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## **DEFENCE MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **DEFENCE HONOURS ENERGY AUSTRALIA**

Energy Australia has been awarded a Defence Reserves Support Council State Award in recognition of its support of the Australian Defence Force Reserves.

Senator Sandy Macdonald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence, attended the ceremony at Parliament House, Sydney, in late May.

Energy Australia, located in Chatswood, was nominated by Major Paul Byleveld from the Health Company of the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade's Combat Services Support Battalion at Dundas.

Energy Australia has three employees serving with the unit and the company was nominated in recognition of its ongoing support and for having released employee Corporal Stenning for a three-month deployment to Rifle Company Butterworth in Malaysia.

“The NSW Committee of the Defence Reserves Support Council, through the Employer Support Awards, acknowledges employers who have adopted a supportive and positive role for their Reserve employees through leave arrangements and other special considerations to enable them to fulfill their Defence obligations,” Senator Macdonald said.

To be eligible for Employer Support Awards, companies need to have a supportive leave policy and must have released their employees for an extended period of Reserve service. Awards are presented in the categories of Government and Large Business, Private Enterprise - Medium Business and Private Enterprise - Small Business.

"It is important to recognise the support that employers give to our Reservists, who in turn play an important role in assisting the Australian Defence Force in all roles, but particularly in peace-keeping and humanitarian aid operations," Senator Macdonald said.

“By providing their staff with Defence service leave, Reservists have been able to complete their training, attend courses to enhance their abilities and participate in Defence exercises. They have also had the opportunity to deploy to countries such as Malaysia, Pakistan and the Solomon Islands, assisting in peacekeeping missions and natural disaster relief.”

"The Australian Government appreciates employers' efforts and one of the ways we thank them is through the Employer Support Payment Scheme, which sees eligible employers receive \$991.20 per week in order for them to employ a temporary replacement while their employee is performing Defence duties," Senator Macdonald said.

The Employer Support Payment will increase to \$1035.90 on 1 July.

#### **Media Contacts:**

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**PHOTO CAPTION** (DSC\_9371)

Major General Neil Wilson - Assistant Chief of the Defence Force Reserves presents Mr Darren Robinson from Energy Australia a DRSC Employer Support Award, accompanied by their employee Corporal Andrew Stennings - 8 Combat Support Services Battalion.