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**RELIGIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SERVICES
DEFENCE PEOPLE GROUP**

R1-1-C007, Department of Defence, CANBERRA ACT 2600

RACS MEMBER MEETING MINUTES 15 MAR 2023

1. The meeting was conducted via Zoom - online.

ITEM 1 – OPENING

2. The Chair opened the meeting at 0900 on Wed 15 Mar 2023.

ITEM 2 – WELCOME

3. The Chair welcomed those in attendance. Rabbi s47F joined the meeting at approximately 1030h. The devotion was provided by The Venerable s47F

(Enclosure 1).

	Present	
1.	The Right Reverend s47F	Chair (ANG)
2.	The Venerable s47F	(Buddhist)
3.	Imam s47F	(Islam)
4.	The Reverend s47F	(Pres)
5.	The Reverend s47F	(APCCB)
6.	Rabbi s47F	(Jewry)
7.	s47F	(Sikh)
8.	Monsignor s47F	(RC)
9.	Mr s47F	(Hindu)
10.	The Reverend s47F	(UCA)
11.	s47F	Secretariat, Staff Officer
12.	s47F	Secretariat, Policy
13.	s47F	Secretariat, Admin

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ITEM 3 – AGENDA CONFIRMATION AND RACS MEMBER UPDATES

4. The agenda as proposed was approved.
5. RACS members shared their updates on their activities since their last meeting.

ITEM 4 – CORRESPONDANCE

6. As tabled at the meeting.

ITEM 5 – MINUTES CONFIRMED

7. It was moved by Reverend s47F and seconded by Monsignor s47F that the Minutes of the RACS Members meeting held on 24-25 Oct 22 be confirmed.

Carried.

ITEM 6 - BUSINESS ARISING FROM RACS MINUTES (PREVIOUS)

8. The Chair led updates on the items and actions from the 24-25 Oct 22 meeting:
 - a. **Para 10 b: RACS Short videos supporting Defence Values. Ongoing.** Reverend s47F has finalised edits ready for DGDFR and subsequently shared these with RACS members.
ACTION: All members are to review the videos and provide any feedback to Reverend s47F by 12 April 2023 before versions are sent to DGDFR.
 - b. **Para 11 b: RACS Chair and CAPT s47F - delivery of mandatory training. Ongoing.** The Chair noted HPC's appreciation that training will be undertaken by RACS member at their May 2023 meeting.
ACTION: CAPT s47F to facilitate refined and tailored mandatory training at the May 2023 in-person RACS meeting.
 - c. **Para 11c: Review of Character and Ethics Development. Ongoing.** s47F updated members on the Character and Ethics Development in the ADF policy document.
ACTION: Chair to work with DGs to determine how/if RACS input to policy documents including those at the Services level would be beneficial.
 - d. **Para 11 f: KLE draft Paper for CJOPS consideration.** The Chair confirmed that CJOPS have received the KLE paper.
ACTION: The Secretariat is to seek clarity from CJOPS staff on how the KLE paper will be used or implemented.

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- e. **Para11 g: Multi Faith Engagement – Working Group for Multi – Faith Training School Briefings. Ongoing.** Members were notified that this work did not progress in a meaningful way.
ACTION: Working Group led by Monsignor s47F and Rabbi s47F to prepare paper for May RACS meeting.
- f. **Para 11h: Key Religious Dates and World Inter Faith Harmony Proposal for COFS/HPC consideration. Ongoing.** The Chair noted that he submitted the proposal and awaits a response.
ACTION: The Chair to follow up with HPC staff on the proposal.
- g. **Para 11 i: Development of Template to Populate RACS Member Accreditation and Endorsement Information for Each Chaplain Faith Group. Ongoing.**
- h. **ACTION:** s47F will dispatch an updated draft for completion by members by end Apr 2023.
- i. **Para 13: Management of RACS Days – Additional Days. Completed.** HPC has granted Iman s47F additional resources following a request from the Chair. The Chair has subsequently requested additional days for several other members as part of the final cross-leveling of RACS resources.
- j. **Para 15: Communications Strategy – Internal DPN Web Page Content Development. Ongoing**

ITEM 7–GENERAL BUSINESS

9. **Swearing in Ceremony – Sacred Text to Swear On.** The Chair led a discussion with members on the procedures to ‘swear in’ ADF members. It was noted that the Christian Bible is commonly available at Defence Force Recruiting for swearing in new ADF members however sacred texts or similar for other than Christian faiths are not.
ACTION: All members are to confirm with the Chair by 12 April 2023 what, if any, sacred text or texts they believe to be appropriate for use at swearing in ceremonies.
10. **Consecration of Colours Multi Faith Opening Statement.** The Chair introduced the proposed introductory paragraphs as an example of the language that could be used as a lead into to a Consecration of Colours service (Enclosure 2). It was explained that the intent was to further enhance the diversity and multi faith

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characteristics of Defence. There was a request for the traditions of the Colours Ceremony to be shared.

