

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Mailing List

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AUSTRALIANS RECOGNISED ON UN PEACEKEEPERS DAY

The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers is an opportunity to reflect on the important role Australian peacekeepers have played in restoring and maintaining peace, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, said today.

Minister Griffin said peacekeepers enter dangerous and unstable environments, often putting their own lives at risk to defend victims of conflict unable to defend themselves.

"This year the United Nations is emphasising the role of women in peacekeeping, both in the disproportionate impacts of conflict on women, and their capacity as peacekeepers and role models for local women when on missions," Mr Griffin said.

"The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers is a time to recognise the more than 30,000 Defence Force personnel, police officers and civilians who have left our shores to restore order in dangerous places, and allows us to remember those who are still serving on foreign soil today, away from their families and loved ones.

"Since our first Australian peacekeepers were deployed to Indonesia in 1947, Australia has offered support in more than 50 peacekeeping operations in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Europe, as well as closer to home in the Solomon Islands and Bougainville."

Australia's role in peacekeeping missions has included providing military force, leadership, observation and enforcement, weapons destruction, training in demining and disaster relief.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs offers a range of support for peacekeepers who may have been impacted by their service. The VVCS - Veterans & Veterans Families Counselling Service provides counselling and group programs to Australian veterans, peacekeepers and their families. It is a specialised, free and confidential Australia-wide service.

This year the Australian Government's Anzac Day commemorative poster highlighted Australia's peacekeeping efforts, recognising 10 years since Australia led the INTERFET operation in East Timor, restoring peace to the territory.

“A project to develop a Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra to commemorate the service and sacrifice of Australian peacekeepers is under way. The design was announced last year and the community are now raising funds for the project,” Mr Griffin said.

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