

From Major General Paul Irving AM, PSM, RFD (Ret'd)



**Defence Reserves
Association**

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, Department of the Senate

PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Members,

Defence Legislation Amendment (Enhancement of Defence Force Response to Emergencies) Bill 2020

The DRA, which is a tri-service organisation, is the only advocacy group specifically representing Defence Reservists. The major objectives of the DRA are to:

- foster and assist the Australian Defence Force (ADF) with particular emphasis on the Reserves;
- be involved in the welfare and betterment of serving and former ADF members with specific attention to Defence Reservists;
- consider and where appropriate seek changes to the conditions of service, amenities and equipment relating to Defence Reserves; and
- represent the standpoint of the Defence Reserves in the promotion of an effective tri-service ADF.

The DRA considers that overall, the Bill is a positive step for Reservists and Reserve service. Further, the introduction of superannuation benefits to called out Reservists backdated to November 2019 and the provision of a level of personal immunity to Reservists whilst on call out duty are fully supported.

In decoupling Reserve call out from the requirement for Continuous Full-time Service (CFTS) and allowing the Chief of the Defence Force to direct a Reserve member's period of service during a call out (i.e. allow call out on the basis of either Reserve Service Days [RSD] or CFTS, depending on the nature of the task) allows greater flexibility in call out procedures, is administratively easier, and is probably less costly for Defence.

However, if there are insufficient records of the service of Reservists (for example, disaster relief service), Reservists and their families may be exposed in terms of the protections and cover that would be required should they be killed or injured while providing that service. While the DRA has been assured that there would be a record kept on PMKeys of the reason for call out, whether on RSD or CFTS, more specific details on the nature of their duties is also required, presumably in the form of an Operations Log.

The DRA understands that a number of Reservists, who were called out on Operation Bushfire Assist early in 2020, have not yet received their Deployment Orders or consequently had their operational service logged.

I acknowledge that detailed record keeping of Reservists' service is a matter for Defence administrative and personnel processes, rather than for inclusion in legislation. Nevertheless, it is an important requirement that needs to be addressed.

Yours faithfully

Paul Irving
National President
15 October 2020