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Speech to IFTAR Ramadan Reception

ANZAC HALL AWM

23 June 2015

INTRODUCTION

Assistant Minister for Defence, Hon. Stuart Robert, MP, Grand Mufti of Australia, Dr Ibrahim Abu-Mohamed, MP, The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. I commence this evening, when we will be celebrating diversity, by acknowledging the traditional owners and custodians of this land on which we meet and their elders past and present.

- I am delighted to be able to host this Inaugural Navy coordinated Iftar. I have fasted today in solidarity with you all, to properly immerse myself in the experience and purpose of Ramadan and to gain an appreciation of the challenges and rewards Muslims experience during this important month in the Islamic calendar.

TRIBUTE TO THOSE LOST IN WAR

- I commence my address in this place of remembrance by paying tribute to all those Muslims who lost their lives in war in service of Australia and whose names are recorded here in the cloisters of the memorial.

- This evening at the Last Post ceremony you heard from Chief Naim of the sacrifice of Lance Sergeant Bin Shalid Ma'Aruff, who was killed in action in Borneo in 1945.
- He was operating with the Army's Z Special Force and was a courageous volunteer for hazardous duty as a commando operating behind enemy lines. One of his brothers-in-arms in Z Force was Corporal Abu Kassar.
- Australian Muslim sailors, soldiers and airmen volunteered, fought and died doing their duty in defence of this country and its freedoms. Many others survived the heat of battle and returned home to lead productive lives and head families. These valiant men were members of what has come to be known as the 'Heroic Generation', the last members of which are now passing. We remember them all with affectionate gratitude

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IN THE RAN

- Tonight I will speak of inclusion and diversity in the service I lead - the Royal Australian Navy. I am accountable to the government for Navy's capability. I deliver the maritime services to Government and people of Australia.
- For that service to be possible I need our equipment - our ships, our submarines and our aircraft. You will have noticed that they vary in size but are almost always made of grey steel.

With submarines you can have any colour as long as it is black!
Equipment is our hardware.

- Equally essential is our software – our people. They also vary in size, but I am pleased to say that they come in a wide range of colours and more are being added every year.
- We need highly trained and motivated, self disciplined men and women to operate our hardware who come from all the corners of Australia and from every ethnicity. Colour is irrelevant; and as I will demonstrate, religious affiliation is no barrier to ADF service.

NEED TO RECRUIT FROM ALL MINORITIES AND ETHNICITIES AND BE REPRESENTATIVE OF WHOLE AUSTRALIAN DEMOGRAPHIC

- It is essential that we who lead the ADF do all we can to attract and retain the widest range of talent from Australia's multicultural communities. Muslim-Australians and the knowledge and the values they bring to the workforce are a key and essential component of a successful Team Navy.
- The Defence Force aims to be entirely representative of the full diversity of the Australian demographic by 2030. We are not there yet, but we are on track and moving in that direction. Navy is more diverse than ever before. We are recruiting and retaining many more women and, as they stay for longer, we are able to promote them to higher ranks and responsibilities.

We are also succeeding in recruiting and keeping Australia's indigenous people. We are aiming to fairly represent in our ranks every ethnicity and faith community but we need to be proactive and drive this change forward.

ISLAMIC CULTURAL ADVISORS AND RELIGIOUS ADVISORY APPOINTMENTS

- To commence this process the last Chief of Navy, VADM Ray Griggs, instituted the positions of Islamic Cultural Adviser and an assistant adviser in 2012. Captain Mona Shindy, who has just spoken and Chief Petty Officer Zul Naim, who organised this event, hold these positions at present.
- These two adviser roles are here to stay because I, and my successors as Chief of Navy, will always need guidance to ensure that everything that can and should be done by Navy to meet the legitimate religious needs of those members of the Islamic faith is done. Henceforth Navy will always need advice on how to be an inclusive recruiter and employer of choice for those Australians who profess Islam.
- On 5 June the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence appointed Sheikh Mohamadu Nawaz Saleem to the ADF's Religious Advisory Committee to the Services.

- The Minister said: *Increasing the breadth of the RACS to include the Muslim faith reflects the ADF's pastoral care responsibilities for all its members and is entirely consistent with Defence's commitment to cultural reform."*

GUIDE TO RELIGION AND BELIEF IN THE ADF

- Last year the then Chief of the Defence Force, General David Hurley, released a document, entitled: *Guide to Religion and Belief in the ADF*. It brings together in one place a clear guide for all ADF commanding officers on the implications of faith as it is practised by permanent serving members and reservists when in uniform.
- This guide makes clear what a supervisor or unit commander's duties and obligations are when attending to the religious needs of those in his or her chain of command.
- It provides a great deal of information on the beliefs and practices of all the religions represented in the ADF. It provides clear guidance on the following matters:

Religious observances at work, the facilitation of prayer and leave for religious festival.

Every effort is to be made to allow members to not be employed on days of particular religious observance other than on necessary duty.

Bereavement leave

The significance of the time required for bereavement may vary depending on cultural background and religious affiliation. Where possible bereavement leave is to be flexible to accommodate this.

Uniform regulations and permissible variations in dress

Commanders may approve different types of head dress such as turbans or hijabs or to be flexible such as allowing Muslim women to wear track suits during physical training. Commanders are also to consider allowing, where possible, an activity to be conducted in an all female environment.

Medical Treatment

Where possible medical treatment should be delivered by a practitioner of the same gender.

