

MEDIA RELEASE



Peter Lindsay

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence

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EMPLOYERS VISIT THE SOLOMON ISLANDS TO EXPERIENCE THE BENEFITS OF RESERVE SERVICE

New South Wales employers of Defence Reservists will fly to the Solomon Islands today (6 July) as part of Exercise Bosslift.

They will be given a first-hand opportunity to meet with their Reserve employees who are on an operational deployment. These employers will have the opportunity to gain an appreciation of the unique skills their Reserve employees can bring back to the civilian workplace.

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence, Peter Lindsay, MP, said 18 employers would travel to the Solomon Islands as part of Defence Reserve Support's Bosslift program.

While in Honiara and its surrounds, the employers will see Reservist soldiers, primarily from the Royal New South Wales Regiment, contributing to Operation Anode, the Australian Defence Force's (ADF) contribution to the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI). The part-time soldiers have been deployed for the past three months and will return to Australia in early August. Since 2003, eight groups of employers have visited Reserve units deployed to East Timor, Malaysia and the Solomon Islands.

During the eye-opening two-day program, the employers will see Reserve soldiers working from their forward operating base in the Solomon Islands. Mr Lindsay said Bosslift participants were usually matched to deployments and exercises that involved their staff.

"Employers involved in the Bosslift program are genuinely impressed with the capabilities of their employees. The military environment trains and develops them in ways that is just not available anywhere else," Mr Lindsay said.

Due to its high operational tempo, the ADF relies heavily on the Reserve Force. Ninety-five per cent of the soldiers involved in this deployment are Reservists.

"The Australian Reservists in the Solomon Islands are serving alongside New Zealand Territorial (Reserve) soldiers. The Australian community can be rightfully proud of these soldiers – the fine traditions of ANZAC are embodied in this operation," Mr Lindsay said.

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

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