3.9 Defence spokespeople must not provide comment on any matter that is outside the boundaries for which the interview was approved, and should take the question on notice or refer the matter to [Defence Media](#), as appropriate.

3.10 Defence personnel are to only release official content or make public comment that has been authorised. Unless subject to an SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer-approved communication plan, military public affairs plan or public affairs guidance, engagement with the media or external parties for activities specified at [paragraph](#)

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[3.2](#), in either a private or official capacity, requires clearance from the responsible SES Band 2 or 2-Star officer (at a minimum) and forwarded to Defence Media for final Defence clearances in accordance with [paragraphs 2.10-2.11 in chapter 2 – Engagement with the Media](#). The Director Defence Media has authority to lower the clearance level to an SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer (at a minimum) on a case-by-case basis.

3.11 Content developed for Service newspapers requires clearance by the relevant Service headquarters prior to publishing.

3.12 Where appropriate, Defence spokespeople identified by name in media releases must be pre-approved and prepared to conduct media interviews during the media release clearance phase.

UNAUTHORISED DISCLOSURE AND LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

3.13 Unauthorised disclosure of information may constitute a security breach under the [Defence Security Principles Framework](#) (DSPF), and may also constitute a breach of the requirements of legislation. Relevant legislation for a release might include any of the [Defence Force Discipline Act 1982](#); [Defence Inquiry Regulations 2018](#); [Public Service Regulations 1999](#) (regulation 2.1); [Crimes Act 1914](#); [Privacy Act 1988](#); [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#); [Espionage and Foreign Interference Act 2018](#); and the [Australian Public Service Code of Conduct](#).

- a. Instances where classified, personal, commercial or sensitive information has been disclosed to the media or public will be investigated by the Defence Security and Vetting Service and may be referred to law enforcement agencies. Defence personnel who are found to have disclosed classified, personal or sensitive information to the media or public will be subject to administrative, disciplinary or criminal action as appropriate. This also applies to contractors in accordance with the scope of this Guide.

3.14 This Guide sets out the approvals that must be sought by Defence personnel before information is released outside Defence. If there are instructions mandating approvals to be sought prior to release and it appears that they have been disregarded by Defence personnel, the matter may also be referred for a fact find and relevant Code of Conduct, disciplinary or contract actions.

3.15 Former Defence personnel must comply with all relevant legislative requirements, including but not limited to those regarding:

- a. the unauthorised disclosure of information; and
- b. protection of intellectual property rights (copyright, trademarks, etc.).

3.16 Content for web publishing must comply with [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2](#), [Defence Web Estate Manual \(WEBMAN\)](#) and the [Digital Transformation Agency](#).

3.17 Content approved for public release must be archived in accordance with [Records Management Policy Manual \(RECMAN\)](#) and the [Archives Act 1983](#).

CHAPTER 4 – CRISIS AND ISSUE COMMUNICATION

4.1 Defence may have a lead responsibility or a supporting role in managing situations that are a direct result of the actions of Defence, partners or contractors; or within Defence's actual or perceived sphere of influence.

4.2 Defence defines a **crisis** as an unplanned event, situation or matter of public concern that requires targeted attention, management, intervention or response beyond business-as-usual processes. A crisis is likely to occur quickly and has the potential to disrupt Defence's normal operations and activities. Crises may undermine our reputation or challenge the public's sense of appropriateness, tradition, values, safety, security or the integrity of Defence. The focus of Defence's crisis communication efforts is to quickly and effectively address stakeholders, minimise physical and reputational damage, and return to normal business.

4.3 Defence defines an **issue** as an event, situation or matter of public concern that emerges over a period of time or is of a less-severe nature than a crisis. It could be an unfolding situation where the details are not yet known, or a persistent situation that remains of concern over a period of time. It is possible that a benign situation, or an issue, could turn into a crisis as the situation escalates, intensifies or broadens. The focus of Defence issues management is the same as crisis communication, with less urgent timeframes and, while communication planning may be proactive, Defence may take a reactive rather than a proactive posture for media engagement.

4.4 Effective, timely and authorised communication during a crisis or issue plays a key role in the protection of life, public safety and property; preserving the integrity of the Defence and the Australian Defence Force; and the continued operation of Defence's core business.

4.5 During a crisis or issue, Defence must speak with one voice and communicate cleared and authorised information as quickly as possible, updating information regularly as circumstances change. Crisis and issue communication is assisted by mature communication functions, where clear reporting lines, responsibilities, structures and processes exist for the flow of information. This includes through the organisation, to the public and to relevant external stakeholders, including but not limited to federal, state/territory and local government; whole-of-government entities; military partners and the media. Media and Information Disclosure Management Branch (MIDB) and Strategic Communication Branch (SCB), in consultation with relevant Groups and Services, provide the communication capability to achieve this.

LEGISLATION AND GUIDELINES

4.6 Defence must conform to relevant legislation and guidelines on crisis and issue management. These include, but are not limited to, the [Defence Act 1903](#), the [Australian Government Disaster Response Plan](#), Defence's [Incident Reporting and Management Manual](#), [Defence Assistance to the Civil Community \(DACC\) Policy](#), [DACC Manual](#), and guidelines specific to Groups and Services.

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PRINCIPLES FOR CRISIS AND ISSUE COMMUNICATION

4.7 Effective communication during a crisis or issue requires adherence to [paragraph 3.8 in Chapter 3 – Releasing Official Content or Making Public Comment on Behalf of Defence](#) and the following principles:

- a. **Timely:** Proactive engagement to inform ministers, the media and other stakeholders of known and confirmed details that are authorised for release regarding the crisis or issue as early as possible.
- b. **Appropriate:** Disclosure of information must consider legislative, operational security, public safety, security classification, confidentiality, privacy and international relationships.
- c. **Perceptive:** Communication should be delivered with respect and empathy for those impacted by the event, or have concerns about the situation.
- d. **Factual:** Only authorised, factual information will be released. Defence will not speculate on the incident.
- e. **Consistent:** Communication and messaging will be consistent and, where appropriate, align with a whole-of-government, state/territory or local government, or military partner approach.

MANAGEMENT OF CRISIS OR ISSUE COMMUNICATION

4.8 During a crisis or issue, the lead Group or Service will manage the crisis or issue. Depending on the nature of the crisis or issue, the Secretary or the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) may establish a specific crisis or issue management team for the purpose of managing the crisis or issue. Communication support will be an integral component of the team. MIDB or SCB will provide communication support, either as an embedded communication resource or an additional resource to support the crisis or issue management team develop and clear product quickly to ensure ministers, the media and other stakeholders are well informed.

4.9 The lead Group or Service is responsible for notifying relevant Groups or Services and the Assistant Secretary Media and Information Disclosure (ASMID) or the Assistant Secretary Strategic Communication (ASSC) or their authorised decision makers of any crisis or issue as soon as practicable.

4.10 The lead Group or Service is responsible for the development of communication products relating to the crisis or issue, including an initial holding statement, talking points, a communication plan and any other accompanying communication products. [Communication product templates](#) are available on the intranet.

4.11 An evaluation of communication activities is to be prepared by the lead Group or Service in accordance with [paragraphs 2.49-2.50 in Chapter 2 – Engagement with the Media](#).

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CLEARANCE OF CRISIS AND ISSUE COMMUNICATION PRODUCTS

4.12 Media enquiries must be managed in accordance with [paragraphs 2.3-2.9 in Chapter 2 – Engagement with the Media](#) and cleared in accordance with [paragraphs 2.10-2.11](#).

4.13 All other crisis and issue communication products, including social media, must be cleared by the responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer (at a minimum) for operational security, fact and policy; as well as ASMID or ASSC or their authorised decision makers. The authorisation for the clearance must be documented in relevant directives, communication plans, military public affairs plans or public affairs guidance.

- a. Depending on the nature of the circumstances and level of agility required, a Combined, Joint or single-Service Information Bureau may be established to align and coordinate media engagement, and to expedite media and communication product development; and approved Defence spokespeople may be authorised to engage directly with media to manage heightened media interest.
- b. The lead Group or Service will identify spokespeople suitable to engage directly with the media, and MIDB or SCB will facilitate the necessary engagement and endorsement of approach with the relevant minister's office.

DEFENCE SUPPORT TO DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES

4.14 Defence is part of the Australian Government's national security and emergency framework and may play a role in responding to emergencies or disasters in support of other federal, state/territory and local government; and whole-of-government entities. This support is through [DACC](#) or [Defence Force Aid to the Civil Authority](#) (DFACA).

FURTHER INFORMATION

4.15 This chapter should be read in conjunction with [Chapter 2 – Engagement with the Media](#); and [Chapter 3 – Releasing Official Content or Making Public Comment on Behalf of Defence](#).

CHAPTER 5 – ENTERTAINMENT AND NON-NEWS PROJECTS

5.1 Parties seeking to produce entertainment and non-news projects must seek permission to use Defence establishments, resources, personnel, equipment or services. Entertainment and non-news projects include, but are not limited to:

- a. television and radio programs (including participation in reality programs and competitions), scripts, short films, feature films, documentaries;
- b. corporate videos, music videos, podcasts, blogs and artworks;
- c. written products such as songs, poems and books (novels, textbooks, children's literature etc.); and
- d. community service announcements and other such projects.

These requests can come from external parties (such as another government entity; organisation, including charitable and not-for-profit organisations; private company; defence industry; individual; event or activity organiser etc.), as well as areas and individuals within Defence.

5.2 All entertainment and non-news project requests are managed by [Defence Entertainment Media](#) within Media and Information Disclosure Branch (MIDB). This includes coordinating enquiries through embedded SCB communication specialists, who work with their relevant line areas to draft and clear responses to enquiries.

MANAGEMENT OF ENTERTAINMENT OR NON-NEWS PROJECTS WITH EXTERNAL PARTIES

5.3 Any external party (as specified in [paragraph 5.1](#)) seeking to receive Defence support for entertainment or non-news projects must submit a [Request for Defence Support in Film, Television and Other Projects Form](#) (a 'Request Form') to [Defence Entertainment Media](#).

- a. Defence Entertainment Media must consult with Defence Legal regarding any proposed amendments by external parties to the Deed Poll contained within the Request Form.
- b. The terms and conditions in the Deed Poll may be supplemented by an additional contract between the Commonwealth and the requestor if the scale of the production or the potential risk to the Commonwealth justifies additional clarification or clauses. Where a contract is required, Defence Entertainment Media must consult with Defence Legal prior to it being signed by the lead Group Head and/or Service Chief, or their authorised decision maker and in accordance with the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#).

