

MEDIA RELEASE



Peter Lindsay

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence

PARLSEC 101/2007

Tuesday, 25 September 2007

JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY TO SUPPORT STUDENT RESERVISTS

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence, Mr Peter Lindsay, today announced that Queensland's James Cook University (JCU) has become the State's first university to formally adopt Student Reservist Support Guidelines.

Mr Lindsay said JCU's adoption of the guidelines represented 'Best Practice' and that similar guidelines and policies were being promoted to other universities and TAFE Colleges across Australia.

The JCU announcement follows the benchmark decision by New South Wales' Southern Cross University earlier this year to adopt a supportive leave policy for its students.

"Whilst universities across Australia are generally supportive of their students' Defence commitments, legislative protections only apply where the student is undertaking Continuous Full Time Service," Mr Lindsay said.

"The introduction of these guidelines at JCU is so important and so welcome. The precedent set by guidelines such as these ones should help students in other tertiary bodies to negotiate fair and reasonable arrangements to balance study and Defence commitments.

"The guidelines developed by JCU allow students to learn in alternative formats, provides them with additional time to complete assessment requirements and grants them special examinations and variations to due dates amongst other provisions."

In the last Reserve Attitude Survey conducted in 2004, almost 25 per cent of respondents indicated that they were undertaking some form of tertiary study and over 16 per cent believed that assistance with arranging study deferral would have a considerable or very considerable influence on improving their availability for Full Time Service.

Mr Lindsay said it was also important to note that Defence's Reserve Policy Division recently allocated \$400,000 over the next two years to support Reservists involved in tertiary and TAFE study, as part of the Defence Assisted Study Scheme.

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