



DEFENCE RESERVES SUPPORT

# EMPLOYER HANDBOOK

Everything you need to know  
about employing Reservists



Australia's Reserve Forces



# Who are we and what do we do?

General information on  
the Defence Reserves

## How can this handbook help you?

This handbook is designed to help you understand your rights and responsibilities as an employer of Defence Force Reservists. It aims to provide you with information about the key support initiatives and includes contact details if you require further information. Please remember that there are Department of Defence employees in every State and Territory of Australia who are available to help you work through any issues you may have related to employing Reservists. There is also a comprehensive website and helpline for you to call. We're here to help you.

# Defence Reserves

## What is a Defence Reservist?

Defence Reservists are a fundamental part of the Australian Defence Force and play a key role in safeguarding Australia's security.

Reservists join the Navy, Army or Air Force as part-time members. They are volunteers who bring with them civilian skills and experience and who are given the opportunity to gain new skills as part of their Reserve training.

Reservists can join as new recruits or can transfer from the full-time Defence Force. They are people prepared to take on the challenge of training and through their dedication and time, show a strong commitment to Australia.

## What role do Reservists play in today's Defence Force?

People who become Defence Reservists make a commitment to train and serve in the defence and protection of Australia. Defence Reservists have played an important part in Australian history since early colonial days.

Today we are increasingly drawing on the skills and expertise of Reservists to maintain the Defence Force's capability.

Reservists played a supporting security role at the APEC Australia 2007 forum and the Melbourne Commonwealth Games and have also provided humanitarian relief to communities in Pakistan, Thailand, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda and Somalia. They served alongside their full-time counterparts to increase security and stability in Timor-Leste and Bougainville. They have also been deployed on operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Solomon Islands.

A rifle company of 100 Army Reserve soldiers regularly deploys to Malaysia as part of Australia's commitment to the Five Power Defence Arrangement, which also involves the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore.

It should also be noted that Reservists make a valuable contribution to the community, providing assistance in times of natural disasters such as floods, droughts and fires and in emergency rescue operations.

Reservists gain capability and experience through formal Defence courses, on-going refresher training and day-to-day experience as they put their skills into practice and advance in responsibilities, rank and leadership ability.

## Reserve training provides substantial benefits to employers and the community. For example:

- The Australian Defence Force is currently engaged in a program to provide civilian accreditation for Reserve training. Employees can gain formal qualifications through Reserve service at no cost to you, their civilian employer.
- Reserve training includes the development of leadership, management and teamwork skills that are expected of managers and executives. These skills can cost thousands of dollars to acquire. Defence provides this training at no cost to the business or the individual.
- Reservists develop a number of personal skills that are attractive to

all employers. These personal skills include self-discipline, initiative, punctuality, self-reliance and acceptance of responsibility.

- A cost-effective form of community-based and supported national defence.
- Trained assistance to the community during times of natural disasters.

## Who is available to assist you?

Each State and Territory has specially trained Defence Reserves Support staff who can answer your queries. You can call them on our helpline, visit them in person or email them — whatever is easiest for you.

## What is the Defence Reserves Support Council?

The Defence Reserves Support Council (DRSC) is an organisation established to provide an effective link between Reservists and other interested parties — employers, the Australian Defence Force (ADF), three levels of government and the community.

The DRSC National Council is responsible for developing broad national policies, providing guidance on the development of national programs and overseeing the operations of the State/Territory committees.

If you are interested in joining your State/Territory committee please call 1800 803 485. Meetings are held regularly in each capital city and also in many regional areas.

Council members are volunteers and include representatives from industry, small business, trade unions, youth and other interested community groups.





In addition, the financial support provided by the Employer Support Payment Scheme can help an employer, especially a small business employer, to attract and hold employees in a very competitive market. Further, it can assist them to become an employer of choice by supporting their people in undertaking training, learning new skills and earning extra tax-free income in the different and exciting environment offered by the Navy, Army and Air Force Reserves.

### **Need more information?**

Contact the helpline: 1800 803 485  
Visit the website: [www.defence.gov.au/reserves](http://www.defence.gov.au/reserves)



# Employer Support Payment Scheme

Providing financial support to  
employers of Defence Reservists







## What is ESP?

The Employer Support Payment (ESP) Scheme provides financial assistance to eligible employers to help offset the costs of releasing employees for most categories of Australian Defence Force service. ESP is paid at a set weekly rate regardless of the employee's salary and there are no restrictions on the way employers can use the money. The weekly rate is equivalent to the average weekly full-time adult ordinary time earnings (AWOTE). This figure is set for 12 months beginning on 1 July each year and is published on the Defence Reserves Support website at [www.defence.gov.au/reserves](http://www.defence.gov.au/reserves)

ESP may be paid at a higher rate in some circumstances.

# Employer Support Payment Scheme

## Who is eligible to claim ESP?

All employers including government organisations, public and proprietary companies, private employers, discretionary or unit trusts and self-employed Reservists.