5.4 Entertainment and non-news project requests must be considered in accordance with the criteria set out in [paragraphs 5.10-5.13](#).

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5.5 Defence personnel participating in approved entertainment and non-news projects on behalf of Defence:

- a. must consult with [Defence Entertainment Media](#), embedded SCB communication specialists and out-posted Regional Managers for Public Affairs (RMPA) to obtain appropriate public affairs guidance regarding their proposed participation.
- b. may be offered gifts or benefits, including hospitality. The decision whether or not to accept a gift or benefit is to be in accordance with [AAI 1 Managing Risk and Accountability – Receipt and Provision of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality](#) and [Financial Policy – Gifts and Benefits](#). Additional guidance on the acceptance and reporting of gifts and benefits, including hospitality, can be found on the [Gifts, Benefits and Sponsorship intranet page](#).
- c. are encouraged to consult with Defence Legal if they are considering signing an appearance release form or other form of waiver in relation to participation in a production or use of their image in associated marketing materials.

5.6 If the Defence-supported project contravenes the terms and conditions in the Request Form or the contract (if applicable), Defence Entertainment Media must seek advice from Defence Legal on possible legal remedies including damages or an injunction to prevent release of the production.

PRIVATE PARTICIPATION OF DEFENCE PERSONNEL IN ENTERTAINMENT OR NON-NEWS PROJECTS

5.7 Defence personnel considering participating in entertainment and non-news projects (such as authoring books, participating in reality television programs etc.) in a private capacity (not on behalf of Defence) must adhere to the following:

- a. Written approval must be sought from their responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer (at a minimum) – via their commander, manager or supervisor – prior to submitting an application to an external party (such as a media organisation or producer etc.), conducting an audition or appearing in an entertainment and non-news project irrespective of whether their participation is undertaken while off-duty or on leave. Where there is no SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer in the reporting line, written approval must be sought from the responsible SES Band 2 or 2-Star officer (at a minimum).
- i. Prior to approval, commanders and managers should consider the duration and nature of their proposed appearance; the risk to organisational reputation; whether they will be wearing uniform and military decorations; and the potential for requests to use their image or Defence establishments, resources, personnel or equipment in promotional activities etc.
- b. Defence Entertainment Media, embedded SCB communication specialists, out-posted RMPAs and Military Public Affairs Officers

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(MPAO) in the chain-of-command must be consulted as soon as possible during the planning phase to obtain appropriate public affairs guidance regarding their proposed participation;

- c. If approved to participate in entertainment or non-news projects in a private capacity, Defence personnel may be offered gifts and/or benefits, including hospitality. While the Defence Gifts and Benefits policy does not apply when an official is participating in a private capacity, personnel must make themselves aware of the policy's content prior to their participation. If clarification is required, guidance on the acceptance of gifts and benefits, including hospitality, can be found on the [Gifts, Benefits and Sponsorship intranet page](#); and
- d. Defence personnel are encouraged to seek independent legal advice if they are considering signing an appearance release form or other form of waiver in relation to participation in a production or use of their image in associated marketing materials.

5.8 Current Defence personnel (including those who have transferred to the Reserves) who intend to release personally-produced products (see [paragraph 5.1](#)) based on their experiences working in Defence (including fictional products based on real experiences), must provide a completed [Request Form](#) and a copy of the product to [Defence Entertainment Media](#) for coordination of Defence's assessment of the product.

5.9 Former Defence personnel who intend to release personally-produced products (see [paragraph 5.1](#)) based on their experiences working in Defence (including fictional products based on real experiences), must comply with all relevant legislative requirements, including but not limited to those regarding:

- c. the unauthorised disclosure of information; and
- d. protection of intellectual property rights (copyright, trademarks, etc.).

For further information regarding unauthorised disclosure and legislative compliance, refer to [Chapter 3 – Releasing Official Content or Making Public Comment on Behalf of Defence](#)). Former Defence personnel are welcome to provide a completed [Request Form](#) and a copy of the product to [Defence Entertainment Media](#) for coordination of Defence's assessment of the product.

For further information regarding compliance with intellectual property rights, refer to the [Defence Intellectual Property Manual](#).

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING REQUESTS

5.10 All requests for Defence support to entertainment and non-news projects are considered on a discretionary basis against a range of criteria, which apply to both external and internal proposals. Proposals that fail to meet these criteria will be declined. These criteria include:

- a. there is a benefit to Defence, which can be based on the project's comparable exposure value, audience figures or other values;

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- b. a military connection is established (including historical value), although exceptions can be made where the project is in the public interest (see public interest criteria at [paragraph 5.12](#));
- c. Defence's security is not compromised;
- d. the proposal aligns with [Defence Values and Behaviours](#) and strategic direction (including Defence's engagement policy and requirements surrounding High Profile Public Events (HPPE));
- e. the proposal delivers key Defence messages to target audiences and supports recruitment, retention and Defence's brands;
- f. community service announcements that have a connection to Defence as these would allow Defence to engage with the community and might also indirectly benefit Defence, such as by assisting charities that provide support to veterans or their families;
- g. Defence business, such as operational requirements and commitments for Defence assets, is not significantly disrupted by the activity;
- h. any potential for inappropriate inferences or implications;
- i. Defence support will not be used to imply or infer an endorsement of an external party (as specified at [paragraph 5.1](#)). Such proposals must be considered in accordance with [Chapter 10 – Defence Endorsement of External Parties](#);
- j. commercially available options do not exist;
- k. no section of the media industry is afforded favourable treatment;
- l. industrial, trade union and/or other workplace arrangements will not be contravened, including those relating to workplace health and safety; and
- m. a risk assessment and, if required, an environmental impact has been assessed and deemed to be acceptable.

5.11 An entertainment and non-news project that does not meet the criteria set out at [paragraph 5.10](#) may be supported in limited circumstances if it could nevertheless significantly boost the Australian economy in terms of foreign capital injection and job creation and sustainment, if it is undertaken in Australia. Such benefits should be taken into account when deciding whether to support these productions. Such proposals must be forwarded to the Defence minister whose portfolio is responsible for the request for consideration.

5.12 **Public interest criteria:** Defence may provide support to community service projects that lack a military connection but satisfy public interest criteria. These campaigns may raise awareness of issues that meet the criteria at [paragraph 5.10](#) and that Defence considers to be of importance to the public, for example mental health and gender equality. Such proposals must be forwarded to the Defence minister whose portfolio is responsible for the request for consideration.

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5.13 Defence does not provide support to:

- a. political purposes in any way contrary to Defence's apolitical standing;
- b. advertisements (except for certain government advertising and information campaigns as specified in [Chapter 11 – Government Advertising and Information Campaigns](#)) and community service campaigns (except for when it meets the public interest criteria at [paragraph 5.12](#));
- c. community service campaigns (except for when they meet the public interest criteria at [paragraph 5.12](#));
- d. student projects;
- e. projects that have no connection with Defence or Defence-related themes or issues. Support may also be refused if Defence's involvement is incidental to the main themes or issues (except for when the project meets the public interest criteria at [paragraph 5.12](#));
- f. projects where there is an available commercial alternative; and
- g. projects that may contravene commercial or industrial arrangements.

CLEARANCE OF DEFENCE SUPPORT TO ENTERTAINMENT OR NON-NEWS PROJECT REQUESTS

5.14 All proposals for Defence support to any entertainment or non-news project must be cleared by the responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer (at a minimum) before it can proceed. Where there is no SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer in the reporting line, clearance must be by the responsible SES Band 2 or 2-Star officer (at a minimum).

5.15 Where approval has been given, the lead Group or Service is responsible for:

- a. assessing the Work Health and Safety (WHS) risk of the activity to both Defence and the proposer's personnel. They will also be responsible for implementing any WHS requirements in respect of the activity;
- b. coordinating and managing all logistics and access;
- c. ensuring that appropriate media escort officers are available for the activity (in coordination with MIDB or SCB, if required);
- d. adding the activity to the [Defence Activity and Engagement Tracker](#), where it does not breach confidentiality agreements;
- e. assigning a project officer as required to coordinate large-scale projects or projects that require ongoing support and to ensure that Defence's objectives are realised and the level of support is appropriate; and
- f. finalising an evaluation of entertainment or non-news projects that involved significant support from Defence, in accordance with

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[paragraphs 2.49-2.50 in Chapter 2 – Defence's Engagement with the Media](#)). The evaluation is to be finalised within four weeks of Defence's support to an entertainment or non-news project concluding and a follow-up evaluation is to be finalised within four weeks once the project has entered the public domain via publication, broadcast etc. The [evaluation template](#) (within the Defence communication plan template) on the intranet can be used as a suggested format.

- i. The evaluation document should be provided to all relevant stakeholders for comment before it is provided to the responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer or their authorised decision maker for clearance and saved in the relevant Group or Service Objective structure.

5.16 Entertainment and non-news project requests are to be considered and cleared as quickly as possible, with consideration for their complexity such as legal negotiations and the requirement to ensure compliancy with the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#). Complex requests and those involving location filming typically require submission at least 21 days prior to the activity taking place. Requests involving Air Force assets require up to three months' notice.

REQUESTS TO USE DEFENCE IMAGERY, AUDIO, ILLUSTRATIONS OR WRITTEN PRODUCTS

5.17 Approved requests by external parties to use pre-existing Defence imagery, audio, illustrations or written materials etc. for entertainment and non-news projects must be cleared by the responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer or their authorised decision maker (at a minimum), and formalised with an *Intellectual Property Deed: Archival Material* ('Archival Material Deed'), facilitated by [Defence Entertainment Media](#).

5.18 Requests from external parties to capture imagery at a Defence facility for entertainment or non-news projects must be cleared in accordance with this chapter and [Chapter 8 – Digital Media](#).

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

5.19 Defence does not generally provide financial assistance to entertainment and non-news projects as this can put the production's editorial independence into question.

- a. In some cases, a Defence grant may be appropriate where a proposal seeks to address the achievement of Defence's strategic priorities to defend Australia and its national interests; and protect and advance Australian strategic interests.
- i. Commonwealth grant opportunities and their guidelines, including Defence grant opportunities, are published on the government grants portal [GrantConnect](#) and [Defence's webpage](#). Any application for a Defence grant should clearly articulate the expected outcomes of the initiative, how these are linked to Defence priorities, and in particular, how the initiative seeks to support the specific priorities expressed in the grant

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program guidelines. For additional guidance on what constitutes a grant, please refer to [AAI 4 Spending Defence Money – Grants](#) and [Financial Policy - Grants](#).

