



**The Hon Dr Mike Kelly AM MP  
Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support**

Mrs Julia Irwin MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Petitions  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

29 SEP 2009

Dear Mrs Irwin *Julia*

Thank you for your letter of 19 August 2009 to the Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon John Faulkner, on behalf of petitioner Mr Mark Rowell concerning eligibility for the Australian Service Medal (ASM) and applicable clasps for short-term service. As this matter falls within my portfolio responsibilities, your correspondence has been passed to me for response.

I am advised the ASM was introduced in 1995 for service in prescribed peacekeeping or non-warlike operations. The minimum qualifying period for the medal is 30 days in an operational area and it is awarded with a clasp denoting the operation. The medal recognises service that involves a level of hazard greater than that experienced during normal peacetime service, but not the same level of danger and hardship associated with warlike service. For this reason, a longer period of service is required to justify the awarding of a medal.

Any decision to reduce a qualifying period for medal purposes is made on the basis that there are operational reasons requiring a lesser duration of service. Two examples of when a shortened qualifying period was applied to the ASM are the period leading up to the First Gulf War and the first phase of the intervention in East Timor in 2006. These were exceptional occurrences and, in both cases, the nature of service warranted a lesser qualifying period.

I am advised the decision to reduce an award's qualifying period is carefully considered and rarely taken. Any determination to apply a reduced qualifying period is made on the basis that there are operational reasons requiring a lesser duration of service.

Short-term deployment is an unavoidable consequence of certain duties undertaken by Australian Defence Force personnel. This often involves health professionals and other specialists who are employed for specific tasks. To ensure the integrity of awards is maintained, and to appropriately recognise service of personnel who complete minimum qualifying periods, short-term deployment is not, in itself, sufficient justification to amend standard qualifying periods for any existing Defence awards.

I hope this information will be of assistance to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

**MIKE KELLY**