

MEDIA RELEASE



Peter Lindsay
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence

PARLSEC 017/2007

Friday, 23 March 2007

VISIT TO SOLOMON ISLANDS TO REINFORCE BENEFITS OF EMPLOYING RESERVISTS

Queensland employers of Defence Reservists will fly to the Solomon Islands today (23 March) to see first hand the benefits that Reserve service brings to their employees and to Australia.

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence, Peter Lindsay, said 20 employers would travel to the Solomon Islands as part of Directorate of Reserve Support's (DRS) Bosslift program.

While in Honiara and its surrounds, the employers will have the opportunity to see Reservist soldiers from the Australian Army's 7th Brigade contributing to Operation Anode, the Australian Defence Force's contribution to the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

The part-time soldiers have been deployed for the past four months and will return to Australia in April.

For the employers, the journey to the Solomon Islands offers a rare opportunity to witness the expert capability that Reservists provide to ADF operations. Bosslift will also show the employers how military experience enhances their workers' skill-sets.

During the eye-opening two-day program, the employers will see Reserve soldiers working from their forward operating base in the Solomon Islands. Since 2003, seven groups of employers have accompanied Reserve units to East Timor, Malaysia and the Solomon Islands.

Mr Lindsay said that Bosslift participants were usually matched to deployments and exercises that involved their staff.

"I have been told that employers' mind-sets can change very quickly after being involved in Bosslift. Employers quickly realise how Reservists add to the capability of the Australian Defence Force, and importantly, how their military skills can be transferred to the civilian workplace," Mr Lindsay said.

"The full-time ADF members in the Solomon Islands have been impressed with the ability of these part-time personnel to integrate into the permanent Defence environment."

For details about the many programs run by Defence Reserves visit www.defence.gov.au/reserves or call the toll free information hotline on 1800 803 485.

Media Information:

Media Advisor: Niki Lyons 0418 762 307

Defence Media: (02) 6265 3343 or 0408 498 664

For a free subscription to Defence Direct, the Minister for Defence's monthly e-newsletter, please follow this link <http://www.minister.defence.gov.au/defencedirect/spt/subscribe.html>