

# AUSTRALIAN VETERANS AND DEFENCE SERVICES COUNCIL INCORPORATED “ AVADSC ”

**Patron:** His Excellency Major General Michael Jeffery AC CVO MC (Retd)  
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

**President:**

Rear Admiral Ian McL Crawford  
AO AM (Mil) RAN (Retd)

PO Box Q314

QVB Post Office  
SYDNEY NSW 1230

**Secretary:** Major Colin Doust JP  
(Ret'd)

Tel: (02) 9377 2320  
Fax: (02) 9267 9837  
ABN: 55 565 676 688



[avadsc@bigpond.com](mailto:avadsc@bigpond.com)

19 March 2007

Dr Kathleen Dermody  
Secretary  
Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence & Trade  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Email: [fadt.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:fadt.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Kathleen

## **AVADSC SUBMISSION INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS**

Reference: Your letter of 9<sup>th</sup> February 2007.

Thank you for considering AVADSC for a submission to your Inquiry. While AVADSC does not have any input into the policies of deployment and operational activities of the ADF it does concern itself with the benefits, welfare and health of members and their families.

AVADSC believes that in considering Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operation it is necessary to take consideration of the arrangements for ADF, Australian Federal Police, charitable organisations and others in peace enforcement (peacemaking) and humanitarian relief. Since the Second World War there have been many changes in the nature of the deployment of ADF personnel overseas. In many cases these commitments have also involved the Australian Federal Police, charitable organisations and others in a range of warlike, non-warlike and humanitarian relief operations. It is often difficult to make a clear distribution between operations and the way they are categorised, yet the outcomes for Australian people committed to these operations in terms of medical and physical health and the risks forced during deployment can often be similar.

Trying to fit every operation into a narrowly defined category can be difficult and leads to perceived anomalies and resultant representations. One of the outcomes of the variety of deployments and categories that has had the greatest impact of those deployed in terms of mental wellbeing, which has subsequent implication for physical health, is recognition. Recognition is an important factor for morale during service and peace of mind and all that this means for those who have left the services.

In inviting the inquiry to give consideration to all deployments and how they relate to peacekeeping, AVADSC believes that it is not possible to make fine distinctions in categorisations of deployments. In view of threats to peace and stability in a troubled world the complexity of commitments is likely to increase rather than decrease and the Government should seek to consider a broader approach to an all-embracing categorisation of operations short of warlike service, noting the implications for medal and badge recognition and what this means for mental wellbeing.

Of course there will be other matters to be addressed to meet the particular issues identified in the notice. Some of these issues we have listed above and issued an explanation to each for your consideration.

## **AVADSC POINTS RAISED**

- ❖ **Category of Service** – ADF is responsible for this and it is not intended to detract from their determination on whether they declare the operation to be Warlike or Non-Warlike service. However, the comment we wish to make is that all members of the ADF or AFP be classified in the one category and not try to separate them. There is also the consideration of Humanitarian relief forces and they should be looked at in particular in the area they are going into and whether they need some form of protection. By placing some personnel on Warlike service and others on Non-Warlike service this affects the morale and workings of the troops, be they ADF or AFP, as it then gives an entirely different access to allowances and entitlements to the VEA, MCRS and of course medals. AVADSC clearly understands that making the distinction amongst the different operations cannot be clearly defined and trying to fit every operation into a narrowly defined category can be difficult and leads to perceived anomalies and representations.

**Recommendation:** AVADSC recommends that all overseas deployments to meet peacekeeping, peace enforcement and humanitarian relief personnel, ADF or AFP, be categorised under one category and all given the required training.

- ❖ **Living conditions** – All personnel, ADF or AFP, should be housed in the same conditions as each other, be it tentage, huts or motel type accommodation. All personnel should be paid the same allowance if an allowance is paid for living conditions. Not having some in tents and others in motel type of accommodation and being paid an additional allowance for such accommodation as has been reported happening in some instances. This also applies to rations the members eat, as all should be on the same rations, be it ration pack meals or fresh meals.

