

DEFENCE FORCE BOARD

Executive Summary

Defence chaplains are the Anglican Church's missionaries and must be strong enough to resist the pressure of the ministry context to compromise their message.

Ministry Context

The Defence Force is becoming more secular and pluralist. For example, in 2019 Defence appointed Buddhist, Sikh, Muslim and Hindu representatives to its highest level religious structure the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services. At the working level some chaplains from these religions are being appointed in what have traditionally been Christian chaplain's positions. In 2020 Navy introduced Maritime Spiritual Wellbeing Officers into their Chaplaincy Branch. They are charged to provide non-religious based "pastoral" care, and there is no requirement for them to be adherents of a faith group.

There is pressure for Chaplains to be more religiously inclusive and therefore, for example, not to publicly pray "in Jesus' name". Defence has reduced the administrative support it provided to Bishop to the Defence Force by 87.5%.

Despite the growing secularism and pluralism, Defence recognises and values the contribution of chaplains. It is looking for younger, more ethnically diverse chaplains and prioritises females. Christian chaplains will compete for places with chaplains of other faiths.

Defence Force Board Response

The Defence Force Board has responded strategically to this by:

- Funding and conducting strategic research on the use of chaplains in Defence and the views of Defence Force members about chaplains
- Growing a funding base to provide support staff for the Bishop's Office
- Seeking high quality young clergy who can demonstrate the value of chaplaincy and also become the Chaplaincy leaders of the future.
- The Bishop engaging with the senior decision makers in Defence.

Motions for General Synod

The following motions are for General Synod to consider:

- That General Synod thank God for the wonderful ministry of Anglican Defence Chaplains undertaken in the increasingly difficult climate of growing secularism and pluralism.
- That General Synod thank God for the privileged position and blessed opportunity to still have Christian chaplains living among and ministering to our Defence Force personnel.
- That General Synod notes the significant reduction in support for the Bishop provided by Defence and encourages each diocese to financially support Defence Chaplaincy by collecting a congregational donation each year on Defence Sunday (the Sunday before Remembrance Day).
- That General Synod affirms the importance of Anglican Defence Chaplaincy as a critical element of the Church's ministry, notes the benefits to the Church of partnering with Defence Chaplaincy in gospel ministry, notes the strategic importance of having high calibre younger women and men serve as chaplains, and therefore encourages each diocese to work with the Bishop to the Defence Force in recruiting them.

Defence Force Board Purpose

The Defence Force Board consults with, and provides advice to, the Bishop to the Defence Force. It is a resource available to the Primate, the bishops, the General Synod and the Standing Committee of General Synod on matters pertaining to the ministrations of the Anglican Church of Australia among Defence Force members and their families. It brings together a range of perspectives and knowledge to anticipate, define and recommend courses of action on emerging problems in an increasingly fluid secular and pluralistic environment. It is also responsible to General Synod for the sustainment and maintenance of the office of the Bishop to the Defence Force.

Defence Force Board Membership

The Defence Force Board met formally in 2017 (5), 2018 (4), 2019 (5: 2 + 3 teleconference), 2020 (6: 2 + 4 combination teleconference and in person); 2021 (5: 1 + 4 teleconference) and 2022 (1 prior to this report). Current membership of the Board is:

Ex officio

The Right Rev'd Grant Dibden (Chair) (since 2020)¹
 Principal Chaplain the Ven Andrew Lewis - Navy Archdeacon (since 2018)²
 Chaplain The Ven Glen Buijs - Army Archdeacon (since 2022)³
 Principal Air Chaplain the Ven Kevin Russell, CSC - Air Force Archdeacon

Clergy elected by General Synod

The Rev'd Andrew Nixon (Sydney) (Navy Reserve Chaplain) Honorary Secretary
 The Rev'd Catherine Wynn-Jones (Sydney) (since 2021)⁴ (Navy Clergy)
 Vacant since January 2022

Lay members elected by General Synod

A/Prof Megan Best (Sydney) (since 2020)⁵
 Mr Alan Gallimore RFD (Brisbane)
 Colonel Mark Francis (Rtd), RFD (Canberra and Goulburn) Honorary Treasurer

