

**THE NETHERLANDS STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE
DISCUSSION ON RESERVE POLICY AT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES -
THE HAGUE, 07 OCT 15**

Introduction

1. This document pertains to Australian Defence Force (ADF) Reserves in response to the request for policy information from the Netherlands Deputy Secretary of the Standing Committee on Defence, dated 17 Sep 15.

ADF Reserves: force composition, recruitment and conditions of service

2. The ADF Reserves number 47,681 personnel. There are presently 22,186 serving in the Active Reserve, 947 serving on Continuous Full-Time Service and 24,548 in the Standby Reserve. The active Navy Reserve provides a workforce pool of trained individuals available to support and supplement the permanent Navy. The active Air Force Reserves are integrated into Permanent Air Force units. The active Army Reserve consists of separate Reserve units and formations. These include the Army's 2nd Division, comprising 6 Brigades and 3 direct command Regional Force Surveillance units, plus several Reserve units and sub-units in the 17th Combat Services Support Brigade.

3. There is no legal obligation for an ADF Reservist to perform duty, unless the Governor-General in Council issues a Call-Out Order during a time of national emergency. However, once a Reservist agrees to undertake a particular pattern of service or a number of days during a financial year, that is technically enforceable under Defence legislation; however, that requirement is not normally enforced.

4. There are age limitations on service within the ADF Reserves. The minimum recruitment age into the Reserves is 17 years of age. Compulsory retirement age (CRA) for all ADF Reservists is 65. The Navy, Army and Air Force Service Chiefs may extend a Reserve member's CRA.

5. The Defence Reserve Service (Protection) Act prohibits discrimination against Reservists in their civilian employment for reasons associated with their Reserve status or service, and provides certain employment, partnership, education, financial liability and bankruptcy protections, and eligibility for re-establishment financial assistance for Reservists.

ADF Reserves: financial conditions

6. Financial benefits for ADF Reservists are based upon benefits for Permanent personnel. For example, Reserve military pay is based upon the daily rate of pay of a full-time equivalent member. Reserve daily rates of pay are exempt from national income tax.

7. An ADF Reservist may also qualify for a Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme benefit, which is a cash subsidy paid to reduce their monthly home loan interest payment.

10. Workers compensation is provided to ADF Reservists for any injuries or illnesses that are directly linked to their Reserve service. This coverage is in place whilst the member is travelling to and from their Reserve service and during the actual period of duty.

ADF Reserves: support for civilian employers

11. The civilian employer of a Reservist may apply for Employer Support Payments (ESP) when the Reservist is absent from their civilian employment on Reserve duty, provided the employer and Reservist have met minimum qualifying requirements. The current ESP weekly rate is \$AUD1,476.30. Higher weekly rates can be approved for some health professionals.

12. The Defence Reserves Support Council (DRSC) was established by Government to promote the benefits of Reserve service to employers and the community. The DRSC provide an effective link between Reservists and other interested parties – employers, the ADF, all levels of government and the community. The DRSC includes representatives from industry networks, small business, trade unions, youth and other interested community groups.

13. The Cadet, Reserve and Employer Support Division (CRESD) within the Department of Defence, conducts employer engagement activities. The primary employer engagement activities include employer challenge days, Exercise Executive Stretch and Exercise Boss Lift, including the opportunity to observe the Reserve at work on exercises and operations, domestically and overseas. This enables employers to gain a valuable insight into the benefits that ADF Reservists bring to the civilian workplace.

ADF Reserves: Post Operational Support (Project Howse)

14. In 2011 Defence endorsed a gap analysis review of support provided to Reserve members on return from operations. The review was conducted in consultation with Navy, Army and Air Force, the Defence Community Organisation and the Department of Veterans' Affairs, which resulted in 38 findings and 21 recommendations.

15. The report from the review resulted in the establishment of Project Howse. The Project Howse Concluding Report made seven recommendations to convert actions from the initial review into Defence activities that are to become business as usual, in support of returned ADF Reservists.

ADF Reserves: ForceNet

16. ForceNet is a secure, unclassified online e-portal providing ADF personnel, including Reservists, with access to Defence services and information. Using state-of-the-art internet-based technologies, ForceNet is available to users anytime they have an internet connection via desktop computers, tablet devices and mobile smart phones. ForceNet will provide a Common Access Portal to provide a simple to use, online information source. There are plans to extend the use of ForceNet to the families of ADF members and former members.



I.B. Flawith AO, CSC

Director Reserve and Employer Support

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