**Recommendation:** All personnel be housed the same and eat the same meals as each other.

- ❖ **Medical** – This is one area that should be more thoroughly controlled and handled. All records/reports, be they for ADF or AFP, should be returned to the member on his return home after they have been checked to see if the records are complete. This is vital to the member for any claims or treatment that may be required to be followed up on return to Australia. If the members wants to make a claim on VEA or MRCS and no record is held in his/her record then it is very difficult to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the injury or disease has occurred. This is one area that has been lacking, and in particular, when medical treatment is given by an alternate force or when the member is referred to another area for treatment, eg Hospital.

**Recommendation:** More care and handling of all medical documents and member check the records before leaving the location.

- ❖ Protection of peacekeeping, peace enforcement and humanitarian Personnel – This should be determined at the raising of the Force and all personnel should be covered by the decision. The Force should know before embarking on the mission if they are all to be armed or not and what protection is provided by supporting forces. This leads to the decision of either the operation is classified as Warlike, Non-Warlike or as an humanitarian force with or without Defence Force protection. It should be completely clear to all members what is expected of them and how any situations, which may occur are handled. There should be some allowance for a force to be re-categorised if necessary. This should be done on the recommendation of the Commander of the force stating the effective date if it has to be rescinded.
- ❖ Pay and Allowances – As previously mentioned all members, be they ADF or AFP or humanitarian relief personnel, e on the same allowances for their duration of their tour of duty.

**Recommendation:** All ADF, AFP and humanitarian relief personnel receive the same allowances for the duration of their tour.

- ❖ Leave on completion of Tour – No comment can be made in relation to the AFP members as their leave plans are unknown to AVADSC, however all leave should be taken before returning to the work force. As for the ADF members all leave accrued in country should be the minimum taken on return to Australia and members not be recalled for redeployment into another peacekeeping, peace enforcement or humanitarian relief force.

**Recommendation:** All leave granted during detachment by both ADF and AFP personnel to be taken on return to Australia and not be recalled for another deployment till it is taken in full.

- ❖ On return from all ADF, AFP or humanitarian relief – All ADF and AFP members entitled to be awarded medals to be granted to them on a parade held in the country before returning home. The members to be debriefed and counselled on arrival home as soon as practicable and sent on leave. ADF and AFP families should be in attendance at the debriefing so they know what to expect of their partner. All families should be at the place of arrival home of the members and each arrival should be at a reasonable hour of the day. Members after the debrief should be paid all moneys owing to them and allowed to proceed home. If families are interstate then the families should be at the nearest airport to their home. Movements arrangements should be made before the members arrive back in Australia.

**Recommendation:** Families to be at arrival area, attend debriefing, members paid and released to proceed on leave.

- ❖ Families – All members families should attend the briefing before departure of their partner and be briefed on length of service overseas, how to contact them, how to access their pay for living expenses, where to obtain assistance if required during their partners absence for such matters as maintenance of the house or any other type of assistance. The families should be advised of the approximate date of departure and return and should be kept informed of any occurrences that may during their partner's tour of duty.

**Recommendation:** Community Services keep families full informed of partners' movements to and from the country member is proceeding to assist in all matters as required whilst the member is away.

- ❖ Re-Deployments – If necessary a member is required to be re-deployed into another peacekeeping, peace enforcement or humanitarian relief operation after completing a tour he should not be re-deployed until all his leave that he was granted in the first deployment

is fully expended and has a period of at least three months' break before proceeding on the second deployment.

**Recommendation:** Member not to be re-deployed until leave granted is taken in full and he has another three months before being re-deployed at home.

- ❖ Medals – Members be granted the medal earned for the area served in at a parade before returning home. All members be granted the same medal, be it an ASM or AASM and not have a situation where a few receive one medal and the remainder receive the other medal. The medal to be determined by the type of service, being either Warlike or Non-Warlike and not as has happened where some received the ASM while the remainder received AASM. The medal to come with the area of operation bar on it.

**Recommendation:** All personnel, both ADF and AFP be granted the one medal with the bar of the area served. The medal to be granted should be the ASM or AASM whichever is applicable.

Yours sincerely

**IAN McL CRAWFORD**  
*Rear Admiral RAN (Ret'd)*  
National President