## Does it apply for all employees?

ESP is payable for full-time employees. It may be paid on a pro-rata basis for part-time employees, as long as the employee is not also in full-time employment elsewhere.

ESP is also available for casual employees who are engaged in work on a regular and reliable basis.

## What are the criteria?

To qualify for ESP payments:

- Your employee's periods of Defence service must be a minimum of five consecutive days.
- Your employee must have served a qualifying period of two weeks of Defence service (in a single period or blocks of five consecutive days or longer) in the current financial year.
- You must submit claims within six months of the first day of service for which the claims are being made. Claims submitted outside this period require special justification.

- You must release your employee on leave (this includes leave without pay) to undertake the Defence service. You must not require them to use their own accrued leave entitlements (e.g. Defence service on annual leave or long service leave is not eligible for ESP payments).
- You must agree to protect your employee's job.

## How do I claim?

By completing the Australian Defence Force Reserves Employer Support Payment Scheme Employer's Claim Form (Form AD 138-1).

Employers of Medical, Dental, Nursing or Allied Health Officers applying under the Chief of Defence Force Capability Approval for Health Officers should complete the Australian Defence Force Reserves Employer Support Payment Scheme Chief of Defence Force Approval Employer's Claim Form (Form AD 138-3) available on the Defence Reserves Support website at [www.defence.gov.au/reserves](http://www.defence.gov.au/reserves)

## What supporting evidence is required?

For the first claim of each financial year, you must attach the following supporting documents to your claim form:

- Evidence that you employ the employee/Reservist.

- Evidence that your business is bona fide and a registered employer.
- For part-time employees only — evidence of normal work hours (this should, whenever possible, cover a two-month period). Generally employees are part-time if they work less than 35 hours per week.

These documents must relate to the period immediately prior to the Defence service being claimed.

Supporting documents are not required with subsequent claims for Defence service within the same financial year unless there has been a change in circumstances (e.g. the employee has moved from full-time to part-time employment).

You may rely on the previous evidence unless further evidence is requested by the approving ESP Delegate\*. In some cases, the Delegate may request further documentation or information from you to support your claim.

## Completing the claim form

You must sign the Employer's Declaration on the claim form. By doing so, you confirm that you have agreed to protect the Reservist's employment in line with the *Defence Reserve Service (Protection) Act 2001*.

\*A Delegate is a particular person or position nominated to authorise payments in Defence.

# Employer Support Payment Scheme continued

## When to claim?

Claims should be made within six months from the first day of Defence service for which the claim is made (this does not apply to the annual qualifying service period).

Claims made later than six months will only be eligible for payment for periods of service within six months of the claim being made (unless this requirement is waived by the Director, Deputy Director or Assistant Director of the ESP Scheme).

You may request a waiver of the six-month limitation period. If you wish to do so, you should submit the claim, with justification for the late submission, to your ESP Delegate.

The ESP Delegate will forward the request for late waiver to the Director of the ESP Scheme.

## Where do I send the claim?

ESP claims are processed by authorised ESP Delegates. You should submit your claim directly to the appropriate ESP Delegate. Authorised ESP Delegates are detailed on the Defence Reserves Support website at <http://defencereserves.com/espclaimaddresses>. You can identify your appropriate ESP Delegate by visiting this website.

## What will happen with my claim?

Delegates should make a decision on a claim for ESP within 30 days of receiving the completed claim form. Delegates may approve or reject the claim, seek further information or refer the claim to the Director of the ESP Scheme. If the claim is approved, payment should be made, where practicable, within 14 days of approval. For employees on extended periods of continuous Defence service (greater than 21 days) you should receive an initial payment followed by fortnightly payments, in arrears, until the completion of the period of the Defence service.

Note: ESP can be paid for a maximum of 78 weeks for a single period of continuous Defence service.

## Is ESP taxable?

ESP is taxable in accordance with normal taxation requirements and must be declared on the appropriate tax return.

GST does not apply to ESP payments relating to Defence service that commenced after 31 August 2005 (however, GST may apply to some Defence service that commenced before 1 September 2005).

## What are the Reservist's responsibilities?

The Reservist should:

- Ensure you are aware of the scheme.
- Provide you with a copy of the ESP claim form before beginning their Defence service.
- Advise you of the appropriate Delegate's address for submission of claims.

## What if ESP is not enough to cover my employee's absence?

The ESP Delegate will forward the hardship/loss claim to the Director of the ESP Scheme for consideration. If approved, the Director, Deputy Director or Assistant Director will determine the amount of the higher payment. You should seek further information before submitting an application for ESP under the financial hardship or loss provisions.







### **Need more information?**

Contact the helpline: 1800 803 485

Visit the website: [www.defence.gov.au/reserves](http://www.defence.gov.au/reserves)



# Employer Support Payment Scheme continued

## Injury/illness

If your Reservist is injured or becomes ill as a result of the Defence service, you may be entitled to receive payments of ESP while they are recovering. Further information is available on the Defence Reserves Support website at [www.defence.gov.au/reserves](http://www.defence.gov.au/reserves)

## Capability payments

ESP may be paid at higher levels, or in situations where eligibility criteria are unable to be satisfied, when the Chief of Defence Force (CDF) has authorised payments to meet a specific Defence Force capability requirement.