- b. Defence may also provide in-kind support or sponsorship.
 - i. The consideration about whether or not to provide in-kind support is to be in accordance with [AAI 6 – Managing Defence Money – Charging for Goods and Services](#) and [Defence Cost Recovery Policy](#).
 - ii. Sponsorship is an arrangement or agreement where a sponsor provides a contribution in money or in-kind product or service to support an activity in return for certain specified benefits. Sponsorship support is typically given in return for some form of recognition. If Defence is considering providing sponsorship there must be a clear and tangible link to supporting Defence's objectives and outcomes. Additional guidance on sponsorship can be found on the Defence Finance Group's [Gifts, Benefits and Sponsorship intranet page](#).

5.20 [Paragraph 5.19](#) does not apply to activities undertaken by Defence Force Recruiting.

FURTHER INFORMATION

5.21 Further information regarding entertainment and non-news projects can be found on the [Entertainment and Non-News Projects intranet page](#), the [Entertainment and Non-News Projects website](#) or by contacting [Defence Entertainment Media](#).

5.22 Entertainment and non-news project requests seeking Defence endorsement must be considered in accordance with [Chapter 10 – Defence Endorsement of External Parties](#).

5.23 Entertainment and non-news projects are not to be confused with Defence's involvement in non-emergency Defence Assistance to the Civil Community (DACC) tasks or other major community events or events organised by commercial enterprises, charitable or not-for-profit organisations or individuals. See the [DACC Policy](#) and [DACC Manual](#) for guidance relating to such tasks.

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CHAPTER 6 – SOCIAL MEDIA (OFFICIAL)

6.1 Social media refers to websites and applications that enable users to create and share content, or to participate in virtual communities and networks. Social media includes, but is not limited to:

- a. social media networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, SnapChat etc.);
- b. social review sites (e.g. Yelp, Tripadvisor, Goodreads, Google Reviews etc.);
- c. image-sharing sites (e.g. Instagram, Flickr, Pinterest etc.);
- d. video-hosting and live-streaming sites (e.g. YouTube, TikTok, Zoom, Skype etc.);
- e. community blogs (e.g. WordPress, Tumblr, Blogger etc.);
- f. discussion sites and professional military education websites (e.g. Whirlpool, Quora, Reddit, The Cove, Forge etc.);
- g. messenger sites (e.g. Messenger, Signal, WhatsApp etc.);
- h. collaborative sites (e.g. Wikipedia etc.); and
- i. dating sites (e.g. Tinder, RSVP, Bumble etc.).

6.2 Defence social media includes official accounts on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Spotify, Twitter and YouTube.

- a. For policy on the use of social media on Defence devices, refer to the [Information and Communications Technology Manual](#).

6.3 Official Defence social media accounts exist to promote the work of the Australian Government and Defence through its operations, activities and personnel both domestically and internationally. These accounts must observe appropriate principles and governance to ensure they are consistent with this objective.

6.4 An official Defence social media account is any account that uses Defence resources or is operated by Defence personnel in a manner that could be reasonably considered as representing Defence, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) or their Groups or Services. Defence retains ownership of all official social media accounts. There are two types of official social media accounts:

- a. **Official organisational:** approved accounts are operated by Defence personnel for a Defence purpose related to a Group or Service, or a Defence activity or organisation (e.g. Defence Australia Facebook account, Australian Army Instagram account etc.). Official organisational social media accounts must be handed over when the social media account manager completes their tenure.

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- b. **Official positional:** approved accounts are operated by Defence personnel for a Defence purpose related to a position (e.g. Chief of the Defence Force Facebook account, Chief of Air Force Twitter account etc.). Official positional accounts must be handed over when the person completes their tenure.

DEFENCE SOCIAL MEDIA HUB

6.5 The Defence Social Media Hub is responsible for:

- a. whole-of-Defence social media strategy, policy, process, training, content guidance, crisis management, analytical reporting, technical support, and account consolidation;
- b. gaining approval and providing access to social media software and tools;
- c. reporting on the number and usage of official social media accounts;
- d. maintaining the whole-of-Defence [Social Media Playbook](#), which provides guidance on social media best practice;
- e. coordinating the Defence Social Media Working Group; and
- f. being the point of contact for Groups and Services to report suspected offensive content on social media by or about Defence personnel and to escalate in accordance with the [Reporting of Offensive Content Escalation Process](#).

6.6 Authorised practitioners are to provide performance information, metrics and analytics of all official Defence social media accounts to the Defence Social Media Hub in support of an annual review.

6.7 For further information, including instructions on the correct use and best practice of official social media accounts, refer to the [Social Media Playbook](#) on the [Defence Social Media intranet page](#), or contact the [Defence Social Media Hub](#).

PRINCIPLES OF OFFICIAL DEFENCE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

6.8 There are three principles for all official Defence social media accounts:

- a. Accountability at a senior level within the chain-of-command.
- b. Alignment with government policy and Defence objectives.
- c. Priority for high-profile announcements, key decisions, operations, events and other significant content lies with the Government to ensure that:
 - i. social media accounts do not pre-empt or foreshadow government decisions or operational, capability or policy outcomes unless authorised by the Assistant Secretary Media and Information Disclosure (ASMID);

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- ii. content is made available to ministers through Media and Information Disclosure Branch (MIDB) before being considered for use by other official Defence social media accounts, in accordance with [paragraph 2.35 in Chapter 2 – Engagement with the Media](#); and
- iii. official Defence social media accounts may post complementary content once ministers' posts have occurred, or where ministers have endorsed prior use of the material.

NEW OFFICIAL DEFENCE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

6.9 New official Defence social media accounts are to be established in accordance with the criteria and process specified on the [Application for a Defence Official Social Media Profile form](#) on the [Defence Social Media intranet page](#) and approved by the respective SES Band 3 or 3-Star officer. This clearance level cannot be delegated.

6.10 New official Defence social media accounts can be created in one of the following parts or positions within Defence:

- a. Navy: headquarters, ships, establishments, squadrons, Navy Band, 1-Star officer and above positions and Service Warrant Officer;
- b. Army: headquarters, brigades, training centres, units, Army Band, 1-Star officer and above positions and Service Warrant Officer;
- c. Air Force: headquarters, public relations assets, 2-Star officer and above positions and Service Warrant Officer;
- d. Joint Operations Command: headquarters; 1-Star officer and above positions, and Warrant Officer Joint Operations;
- e. Joint Capabilities Group: headquarters, units, 1-Star officer and above positions, and Warrant Officer Joint Capabilities; or
- f. Other areas within Defence: Executive (Secretary, CDF, Vice Chief of the Defence Force (VCDF) and the Associate Secretary), Australian Defence Force Headquarters (ADFHQ), Defence Science and Technology Group (DSTG), Defence Force Recruiting (DFR), the Defence Member and Family Support Branch, and Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication Division (MECC).

6.11 Each official Defence social media account is to have a designated **responsible officer** at the SES Band 2 or 2-Star officer level who is accountable for the account and its adherence to the [Defence Media and Communication Policy](#) and this Guide. This requirement also applies to accounts operated by Defence staff overseas. In considering whether a new official Defence social media account should be created, consideration should be given to:

- a. whether there is a different or unique audience for social media content that cannot be reached via existing official accounts,

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- b. the existence of a strong external brand or the potential to build a strong external brand, and
- c. the ongoing commitment of resources required to manage the account.

6.12 Once an official Defence social media account is established, the responsible SES Band 2 or 2-Star officer is responsible for ensuring posted content is appropriately cleared and that appropriately trained staff are assigned to undertake regular monitoring and moderating of comments.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ONGOING MANAGEMENT OF OFFICIAL DEFENCE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

6.13 There are five requirements for the ongoing operation of official Defence social media accounts:

- a. **Purpose:** where the account and its objectives are defined in a formal content strategy to provide strategic guidance for the management of the account and align with the [Defence Communication Strategy's](#) objectives. Content strategies are to be reviewed annually against this Guide by the accountable SES Band 2 or 2-Star officer.
- b. **Governance:** including processes for content approval, reporting, escalation and issues management.
 - i. Members of the Defence Social Media Hub and/or relevant Group or Service headquarters must be included as administrators of the account. The account will not be accessed by the Defence Social Media Hub or Group or Service headquarters unless there is an urgent need, where the Group or Service would be consulted prior to accessing.
- c. **Resourcing:** including ongoing accountability, daily monitoring and staffing arrangements. Anyone posting content to and moderating an official Defence social media account is to be an authorised and trained practitioner with a current duty statement or performance agreement reflecting this responsibility.
- d. **Training:** where authorised practitioners complete the Social Media Practitioner course.
 - i. The Defence Social Media Hub will administer the course.
 - ii. Registration for all training and assessment will be completed via [Campus](#).
 - iii. Training is delivered by trainers authorised by the Defence Social Media Hub.
- e. **Content:** which is relevant to official Defence business and includes:
 - i. a content plan, which highlights key social media activities on a short-term basis (such as monthly or quarterly) and cleared by

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the responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer or their authorised clearance authority;

- ii. high-quality imagery and vision cleared in accordance with [paragraph 8.5 in Chapter 8 – Digital Media](#);
- iii. assurance by the authorised practitioner that all content is cleared at an appropriate level before publishing; and
- iv. regular and ongoing review by the authorised practitioner.

6.14 Content identified in content plans, communication plans, military public affairs plans or public affairs guidance for posting to official Defence social media accounts is to be cleared by a minimum Executive Level 1 or the designated unit commander.

6.15 Authorised practitioners must adhere to the [Social Media Playbook](#) for best-practice information on maintaining official Defence social media accounts.

REQUIREMENTS FOR POSTING AND INTERACTING ON DEFENCE OFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

6.16 Defence personnel posting on official organisational or official positional social media accounts are representing the views of the Government and Defence and must be apolitical in nature.

6.17 Likes, reactions, shares, comments and similar activity on others' content can give the perception of support for, or endorsement of, that content. Official organisational and official positional Defence social media accounts should only like, react to, share or comment on content from Defence and other government accounts or accounts that are non-political in nature and in accordance with Defence's strategic messaging and [Defence Values and Behaviours](#). For further information, refer to [Chapter 10 – Defence Endorsement of External Parties](#).

