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For information:
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**ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FORMATION OF THE DEFENCE FORCE
CONSERVATIVE ACTION NETWORK AND REQUEST TO WEAR UNIFORM**

1. After much feedback and consultation with serving members, families of serving members and former serving members, I have launched the Defence Force Conservative Action Network (DEFCAN). It is based on the same principle as the Defence Force Gay and Lesbian Information Service (DEFGLIS), except that it will seek to ensure that Defence members who hold conservative social views are respected and protected by Defence policies. As such, DEFCAN represents ADF members and their families who are Christian, pro-life and pro-marriage.
2. This minute is also to inform you of DEFCAN's position with regards to political activity.
 - a. DEFCAN, in principle, does not support uniformed political activity. DEFCAN does support the ADF's previous policy position that prohibited uniformed attendance at political events.
 - b. However, DEFCAN also recognises that the ADF has chosen to abandon that policy by allowing uniformed participation at the Mardi Gras. As such, DEFCAN has reluctantly formed the view that the only possible way its members can fairly campaign for their social views is if they are also given permission to attend events that they support in uniform.
3. Given this, I am now seeking permission from Defence to allow uniformed participation at pro-marriage and pro-life events. Specifically, I request permission to attend the March for Babies in Melbourne on 11 Oct 14 in uniform, and for that same approval to be given to any DEFCAN members who also wish to attend. I am happy to work through any issues this raises with the appropriate members of the chain of command.
4. I also seek permission to liaise with the appropriate office holders in the Defence People Group to ensure that DEFCAN receives the same level of support as DEFGLIS and is able to represent its members in the same capacity as DEFGLIS. As DEFCAN is newly established, I anticipate there will be a number of issues to work through to ensure that the ADF and members of DEFCAN are able to establish a harmonious working relationship.
5. Finally, as a matter of courtesy to the chain of command, I am informing you that DEFCAN will undertake political activity in a similar fashion to DEFGLIS. As a reminder, DEFGLIS has campaigned on behalf of certain Defence members for homosexual marriage and to remove rights from religious organisations. DEFCAN does not support these views and the ADF hierarchy can expect DEFCAN to robustly assert the views of the socially-conservative Defence members it represents. As such, it is likely that DEFCAN will take positions on issues like marriage, abortion and Islamic immigration.

6. While DEFCAN acknowledges that not everyone within the ADF will support its views, it does expect that it will be given the same opportunities to represent them as DEFGLIS has. Anything less would demonstrate that Defence's commitment to diversity is less than genuine, and would also raise serious concerns of discrimination. It is precisely to fight these concerns that DEFCAN has been established.

7. Understandably, these requests should not be actioned at a unit level. Therefore, I look forward to working through the chain of command to arrive at a solution that promotes Defence's commitment to diversity, while also respecting the values of socially-conservative Defence members.

8. I note that Defence 'promotes respect for ADF members with diverse backgrounds' and I look forward to assisting Defence put that goal into action. DEFCAN is certainly committed to ensuring that Defence is valued for its respect of diverse social views and can think of no better way to demonstrate this than by proudly representing and commanding uniformed Defence personnel at pro-marriage and pro-life events, just as DEFGLIS has done so at events that support homosexual marriage and anti-life reproductive activities.

9. I look forward to your response.



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