Structural Arrangements

Bishop to the Defence Force. The Bishop to the Defence Force is a full-time Anglican Church position appointed by and responsible to the Primate. The Bishop to the Defence Force is also a member, appointed by the Minister of Defence, of the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services. The Bishop currently serves as the Chair of this Committee (since 1 January 2022). Key tasks are:

- Episcopal oversight and pastoral care of Anglican chaplains serving in the Defence Force and of the ministrations of the church among men and women of the Defence Force and their families.
- Recruiting suitable people to represent our church as Defence Chaplains, endorsing them to Defence and recommending to the Primate their licencing as chaplains.

¹ The Right Rev'd Ian Lambert retired in October 2019

² Principal Chaplain the Ven Collin Acton stood down in 2017

³ Principal Chaplain the Ven Robert Sutherland, CSC - Army Archdeacon (2018-2021) was replaced by Chaplain the Ven Glenn Buijs on 1 Jan 2022

⁴ The Rev'd Tim Booker CSM (Sydney) (former Army Chaplain) resigned from the Defence Force Board on 21 Jul 21 and The Rev'd Catherine Wynn-Jones was appointed by Standing Committee to fill the casual vacancy

⁵ Mr Allan Sauer retired from the Defence Force Board after 30 years on 27 Jun 20 and A/Prof Best was appointed by Standing Committee to fill the casual vacancy

- Support chaplains transitioning back to civilian life and ministry.
- Provision of advice to the Defence Force on all matters of religious policy and practice as the direct link between Anglican Church of Australia and the Defence Force.
- Monitor content and appropriateness of ADF professional and pastoral education in conjunction with the heads of Navy, Army and Air Force chaplain branches.
- Dealing with Professional Standards matters relating to Defence Anglican chaplains.
- Communicate with the Defence Minister and Chief of the Defence Force as required.

Bishop to the Defence Force is funded as a Religious Advisory Committee to the Services Member by Defence (approximately 60% of remuneration package) the balance of the Bishop's package is provided by Defence Chaplains who through Defence Force Anglican Chaplains Incorporated contribute 0.9% p.a. of their salary (a portion of which pays approximately 40% of Bishop to the Defence Force package including housing). Administrative support had been provided by Defence supplemented by contributions from chaplains. The Defence Force Board supplements the remuneration package and administrative support as required (including for example Bishop to the Defence Force travel for Anglican non-Defence activities).

Chaplains. Defence appoints, directly employs and pays both full-time and part-time chaplains with The Royal Australian Navy, The Australian Army and The Royal Australian Air Force. Anglican Defence Chaplains must meet the Defence recruiting standards and be endorsed by the Bishop to the Defence Force (representing the Anglican Church of Australia) and licensed by the Primate.

Ministry Context

The environment of the Defence Force, like Australian society, is becoming increasingly questioning of Christianity and of Christian chaplaincy. Secularism has been growing and this has been reflected in Navy recently introducing Maritime Spiritual Wellbeing Officers in 2020. They are members of the Navy Chaplaincy Branch, are charged to provide non-religious based "pastoral" care, there is no requirement for them to be adherents of a faith group and they must possess a secular "care" qualification. It is also reflected in the National Secular Lobby conducting a campaign to shine "*a spotlight on religious privilege in our armed forces*"⁶.

Pluralism within the ADF is increasing. In 2019 Defence appointed Buddhist, Sikh, Muslim and Hindu representatives to the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services (its highest level religious structure) growing the membership to 10 people of which the Anglican Bishop to the Defence Force remains one.

At the working level Defence has recruited and appointed Muslim chaplains to work alongside the existing Christian and Jewish chaplains. Furthermore, there are Hindu and Buddhist chaplains currently in full-time Defence sponsored training. Navy is leading the charge and out of a total of 39 full time chaplains, they are actively seeking to recruit at least two Buddhist, one Muslim and over the next four years eight full time Maritime Spiritual Wellbeing Officers (MSWO), thus reducing the number of Christian chaplains.