Employers of Medical, Dental, Nursing or Allied Health Officers submitting claims under the current CDF approval for Health Officers are advised to use ADF Reserves Employer Support Payment Scheme CDF Approval Employer's Claim Form (Form AD 138-3).

Details on current CDF Approvals for higher payments, and on how to submit these claims can be found on the Defence Reserves Support website at [www.defence.gov.au/reserves](http://www.defence.gov.au/reserves)

## Changed circumstances

You must advise the Director of the ESP Scheme, through your Reservist's Defence unit, if your employee leaves your employment while undertaking Defence service for which you are receiving payments of ESP. In this event, your entitlement to ESP ceases immediately.

## Self-employed Reservists

Additional criteria apply to claims from self-employed Reservists. These claims must be submitted on different claim forms. Further information is available on the Defence Reserves Support website at [www.defence.gov.au/reserves](http://www.defence.gov.au/reserves)

The Employer Support Payment Scheme Employer's Claim Form (Form AD 138-1) is available on the Defence Reserves Support website.

STAFF-IN-CONFIDENCE (after first entry)  
Department of Defence  
Australian Defence Force Reserves  
Employer Support Payment Scheme  
Employer's claim form

AD 138-1  
Revised Jan 2007

Date received by unit

**Privacy statement**  
Defence is collecting the information on this form to determine your eligibility for payment under the ADF Reserves Employer Support Payment Scheme. This payment is authorised by Defence (Employer Support Payments) Determination 2005 made under Section 158B of the Defence Act 1903.  
Information provided in this Employer Support Payment claim form will be used for the administration of the Employer Support Payment Scheme. The information may also be used in the organisation or conduct of employee service activities. This information is safeguarded by the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) which provides the information from this form will not be unauthorised purposes.

**Completion instructions:** Refer to pages 1 and 2 for instructions. Employers must complete Section A of appropriate forms. When completed, please submit pages 3 to 6.

**Section A - To be completed by the employer of the Reservist.**

Name of organisation or business  
Contact name  
Mailing address  
Phone number (Fax number)  
Name of Reservist  
Reservist's Defence unit (Postcode number of hours) (Postcode number of hours)  
Periods of Defence service for which the Reservist, detailed above, was approved leave of absence: if this is the first claim for the Reservist, please indicate the periods that meet the qualifying period requirement.  
The employee commenced employment with my business or organisation on (Date)  
The basis of his or her employment is: (not appropriate but)  
☐ Full-time (35 hours or more per week)  
☐ Part-time for ( ) hours per week as my employee  
If part-time employment, also detail any other employment of the Reservist:  
Name of employer  
Average number of hours per week  
Name of employer  
Average number of hours per week  
If part-time employment, no payment can be made if the Reservist is also in full-time employment.  
If Reservist is in more than one part-time employment, payment is shared on a pro-rata basis.  
If Reservist is in multiple part-time jobs, his or her total number of part-time hours per week is ( )  
STAFF-IN-CONFIDENCE (after first entry)  
AD 138-1 - Page 3 of 6





# Office of Reserve Service Protection

Know your rights and obligations

## What is the Office of Reserve Service Protection?

In 2001, the Australian Government introduced legislation to protect Defence Reservists in their civilian employment and education. The *Defence Reserve Service (Protection) Act 2001* makes it an offence for an employer to discriminate against, disadvantage or dismiss an employee or prospective employee for rendering Defence service. Protections also apply to contractors and partners and in certain circumstances to students enrolled in a course of instruction at an Australian education institution. The Act also requires employers to release employees who are Defence Reservists to undertake Defence service. The Act not only makes it mandatory for employers to release their Reservists for service, but also for the training necessary to prepare them for that service. That said, neither the Government, nor the Australian Defence Force, wants to impose unreasonable burdens on employers. Reservists also have obligations to their employers. For instance, they should always attempt to give their employer reasonable notice of their requirement to perform Defence service. If an employer has significant and legitimate problems releasing an employee, they are encouraged to speak with the employee and their Reserve commander. If this does not resolve the issue, the employer can contact the Office of Reserve Service Protection (ORSP). The Act and its Regulations can be found at [www.comlaw.gov.au](http://www.comlaw.gov.au)

# Office of Reserve Service Protection

## What does the Act do?

It provides specific protection measures for current, prospective and former Reservists and places legally binding obligations on employers, educational institutions and partners in the areas of perceived discrimination, hindrance, loss of status and entitlements due to an employee's Reserve service.

## Who manages the Act?

The provisions of the Act are managed by the Office of Reserve Service Protection (ORSP) within the Department of Defence.

## How can the Office help Reservists?

Reservists can lodge complaints for perceived discrimination or disadvantage in their civilian employment, educational status, and partnership or practice rights.