- a. Official Defence social media accounts are permitted to follow Members of Parliament across the political spectrum in the interests of staying well-informed. Any engagement with these accounts must be in accordance with this [paragraph 6.17](#).
- b. Official Defence social media accounts may re-tweet, share or like posts from Defence portfolio ministers where:
 - i. the content relates to a minister's portfolio responsibilities; and
 - ii. the content and associated tags, including silent tags, are not political in nature, and/or do not compromise Defence's integrity.
- c. Defence personnel may be authorised to monitor other accounts where it relates to their duties and responsibilities, and is in accordance with legislative and policy obligations.

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REQUIREMENTS FOR OPERATING AND MAINTAINING AN OFFICIAL CLOSED GROUP

6.18 An official closed group is any closed group that uses Defence resources or is operated by Defence personnel in a manner that could be reasonably considered as representing Defence, the ADF or their Groups or Services. Defence retains ownership of all official closed groups.

6.19 ForceNet should be used where the intended audience is primarily within Defence (such as to provide information to a unit, base etc.) or encompasses the immediate Defence community (such as families, on-base groups, sports etc.).

- a. Cadet units awaiting access to ForceNet may use Facebook closed groups until this access is in place.

6.20 Where access to ForceNet is not possible (such as for alumni groups with non-Defence or international participants etc.), the use of a closed group on commercial social media sites may be appropriate. The creation of a closed group requires Group Head or Service Chief approval. Appropriate management of an approved closed group requires:

- a. **Governance:** there must be a Defence administrator for all approved Defence closed groups, and a clear succession plan for the handover of the group following personnel changes.
- b. **Content:** all content must be moderated including deletion, escalation and reporting of content.
- c. **Membership:** must be monitored, maintained and updated.
- d. **Reputation:** each closed group must have authorised Defence or Group or Service branding including naming, imagery and descriptions.

CLEARANCE TO DEACTIVATE OFFICIAL DEFENCE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS AND CLOSED GROUPS

6.21 There must be a sound business reason to deactivate an official social media account or closed group, which could include it being merged, suspended or deleted. Before deactivating an official social media account or closed group, contact the [Defence Social Media Hub](#) for advice. Clearance to close an official Defence social media account must be made in writing by the responsible SES Band 2 or 2-Star officer.

CHAPTER 7 – SOCIAL MEDIA (UNOFFICIAL)

7.1 Social media refers to websites and applications that enable users to create and share content, or to participate in virtual communities and networks. Social media includes, but is not limited to:

- a. social media networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, SnapChat etc.);
- b. social review sites (e.g. Yelp, Tripadvisor, Goodreads, Google Reviews etc.);
- c. image sharing sites (e.g. Instagram, Flickr, Pinterest etc.);
- d. video hosting and live streaming sites (e.g. YouTube, TikTok, Zoom, Skype etc.);
- e. community blogs (e.g. WordPress, Tumblr, Blogger etc.);
- f. discussion sites and professional military education websites (e.g. Whirlpool, Quora, Reddit, The Cove, Forge etc.);
- g. messenger sites (e.g. Messenger, Signal, WhatsApp etc.);
- h. collaborative sites (e.g. Wikipedia etc.); and
- i. dating sites (e.g. Tinder, RSVP, Bumble etc.).

7.2 An unofficial social media account is one operated by Defence personnel in a personal or private capacity for non-Defence related positions, organisations and activities, not associated with their service or employment in Defence.

- a. For policy on the personal use of Defence's information and communications technology resources, refer to the [Information and Communications Technology Manual](#).

7.3 Defence personnel can use social media in an unofficial capacity. This must be balanced with security and professional obligations as Defence personnel, where online behaviour can pose a risk to national security, and reflect on Defence as a whole. This ultimately may harm Defence's personnel, information or national interests, as well as impacting on organisational reputation and the level of confidence Defence receives from the Australian community and the Government. In some cases, responsibilities extend into Defence personnel's private lives and limit their ability to participate fully in public discussions, including on social media.

7.4 Unofficial social media accounts of Defence personnel must not use any Defence branding (including Defence logos, emblems, badges, symbols, iconography etc.); official title; rank; profile photo in uniform or other clothing with Defence branding; position/employment category; role; or organisational grouping connected to or representing Defence.

- a. Defence personnel using **LinkedIn** must:

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- i. comply with the security considerations at [paragraphs 7.11-7.13](#) and carefully consider the type and amount of information they post, including technical expertise;
- ii. not use their rank, profile photo in uniform or other clothing with Defence branding, detailed information about their current or previous roles in Defence, or any operational, classified or sensitive information;
- iii. apply the highest privacy and security settings available;
- iv. only access LinkedIn via the official website or mobile application; and
- v. consider using a different email address for LinkedIn access from the email address used for personal communication.

7.5 Defence personnel submitting content to internal or external professional military education parties (such as The Cove, Forge, The Runway etc.) must do so in accordance with [Chapter 3 – Releasing Official Content or Making Public Comment on Behalf of Defence](#).

CONDUCT WHEN USING UNOFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

7.6 Posts, comments, direct messages, likes, reactions, shares and similar activity on social media from people identified or identifiable as Defence personnel constitute public comment and are subject to the policies, values and legislation governing Defence. Failure to comply with Defence policy could constitute an offence against provisions of the [Defence Force Discipline Act 1982](#), the [Public Service Act 1999](#) and/or amount to a breach of the [Australian Public Service Code of Conduct](#).

- a. The policies, values and legislation governing Defence apply even if material is posted anonymously or using a pseudonym and Defence employees should be mindful that their identity or employment may be revealed.
- b. Joining, following or liking someone else's content could be perceived as endorsement of the content. Defence personnel should apply the considerations of [paragraph 7.7](#) when joining, following or liking another person's content.
- c. Being tagged in certain posts may imply an association. Where possible, Defence personnel must untag themselves from posts that do not comply with their responsibilities as Defence personnel.
- d. Defence personnel are permitted to follow Members of Parliament across the political spectrum in the interests of staying well informed or because they support a particular party. Any engagement with such posts must be in accordance with [paragraph 7.6.a](#).
- e. Defence personnel should review their online footprint periodically, such as when joining Defence, changing roles or on promotion.

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Historical posts should be considered in the context of all the risk factors and removed where appropriate.

7.7 Defence personnel using unofficial social media accounts must:

- a. exercise discretion and judgement and protect classified and private information, operational security, our international relationships and the safety of Defence personnel and their families;
- b. do so in a professional, impartial and apolitical manner;
- c. behave with respect and courtesy;
- d. ensure that personal comments added to official content released by Defence aligns with [Defence Values and Behaviours](#);
- e. be aware that what you post can affect your reputation, as well as that of the Government, ministers and Defence; and
- f. be aware that content posted on social media is available immediately to a wide audience, effectively endures without limit, may be copied repeatedly, screen captured, may be seen by people who it was not intended for or used for a purpose for which it was not intended, or taken out of context.

7.8 Defence personnel using unofficial social media accounts must not:

- a. release operational, classified or sensitive information, including but not limited to, details about operational incidents, missions, security procedures, locations and times of deployments, damaged equipment and assets, personal documents (such as wills, powers of attorney, deployment information etc.), and issues regarding morale or personnel;
- b. release information about the injury, wounding or death of a Defence employee before the next of kin is notified and the information is publicly released by Defence;
- c. criticise or question the role, work, policy or administration of the Government, Defence, or Defence Group or Service;
- d. forecast, announce or promote Defence activities that have not been disclosed previously in the public domain;
- e. claim or appear to represent Defence as an official spokesperson (such as, but not limited to, using Defence branding, including Defence logos, emblems, badges, symbols and iconography (see [Chapter 9 – Defence Branding](#)); official title; rank; position/employment category; role; profile photo in uniform etc.);
- f. use imagery of Defence activities that have not been cleared for public release or represent Defence negatively in the public domain;

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- g. post any defamatory, discriminatory, vulgar, obscene, abusive, profane, threatening, racially or ethnically hateful, otherwise not aligned with [Defence Values and Behaviours](#), or illegal information or material;
- h. join, submit content to or remain a member of a group, forum, site or discussion that is involved in or promotes behaviour that is exploitative, objectifying or derogatory, goes against [Defence Values and Behaviours](#) or in any other way breaches any relevant legislation or Defence policies; or
- i. use media where the copyright is owned by anyone else without authorisation or permission.

CLEARANCE TO USE IMAGERY/AUDIO ON UNOFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

7.9 Defence personnel can post imagery (photographs or videos) of themselves in uniform provided they have appropriate clearance by their chain-of-command. Prior to posting, imagery must be closely reviewed to ensure no operational, classified, sensitive or personal information is released (such as troop locations, equipment, tactical unit details, numbers of personnel etc.).

- a. Images of Defence personnel in uniform must not be used as profile pictures on any unofficial social media accounts. The only exception to this is ForceNet, where the use of a profile picture in uniform is permitted.
- b. Defence personnel are permitted to post images that have been published on the [Defence Image Gallery](#) (in accordance with [paragraph 7.6.a](#)) or videos that have been published on the [Defence Australia YouTube](#) channel.
- c. Images, videos or audio taken by Defence personnel on duty belong to Defence and must be cleared by the member's chain-of-command prior to release to ensure no operational, classified, sensitive or personal information is released. For further information regarding copyright of imagery or audio, refer to [paragraphs 8.11-8.23 in Chapter 8 – Digital Media](#).

7.10 Defence imagery and audio must not be used for political purposes in a way contrary to Defence's apolitical standing. Defence personnel engaging in political activities must comply with imagery and audio requirements in accordance with [paragraph 8.19 in Chapter 8 – Digital Media](#).

SECURITY OF UNOFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

7.11 Defence personnel need to exercise caution with respect to their online presence and be aware that criminal and terrorist organisations, ideologically motivated groups, foreign intelligence services and other individuals (who may disguise their real identity) actively seek information from Defence personnel and their spouses, partners, family members and friends about Defence capabilities, which may potentially harm Defence personnel, information and interests.

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- a. Defence personnel must not provide information in response to requests for information about Defence through digital channels without appropriate clearance. Requests from media must be referred to [Defence Media](#) and requests from the public are to be referred to the [Defence website](#). Suspicious contacts must be reported to the [Defence Security and Vetting Service](#).

