



DEFENCE MEDIA RELEASE

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ADF 'ready' to support the Commonwealth Games

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) is providing approximately 2,600 people, along with a range of equipment, to support both security and non-security aspects of the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games being held in Melbourne from March 15 to 26.

"This is an activity that Defence is very proud to be involved with," said Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston. "We want to ensure that Australia stages a safe, secure and successful event for the athletes and public to enjoy."

Defence tasks will include specialist ceremonial and general support, as well as assisting the Victoria Police search venues, operate vehicle checkpoints, respond to bomb threats and clear waterways.

Defence's commitment will include Blackhawk helicopters and a detachment of F/A 18 Hornet fighters, specialised search teams, special forces, and ships from the Royal Australian Navy. The ships and aircraft will be able to divert aircraft and intercept vessels at sea to counter specific threats should they arise.

The ADF will also provide personnel to assist venue managers in co-ordinating communications at Commonwealth Games venues and precincts.

Air Chief Marshal Houston emphasized the ADF's supporting role during the Games: "I want to stress that the Victorian Government, and Victoria Police in particular, are responsible for security at the Games. The ADF's job is to provide specialised support to the Victorian Police, as well as support to the Attorney-General's Department under the Commonwealth's standing arrangements for counter-terrorism if that is required".

Once again, Reservists from the Navy, Army and Air Force will play key roles in the ADF's supporting task force by providing an additional layer to complement other ADF domestic security capabilities. "I am pleased to see Reserves taking a full part in this operation," ACM Houston said.

"Some of these troops are part of the Reserve Response Forces that were established two years ago as part of the Government's commitment to securing Australia against the threat of terrorism. Their contribution to the Melbourne Games will include assisting the Victorian Police with tasks such as searching venues and operating vehicle checkpoints, showing just how versatile Australia's Reserve forces are."

Air Chief Marshal Houston also congratulated the newly-appointed commander of the ADF's joint task force for the Games, Brigadier Andrew Smith. "Brigadier Smith is very experienced in this type of operation, having played an important role in the ADF's support to the Sydney Olympics. I wish him, and all of his troops, the very best for this operation."

Further information: www.defence.gov.au/opacolyte/

Media contact: Defence Media Liaison - 02 6265 3343 or 0408 498 664