

QUEENSLAND EMPLOYERS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF DEFENCE PAYMENTS

Queensland employers of Defence Reservists are taking advantage of the financial assistance scheme designed to help offset the costs of releasing employees for service.

400 businesses in the Sunshine State have received Employer Support Payments (ESP) totalling nearly \$4 million from the Federal Government in the past financial year.

During 2005/06 more than \$13 million has been paid to Australian employers under the scheme, an increase of more than 12% on the previous year.

The ESP, of around \$1000 per week, helps to relieve the cost of releasing an employee for Reserve Service.

Ralph Kremer, Cairns manager of the Cummins Engine Company says the ESP has made it easier for his company support several employees who are Reservists.

“The Payment means we can engage a skilled worker to complete their work while they are away. This minimises the impact on our business,” said Mr Kremer.

“As the needs of the modern Defence Force changes, employers need to change as well”.

Mr Doug Stedman, Director of the ESP Scheme says the payment is claimed for a wide range of ADF activities.

"We get claims in relation to Reservists serving in a wide variety of jobs and environments" Mr Stedman said.

“This includes new Reservists undergoing recruit training through to trained Special Forces soldiers and highly qualified medical specialists serving in Iraq and Afghanistan”.

For further information about the ESP go to www.defence.gov.au/reserves or call 1800 803 485.