7.12 To meet individual security responsibilities, Defence personnel must abide by the eSafety Commissioner's [eSafety Guide](#); Defence Security and Vetting Service's [Social Media Security](#) intranet page and [top tips to help protect you on social media](#); the Australian Cyber Security Centre's [Personal Cyber Security: First Steps Guide](#); [Personal Cyber Security: Next Steps Guide](#); [Personal Cyber Security: Advanced Steps Guide](#); [security tips for personal devices](#) and [easy steps to secure your online information](#); the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation's [Think Before You Link](#) guidance; and the Australian Public Service Commission's [guidance on the use of social media](#). In addition, Defence personnel must keep their unofficial social media accounts secure by:

- a. applying the highest privacy and security settings available;
- b. choosing separate and complex passwords for each account, changing them regularly (approximately every three months), using two-factor authentication where possible, logging out when not in use, and not allowing web browsers to store passwords;
- c. turning off geotagging and location-based social networking to avoid sharing geographical details of where media such as photographs, video, websites and SMS messages were taken; and
- d. not friending/connecting with people unknown to them.

7.13 Defence personnel are encouraged to talk to their spouses, partners and family members about the importance of maintaining secure social media accounts, including that they:

- a. do not post operationally sensitive information (such as deployment dates, locations etc.) or tag Defence personnel in their posts;
- b. apply the highest privacy and security settings available;
- c. carefully consider the type and amount of information they post, including restricting personal information on their accounts (such as home or work address, phone numbers and place of employment etc.); and
- d. choose separate and complex passwords for each account, change them regularly (approximately every three months), use two-factor authentication where possible, log out when not in use, and do not allow web browsers to store passwords.

7.14 For further information, refer to the [Personal Social Media Guide](#) on the [Defence Social Media intranet page](#), or contact the [Defence Social Media Hub](#).



News Media Copyright Requests

8.12 News media organisations may republish and archive imagery, audio and other material from the Defence website for the purpose of reporting news free-of-charge and without seeking further authorisation from the Commonwealth of Australia or Defence, subject to the following conditions (unless specific or additional copyright conditions are otherwise noted on the relevant webpage):

- a. Commonwealth of Australia copyright and Defence origin must be appropriately acknowledged with status at least equal to other credits;
- b. users may not purport to license or assign copyright to other parties, and may not charge customers for intellectual rights; although they may charge for production, research and retrieval, and distribution components of republishing; and
- c. the Commonwealth of Australia reserves all other rights.

8.13 For further information about engaging with the media, refer to [Chapter 2 – Engagement with the Media](#).

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Copyright Requests for Entertainment and Non-News Projects

8.14 For information on entertainment and non-news projects copyright requests, refer to [paragraphs 5.17-5.18 in Chapter 5 – Entertainment and Non-News Projects](#).

Copyright Requests for Political Purposes

8.15 Imagery support to the Prime Minister, Defence portfolio ministers or their nominated elected representative is to be in accordance with [paragraphs 2.30-2.36 in Chapter 2 – Engagement with the Media](#).

8.16 Defence imagery and audio must not be used for political purposes in a way contrary to Defence's apolitical standing.

8.17 Defence imagery and audio can be used by Defence ministers where it relates to their portfolio responsibilities, in accordance with [paragraph 8.16](#).

8.18 Other politicians can request to use imagery and audio where the use:

- a. relates to their participation in authorised activities involving the Australian Defence Force (ADF), such as base visits, ceremonial events or the ADF Parliamentary Program;
- b. factually informs the public of Defence's service to the nation; and
- c. complies with [paragraph 8.16](#) and is approved at the headquarters level by the responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer or their authorised decision maker (at a minimum).

8.19 Where Defence personnel engage in political activities, they are to take all reasonable steps to protect Defence's impartiality and political neutrality and avoid giving the impression that such activities are being undertaken in anything other than a private capacity.

- a. Defence personnel must not publish imagery of themselves or other Defence members in uniform in the context of political activity.
- b. Defence personnel transferring to the Reserve or resigning from Defence to contest an election are requested to avoid displaying or publishing imagery of themselves in uniform.

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CHAPTER 11 – GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS

11.1 Government advertising and information campaigns are typically designed to support the effective delivery and implementation of government policies, programs, assistance, initiatives and services. In general terms, a campaign is a planned series of communication activities that share common objectives, target the same audience and have specific timelines and a dedicated budget. Campaigns may seek to inform, educate or motivate a particular target audience; change levels of awareness, attitudes and behaviours in order to achieve a specific public policy outcome.

- a. **Advertising campaigns** include paid media placement (including social media).
- b. **Information campaigns** typically involve a mix of public relations or below the line activities, but do not include a paid advertising component.

11.2 The [Communications Advice Branch](#) in the Department of Finance is responsible for whole-of-government coordination of government communication campaigns, including the administration of the [Australian Government Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by non-corporate Commonwealth entities](#) (the 'Guidelines'). The Guidelines apply to all information and advertising campaigns undertaken in Australia by non-corporate Commonwealth entities under the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#).

11.3 The development of all government advertising or information campaigns by Defence requires early engagement with the [Communications Advice Branch](#) in the Department of Finance to ensure compliance with the Guidelines and campaign development requirements.

11.4 The requirements for the review and certification of campaigns are determined by the value of the campaign and whether advertising will be undertaken, and may require Cabinet approval. The value of a campaign is the budget for all campaign elements across all financial years, excluding entity officials and associated costs.

CLEARANCE OF GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS

Whole-of-Government Clearance Requirements

11.5 Defence personnel must consult with the [Communications Advice Branch](#) in the Department of Finance to determine whole-of-government clearance requirements.

Defence Clearance Requirements

11.6 Defence's government advertising campaigns must comply with the [Guidelines](#) and be cleared by the responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer or their authorised decision maker (at a minimum).

- 3.17.1 Defence's government advertising campaigns may also require clearance from:

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- i. other areas of Defence (such as Defence Legal, Defence Finance Group etc.); or
- ii. Cabinet.

CLEARANCE OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS**Whole-of-Government Clearance Requirements**

11.7 Defence personnel must consult with the [Communications Advice Branch](#) in the Department of Finance to determine whole-of-government clearance requirements.

Defence Clearance Requirements

11.8 Defence's information campaigns are to comply with the [Guidelines](#) and be cleared by the responsible SES Band 1 or 1-Star officer or their authorised decision maker (at a minimum).

- a. Defence's government advertising campaigns may also require clearance from other areas of Defence (such as Defence Legal, Defence Finance Group etc.).

APPEARANCE OF DEFENCE PERSONNEL IN GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING OR INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS

11.9 Defence personnel must not be used in government advertising or information campaigns unless the role is essential to the communication of an important message, such as a demonstrated Defence, public interest or public safety issue. Any involvement of Defence personnel in government advertising or information campaigns must be in accordance with the Australian Public Service Commission's guidance on [Working with the Government and the Parliament](#) and the Military Personnel Policy Manual (MILPERSMAN) – Part 7 (Personnel Management), Chapter 5 – [Political Activities of Defence members](#).

- a. Defence personnel appearing in government television, radio, print or online campaigns must be approved by the Secretary of Defence (or their authorised decision maker) for Australian Public Service employees, or the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) (or their authorised decision maker) for Australian Defence Force personnel.
- b. Any involvement of Defence personnel in government advertising and information campaigns must be consistent with the requirement for personnel to be impartial in the performance of their duties and should accord with [Defence Values and Behaviours](#).
- c. The lead Group or Service is to coordinate approval from the Secretary and/or the CDF.

11.10 For information about Defence endorsement of external parties, including the appearance of Defence personnel in external party advertising, see [Chapter 10 – Defence Endorsement of External Parties](#).

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11.11 For information about the release of Defence imagery or audio, see [Chapter 8 – Digital Media](#).

ANNEX A – DEFINITIONS

The following terms are defined in [Defence Instruction – Administrative policy](#):

Accountable officer

Administrative policy

Administrative policy framework

A person/s engaged under a contract

Australian Public Service employee

Commander

Defence

Defence civilian

Defence locally engaged employee

Defence member

Defence personnel

Framework documents

Manager

Period-of-effect

Personal information

Policy domain

Policy owner

Provision

Sensitive information

Supervisor

For the purpose of this Guide, the following additional definitions apply:

Authorised practitioner

An appropriately trained person in a designated social media role, formally tasked by a social media Responsible Officer to manage or administer an official Defence social media profile as part of their duties.

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Commentary	Anything serving to illustrate a point; comment.
Communication	A process that conveys shared meaning between individuals or between organisations and individuals.
Content	Information contained in any communication, whether in audio, text, graphics, images etc.
Content plan	A document that highlights key social media activities on a short-term basis (such as monthly or quarterly).
Content strategy	A document that provides strategic guidance for the management of official Defence social media accounts.
Communication	A process that conveys shared meaning between individuals or between organisations and individuals.
Crisis	A crisis in Defence is an unplanned event, situation or matter of public concern that requires targeted attention, management, intervention or response beyond business-as-usual processes. A crisis is likely to occur quickly and has the potential to disrupt Defence's normal operations and activities. Crisis may undermine our reputation or challenge the public's sense of appropriateness, tradition, values, safety, security or the integrity of Defence. The focus of Defence's crisis communication efforts is to quickly and effectively address stakeholders, minimise physical and reputational damage, and return to normal business.
Defence Image Gallery	A publicly accessible platform showcasing Defence public affairs images, selected based on public affairs value, technical standards and metadata requirements. It interfaces with the Navy, Army and Air Force image galleries. Image links can be incorporated in Defence media releases and other documents. All images can be downloaded, subject to copyright conditions.
Defence installation	As defined in the <i>Defence Act 1903</i> .
Defence logo	Consists of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the words 'Australian Government', an underline, and the word 'Defence'.
Defence spokespeople	Defence spokespeople are those authorised to speak on behalf of Defence. They are a subject matter expert for the topic of the media engagement, who voluntarily agree to speak on behalf of Defence.