⁶ <https://www.nsl.org.au/columns/navys-top-chaplain-excited-for-new-secular-roles/> accessed on 29 Jan 21

Despite the growing secularism and pluralism, Defence recognises and values the contribution of chaplains and is looking for more chaplains. Defence has, however, said that they are not looking for the chaplains of the past. Defence is looking for younger chaplains, more female chaplains, and chaplains from a greater ethnic spread to represent the increasing diversity of the ADF.

There is pressure for Chaplains to be more religiously inclusive and therefore, for example, not to publicly pray “in Jesus’ name”. Separately, the Navy has eliminated the position of denominational Principal Chaplain (most senior Chaplain), who was the Navy Anglican Archdeacon. This person provided a second layer of governance, including significant input to the Defence Force Board, and undertook considerable work in the recruiting area. The function has been replaced by a Faith Group Lead Chaplain of lower rank who is likely to be considerably less experienced, reducing support for the Bishop to the Defence Force. Army has recently followed suit and RAAF are reviewing their denominational Principal Chaplain position with a report due in the near future.

A far reaching review of the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services was undertaken by Defence in 2020. The outcome of the review was that the administrative support provided by Defence to Bishop to the Defence Force was cut by 65%. All support was centralised under the RACS Chair and the support to the Bishop was reduced further by Defence in early 2021 resulting in an effective cut of 87.5% from previous support levels.

There is also pressure on the Defence provided travel budget for Bishop to the Defence Force.

The current statistics for religious adherence in Defence are:

	Full Time	Part Time
Anglicans	11.1%	14.6%
No religion/atheist/not applicable	58.4%	47.3%
TOTAL People	60 516	24 097

Mission and Vision

In this ministry context Defence Anglicans⁷ mission and vision are:

Mission

To minister, proclaim and witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ within the ADF community

Vision

That all may know the reign of God (Matthew 28: 19; Colossians 1: 28). Under God we seek to serve the ADF community by:

Restoring the broken (Luke 4: 18)

Awakening people to God

Inviting the community into relationship with Jesus

Sustaining and nurturing them on their faith journey

Praying for the community

In all this we demonstrate the love of God.

⁷ Defence Anglicans is the pulling together of the Defence Force Board and the Defence Force Anglican Chaplaincy Incorporated to assist with alignment, focus and energy of the two organisations. It has no formal status or authority.

Strategic Goals and Initiatives

In order to fulfil this mission and vision, in 2020 the Bishop to the Defence Force instigated a review of the strategic planning via two Defence Anglican Strategic Planning Meetings between the Defence Force Anglican Chaplains Incorporated⁸ Committee and the Defence Force Board. These meetings determined these five common goals for Defence Anglicans:

- Engage and build partnerships with the broader Anglican Church of Australia.
- Support Defence as Anglicans ministering inside Defence.
- Provide strong and appropriate advocacy in Defence.
- Support and enhance the role of the Bishop to the Defence Force.
- Provide episcopal, governance and other support to chaplains.

As well as the key tasks of pastorally caring for Defence Chaplains and recruiting the right clergy for chaplaincy, several strategic initiatives commenced in 2020 flowing from the review:

- Surveying Defence personnel about their interactions with Chaplains to provide evidence that counters the Secular Lobby Campaign. To date a working group overseen by the Bishop and headed by A/Prof Best (Board Member and senior academic), with A/Prof LB Carey (RAAF Reserve Chaplain and senior academic), Rev'd M Layson (PhD Candidate) and Ms K Tunks-Leach (PhD Candidate) has been established. A worldwide literature review has been completed and published in a peer reviewed academic journal. The survey itself has been conducted and the results should be available in the near future and a second paper based on these results completed and published.
- Refreshment and upgrading of our Defence Anglicans website www.defenceanglicans.org.au The first stage (external) is complete and the internal (password protected) section has been developed and is currently being tested and data loaded.
- Growing the Defence Sunday appeal to support the Bishop to the Defence Force.
- Developing a Moral Injury Support course/program. This is schedule to begin in 2022 with a view to it being available to Defence members, veterans and the broader community. It will be focused on the spiritual aspects of moral injury.

