



PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

**MESSAGE: NEW SOUTH WALES LAUNCH OF RESERVE FORCES
DAY 2006**

I am delighted to provide this message for the launch of Reserve Forces Day 2006 and to commend the Reserve Forces Day Council for its commitment to raising the profile of the Navy, Army and Air Force Reserves. I note that the parades in New South Wales alone include the National Parade in Sydney as well as parades in Newcastle, Lismore, Tamworth and Dubbo.

Australia's Reserve Forces continue to provide invaluable support to Australian Defence Force operations and it is important that in 2006, Reserve Forces Day will pay special tribute to the overseas service of our reservists. These reservists undertake difficult tasks in dangerous situations and Australia is grateful for their contribution.

From their early beginnings as militia and volunteer units, reservists through their bravery and sacrifice, have consistently made a vital contribution to the defence and security of Australia and have written themselves into Australia's military history.

In recent years, reservists have served with distinction alongside their full-time counterparts in peace missions in East Timor and Bougainville, in operations in Solomon Islands, Afghanistan and Iraq as well as ensuring the security and success of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games and more recently the Commonwealth Games. Australian Defence Force Reservists have also demonstrated their commitment and professionalism through participation in humanitarian relief operations in Rwanda, Somalia and Pakistan.

The families and employers of our reservists should also be acknowledged as their support is essential for the ongoing success of the Reserve Forces.

I am pleased to note that the 2006 Reserve Day activities will also recognise the contribution of civilians who have volunteered to serve overseas, in many cases alongside our Australian Defence Force members. They too risk their own safety so they may provide help to those in need. Australia is indebted to these people and I thank them for their commitment.

In addition, the celebrations will acknowledge the 100th anniversary of the Australian Army Cadets and service in the Navy and Air Force Cadets; the 90th Anniversary of the Royal Australian Corps of Military Police and of the 41st Infantry Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment based in Northern NSW; and the 70th anniversary of Number 22 (City of Sydney) Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force.

I am sure I speak for all Australians in acknowledging our nation's debt to its Reserve Forces for their commitment and courage in continuing a long tradition of distinguished service. I wish all reservists and the Reserve Forces Day Council every success for Reserve Forces Day 2006.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'John Howard'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

(John Howard)