



# Jungle adventure for boss

## First-hand Reservist training

IN A normal week, Bungendore's Steve Williams works in air-conditioned comfort at Defence's Russell offices.

But January was a bit different.

Steve travelled 8000 kilometres from Bungendore to the jungles of Malaysia to show 20 other Australian employers what their employees were up to at jungle survival school.

The employees are all Army Reservists and the training was part of a three-month overseas tour of duty.

"As the director of Employer and Industry Engagement part of my job is to show the bosses the benefits of having Reservists working for them," Mr Williams said.

"But I'm also a Wing Commander in the RAAF Reserve so I have a foot in

both camps. This time, instead of staying in my office, I thought it was my turn to lead a field trip.

"The Reservists were in a very robust program – jungle survival school was tough. They had been given a knife and some water and

had to get through 36 hours by themselves in the jungle – but they had been taught how to make traps, and which vines held drinking water.

He said it was less about seeing the soldiers' activities and more about the skills they showed while doing it – issuing orders clearly, training others and working in teams.

Mr Williams said the reaction of the bosses had been overwhelmingly positive.

"They had a face-to-face chance to see how their

people were developing – the training and experience they are getting, which will add to the bosses' own business competitiveness back home – whether it's through gaining a truck driver licence or being able to lead teams at quite senior level."

Mr Williams said when the bosses returned home he hoped they would become advocates of employing Reservists – by talking on the radio, or just talking to other bosses.

He said some might even join state-based Reserve support committees.

"Members already range from major companies to small businesses and everyone in between," Mr Williams said.

"Sometimes Reservists do go overseas for three months at a time and bosses

need to be okay with that.

"Sure, the bosses are compensated financially while their employees are away in uniform. But it's not just about the money – the person that comes back to them will have more skills and be more use to the business."

Of the 100,000 people in Australian uniform some 45,000 are Reservists.

All are volunteers and they have to volunteer again to serve overseas.

In Australia Reservists can also get involved in security at major events and take part in disaster relief operations.

Employers are compensated financially while their employees are away in uniform.



**IN THE FIELD:** Steve Williams led a contingent of employers to Malaysia