ACTION: Rev'd s47F to distribute a paper that provides a background of the Christian connection to the Consecration of Colours.

11. **2024 Faith Based Retreat Funding.** The Chair briefed on the constrained budgetary environment that Defence is operating within. Members were encouraged to consider how retreats could be facilitated more frugally in future years,.

12. **Cessation of RACS Appointments.** Imam s47F, Mr s47F and s47F RACS tenures conclude in Jan 2024. The chair encouraged them to take early steps with their faith group to ensure either an extension to their tenure as RACS members, or a replacement is nominated in a timely manner. Similarly, Monsignor s47F's tenure expires in June 2024. The Chair highlighted Defence's desire to increase the female representation on RACS following a letter to that effect from A/Dep DP. Planning is important noting that the Minister for Veteran's Affairs and Defence People is the decision maker and time is required to brief appropriately, including through HPC.

ACTION: RACS Members whose tenure expires in Jan 24 are to confirm with their Faith Groups whether they will be extended in their appointments or whether a replacement needs to be sought by the RACS Members meeting in May.

13. **CN Letter concerning DGCHAP-N Tenure.** The Chief of Navy (CN) has written to the RACS Chair seeking a recommendation from RACS on DGCHAP-N. All members were grateful for this engagement from CN.

ACTION: Letter to CN from RACS Chair

14. **Review of Draft Defence and Veteran Family Support Strategy.** The Chair updated members on a short notice task to review the Draft Defence and Veteran Family Support Document. An ad-hoc RACS subcommittee was formed and provided feedback.

15. **RACS Priorities Update.** Due to time constraints, the RACS priorities update will take place at the May 23 meeting.

ITEM 13 – ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

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17. The next RACS Members and RACS-DG meetings will be in-person over the period 17-19 May in Canberra.

s47F

**Right Reverend
Chair**

17 May 23

**LTCOL
Secretary**

17 May 23

Enclosures:

1. Devotion by The Venerable s47F
2. Multifaith introduction to Dedication of Colours

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**RELIGIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SERVICES
DEFENCE PEOPLE GROUP**

R1-1-C007, Department of Defence, CANBERRA ACT 2600

RACS MEMBER MEETING MINUTES 17 and 19 MAY 2023

1. The meeting was conducted at the Vibe Hotel Canberra

ITEM 1 – OPENING

2. The Acting Chair, Reverend s47F, opened the meeting at 1310 on 17 May 2023. The Right Reverend s47F assumed the Chair at 1515.

ITEM 2 – WELCOME

3. The Acting Chair welcomed those in attendance.

Present		
1.	The Right Reverend s47F	Chair (ANG)
2.	The Venerable s47F	(Buddhist)
3.	Imam s47F	(Islam)
4.	The Reverend s47F	(Pres)
5.	The Reverend s47F	(APCCB)
6.	s47F	(Sikh)
7.	Monsignor s47F	(RC)
8.	Mr s47F	(Hindu)
9.	The Reverend s47F	(UCA)
10.	s47F	Secretariat, Staff Officer
11.	s47F	Secretariat, Policy
12.	s47F	Secretariat, Admin
Apologies:		
	s47F	(Sikh)
	s47F	(Jewry)

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ITEM 3 – AGENDA CONFIRMATION AND RACS MEMBER UPDATES

4. The agenda as proposed was approved.
5. RACS members shared updates on their activities since their last meeting.

ITEM 4 – CORRESPONDANCE

6. Members acknowledged correspondence as tabled.

ITEM 5 – MINUTES CONFIRMED

7. It was moved by Reverend s47F and seconded by Reverend s47F that the Minutes of the RACS Members meeting held on 15 Mar 23 be confirmed. **Carried.**

ITEM 6 - BUSINESS ARISING FROM RACS MINUTES (PREVIOUS)