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Department of Defence logo	Consists of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the words 'Australian Government', an underline, and the words 'Department of Defence'.
Digital communication	Digitised content that can be transmitted over the internet or computer networks, including text, audio, video and graphics.
Embedded SCB communication specialists	Communication specialists that are part of Strategic Communication Branch (SCB), who are embedded within each Group and Service.
Endorsement	<p>Endorsement occurs when Defence provides its support publicly to an external party (such as another government entity; organisation, including charitable and not-for-profit organisations; private company; defence industry; individual; product, including publications; service; event or activity etc.) that may, or may not, result in a commercial benefit.</p> <p>An endorsement may encompass verbal or written statements, such as a testimonial; imagery (photographs or video) of Defence personnel, equipment or facilities; Defence logos; or any other characteristic that may lead people to believe there is an association between Defence and an external party.</p>
Entertainment and non-news project	<p>Entertainment and non-news projects include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. television and radio programs (including participation in reality programs and competitions), scripts, short films, feature films, documentaries; b. corporate videos, music videos, podcasts, blogs and artworks; c. written products such as songs, poems and books (novels, textbooks, children's literature etc.); and d. community service announcements and other such projects.
External party	Such as another government entity; organisation, including charitable and not-for-profit organisations; private company; defence industry; individual; event or activity organiser etc.

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Imagery	Collectively, the representations of objects reproduced electronically or by optical means on film, electronic display devices, or other media (such as still frame image files, motion video tape or files, hardcopy photographs etc.).
Intranet	An internet protocol (IP) network belonging to an organisation, usually a corporation, and accessible only to organisation members, employees etc., or people authorised by them.
Issue	An issue in Defence is an event, situation or matter of public concern that emerges over a period of time or is of a less-severe nature than a crisis. It could be an unfolding situation where the details are not yet known, or a persistent situation that remains of concern over a period of time. It is possible that a benign situation, or an issue, could turn into a crisis as the situation escalates, intensifies or broadens. The focus of Defence issues management is the same as crisis communication, with less urgent timeframes and, while communication planning may be proactive, Defence may take a reactive rather than a proactive posture for media engagement.
Media	A publication or broadcast program that provides news and feature stories to the public through various distribution channels such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television or online.
Media and Information Disclosure Branch	Media and Information Disclosure Branch (MIDB) within Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication Division includes Defence's central media team, Defence Media , which is Defence's primary contact for the media. Other functions undertaken within MIDB include Defence News Bureau (including Service newspapers, social media, and digital media); speechwriting for ministers, the Secretary and the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF); events management; entertainment and non-news projects; daily Defence talking points; question time briefs; freedom of information; and official histories.
Metadata	Information describing specific attributes of data.
Media outlets	Newspapers, magazines, radio, television or online.
Military public affairs officer	Australian Defence Force members who deliver Joint, Service-specific, operational, exercise and regional media and communication effects.

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Objective	A Defence information and communications technology application for the creation, storage, retrieval, collaboration, communication and management of corporate information.
Official closed group	Any closed group (e.g. ForceNet) that uses Defence resources or is operated by Defence personnel in a manner that could be reasonably considered as representing Defence, the ADF or their Groups or Services. Defence retains ownership of all official closed groups
Official content	All content released by Defence is considered official.
Official Defence social media account	Any social media account that uses Defence resources or is operated by Defence personnel in a manner that could be reasonably considered as representing Defence, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) or their Groups or Services.
Official organisational Defence social media account	Approved accounts operated by Defence personnel for a Defence purpose related to a Group or Service, or a Defence activity or organisation (e.g. Defence Australia Facebook account, Australian Army Instagram account etc.). Official organisational social media accounts are handed over when the social media account manager completes their tenure.
Official positional Defence social media account	Approved accounts operated by Defence personnel for a Defence purpose related to a position and independent of the incumbent (e.g. Chief of the Defence Force Facebook account, Chief of Air Force Twitter account etc.). Official positional accounts are handed over when the person completes their tenure.
Public affairs guidance	Drafted by a public affairs officer to support proactive content or operational incident reporting by providing a recommended public information approach.

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Public comment	Public comment by Defence personnel is the provision of official content to individuals or organisations external to Defence or for use in Defence publications. This includes, but is not limited to, social media, Defence media releases, contractor media releases and website testimonials, media responses, interviews, podcasts, background briefings, informal briefings, documents, letters to the editor, opinion pieces, articles, journals, academic/educational/research papers, professional military education parties, public briefings, speeches, lectures, presentations, seminars, workshops, conferences, commentary, imagery, audio, internet sites, mobile networks and self-contained works.
Publications	Hard copy or soft copy documents intended for, or likely to be made available to the public, State authorities or foreign countries by way of free issue or sale. They include books and booklets (monographs or serials, hardback or paper bound), periodicals, journals, Defence and committee reports, instructional handbooks and manuals, posters and display material, binders for documents published in loose-leaf format, broadsheets, pamphlets, folders, leaflets, forms of advertising and business cards.
Public information	Text, audio or imagery content that has been cleared for public release or comment.
Regional manager for public affairs	Media and Information Disclosure Branch has a team of out-posted Regional Managers for Public Affairs (RMPA) who work collaboratively across Australia. RMPAs foster and maintain relations with local media and other key stakeholders. RMPAs work with Defence Establishment leadership, military public affairs personnel and others in the coordination of proactive engagement, media enquiries, issues, incidents, operations and events in their region.
Responsible officer	An SES Band 2 or 2-Star officer in the relevant Group or Service who is accountable for the content of an official Defence social media account and its adherence to the Defence Media and Communication Policy and this Guide.

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Social media	Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content, or to participate in virtual communities and networks. Social media includes, but is not limited to: social media networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, SnapChat etc.); social review sites (e.g. Yelp, Tripadvisor, Goodreads, Google Reviews etc.); image-sharing sites (e.g. Instagram, Flickr, Pinterest etc.); video-hosting and live-streaming sites (e.g. YouTube, TikTok, Zoom, Skype etc.); community blogs (e.g. WordPress, Tumblr, Blogger etc.); discussion sites and professional military education websites (e.g. Whirlpool, Quora, Reddit, The Cove, Forge etc.); messenger sites (e.g. Messenger, Signal, WhatsApp etc.); collaborative sites (e.g. Wikipedia etc.); and dating sites (e.g. Tinder, RSVP, Bumble etc.).
Strategic communication adviser	A Strategic Communication Branch communication specialist who is embedded in a Group or Service to provides media and communication support. Group Heads and Service Chiefs decide the specific role of the Strategic Communication Adviser (SCA) according to their needs.
Strategic Communication Branch	Strategic Communication Branch (SCB) within Ministerial Executive Coordination and Communication Division produces Defence's strategic media and communication policy and guidance, including the Defence Communication Strategy , Defence Media and Communication Policy , and this Guide. SCB is also comprised of embedded communication specialists in the Groups and Services and taskforce media and communication oversight as required.
Unofficial social media account	An unofficial social media account is one operated by Defence personnel in a personal or private capacity for non-Defence related positions, organisations and activities, not associated with their service or employment in Defence.
Websites	A set of related web pages located under a single domain name. Are external to Defence.

ANNEX B – MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION CLEARANCE AUTHORITIES

		Groups/Services						Central						
Paragraph	High-profile, large-scale, priority or significant, Defence operations, exercises, events, community engagement, activities	CO/OC/O6 Manager	Embedded comms specialist / MPAO	SES Band 1 / 1-Star	SES Band 2 / 2-Star	Group Head / Service Chief	Group / Service HQ	Director News	Defence Media	ASMD / ASSC	ASSOC SEC	SEC/CDF (or Office)	Minister's Office	Comments
Media Engagement, Releasing Official Content and Public Comment														
2.10	Responses to media enquiries		✓		✓*				✓			✓	✓*	
2.11	Responses to media enquiries for routine Defence activities (eg: exercises, community engagement) limited to content contained in an approved communication plan, military public affairs plan, public affairs guidance, talking points or holding statement			✓					✓			✓		In the lead up to, during, and up to 48 hours after the conclusion of an activity, media responses can be drawn from the approved plan or product for routine activities.
4.12	Responses to media enquiries – crisis and issue		✓		✓*				✓			✓	✓	A Combined, Joint or single-Service Information Bureau may be established and Defence spokespeople may be authorised to engage directly with media to manage heightened media interest.
2.22	Media events		✓	✓*					C			C	C*	
2.39	Communication plan for Defence operations, exercises, community engagement and other Group or Service level activities		✓	✓*		C		C	C			C	C	Where an ADF chain-of-command has no 1-Star officer, the responsible Colonel (equivalent) can clear.
2.39.a	Communication plan – National events of commemoration, significant and importance; and issues of diversity and inclusion.		✓	✓*		C		C	C		✓	C	C	Approved communication and public affairs plans can devolve or escalate clearances depending on sensitivities.
2.47	Media embeds		✓	✓*					✓			✓	✓	
2.49	Evaluation of communication activities		✓	✓										
2.50	Ministerial talking points		✓	✓					C			C		
2.50	Ministerial talking points with accompanying media release		✓	✓					✓			✓		
2.58	Content for Ministerial speeches			✓*										
3.10	Releasing official content or making public comment on Defence matters		✓		✓*							✓	C	Defence Media has discretion to lower clearance to SES Band 1/1-Star level.
3.11	Service newspaper content						✓							
Social Media														
6.9	Create a new official Defence social media account					✓								
6.13.a	Social media content strategies				✓									
6.13.e.i	Social media content plans			✓										
6.14	Social media product identified in content plans, communication plans, military public affairs plans or public affairs guidance	✓*												Minimum EL1 or the designated unit commander.
6.12	Authorise personnel to post to official Defence social media accounts				✓									Personnel posting are to be minimum EL1 or COL (equivalent), PAOs or Service Warrant Officers.
6.20	Create a new closed group					✓								
6.21	Deactivate an official Defence social media account or closed group				✓									
Digital Media														

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Defence Media and Communication Guide

		Groups/Services						Central						
Paragraph	High-profile, large-scale, priority or significant, Defence operations, exercises, events, community engagement, activities	CO/OC/O6 Manager	Embedded comms specialist / MPAO	SES Band 1 / 1-Star	SES Band 2 / 2-Star	Group Head / Service Chief	Group / Service HQ	Director News	Defence Media	ASMID / ASSC	ASSOC SEC	SEC/CDF (or Office)	Minister's Office	Comments
Entertainment and Non-News Projects														
5.7.a	Private participation in entertainment or non-news projects	✓	✓	✓*					✓					
5.8	Private participation in entertainment or non-news projects – current Defence personnel who intend to release personally-produced products based on their experiences working in Defence	✓	✓	✓*					✓					Requires submission of a <i>Request for Defence Support in Film, Television and Other Projects</i> form.
5.9	Private participation in entertainment or non-news projects – former Defence personnel who intend to release personally-produced products based on their experiences working in Defence													Must comply with legislative requirements.
5.14	Defence support to entertainment or non-news projects		✓	✓*					✓					Requires submission of a <i>Request for Defence Support in Film, Television and Other Projects</i> form.
5.17	Use pre-existing Defence imagery, audio, illustrations or written materials etc. for entertainment or non-news projects		✓	✓*				✓	✓					Must be formalised with an <i>Intellectual Property Deed: Archival Material</i> .
Defence Branding														
Endorsements of External Parties and Testimonials														
Government Advertising and Information Campaigns														
11.5-11.6	Government advertising campaigns			✓*										Must comply with whole-of-government and Defence clearance requirements.
11.7-11.8	Government information campaigns			✓*										Must comply with whole-of-government and Defence clearance requirements.