Complaints could include:

- An employer refusing to hire a person because they are a Reservist.
- An employer refusing to allow a person to undertake Reserve service.
- An employee being refused leave or being coerced to use annual or long service leave to undertake Reserve service.
- An employee being dismissed or otherwise disadvantaged for undertaking Reserve service.
- An employee being refused or expelled from a partnership or having a contract terminated for being a Reservist.
- A student being excluded from a course or unit of study at an educational institution for undertaking Reserve service.

## What can the Office do?

It can have breaches of the Act corrected, including having a Reservist reinstated.

It can do this by:

- Offering advice to stakeholders.
- Liaising with employers.
- Providing alternative dispute-resolution services including mediation.
- Taking legal action as a last resort.





## Office of Reserve Service Protection continued

### How do you make a complaint?

Before making a complaint the Reservist should try to resolve the issue locally, with support from their Commanding Officer and local Defence Reserves Support staff. If it cannot be resolved at that level they should complain to the Office of Reserve Service Protection in writing. A form is available on the Defence Reserves Support website at

**[www.defence.gov.au/reserves](http://www.defence.gov.au/reserves)**

In the first instance the Office will try to negotiate with the employer. If that fails it will seek to resolve the issue by more formal means.

The Office will not take up a complaint if it is considered to be vexatious, frivolous or made in bad faith.

### What are Reservists' responsibilities?

The onus is not solely on employers. Reservists are obliged to ensure that their release is made as easy as possible for their civilian employers to accommodate.

This can be done by:

- Considering the impact of their proposed absence on the business.
- Giving employers reasonable notice of their Defence training requirements.
- Not volunteering for excessive/repeated periods of Defence training in a single year.
- Ensuring their employer is aware of and is able to claim the Employer Support Payment from Defence.
- If requested Reservists are to provide employers with appropriate formal Defence documentation which confirms any military employment, period of absence and Defence employer contact details.

### How can the Office help employers?

The Office of Reserve Service Protection can provide advice to employers on their legal obligations and on how best to resolve issues following a complaint.

The Office can also act as an intermediary to help employers negotiate reasonable and workable solutions to Defence Force requirements.

Employers can also talk to their local Defence Reserves Support office by calling 1800 803 485.



## Need more information?

Contact the helpline: 1800 803 485  
Visit the website: [www.defence.gov.au/reserves](http://www.defence.gov.au/reserves)







# Employer Engagement Activities

Exercise Executive Stretch, Boss Lift  
and Employer Support Awards

Coordinated by the Directorate of  
Employer and Industry Engagement



## Need more information?

Contact the helpline: 1800 803 485

Visit the website: [www.defence.gov.au/reserves](http://www.defence.gov.au/reserves)

## What are the Employer Engagement Activities?

The primary Employer Engagement Activities are Exercise Executive Stretch, the Employer Support Awards and Boss Lift.

The aim of these is to enhance the availability of the Reserve force by further developing community and employer support of the Reserve.

# Employer Engagement Activities

## EXERCISE EXECUTIVE STRETCH

### What is Exercise Executive Stretch?

Exercise Executive Stretch (EES) is an activity for employers of Reservists and potential employers of Reservists. The activity is intended to give employers an insight into the type of training conducted in the Australian Defence Force.

### What will I have to do?

A typical Executive Stretch program is informative and adventurous — all within a safe and controlled environment. It will combine a range of activities that may include some of the following:

- Leadership, confidence and initiative tests.
- Team-building exercises.
- Navigation theory and practice.
- Bush-craft.
- Communications.
- Quick decision exercises.
- Abseiling and rappelling exercises.
- Visits to technical training facilities.

### How can I nominate?

Either visit [www.defence.gov.au/reserves](http://www.defence.gov.au/reserves) and nominate online or call your local Defence Reserves Support office on 1800 803 485.

## EMPLOYER SUPPORT AWARDS

### What are the Employer Support Awards?

These Defence Reserves Support Council sponsored awards are designed to formally recognise those employers who are committed to supporting Reservists in their workplace. They are very well received in the business community and the public sector.

While the awards program does not provide any financial or commercial gain to employers, it does offer the chance to give you the formal public recognition you deserve.

### What are the award categories?

Employer Support Awards are made at the State/Territory level.

The categories are:

- Certificate of Recognition.
- Certificate of Appreciation.
- State/Territory Employer Support Awards.

Reservists are encouraged to nominate their employer to their State/Territory Defence Reserves Support office.

## BOSS LIFT

Participating in a Boss Lift activity is a way to learn first-hand about what the Australian Defence Force does on exercises and operations.

Further, employers involved in Boss Lift gain a valuable insight into the benefits that Reserve service brings back to the civilian workplace.

Often there is also an opportunity for employers to actually see their employees working as Reservists.

The Directorate of Employer and Industry Engagement takes employers on exercises within Australia and also overseas where Australian Defence Force personnel are serving on operations or exercises.

For instance, employers have been to Rockhampton to see Defence personnel involved in Exercise Talisman Saber. Talisman Saber's primary aim is to conduct collective training and exercise interoperability between Australian and US forces.