8. The Chair led updates on the items and actions from the 15 Mar 23 meeting:
 - a. **Para 8 a: RACS Short videos supporting Defence Values.** Following feedback on the videos from members, the RACS Chair wrote a letter to DGDFR with a link to the final versions on drop box inviting DFR to use the videos to support recruiting. One RACS member requested that their video not be provided to DFR.
ACTION: Secretariat to liaise with DFR and report back to members if the videos will be used and if they will be, how they will be used.
ACTION: Secretariat to provide members with the correspondence between the Chair and DGDFR regarding the RACS Member short videos. **Completed 17 May.**
 - b. **Para 8 b: RACS Chair and s47F - delivery of Mandatory Training.**
s47F outlined that a refined and tailored mandatory training session will occur for all members on 19 May 23
 - c. **Para 8 c: Review of Character and Ethics Development. Ongoing.** Members reaffirmed their interest in providing input, where appropriate, into ADF policy documents and welcomed the closer collaboration with DGCHAPs to facilitate this.
 - d. **Para 8 d: Key Leader Engagement (KLE) Paper for Chief of Joint Operations' (CJOPS) consideration.** RACS Secretariat sought clarity from CJOPS staff on how the KLE paper will be used or implemented. CJOPS staff have advised that KLE will be considered under the Theatre Engagement and Influence Framework (TEIF) and they see value in incorporating religious engagement within KLE planning.
 - e. **Para 8 e: Multi Faith Engagement – Working Group for Multi – Faith Training School Briefings. Ongoing.** Monsignor s47F advised that a paper had not yet

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been produced however provided a status update including how multifaith issues are being considered and what is relevant to commanders and members. Monsignor s47F informed members that this remained important and complex work. Members exchanged a range of views on how best to influence the culture at trainings schools to better embed multi-faith practices. It was also recognised that Defence had come a long way with regards to including multi-faith considerations into training schools, but more reform was needed, and that culture change is an ongoing process.

ACTION: Monsignor s47F is to coordinate and obtain from RACS Members any practical actions to better embed multifaith practices at training schools.

Imam s47F to collate this information to develop a broad guidance document for use and implementation at training schools. All actions to be completed by 1 August 2023.

- f. **Para 8 f: Key Religious Dates and World Inter Faith Harmony Proposal for Head People Capability (HPC) consideration. Ongoing.** RACS Chair briefed the meeting that he had followed up with COFS HPC and she had asked for 2024 dates. Members were provided a copy of the 2024 Faith Group ‘events of significance’ and requested to confirm the dates as soon as practical.
ACTION: Members to confirm with the Secretariat (s47F) that the dates for the 2024 ‘events of significance’ are correct as soon as practical.
- g. **Para 8 g: RACS Member Accreditation and Endorsement Template for Faith Group Chaplains. Ongoing.** s47F prepared and promulgated a draft of the template to all members ahead of the meeting. RACS members discussed the categorisations and noted that further discussions would take place with DG CHAPS at their 18 May 23 meeting.
- h. **Para 9: Swearing in Ceremony – Sacred Text to Swear On.** During April 23, RACS members provided details on what, if any, sacred text or texts they believe to be appropriate for use at swearing in ceremonies.
- i. **Para 10: Consecration of Colours Multi Faith Opening Statement.** Reverend Estherby has distributed a paper that provides a background of the Christian connection to the Consecration of Colours.
- j. **Para 12: Cessation of RACS Appointments. Ongoing.** RACS Members whose tenure expires in Jan 24 were requested to confirm with their Faith Groups whether

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their appointments will be extended or whether a replacement needs to be sought.

Venerable s47F advised that her tenure will be extended for approximately 2 years. Imam s47F advised that his faith group will soon provide correspondence on this matter as it relates to his appointment. s47F advised that his tenure will be extended.

ACTION: RACS Members whose current appointment concludes at the end of 2023 are to seek confirmation in writing through their Peak Faith Bodies that their tenure will be extended or that they are seeking a successor. The correspondence is to be sent to RACS Chair.

- k. **Para 13: Chief of Navy (CN) letter concerning DGCHAP-N tenure.** It was noted that the CN has confirmed that DGCHAP-N's tenure has been extended through a DEFGRAM.

ITEM 7–GENERAL BUSINESS

9. The following are General Business Items:

- a. **Review RACS Protocols.** The RACS Chair and Imam s47F updated members on the background and purpose on the Protocols. Members shared their own views on the protocols. It was noted the Protocols guide RACS to interact in a respectful manner. It was further noted that Protocols were unique to RACS as opposed to the Chaplains Accountability Statement which provides guidance to all chaplains.

ACTION: Venerable s47F to review the RACS Protocols and present any suggested re-drafting to the next RACS meeting for consideration.

- b. **RACS Moral Injury Familiarisation.** The Chair noted that Moral Injury remains a relevant and emerging discourse, including for the veteran community. A one-day familiarisation session can be facilitated for RACS members; next financial year on either 31 July 23 or 1 August 23 were identified as possible dates. Members indicated an interest in this familiarisation opportunity.

