

GOVERNMENT URGES EMPLOYERS TO ADOPT DEFENCE RESERVES LEAVE GUIDELINES

Employers have been urged to consider new guidelines for leave for members of the Australian Defence Force Reserves. The guidelines were announced today by Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, Mal Brough and unveiled by Chief of the Defence Force, General Peter Cosgrove at a gathering of senior business people from around Australia, at Fort Denison in Sydney.

"Reservists account for more than 42 per cent of the Australian Defence Force and are increasingly being utilised to support the high tempo of operational deployments seen over the past few years," Mr Brough said.

"Reservists need to be confident that their employer supports their involvement in Defence training and their employment is secure.

"These guidelines provide a framework for employers to develop policies that provide that support."

Mr Brough said the guidelines were not compulsory, but the Australian Government encouraged employers to adopt them.

"The Government has already introduced the Employer Support Payment Scheme, which financially compensates employers while their employees are undertaking Defence service.

"More than 2400 employers have claimed around \$28 million since the scheme was introduced in 2001.

"The guidelines are another demonstration of the Government's commitment to stronger partnerships between the Defence Force and the private sector."

The guidelines, developed by the Defence Reserves Support Council, will be distributed in the coming months, along with a booklet featuring examples of effective partnerships between employers and Reservists.

Employers can access the private sector leave guidelines for Defence Reservists at www.defence.gov.au/drsc or by calling 1800 803 485.

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