Employers have also travelled to the Solomon Islands and Malaysia as part of the Boss Lift program.

Employers who are interested in participating in a Boss Lift activity should contact their local Defence Reserves Support office on 1800 803 485.





# Leave Policies and Guidelines

Guidelines to help you develop  
leave policies

## Introduction

This section provides guidelines to employers in the private and public sectors to assist them in their development of leave policies. Employers are strongly encouraged to adopt the guidelines as a best-practice model for supportive workplace arrangements and practices.

Defence Reserves Support personnel are located in each State and Territory in Australia and they can provide you with a Leave Policy Template that you can easily fill in and implement within your organisation.

Call 1800 803 485 to obtain an easy to use Microsoft Word document. Alternatively go to the Defence Reserves Support website at [www.defence.gov.au/reserves](http://www.defence.gov.au/reserves) to download the template.

# Leave Policies and Guidelines

## PRIVATE SECTOR LEAVE GUIDELINES

### Why have these guidelines been provided?

The guidelines are designed to assist employers with the development of leave policies so that Reservists can be released from private sector employment to fulfill their training and service obligations.

The guidelines provide clear guidance to employers, Reservists and the Defence Force in relation to Reservists employed in the private sector. Employers are strongly encouraged to adopt the guidelines as a best-practice model for supportive workplace arrangements and practices.

### What are employers to do?

Employers are encouraged to develop policies that provide support for their employees to undertake Defence service.

Supportive employers are encouraged to:

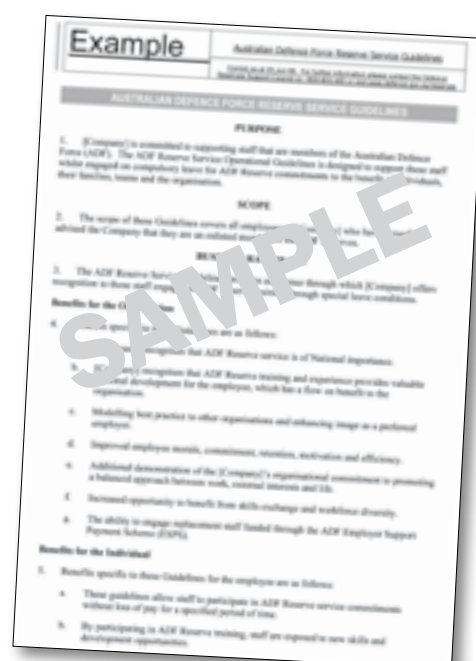
- Have a transparent human resources policy for employee participation in the Defence Force Reserve with provision for Defence leave, acknowledging that Reserve training enhances job performance as well as contributing to national security.
- Ensure that every level of management in the organisation is aware of the supportive policy.
- Recognise Defence service accomplishments in the organisation's newsletters and other publications.

- Grant, as a minimum, two weeks (10 working days or 14 calendar days) Defence leave each year, in addition to annual leave, either as paid or unpaid leave or on top-up pay.
- In line with current legislation provide access to additional Defence leave if required by the Australian Defence Force.
- Support Reservist employees during their first year of Defence service to enable them to complete recruit or initial-employment training, whether by continuous attendance or by attendance at modules, in order to allow them to achieve the necessary competency skills and qualifications.
- Ensure that any absence on Defence service does not break continuity of service for the purposes of seniority and employment.
- Preserve access to other entitlements during absences on Defence service, including counting periods of leave without pay as service for accrual of annual leave and long service leave entitlements except where such periods are rendered as Continuous Full Time Defence Service.
- Commit, wherever possible, to the provision of job opportunities and benefits for Reservist employees, consistent with those for other employees.

- Review the Reservist's salary or conditions along with other employees if a periodic review is undertaken while the Reservist is absent on Defence service. If a new workforce agreement is signed during the Reservist's absence, then the Reservist should be considered as an employee for the purposes of that agreement.
- Actively address the Reservist's re-integration into the workforce, without detriment, after deployment or absence on military duties including training.

It should be noted that a number of these actions are required by law.

The Private Sector Leave Policy template is available on the Defence Reserves Support website.





### What should Defence do?

The guidelines also contain recommended actions for the Australian Defence Force and Reservists to ensure the needs of employers are met.

These actions include:

- Providing sufficient notice of a Reservist's requirement for Defence service.
- Seeking to identify alternative dates for the Defence service if it causes significant operational difficulties for the employer.
- Whenever possible to not withdraw from, or cancel, a course or other period of Defence service at short notice if Defence leave has been arranged with the employer.
- To advise the employer of qualifications or skills a Reservist has gained as a result of Defence service.
- To inform the employer about the Employer Support Payment Scheme and opportunities to visit or observe Defence activities.
- To provide employers with written notification from Defence regarding deployment dates, training courses and similar activities.



# Leave Policies and Guidelines continued

## PUBLIC SECTOR POLICY

### Who has this policy been developed for?

This policy has been developed for the Commonwealth public sector.