✓ – Approval

* – Additional Clearance at MECC, SEC or CDF request

C – Copy for Information

Clearance officers have responsibility to seek higher clearances depending on risk, complexity and sensitivities.

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Australian Government
Department of Defence

EC20-000367

See distribution

**JOINT DIRECTIVE 01/2020 BY THE CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE AND
SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE**

SUPPORT TO DEFENCE MINISTERS - MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

Reference:

A. Defence Media and Communication Policy

INTRODUCTION

1. Effective, high quality, proactive and well-coordinated communication is essential to explaining the Government's defence policy. Public awareness and understanding of Defence policies and activities are vital to maintain public support for the organisation.
2. Defence encourages its personnel to engage with the media and public. However, engagement must be authorised and managed appropriately, consistent with the requirements of Government. To do this, all personnel must ensure the information they provide is accurate, properly agreed and authorised, represents a whole of Defence view, and is aligned with Defence policies and strategic communication plans.
3. Our public comments should strengthen Defence's credibility and reputation. At the same time, Defence must protect classified and private information, operational security, our international relationships and the safety of Defence personnel and their families. We do not criticise or question the role or policy of Government to the media or any other organisations.
4. Media and Communication Branch (MCB), in the Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication Division (MECC), is the departmental coordinating authority for media and communication in Defence and plays an important role in assisting commanders and managers to promote Defence as a capable, transparent, coordinated, accountable and responsive organisation.
5. In turn, commanders and managers maintain and improve Defence's reputation by providing accurate and timely information, and by facilitating access to Defence personnel and activities when required and authorised. Failure to engage in a timely manner will mean public perceptions of Defence are disproportionately shaped by speculation, misinformation or unbalanced reporting. Accordingly, all commanders and managers must prioritise media and communication activities and be available to answer media questions within required timeframes.
6. This requires active incorporation of the One Defence ethos by speaking with a single, coordinated and consistent voice and treating media and communication matters as a high priority and essential element of everything we do.

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7. Official Defence social media profiles exist to promote the work of the Australian Government, and of the Department, its operations, activities and personnel. It is important that they observe appropriate principles and governance to ensure they are consistent with this objective.

PURPOSE

8. The purpose of this Directive is to make clear the expectations of the Secretary and the Chief of the Defence Force on the responsibility of all Defence personnel in supporting Defence portfolio Ministers in relation to media and communication.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

9. **Commanders, managers and members of all Groups and Services are responsible for:**

- a. Familiarising themselves with their responsibilities contained within the [Media and Communication Policy](#) and adhering to it in the course of their work.
- b. Responding to requests for media releases, media responses, talking points and other communication products as a high priority.
 - (1) Media responses must be drafted by subject matter experts.
 - (2) All responses to media enquiries must be cleared by the responsible SES Band 2 or 2-Star officer.
 - (a) Where there is no SES Band 2 or 2-Star in the reporting line, the responsible Band 3 or 3-Star officer may delegate this responsibility in writing to a Band 1 or 1-Star officer.
 - (3) Should any issues be encountered that could result in a delay, MCB should be advised as quickly as possible.
 - (4) Defence personnel must remain adaptable and adjust to business process changes as required to meet deadlines.
 - (5) Each Group and Service is responsible for reviewing content in the central talking points database for which it is the departmental lead to ensure those talking points are accurate and up to date (see also Paragraph 10d below).
- c. Responsive and effective media engagement.
 - (1) When journalists or media organisations ask reasonable questions about our work, Defence personnel must answer those questions as quickly as possible.
 - (2) Media enquiries that are urgent, sensitive or topical – and are prioritised by the Director of Defence Media as a high priority (Priority 1) – must be answered by subject matter experts and cleared in less than three hours of being tasked.

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- (3) Media enquiries identified by the Director of Defence Media of lower priority (Priority 2 or lower) – must be answered by subject matter experts and cleared as quickly as possible, and within three hours if practical.
 - (4) Where a deadline cannot be met due to complexity, evolving circumstances or operational reasons, a holding statement must be provided within the original deadline, and a final response provided as soon as possible.
 - d. Regularly reviewing and updating the [Defence Activity and Engagement Tracker](#) to maintain a comprehensive database of all Defence upcoming engagement opportunities (including any matter of potential media or public interest).
 - (1) All events and activities of actual or potential media or public interest must be added to the Defence Activity and Engagement Tracker.
 - (2) Activities must be added as soon as possible and no later than three weeks before the date of the event. Unexpected opportunities must be added at the earliest opportunity and advised to MCB.
 - (3) These events or activities include but are not limited to:
 - (a) any event, open day, ceremony, public display, family day, or similar
 - (b) reviews, major unit parades, unit or capability deployments or returns from operations
 - (c) exercises, readiness milestones or similar
 - (d) planned media events or announcements
 - (e) contract or sustainment milestones or announcements, in particular where industry may make an announcement (especially Australian industry).
 - (4) On identification of an unforeseen event, the responsible senior officer (minimum SES Band 1 / 1-Star) is to ensure the event is added to the tracker immediately and alert FAS MECC or the Assistant Secretary Media and Communication.
 - e. Communication plans for events that the media are to be invited to, or where a media release or social media post is proposed, should be provided to MCB no later than three weeks prior to the event. Our Ministers expect all communication plans to be cleared at the Band 1 / 1-Star level.
 - (1) All event-related talking points and media releases are to be cleared through MCB a minimum of three weeks prior to the event or opportunity.
10. **MECC is responsible for:**
- a. Coordinating media and communication support for Defence and its Ministers, except for where appropriate delegation (through Assistant Secretary Media and Communication) has been given or a Defence employee has been authorised to engage with the media as part of an activity.

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- b. Clearing all media responses, media releases and media alerts through the relevant ministerial office(s) promptly once received from the lead Group or Service, provided they satisfy the requirements of Paragraph 9 above.
- c. Managing a media enquiries handling process to ensure:
 - (1) incoming enquiries are prioritised by Defence Media, where urgent, sensitive and/or topical enquiries identified as Priority 1
 - (2) relevant Ministers' offices are promptly made aware of all media enquiries received by the department and can escalate priority if required
 - (3) proposed responses to Priority 1 enquiries are provided to the office of the relevant Minister(s) for final clearance no more than three hours after they were tasked
 - (4) Priority 2 enquiries are responded to directly by the department as quickly as possible, and preferably within three hours if practicable.
- d. Developing and maintaining a central database of talking points on issues that could reasonably be expected to be raised by media.
 - (1) The database is to be available and accessible by all Ministers, their offices, and members of the Defence Senior Leadership Group.
 - (2) The database will include any talking points requested by ministerial offices.
 - (3) Where it becomes aware of an issue that would affect the currency or accuracy of content in the database, MECC will alert the lead Group or Service so that it can review the content.
- e. Monitoring the Defence Activity and Engagement Tracker and using the content as a basis for regular discussions with Ministers' offices to consider upcoming media and public engagement opportunities for Ministers.
 - (1) On a weekly basis and following agreement with Ministers' offices, FAS MECC will distribute to the Defence Senior Leadership Group the list of media and public events for the next three weeks.
 - (2) MECC will conduct urgent consultation with relevant Ministers' offices in the event of a previously unforeseen event being identified (see also Paragraph 9d(2) above).
- f. In collaboration with relevant Groups and Services, conducting a program of regular briefings to key journalists to improve national awareness and shape the public narrative.
 - (1) Ministers' offices must be kept informed of and engaged in the planning, approval and conduct of these briefings.
- g. Producing an overarching Defence Communication Strategy to direct, steer and inform all department communication.

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- (1) This will include communication themes for the Defence portfolio and key overarching messages for all Ministers and Defence officials to deliver in the course of their engagements.
- h. Producing individual strategic communication and engagement plans for each portfolio Minister.
 - (1) These plans must set out key engagement opportunities for the next six months and be aligned to each individual Minister's portfolio responsibilities and the communication themes in the Defence Communication and Engagement Strategy.
 - (2) Each plan must be continually reviewed and developed in consultation with respective Ministers' offices, but updated and formally submitted to Ministers every six months.
- i. Providing advice, support and training to all Groups and Services on official media and communication activities, including working with ministerial offices to provide awareness and obtain necessary clearance.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- 11. An official Defence social media profile is any account or profile that utilises Department of Defence resources or is operated by Defence personnel in a manner that could be reasonably considered as representing the Department, the ADF or their Services or Business Groups.
- 12. There are three principles for all official Defence social media profiles:
 - a. Accountability at a senior level within the chain of command.
 - b. Alignment with Government policy and Defence objectives.
 - c. Priority for announcements, key decisions, operations, events and other significant content lies with the Government of the day, whereby:
 - (1) social media profiles do not pre-empt or foreshadow Government decisions, operational, capability or policy outcomes unless authorised through MCB
 - (2) appropriate content is made available to Ministers through MCB before being considered for use by other official Defence profiles
 - (3) Defence social media accounts may post complementary content once Ministers' posts have occurred.
- 13. The criteria for establishing an official Defence social media profile are:
 - a. Approval by the respective Service Chief or Group Head prior to creation.
 - (1) Applications will be facilitated through the Defence Social Media Hub, which will confirm it meets the other criteria and engage with the relevant Service or Group headquarters.