ACTION: Chair to confirm with MI coordinators when and where the MI Course will take place.

- c. **RACS Accountability Statement on Diversity, Inclusion and Respect.** The Chair and Reverend s47F updated members on their reflections of the Statement noting it has been in place for a year. Members exchanged views on how to ensure the

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document remains contemporary and how to interpret and reflect inclusivity in a meaningful way.

- d. **RACS Member attendance at Army Regional Seminars.** Members confirmed their intentions to participate in regional seminars as per the dates and locations tabled at the meeting.
ACTION: Secretariat to provide list to DGCHAP-A.
- e. **Notification process to DGs of RACS travel to Military bases.** RACS Chair requested that Members inform the Secretariat of their travel and engagement intentions so that the Secretariat can advise DGs as requested.
- f. **Faith Group engagement with Defence for external activities** –RACS Chair encouraged RACS Members to inform the Secretariat of any support they are seeking for external activities. The Secretariat can then assist if required.
- g. **Army Chaplaincy Insignia.** Members noted that this discussion will take place with DGCHAP Army at the 18 May 2023 joint meeting.

Day 1 (17 May 2023) of the RACS meeting closed at 1700.

Day 2 (19 May 2023) of the RACS meeting commenced at 0830.

ITEMS 1 and 2 – WELCOME and DEVOTIONAL

- 1. Day 2 of the RACS meeting commenced at 0830 on 19 May 2023. The Chair welcomed members, confirmed the agenda and invited Reverend s47F to provide a devotion.

ITEM 3 – RACS STRATEGIC PLAN FINANCIAL YEAR (FY) 2022/23 UPDATE

- 2. The Chair led a discussion and provided an overview of how RACS had performed against the twelve priorities for the current FY.
 - a. Priority 1. RACS is to contribute to ADF capability by delivering high quality and responsive care, religious advice and recruitment in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA). **Achieved; ongoing.**
 - b. Priority 2. Implement mentoring system for RACS members. **Achieved; ongoing.**
 - c. Priority 3. Review character and ethics development in the ADF. **Ongoing.**

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- d. Priority 4. Explore ways of delivering whole of life care in consultation with the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). **Achieved; ongoing.**
- e. Priority 5. Identify Australian Defence Force (ADF) policy that RACS could inject into in order to contribute to capability. **Progressing**: opportunities remain to better influence policy and doctrine. This Priority will be consolidated with Priority 3 into the future. **Ongoing.**
- f. Priority 6. Develop process for KLE by RACS members. **Achieved; ongoing.**
- g. Priority 7. Develop processes and material for Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh members allowing better engagement with their religious communities thereby enhancing recruitment opportunities. **Achieved; ongoing.**
- h. Priority 8. Identify and celebrate multi-faith events. **Achieved; consider transitioning this to a secretariat task.**
- i. Priority 9. Complete annual endorsement and accreditation of Chaplains. **Achieved; transition to a Business As Usual (BAU) task.**
- j. Priority 10. Complete quarterly metrics collection and brief HPC. **Achieved; transition to a BAU task.**
- k. Priority 11. Produce a high-quality annual report. **Achieved; transition to a BAU task.**
- l. Priority 12. Develop and utilise the Business Continuity Plan. **Achieved; transition to a BAU task.**

ITEM 4 – RACS STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR FY 2023/24

3. The Chair and s47F [REDACTED] facilitated a session to assist RACS consider the goals of their 2023/24 Strategic Plan. s47F [REDACTED] commenced the discussion by encouraging members to consider adopting a Mission Statement to accompany their existing Vision Statement. Members prepared a draft Mission Statement that s47F [REDACTED] captured and will promulgate as part of the final Strategic Plan for endorsement. Members also considered the RACS objectives and the possibility of reducing them from the current four to three. Similarly, s47F [REDACTED] will promulgate the revised draft objectives.

ACTION: s47F [REDACTED] will work with the Chair to prepare the 2023/24 Strategic Plan with a view to furnishing members with a draft before 30 June 2023.

4. It was also agreed that work on several elements of the plan should commence. These were:

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ACTION: Reverend §47F and **Reverend** §47F to draft a ‘value proposition’ paper for reflection by all Members at their next meeting.

ACTION: Reverend §47F, **Monsignor** §47F and **Reverend** §47F to draft a paper outlining the value of Chaplaincy Retreats for consideration by members and DGCHAPS at the next meeting.

ACTION: Venerable §47F and **Imam** §47F to prepare a short paper that defines ‘faith’, ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’ for reflection by all Members at their next meeting.