The Defence Force Board will make their unique contributions to these goals and initiatives, as will Defence Force Anglican Chaplains Incorporated, as *together* we seek to pursue our mission and vision. Indeed, without the Defence Force Anglican Chaplaincy Incorporated there could be no full time Bishop, there would be even less administrative support and no ability to undertake SPHAS funded projects such as survey and academic paper mentioned above.

Ministry

Defence chaplains are the Anglican Church's missionaries, working directly with sailors, soldiers and aviators. It is critical, therefore, that clergy who become chaplains have a missionary mindset being clear that the imperative is to both live out and proclaim the gospel winsomely with gentleness and respect. Yet they must be strong enough to resist the pressure of the ministry context to compromise their message.

⁸ Defence Force Anglican Chaplains Incorporated have submitted their own report to General Synod

Chaplains do things which both point to the future of the world and bring the future into the present. So, every time they offer the forgiveness of God through Christ, they are bringing the future new creation into the present. Every time they show love, acceptance, grace, mercy and healing, indeed anytime they do anything in Jesus' name which contributes to human wholeness and thriving, they are actually participating in the mission of Christ and pointing to God's future.

The hallmarks of Anglican Chaplaincy are that chaplains are faith driven, gospel focused, people oriented and command responsive. Under God, they demonstrate His love by awakening people to Him, sustaining and nurturing them on their faith journey, and praying and caring for them. Chaplains provide unhurried, non-judgemental listening and bring the truths of Scripture to bear on all manner of practical issues Defence Force members and their families face. They are used of God to bring forgiveness and peace to troubled souls, reconciliation, and calm to broken relationships and stressful situations, hope to those in despair, practical support in difficult times, and comfort to those suffering loss or grief. They live out their faith looking for opportunities and taking those the Lord provides to share the good news as a key part of helping people deal with life issues. They disciple among people, the majority of whom do not follow Jesus, bringing spiritual, faith, and belief issues into pastoral work.

Staffing

Currently there are 91 Anglican clergy consisting of 40 Full time Anglican Defence Chaplains (there are 144 Full time Chaplain positions within Defence) 6 in full time training (parish placement) and 46 Reserve (Part Time) Anglican chaplains (there are 137 Part Time Chaplain positions). Anglicans are the biggest single denominational group.

	Navy		Army		RAAF	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Full Time	7	3	19	1	8	2
Reserve	6	1	26	2	9	2

The trainees are Navy – 1 male; Army 4 female and 1 male and no trainees for RAAF.

Chaplains continue to deploy with military personnel where they serve in Australia and overseas: currently there are ADF chaplains in several locations in the Middle East, Pacific, South-East Asia, and at sea. Often during the reporting period, three Anglican clergy have been deployed at one time on various operations overseas for periods of up to eight months. Many more have been away from home and parish, providing support during bushfires and COVID-19. This comes at great cost personally, spiritually, and psychologically.

Moral and spiritual injury are current issues of discussion in the ADF. Chaplains have been asked to contribute to the discussions and preparation of policy around Mental and Spiritual Health, character development and the response to the Afghanistan Inquiry.

Recruiting

With the increase in recognised Faith Groups comes an increase in competition for Chaplaincy positions. Clergy who are able to sit with people in darkness and to bring light and life and hope into the darkness make the best chaplains. Defence chaplains often work theologically from the other person's situation back to God rather than starting from a church or religious perspective. Defence chaplains have to live the gospel amongst many who have never heard the 'good news of salvation'. Many chaplain candidates who are unsuccessful are unable to meet the Defence medical or physical fitness or citizenship requirements.

Navy has an ongoing requirement for full-time Chaplains with a preference for people between 30 and 40, with a priority for women. There is a need for part-time Navy Chaplains in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Adelaide, Darwin and Cairns. If the sending Christian churches do not provide enough quality candidates, Navy will not hesitate to recruit other religious and secular (MSWO) chaplains.

For Army although there is always a need for full-time chaplains, the greatest need is part-time Army Reserve chaplains aged between 30 to 40, with a priority for women, particularly in Queensland, SA, WA and NT. Army is looking to strengthen relationships with local parishes.