It is suggested that State and Territory public sectors adopt similar measures.

### What is the policy?

#### Policy — Australian Public Service (APS) Agencies

“Agreements are to include leave policies and employment practices that support the release of Defence Reservists for peacetime training and deployment.”  
Government Policy Parameter 6

### Where can you find more details about the government policy requirements?

Government policy requirements for agreement making can be found on the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) website at [www.workplace.gov.au](http://www.workplace.gov.au)

From the website, search for the Policy Parameters for Agreement Making in the APS (April 2006).

The Policy Parameters are amplified by the supporting guidelines, which can also be found on the DEEWR website.

### What approach does Defence recommend to the public sector?

Specifically, Defence recommends agencies:

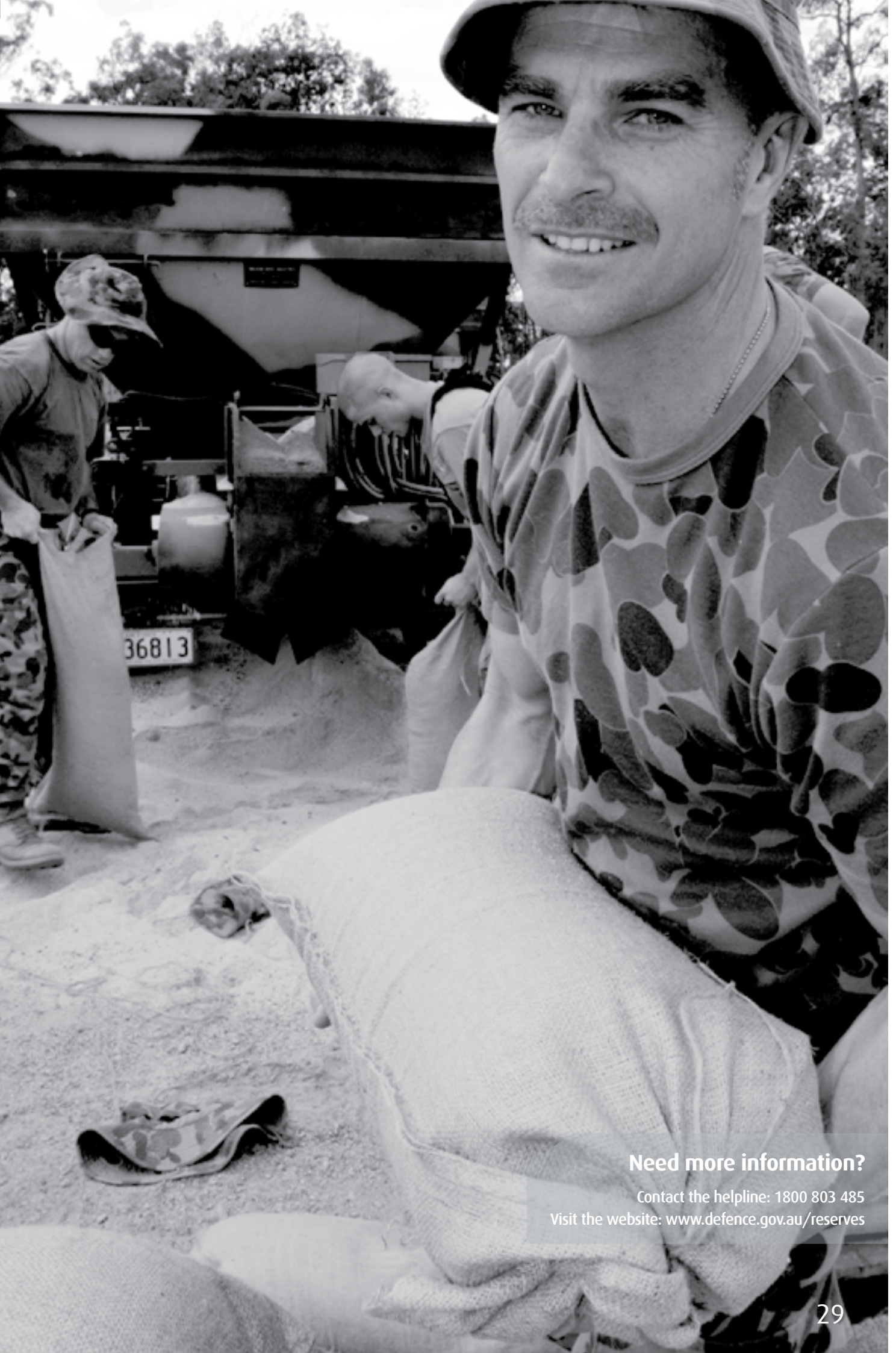
- Provide four weeks (20 working days or 28 calendar days) leave on full pay each year for Reservists undertaking Defence service.
- Provide an additional two weeks paid leave to allow for Reservists' attendance at recruit/initial employment training.
- Provide scope for additional leave for Defence service, either on a paid, unpaid or top-up pay basis.
- Not require Reservists to pay their tax-free Reserve salary to their agency under any circumstances.
- Allow Defence leave entitlements to accumulate and be taken over a two-year period.
- Treat leave for Defence service, whether with or without pay as service for all purposes — the exception being that a period or periods of Continuous Full Time Defence Service does not count as service for the purpose of leave accrual.

