



## DEFENCE MEDIA RELEASE

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### REBUILDING IN THE CRADLE OF CIVILISATION

Helping to rebuild in the 'cradle of civilisation' is the latest challenge for East Brisbane's Mark Armstrong. He has a key role in the Australian Battle Group on duty in southern Iraq where 6,000 years earlier the Sumerians established the first known civilisation.

In his own civilian life Mark, 34, is the People and Innovation Manager for Symbion Consumer, Australia's largest manufacturer and marketer of vitamins and health supplements.

But Mark is also a Major in the Army Reserve and, as the leader of the Army's Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) project team, he is now playing an important role in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Iraq.

"As the leader of the CIMIC team I work with international reconstruction agencies, Iraqi businesses and local government to rebuild and develop civil infrastructure," Mark said. "What we do is visit needy villages and towns in southern Iraq to assess their requirements for infrastructure projects and community development projects."

The CIMIC team then plans and manages projects that will allow local people to improve their standard of living such as irrigation systems, power generators, transformers roads, and school buildings.

"Iraq is my first operational deployment and I'm very proud to be upholding the legend of Anzac. I want my family and friends back home to know that I am proud to be here. But what I miss most about Australia is spending time with my wife, Leanne, and our nine-month old daughter, Ruby," Mark said.

Mark is one of 1575 members of the Australian Defence Force who are now on duty in the Middle East as part of Operation Catalyst, the Australian Government's contribution to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq. Working with the Iraqi Government and coalition forces, Australian military personnel are continuing to work for a more secure environment and assist with national rehabilitation programs.

As well as supporting Iraqi security forces, the Australian Battle Group is project managing many reconstruction projects. More than 20 Australian projects have been completed, with more under way. These include water and irrigation projects, rural projects to enhance crop and animal production, health clinics, and power supply initiatives.

***Caption:*** East Brisbane's Mark Armstrong is now managing infrastructure projects in southern Iraq.

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