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- b. An appointed SES Band 2 / 2-Star level officer in the responsible Service or Business Group who is accountable for the content of the account and its adherence to this directive.
 - (1) This requirement also applies to profiles operated by Defence staff overseas.
 - c. An authorised and trained practitioner with a current duty statement or performance agreement reflecting this responsibility, who will:
 - (1) have written delegated authority from a SES Band 2 / 2-Star level officer in the responsible Service or Business Group to undertake the day-to-day operation and management of the profile on behalf of the accountable officer (Paragraph 13b), consistent with Defence branding and messaging, with daily monitoring and content management
 - (2) consider where content should appropriately be offered for Ministerial use.
 - d. Strategic importance and relevance to Defence.
 - e. A strong external brand.
 - f. An external audience different to those of existing official profiles.
 - g. A position within one of the following parts of the organisational structure:
 - (1) Navy: headquarters; ships; establishments; squadrons; One-Star and above positions;
 - (2) Army: headquarters, brigades, training centres, One-Star and above positions;
 - (3) Air Force: headquarters, public relations assets, One-Star and above positions;
 - (4) Joint Capabilities: based on criteria set out in Paragraph 15; and
 - (5) Department of Defence: headquarters and MECC.
14. ForceNet should be utilised where the intended audience is primarily within Defence. Cadet units awaiting access to ForceNet may use Facebook closed groups until this access is in place.
15. There are five requirements for the ongoing operation of official Defence social media profiles:
- a. Purpose, where the profile and its objectives are defined in a formal communication strategy.
 - b. Governance, including processes for content approval, reporting, escalation and issues management.
 - (1) Members of the Defence Social Media Hub and/or relevant Service or Business Group headquarters must be included as administrators of the profile.

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- (2) All official social media activity must be consistent with the Defence Media and Communication Policy.
- c. Resourcing, including ongoing accountability, monitoring and staffing arrangements as set out in Paragraph 13.
- d. Training, where authorised practitioners complete the Social Media Practitioner course.
 - (1) The Defence Social Media Hub will administer the courses.
 - (2) Registration for all training and assessment will be completed via CAMPUS.
- e. Content, which is relevant to official Defence business and includes:
 - (1) a content plan in place at all times and reviewed against this directive at least every 12 months by the accountable SES Band Two / Two-Star officer
 - (2) high quality imagery and vision cleared through MCB or a Group or Service official with specific delegated authority
 - (3) assurance by the authorised practitioner that all content is cleared at an appropriate level before publishing
 - (4) regular and ongoing review by the authorised practitioner.

APPLICATION AND COMPLIANCE

- 16. All Defence personnel are required to comply with the provisions in this Directive and the [Media and Communication Policy](#) unless particular circumstances warrant departure from the provisions.
- 17. Some provisions in the [Media and Communication Policy](#) may support Defence personnel to comply with obligations that exist in:
 - a. applicable laws
 - b. the [Defence Enterprise Agreement](#)
 - c. directives and determinations issued under the [Public Service Act 1999](#) or the [Defence Act 1903](#) or the [Defence Enterprise Agreement](#)
 - d. [Defence Instructions](#).
- 18. Defence personnel may be subject to performance management, administrative action, or, in some circumstances, disciplinary action if they depart from the provisions in this Directive or the [Media and Communication Policy](#).
- 19. Failure to adhere to administrative policy may result in a breach of legislation or other legal requirement and sanctions under that legislation may apply.

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20. Defence personnel who award or manage contracts should consider whether there is a specific and documented reason to include in the terms of a contract the requirement to comply with the provisions of the Directive or the [Media and Communication Policy](#) and, if so, include such terms.

21. Failure by a contractor, consultant or outsourced service provider to comply with the mandatory requirements of this policy – where compliance is a term of the contract – may result in a breach of contract.

IMPLEMENTATION

22. This Directive is effective immediately and will remain extant until amended or withdrawn by us.

23. This Directive is sponsored by the First Assistant Secretary, Ministerial and Executive Coordination and Communication. This Directive is to be reviewed by 30 June 2020 or if arrangements significantly change.

s22

Greg Moriarty
Secretary

7 February 2020

Distribution

VCDF
Associate Secretary
Service Chiefs
Group Heads

s22

Angus J Campbell
General
Chief of the Defence Force

7 February 2020

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Defence.

Keyword Media Brief

30 June 2022.

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MENTION STREAM	KEYWORDS
Defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Defence, Department for Defence, Defence Department, Australian Defence Force, Australian Defence Forces, Australia's Defence Forces, Australia's Defence Industry • Defence Force, Defence Forces when mentioned with Australia • Defence, Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group, CASG when mentioned with Thales, Thales Australia • Richard Marles MP, Hon Richard Marles, Minister Richard Marles, Richard Marles, Minister Andrew Hastie, Andrew Hastie , Hon Matt Thistlethwaite, Minister Matt Thistlethwaite, Senator Matt Thistlethwaite, Minister Pat Conroy, Senator Pat Conroy, Matt Keogh, Hon Matt Keogh, Minister Matt Keogh, Minister Keogh, Hon Barnaby Joyce, Minister Barnaby Joyce, Senator Barnaby Joyce, Phillip Thompson, Minister for Defence Personnel, Luke Howarth, Senator Howarth, Minister Howarth, Defence Personnel Minister • Neil James when mentioned with Defence • Defence Minister, Minister Of Defence, Minister For Defence when mentioned with ADF, Defence force, Keogh, Australia, Pat Conroy, Conroy, Marles • Lieutenant General John Frewen, John Frewan, LTGEN Frewen, LTGEN John Frewen • Defence Force, army, Navy, RAAF, Air Force, Airforce, Australia when mentioned with ADF, Australian Defence Force, Australian Defence Forces • Anthony Albanese when mentioned with Defence Force, Department of Defence, ADF, Army, Navy, RAAF, Air Force, Airforce

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST NO. 550/21/22

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.

List of parliamentarians, journalists and other individuals or organisations for which Defence prepares social media reports in the lead up to and including Senate Estimates hearings. Current as at 1 April 2022. The Defence social media hub has authority to prepare reports where the public content/comment specifically relates to the Defence portfolio.

Individuals – Politicians
Abetz, Eric
Albanese, Anthony
Antic, Alex
Askew, Wendy
Ayres, Tim
Bilyk, Catryna
Bragg, Andrew
Brockman, Slade
Brown, Carol
Butler, Terri
Canavan, Matthew
Carr, Kim
Chandler, Claire
Chester, Darren
Chisholm, Anthony
Ciccone, Raff
Clare, Jason
Conroy, Pat
Davey, Perin
Dodson, Patrick
Dutton, Peter
Farrell, Don
Faruqi, Mehreen
Fawcett, David
Fierravanti-Wells, Concetta
Gallacher, Alex
Gallagher, Katy
Gee, Andrew
Green, Nita
Griff, Stirling
Hanson, Pauline
Hanson-Young, Sarah
Hastie, Andrew

Hawke, Alex
Henderson, Sarah
Hughes, Hollie
Keneally, Kristina
Keogh, Matt
Lambie, Jacqui
Lines, Sue
Marles, Richard
McAllister, Jenny
McCarthy, Malarndirri
McDonald, Susan
McGrath, James
McKenzie, Bridget
McKim, Nick
McLachlan, Andrew
McMahon, Sam
Molan, Jim
Morrisson, Scott
Neumann, Shayne
O'Connor, Brendan
O'Neill, Deborah
O'Sullivan, Matt
Paterson, James
Patrick, Rex
Payne, Marise
Polley, Helen
Pratt, Louise
Price, Melissa
Rennick, Gerard
Reynolds, Linda
Rice, Janet
Roberts, Malcolm
Scarr, Paul
Sharma, Dave
Sheldon, Tony
Siewert, Rachel
Small, Ben
Smith, Dean
Smith, Marielle
Steele-John, Jordon
Sterle, Glenn

Stoker, Amanda
Swanson, Meryl
Thorpe, Lidia
Urquhart, Anne
Van, David
Walsh, Jess
Waters, Larissa
Watt, Murray
Whish-Wilson, Peter
Wong, Penny
Individuals – Journalists
Banville, Kate
Benns, Matthew
Beretta, Mark
Blenkin, Max
Brown, Greg
Callinan, Rory
Carlton, Mike
Coorey, Phillip
Crowe, David
Curtis, Katrina
Dempster, Quentin
Dennett, Harley
Doherty, Ben
Donnellan, Angelique
Doran, Matthew
Dziedzic, Stephen
Elton, James
Ferguson, Richard
Fordham, Ben
Galloway, Anthony
Grattan, Michelle
Greene, Andrew
Hendry, Justin
Hodge, Amanda
Ikonomou, Tess
Ison, Sarah
Keane, Bernard
Kelly, Fran
Knaus, Christopher

Lane, Sabra
Lester, Tim
Maiden, Samantha
Maley, Jacqueline
Markson, Sharri
Massola, James
McClymont, Kate
McIlroy, Tom
McKenzie, Nick
Medcalf, Rory
Milligan, Louise
Murphy, Katherine
Nicholson, Brendan
Oakes, Dan
Osborne, Paul
Packham, Ben
Pittaway, Nigel
Probyn, Andrew
Riminton, Hugh
Riordan, Primrose
Rowland, Michael
Sales, Leigh
Scarr, Lanai
Shepherd, Tory
Shields, Bevan
Smethurst, Annika
Speers, David
Tillett, Andrew
Tingle, Laura
van Olsen, Peter
Wainwright, Sofie
Walls, Jason
West, Michael
Whinnett, Ellen
Willacy, Mark
Wroe, David
Ziesing, Katherine
Individuals – Other
Arraf, Rawan

Barratt, Paul
Davis, Malcolm
Fullilove, Michael
Hellyer, Marcus
McBride, David
McCarthy, Stuart
Russell, Heston
Shoebridge, Michael
Townshend, Ashley
Organisations – Mon-Media
Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Organisation
Amnesty International
ASPI
Australian Centre for International Justice
Australia Defence Association
Grattan Institute
Human Rights Law Centre
International Criminal Court
Lowy Institute
Organisations – Media/Social Media
ABC 730
ABC News
Australian Defence Magazine
Channel 7
Channel 9
Channel 10
Financial Review
Four Corners
Guardian Australia
Herald Sun
Insiders ABC
News Dot Com
SBS News
Sky News Australia
Sydney Morning Herald
The Age
The Australian
The Courier Mail
The Daily Telegraph

The Pineapple Express
The Project
The Saturday Paper
The West Australian
7 News Australia
9 News Australia
9 News Sydney
10 News First
60 Minutes