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DELIVERED BY

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AT DEFENCE HEADQUARTERS, RUSSELL

Distinguished Guests Ladies and Gentlemen,

The number one question I am asked – other than what is a two and a half star – is how the establishment of Joint Capabilities Group is going. Some ask hoping to hear a note of discord and I fear that I disappoint them. I believe the Group is going very well, and I'll say more about that in a few moments. But the essence of the question has merit: in a sense, people are asking whether I believe in "jointness". Quite simply, I do.

Why Joint?

Many reasons have led the Australian Defence Force to embark on its joint journey: let me touch on a few.

First, we need to rise above inter-Service rivalries. Each of the Services has its own strong sense of purpose and identity, and this has sometimes led to squabbling and rivalry, particularly over resources. In a sense, many families are like this: when they are young, siblings fight over all manner of things, but as they grow into maturity, they come to appreciate each other and begin to focus on how they can help each other. That maturing process has been happening in the ADF now for some years. Of course, there are defence forces that have not had the luxury of coming to that maturity over time. Israel, for example, had to fight for its survival from the very beginning. There was no time for individual Services to indulge themselves; they had to fight together as one from the outset so as to win.

Next, we need people to take a broader view than a single Service perspective can provide. As my career has unfolded I have increasingly seen things through a different frame of reference. Now, as a young apprentice I could barely spell 'reference'! But as a junior Air Force pilot I was exposed to a wider view when I worked with the Navy at Nowra. I came to understand that we all played a part in protecting the fleet. On a posting to Canada, I was struck by the way that search and rescue operations were organised and conducted. There was no bickering about who owned what part of the job: Canadian aircraft were force-assigned to civilian authority, which issued tasks and provided resources, and we just got on with it. As Commanding Officer of 11 Squadron, I saw the need to change as we

developed the Air Operations Centre and Joint Operations Command in response to an internal joint revolution, not least because of how things were developing on Operation RESOLUTE. And in the Middle East, I saw how some elements of the Air Force responded when your Chair, Mike Crane, asked me to write a paper exploring how our P3s could be used in support of land operations over Iraq. We knew it was good idea, but there were folks in Australia that wanted no part of employing a maritime patrol aircraft on land operations.

I think another reason is that we need to pay more attention to important elements of the Defence Force that have been largely unloved. For example, as part of forming Joint Capabilities Group, I was asked to take on the military policing function. As I started to look into it, I found the capability was like a run-down house: the rooms needed repairs and painting, and the yard was untidy and neglected. No money had been spent on it, and it needed some investment and tender loving care. But the foundations of the house – the people who work in military policing – were sound; they are passionate about what they do and they sometimes go to extraordinary lengths in doing it. The investment is not only necessary, it will be well worth it.

So yes, I do believe in the need for a joint Australian Defence Force.

What is Joint Capabilities Group?

Joint Capabilities Group was established in July last year to bring together several of our joint capabilities. It comprises principally:

- Joint Health Command,
- Joint Logistics Command,
- Australian Defence College, and
- Information Warfare Division.

In addition, I now look after the military police and Women Peace and Security. I have a total of 2,740 personnel – 1,370 Australian Public Service and 1,370 uniformed personnel. Some ask was it difficult to get those resources, but I have not found it so. I have been very well supported by the Chief of the Defence Force, the Vice Chief of the Defence Force and the Service Chiefs. I've had long conversations with all of them. I promised Service Chiefs that I would not ask for any more than I absolutely need. The Chief of Army simply said "I'll pay my way, tell me what you need". The Chief of Navy said the same, though he added, and rightly so, that he faces a number of complexities in trying to build the Navy of the future while his workforce is constrained, so it would not be easy for him. That said, Navy has stepped up commendably in meeting a number of requirements; Cyber and the Military Police are but two examples. The Chief of Air Force has been similarly supportive.

My task has been to get across the business as quickly as possible and to work to homogenise the Group.

One of my first challenges will be to help make Joint Health Command affordable. It is an enormously complex and expensive business and Commander Joint Health, Air Vice Marshal Tracy Smart, is going to need a lot of support as she confronts some difficult choices. She has a very motivated and capable team who have made significant advances in Joint Health Command.

At the Australian Defence College, there's a passionate advocate for education in Major General Mick Ryan. But across the ADF we still don't value education as highly as we should, the same can be said for Australia in general, and he is working hard to change that culture – there's still a long way to go but he is absolutely the right person to make it happen.

In Information Warfare Division, Major General Marcus Thompson is working to get ahead of the cyber challenge. As we all know, this is going to be a big part of our future, and he certainly has his work cut out for him.

We also need to reform the military policing function in a number of areas. As I've said, this will need some investment, but in the context of everything else we do it's relatively small. We just need to pay attention and get on with it.

Another area that needs reform is the way we use the Defence Secret Network. We have a culture that uses the DSN interchangeably with the Defence Protected Network, and we have to change that. DSN is our warfighting network, and we need to stop treating it as an administration network.

Joint projects are another key focus of the Group as now, more than ever, they are critical to the way we will fight into the future. For example Joint Project 2096 Phase 1, which at its core aims to speed up the search and collation of intelligence data. Why would that be important? Well in the future, and not too distant future, we will be required to work through very large amounts of data to formulate decisions that must be made quickly in a conflict. It was always thus, but with Artificial Intelligence on the horizon, a capability that has the promise of delivering the right decision more quickly than a human, we had best be ready for it.

Finally, I should add that I have a very lean headquarters. There aren't many of us, and we will need to focus exclusively on doing only that which is important.

What if there was no Joint Capabilities Group?

Another way of thinking about this is to ask the question "What if there was no Joint Capabilities Group?". I think the answer is that we would find ourselves increasingly behind in the information game, and the progressive introduction of increasingly modern platforms would eventually force us to invent it.

This is illustrated by Colonel John Boyd's fascination with the success of American fighter pilots flying US F-86 Sabre jets against North Korean and Chinese pilots flying the Soviet-made MiG-15 during the Korean War. Boyd spent more than 35 years analyzing the reasons for this success, and as a result

articulated the Observe, Orient, Decide, Act – or OODA – Loop. In short, he concluded that American pilots were 10 times more successful than their enemy because the Sabre's superior visibility and more responsive flight controls enabled the F-86 pilot to transition more quickly and more effortlessly between individual manoeuvres. The lesson he drew was that the more rapid your decision-making process, the more likely you are to win.

Today's Australian Defence Force is very much in the game of increasing the speed of its decision-making processes, and Joint Capabilities Group has to help in delivering that.

Thank you.