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Senator Helen Polley

Chair, F&PA Committee

Parliament House

Canberra ACT

Dear Chair,

I wish to provide further information for the public record pertaining to my appearance before the Committee earlier today, during which Senator Ronaldson made suggestions that somehow the Governor-General had disrespected Australian defence personnel by not wearing a poppy on 10 November 2012, in the presence of Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, at Government House, Canberra.

As the website of the Australian Army outlines, in Australia it is customary for a poppy to be worn as a sign of respect on Remembrance Day (11 November) each year. This custom has been in place for over 80 years. In accordance with this custom, the Governor-General wore a poppy at the National Remembrance Day Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial on 11 November 2012. I understand that the practice differs in the United Kingdom, where poppies may be worn over a number of days leading up to Remembrance Day.

The Governor-General as Commander-in-Chief always conducts herself with the greatest level of respect in relation to military commemorations. Her outreach and engagement with the veteran community and serving ADF is without parallel and has included over 140 events in Australia and overseas, including:

#### **Overseas**

- o Visited Australian troops in Timor Leste, Solomon Islands, and Afghanistan (on 3 occasions: being the first VIP to ever overnight there)
- o 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Armistice Day, Verdun, France, November 2008
- o 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gallipoli landings, Turkey, April 2009
- o Re-interment of unknown soldier, Fromelles, and other services associated with Australian involvement on the Western Front, France, July 2010
- o 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sandakan death marches, Sabah, Malaysia, August 2010
- o ANZAC Day service at Hellfire Pass and commemorative service at Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, Thailand, April 2011
- o Visited Long Tan Cross Memorial Site, Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Vietnam, May 2011
- o Paid her respects in places as diverse as Dar es Salaam, Brunei, New Caledonia and the Philippines
- o Paid respects to two fallen soldiers at Al Minhad base and attended the ramp ceremony for soldiers being repatriated to Australia in September 2012

#### **Domestic**

- o Attended a Ceremonial Sunset commemorating the sinking of HMAS Sydney (II) on

the 67th Anniversary of her loss at the Sydney II Memorial in Geraldton-Greenough, November 2008

- Reviewed the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary parade for the Royal Australian Regiment, November 2008
- Reviewed the parade to mark the end of Operation Catalyst at the Australian War Memorial, November 2009
- Reviewed the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary parade for the Royal Australian Air Force, March 2011
- Hosted a Ceremonial Sunset at Admiralty House in recognition of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the granting of the 'Royal' assent to the Royal Australian Navy, July 2011
- Presented the Unit Citation for Gallantry to D Company, 6 Royal Australian Regiment, at a military parade in recognition of the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan at Enoggera Barracks, August 2011
- Presented the Queen's and Regimental Colours to 7 Royal Australian Regiment, September 2011
- Attended a commemorative ceremony for AE1 at Garden Island, September 2011
- Presented the Governor-General's Banner to the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps, November 2011
- Attended at the Anglesea Barracks Bicentennial Parade in Hobart, December 2011
- Attended the Commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin, February 2012

In addition to these events, the Governor-General has:

- attended annual events such as ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day and Long Tan Day
- attended military Graduation Parades at the Royal Military College, Australian Defence Force Academy, Junior Officer Training and Recruit Training centres
- hosted events in recognition of veterans' groups, including the Land Army, Rats of Tobruk, Women's Royal Australian Air Force, Battle of Coral Sea and military nurses
- presented the Gloucester Cup
- visited numerous Defence bases, including Larrakeyah Barracks, RAAF Base Tindal, Enoggera Barracks, RAAF Base Amberley, RAAF Base Townsville, Holsworthy Barracks, RAAF Base Williamtown, Fleet Base East, HMAS Creswell, Kapooka, RAAF Base Wagga, HMAS Cerberus, Anglesea Barracks, Campbell Barracks and Fleet Base West
- presented the Governor-General's banner to a number of Australian Defence Force units, and
- presented three Victoria Crosses for Australia.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Brady

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