- Provide Reservists with continued access to other components of their remuneration package during periods of Defence service, for example: superannuation (subject to the rules of the CSS, PSS and Military Superannuation and Benefits Scheme), studies assistance, salary reviews and cars.

In addition, Defence considers it important that agencies keep their Reservist employees informed of developments in the workplace while the Reservists are undertaking training or are on deployment.

More broadly, the Australian Government strongly encourages APS agencies to actively promote the benefits of Reserve service to their employees. Defence Reserves Support communication staff can assist agencies with promotional material.





**Need more information?**

Contact the helpline: 1800 803 485

Visit the website: [www.defence.gov.au/reserves](http://www.defence.gov.au/reserves)





# Supportive Employers

A selection of case studies



## Lismore Base Hospital

Lismore Base Hospital not only nurtures and cares for its patients — employees who are members of the Australian Defence Force Reserves are also very well looked after.

In 2008, the New South Wales hospital received a prestigious ‘Employer of the Year’ award from the Department of Defence, for supporting and encouraging its Reservist employees.

“The award came as a total surprise. Unexpected, but greatly appreciated,” said the hospital’s Executive Officer Dan Madden.

Ten of its surgeons, anaesthetists, physicians and nurses are officers in the Navy, Army and Air Force Reserve. Their specialist skills mean they are regularly called upon to deploy on operations and exercises around the world.

“We follow the Health Department’s directive, which is to free up Reservists so long as service continuity is maintained to our patients,” said Mr Madden.

“This is a big commitment for a regional hospital but we are the ones who are ultimately rewarded by it.”

The community spirit at the hospital means most Reserve absences are often met internally. Colleagues of these senior medical staff often change shifts and agree to cover their absences.

Brian Pezzutti is a senior anaesthetist at the Lismore Base Hospital. As Brigadier Brian Pezzutti, he’s a special projects officer for the Australian Defence Force’s Surgeon General and has been on many deployments. He nominated the hospital for the award.

“The hospital has never grumbled and is always most supportive of its Reservist staff,” said Brigadier Pezzutti.

“Like many regional hospitals, staffing is stretched at the best of times. The goodwill that exists from the top of the hospital structure right to the bottom means there has never been a drama in releasing us for Reserve duty.”

Staff and management agree that by supporting Reservists, the Lismore Base Hospital receives many benefits.

“The staff members are enriched,” said Mr Madden.

“Through their Defence experience, they develop a broader outlook on life and are exposed to medicine and surgery that they would not see in civilian life.”

The senior medical staff also share their Defence experiences with colleagues.

“After the Asian Tsunami, where some of our people were deployed for up to two months, the junior doctors received presentations on what happened. While they weren’t there on the ground in Aceh, they took some benefit and knowledge from what was a significant experience for the medicos who were there,” said Mr Madden.

Brigadier Pezzutti is also certain of the flow-on benefits from the hospital’s support of its Reservist staff.

“Our Reserve activities bring home a world class insight into the management of severe trauma. This contributes to policy and protocols at Lismore Base Hospital that we apply to trauma patients. So the entire community benefits from it.”





# Language Links

Commitment to the Australian Defence Force doesn't get much stronger than at Language Links.

The business is always keen to employ full-time staff who are also Defence Reservists. At the moment, Language Links has one Reservist on staff, but at times a third of its staff members have been Reservists.

Language Links teaches English as a second language, preparing students for entry into Australian universities or for the Cambridge University international qualification, and providing vocational courses in Travel and Tourism and Business Studies. The college is a drawcard for students from countries including Switzerland, Japan, Korea, France, Reunion Island, Thailand, Brazil and Taiwan.

In 2003, Language Links was awarded the Western Australia Small Business Employer of the Year Award by the Defence Reserves Support Council for its efforts.

Founder and Executive Director Lyn Everett has no doubts the college's support for accountant (Flight Sergeant) Warren Everett is, in turn, rewarded.

Warren looks after all the college accounts. He prepares the fortnightly staff salaries, monthly BAS statements, prepares the college's financial statements and ensures the financials meet requirements for audits at State and Commonwealth levels, ensuring compliance within the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).

Warren also represents the college at all financial audits – making his role in the college a very valuable and valued one.

"The training skills that Warren receives with the Royal Australian Air Force are easily transferred to the college, and of course, vice-versa," said Ms Everett.

"An exchange of business knowledge and strategies, especially in meeting the standards of the AQTF is of immense benefit to both parties."

The impact on smaller employers is often greatest when Reservists are taken out of the workforce. Managing teaching rosters is helped by advance notice of leave obligations.

Ms Everett said the Employer Support Payment (ESP) Scheme is also important to her business.

