

Vice Admiral Tim Barrett, AO, CSC, RAN

Chief of Navy

**Graduation Message to No. 67 Aviation Warfare Officers Course, No. 5
Fighter Controller Course, and No. 25 Air Combat Officer Course**

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you all for providing me with this very special and personal honour, as an AvWO Chief of Navy to present Wings to the School of Air Warfare Graduating Courses.

First and foremost, I would like to extend a very special welcome to the families and friends of today's graduates: I know some of you have travelled great distances to be here today and on behalf of both them and the ADF I thank you. No one should ever underestimate the power of your support; it has been an essential factor in their success so far and will continue to be an important factor throughout their unique and rewarding careers. I am pleased you could attend today and it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all into the larger Australian Defence Force family.

I would like to acknowledge the professionalism and dedication of the instructors and support staff at SAW, 32 Squadron, as well as the maintenance and support teams – there is no more important task than the instruction and support of our young people.

Turning now to the Graduates, my congratulations to you; the graduates of Number 67 Aviation Warfare Officers Course, Number 5 Fighter Controller Course and Number 25 Air Combat Officers Course. I must tell you that you are arriving at an immensely exciting time for the ADF. There are big transitions going on in the world and they bring both opportunities and challenges for our nation. Australia seeks to be a world player in these events. In support of this ambition – to be a credible ally and have capable, modern and well trained Defence Force – we have embarked on a path of modernisation through procurement of a new generation of capabilities. This means you, very early in your careers, will operate on and see the imminent delivery of multiple platforms: Navy MRH-90, MH-60R and EC-135 helicopters; Air Force P8 Poseidon Wedgetail, F18 Super Hornet and EA18G Growler.

This transformation of ADF aviation will place great demands on all of us as these aircraft and systems are some of the most technologically advanced pieces of equipment in the world. It will take hard work, intellect, determination, skill and perseverance to master these aircraft and systems and we, the ADF, will need all of your professionalism to succeed. At this school, on these courses, you have been well prepared to meet these demands.

But please make sure that you don't focus solely inside cockpit. You are all junior leaders in an organisation which requires strong and fair leadership at all levels. Take every opportunity to reflect and learn from your own experience and that of others to continually develop your leadership skills – this is where you can make the greatest contribution.

Today, I hope you will enjoy what you have achieved. You have successfully completed difficult and demanding courses and have earned the right to wear your Wings as a consequence of your team work, tenacity and pursuit of excellence. Enjoy the challenges, work as a team, respect yourself and your colleagues, but, never, ever, forget you are working for the people of Australia.

Ladies and gentlemen, to the ADF's newest AvWOs, FC and ACOs, I offer my sincere congratulations. I have enjoyed the challenges, excitement and rewards of a career in the ADF aviation community and I trust you will do the same.