RAAF has an ongoing requirement for both full-time and part-time Chaplains with a preference for people between 30 to 40, with a priority for women.

Opportunities and Benefits

There are many potential opportunities for the Anglican Church of Australia to grow in partnership in Christian ministry with Defence Chaplaincy. Investment by the National Church in high calibre younger chaplains can bring a tremendous benefit. They can influence the leaders they come in contact with who will not only lead the nation's defence force in the future, but will be leaders of government departments, politicians and company CEOs. They will also touch many ordinary Australians who would not normally attend church and some of them will become the heads of Defence Chaplaincy and have a great impact there. Defence Chaplaincy is a critical mission element in the ministry of the church.

In addition to these more intangible benefits, Defence Chaplaincy can benefit the local parishes by:

- Parishes or ministry units looking to engage an additional minister or employ a part-time minister might look to encouraging them to become part-time Defence chaplains (Defence pays quite well).
- Development of young priests through high quality leadership and pastoral skills training which they can use when they return to parish ministry.
- Fully immersing young priests in our secular society where they develop their skills in sharing a Christian world view winsomely and effectively which they can use when they return to parish ministry.
- Bringing Defence families into local churches that are compatible with sailors, soldiers and aviators and their families.

Finance

The funding by the Commonwealth for Anglican Chaplaincy support is in the order of \$7.5 million pa. A large sum that is indicative of the value that Defence places on Anglican chaplains. However, this pays for the salaries and on costs associated with the direct delivery of chaplaincy at the working level and does not cover the costs necessary for conducting Anglican ministry – oversight, administration, structure, discipline and such like. This is reflected in the reduction of Defence funding for administrative support to the Bishop to the Defence Force. Further, the Commonwealth does not (and should not) provide funds to achieve our Anglican strategic goals.

The Defence Force Board receives, and is most grateful for, an annual grant of approximately \$16 000 from the General Synod General Fund to help fund its operations. Noting the financial contribution of the Commonwealth, the return on investment of this \$16 000 by the Anglican Church of Australia to the Defence Force Board is astronomical in financial terms and we pray in kingdom terms too.

As mentioned above, Defence administrative support to the Bishop has decreased by 87.5%. This necessitated the employment of a part-time Staff Officer and a part-time Administrative Assistant. These appointments have been funded by the Defence Force Board and an increase in personal contributions from Defence chaplains on a 50/50 split between them and the Defence Force Board. The increase in Defence chaplains' personal contributions has been a burden for many, particularly for those with young families. The Defence Force Board's ability to fund these positions will be exhausted by around December 2023 if not before.

Consequently, there is a continued campaign centred on the celebration of Defence Sunday together with the Prayer Diary (new version to be released March/April). If every parish sought a \$10 per person donation on Defence Sunday each year that would go a long way to meeting the need.

Closing Remarks

By and large, the Chaplains do tremendous ministry bringing glory to God. They are charged with taking the gospel to the Defence community, and along with the significant number of active fellow Christians, carrying the presence of God, often into some very dark places such as to those affected by the Afghanistan Inquiry. It is not without cost to their families and to their own physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

The Defence Force Board commends the Chaplains and the Office of the Bishop to the Defence Force, to your prayers, and encourages the continued support of the National Church for this expanding mission field. We also seek your prayerful support that the Lord would continue to raise up young clergy for this mission role.

Motions for General Synod

The following motions are for General Synod to consider:

- That General Synod thank God for the wonderful ministry of Anglican Defence Chaplains undertaken in the increasingly difficult climate of growing secularism and pluralism.
- That General Synod thank God for the privileged position and blessed opportunity to still have Christian chaplains living among and ministering to our Defence Force personnel.
- That General Synod notes the significant reduction in support for the Bishop provided by Defence and encourages each diocese to financially support Defence Chaplaincy by collecting a congregational donation each year on Defence Sunday (the Sunday before Remembrance Day).
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Grant Dibden
Anglican Bishop to the Defence Force
On behalf of the Defence Force Board

24 February 2022