"The ESP does assist in providing some financial support when used towards paying relief staff who would need to take over in the extended absence of the Reservist employed," she said.

"In the absence of the ESP, the work or tasks would need to be paid for from the institution's budget, and would be seen as an 'added' cost to the delivery of our product. The ESP is seen as a 'supplement' and therefore, makes the employment of a Reservist much more financially viable and attractive."

"Because we pride ourselves on being an Australian company, we feel that supporting the Reserve is very much a part of Australian organisations working together."



# Australian War Memorial

“As a Reservist, she has really developed her skills in dealing with people.”

Carol Cartwright,  
Head of Education and Visitor Services

“My life is so much richer for meeting them. I wish I had enlisted years earlier!”

Poppy Wenham,  
Visitor Services Manager

“It brings great balance to my life ...”

Lance Corporal Poppy Wenham radiates enthusiasm for life. After eight years as a Reservist she is now a Section Commander for a combat support battalion, handling the complex logistics of moving equipment, supplies and personnel. “Being a Reservist has exceeded all my expectations,” said Lance Corporal Wenham. “The opportunities to make friends from all over the world, people out of my age group, out of my social sphere, out of my region. My life is so much richer for meeting them. I wish I had enlisted years earlier!”

At the same time, Ms Wenham is Visitor Services Manager at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, overseeing as many as 60 staff who provide the front-of-house contact with the public at one of Australia’s biggest, busiest and most important visitor destinations.

Carol Cartwright, Head of Education and Visitor Services responsible for managing around one million visitors a year, is equally enthusiastic about Ms Wenham’s contribution. “As a Reserve, she has really developed her skills in dealing with people and we benefit from that,” said Ms Cartwright. “There is no doubt that her peacekeeping deployment in Bougainville, living and working in those conditions, gave her an inner strength and a tolerance that she transferred back to our workplace.”

“The personal growth was just enormous,” agrees Ms Wenham.

Ms Cartwright also sees a strong relationship between the War Memorial and the Reserve, and a shared commitment to support and promote each other.

“Our core business and the business of the Reserve have some very close links,” explains Ms Cartwright. “Ms Wenham is always eager to share her Reservist experiences to enhance the War Memorial’s priceless collections, usually by taking films and photographs, doing research or writing diaries.”

From Ms Wenham’s perspective, the War Memorial was very supportive when she went to Bougainville, approving leave without pay but counting it as service so that her superannuation and other benefits were not disrupted.

“So I was delighted to repay them by providing information about peacekeeping operations,” she said.

Ms Wenham feels she has the best of both worlds: a busy and important job at the Australian War Memorial, and the full support of her employer for both the Defence Reserve and her enthusiastic involvement with them.

In her words, a great balance in her life.



# Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

When Jonathon Blackley was a teenager, all he wanted was to be a firefighter. At the age of 17 he was too young to join the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, so Jonathon looked to the Army.

"I had to wait two more years before I could apply to be a firefighter, so the Army was a good option for me," he said.

Corporal Jonathon Blackley became a qualified Combat Engineer with 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment in Townsville and then fulfilled his ambition by transferring to the Army Fire Service (now known as the Emergency Response Squadron).

"My role was to provide fire and rescue services, mainly to the airfield, at the Army Aviation Centre at Oakey, west of Toowoomba," said Corporal Blackley.

"We provided around the clock protection for the centre and were responsible for the fire and emergency protection of millions of dollars worth of helicopters. This wasn't only for the Australian Defence Force but also the Republic of Singapore Air Force, with their squadron of Super Puma helicopters."

Jonathon left the full-time Army in 2002 and was quickly snapped up as a civilian firefighter. He also joined the Army Reserve!

Now, his days are spent fighting fires and attending motor vehicle crashes. "It's a great job," he said. "I really like the pro-active stuff we do, especially the education and community service work."

For instance, we go to schools and teach students about fire education. I think a lot of families across Queensland now have 'Home Evacuation Plans' because of the 'Fire-Ed' program that runs in schools."

Transferring to the Army Reserve was a natural decision for Jonathon.

"I transferred to the Reserves because I didn't want to cut all ties with the Army and the tax-free pay was an added bonus and a big incentive," he said.

"Also, I didn't want to waste the skills I had learnt in the Army. I still wanted to contribute to Australia's defence effort."

His boss at the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service is pleased he made the move.

Superintendent Neil Reid, the Area Director of Brisbane's City West Command said Jonathon's Army training was a big help in securing his employment as a civilian firefighter.

"The training and discipline provided by the Army is extremely attractive to civilian employers," said Superintendent Reid.

"Because of this, Reservists are more than just firefighters to us. They are motivated leaders and make great team players."

Corporal Blackley said, "I can make my Reserve service fit in around my civilian work and family life. I wouldn't trade my Reserve service for anything."









DEFENCE RESERVES SUPPORT

For further information  
contact our helpline  
or visit the website

**1800 803 485**  
[www.defence.gov.au/reserves](http://www.defence.gov.au/reserves)



Australia's Reserve Forces