Dietary needs and fasting

Personnel are to be treated equitably with regards to their dietary choices and religious or cultural dietary restrictions. Catering arrangements are where possible to make every effort to provide flexibility to accommodate ADF personnel. Where possible fasting should be able to occur by a unit remaining flexible with daily routines.

For example during Ramadan it may be appropriate to arrange to make eating in messes possible outside normal meal times.

Worship

Commanding Officers are encouraged to facilitate, where possible, personnel attending their respective religious services at a civilian place of worship or led by lay persons with religious accreditation to conduct Services of Worship within their particular religion.

Death in service.

The conduct of mortuary affairs where practicable is to be commensurate with the deceased member's family religious and cultural beliefs, desires and expectations.

- In the section of this ADF guide dealing specifically with Islam the five pillars of the faith, the daily rituals of the practicing Muslim and the significance of Friday prayers are all respectfully and carefully explained.

RELIGIOUS AND SERVICE OBLIGATIONS ARE COMPATABLE IN THE ADF

- I have spoken about this Guide to Religion and Belief at some length to underline the point that ADF and Navy has embraced and welcomes its multi-faith future.
- The Service Chiefs and the Secretary of Defence and the Government are hoping that the leaders of faith communities will now encourage members to see the ADF for what it has become and will continue to be; not what it once was.
- The Navy I lead is a work place where men and women of all faiths should be able to offer service to Australia and meet their religious duties, without compromising either obligation. Please take that message with you and pass it on to those in your community who may want to know more about a career in the ADF. We welcome and need their talent and their commitment to serve.

NEW CAPABILITY AND CLEVER SHIPS NEED CLEVER PEOPLE

- We have a huge task to prepare Navy for the new ships and capabilities which the Government is providing. We are in for a period of profound naval recapitalization unmatched in Australia's peacetime history.

- We are building a highly trained and motivated workforce. Our people are doing a superb job of integrating the first of our new ships the LHD HMAS *Canberra* into the fleet and making her amphibious and aviation capabilities available to the rest of the ADF and the Government.
- But the pace and size of this 'step change' is about to pick up. As you may have seen in the last month we gently lowered the first of our three new Air Warfare Destroyers, *Hobart*, into the water and we have commissioned a new Squadron of advanced Romeo Helicopters.. We have a new class of fleet replenishment ships being decided on. We will build a new class of offshore patrol vessels which will be bigger than our current patrol boats. We are planning a new class of frigates. The Government will announce later this year what will replace the Collins class submarines. The long and the short of it is we need to recruit and retain all the talented people that this clever country can provide if we are to get all this new clever capability into the water and keep it operational.
- I sometimes face challenges using all the new smart apps on my smart phone but I am learning all the time and getting more capable as I practice. We learn as we go in this innovative age. These are smart ships and aircraft I am describing and we need smart people to learn to operate them and keep learning as we develop new capabilities to put in them.

DIVERSITY AND INNOVATION THROUGH PLAN PELORUS

- We will get there. We are swiftly becoming a more agile Navy and we will meet our obligations. But we need our innovative leadership and management practices and our inclusive approach to diversity to do it. This is not only the right way forward in a meritocratic society, it is also the only way ahead if we are to achieve our passage plan to 2018, when I will come to the end of my term as Chief of Navy, and beyond to my successors.
- We need a strategy to provide our way points and our headmarks. I have devised one and called it Plan Pelorus, because a pelorus is the instrument on a ship's bridge from which we get our bearings and can set a new course.
- Pelorus builds on the tool for reinforcing that new Navy culture which is already in use and has been for the last six years. That tool is New Generation Navy (NGN).

NEW GENERATION NAVY – VALUES BASED CULTURAL CHANGE

- NGN is a cultural renewal programme that identifies the values and behaviours that are required of all Navy people.
- It is about modernisation of our culture, our structures and the way we lead and how we release our people to be creative and to innovate

- New Generation Navy led renewal is about making explicit what the Navy's expectations are for each serving member and also stating what members are accountable for to each other. It is a values-based people strategy.

NAVY VALUES

- So what are these Navy values that our people live by? They are: Honour, Honesty, Courage, Integrity and Loyalty. They have always been implicit in our culture and generations of our sailors have demonstrated them in peace and war. New Generation Navy makes them explicit.

SIGNATURE BEHAVIOURS

- How do we demonstrate these values in our practical day to day lives. We live out our values through ten signature behaviours. Six of these are of particular relevance to us tonight thinking about inclusion and diversity.

1. Respecting the contribution of every individual

2. Promoting the wellbeing and development of all Navy people

3. Challenging and innovating

4. Strengthening relationships across and beyond Navy

5. Be the best we can be; and

6. Making Navy proud and making Australia proud.

- Tonight I know I share these values and signature behaviours with a faith community that also holds them to be true.
- Through embracing the principles of respectful inclusion, living the Navy values and behaviours we can capitalise on the real benefits that diversity brings to the work environment. Diversity enhances our overall capability and performance as an organisation, trusted, ready and able to defend our country and its interests when called upon to do so.

CONCLUSION

- I am pleased and honoured to be able to host such an important event as this first Navy coordinated IFTAR reception in the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. I welcome all opportunities for education, understanding and respectful inclusion. I thank Captain Mona Shindy and Chief Naim for planning and organising this event and the Director Dr Nelson and his Staff of this great memorial for making it available.
- I thank you all for your attendance. I hope that you find the remainder of the month of fasting rewarding.
- You will find etched on the Navy commemorative coin each of you have been given, our Navy values. On its back you will find the sentiments I wish to leave you with.

“Ramadan Mubarak”.

