

RESERVE FORCES DAY

Statement by Minister for Veterans

MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot — Minister for Veterans) [9.10 am]: Tomorrow, 1 July 2016, is Reserve Forces Day across Australia. The objective of Reserve Forces Day is to recognise former and serving Army, Navy and Air Force reservists and raise awareness of their role in our community. It is a day when we take the opportunity to reflect on their contribution to our nation's defence and security and thank the employers and families of reservists, because without their support they would not be able to do their job.

According to the 2016 Defence Force white paper, there are more than 19 000 active reservists in Australia, with approximately 2 200 of those in Western Australia. Since 1999, around 14 000 reservists have deployed on operations within Australia and overseas, which is around 18 per cent of all Australian Defence Force personnel deployed. Reservists support and augment the fulltime regular forces both at home and overseas and come from broad careers across the public, private, small business and not-for-profit sectors. Reservists have skills, qualities and knowledge that an employer might not necessarily know about. It is important to promote the value that reservists bring to an organisation's workforce through diversity and the skills, qualities and knowledge gained by them through military service. Currently, 210 employers are registered as Defence Reserves Support employers in Western Australia. It is important to acknowledge that these supportive employers stand behind their reservists and enable them to perform their vital roles.

For over a century, the men and women of the Australian Defence Force have served our country with distinction, and I take this opportunity to thank them, both past and presently serving.