ITEM 5 – RACS ANNUAL TRAINING OVERVIEW

5. RACS members, except for Imam §47F, §47F and Rabbi §47F received annual mandatory training comprising of Security Awareness, Workplace Behaviours, Fraud and Integrity, Workplace Health and Safety, and Media and Freedom of Information (FoI) modules. §47F outlined that important ADF Suicide Awareness Training exists but will not be covered today as it must be given by appropriately qualified professionals who are familiar with the most up to date policies and procedures. All training was delivered by §47F with the exception of Media and FoI which was delivered by staff from the Ministerial and Executive Co-ordination and Communication Division (MECC), Department of Defence.

ITEM 6 – ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEXT MEETINGS

6. The next RACS Members meeting will take place virtually on 12 and 14 Sep 2023 commencing at 0900 and concluding by 1230.

7. 5-7 December 2023 (inclusive) was identified as the next in-person meeting dates. Imam §47F indicated that he will send a representative and Venerable §47F will need to confirm §47F attendance separately.

8. To assist planning, 4-6 March 2024 were identified as in-person meeting dates.

§47F

**Right Reverend
Chair**

14 Sep 23

§47F

**CAPT
Secretary**

14 Sep 23

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**RELIGIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SERVICES
DEFENCE PEOPLE GROUP**

R1-1-C007, Department of Defence, CANBERRA ACT 2600

RACS MEMBER AND DGs MEETING MINUTES 18 MAY 2023

1. The meeting was conducted at the Vibe Hotel Canberra

ITEM 1 – OPENING

2. The morning devotion was provided by PRIN Chaplain s47F (**Enclosure 1**).

ITEM 2 – CHAIR WELCOME

3. The Chair opened the meeting at 0830 and welcomed RACS Members and DGs.

Present		
1.	The Right Reverend s47F	Chair (ANG)
2.	The Venerable s47F	(Buddhist)
3.	Imam s47F	(Islam)
4.	The Reverend s47F	(Pres)
5.	s47F	(Sikh)
6.	Monsignor s47F	(RC)
7.	Mr s47F	(Hindu)
8.	The Reverend s47F	(UCA)
9.	The Reverend s47F	(APCCB)
10.	PCHA s47F	DGCHAP-N
11.	PRINCHAP s47F	DGCHAP-A
12.	PAC s47F	DGCHAP-AF
13.	s47F	Secretariat, Staff Officer
14.	s47F	Secretariat, Policy Officer
15.	s47F	Secretariat, Admin
Apologies:		
	s47F	(Sikh)
	Rabbi s47F	(Jewry)

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ITEM 3 –AGENDA

4. The agenda as proposed was approved.

ITEM 4 – MINUTES CONFIRMED

5. It was moved by Reverend s47F and seconded by Imam s47F that the 16 Mar 2023 Minutes of the RACS Members and DGs meeting minutes. Agreed.

ITEM 5 - CORRESPONDENCE

6. As tabled at the meeting

ITEM 6 – BUSINESS ARISING

7. The following business items arising from the RACS and DG meeting on 16 Mar 23 were raised:

a. **Para 6a: Retreat Details: Imam Abdo to provide Retreat details to DGCHAPs.**

Imam s47F advised that external sources of funding may be an option to fund an overseas pilgrimage. It was agreed that Imam s47F would continue discussions directly with relevant DGCHAPs regarding this matter.

- b. **Para 12e: Defence Force Recruiting (DFR) Interaction. Reverend s47F and DGCHAPs to identify updates to the Defence Jobs Website in consultation with DFR.** Ongoing. DG CHAP Army noted that the website is under review now. It was further noted that the DFR contract is scheduled to change mid-year, and this presents an opportunity to improve DFR's understanding of CHAP recruitment. Any DFR changes will not affect those candidates already in the recruitment pipeline.

ACTION: Reverend s47F to provide input via Australian Defence Force Chaplains Committee regarding suggested changes to the DFR website.

ACTION: Secretariat to invite the new DFR contractor to the in-person December meeting.

Secretariat to liaise with DFR to consider how the Defence Jobs website does not state there are no jobs available when there are chaplain vacancies, despite targets being met, and/or other service opportunities. Ongoing.: In an email response in Mar 23, DFR said “DFR are always recruiting Chaplains and will not plan on closing jobs – however, should a service/avenue of entry not have targets for a financial year, the Defence Jobs website will note that the job is not recruiting. DFR operate the same for all jobs where there are no targets for ab-initio recruitment. The

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Defence Jobs website is currently being overhauled, and a new platform will launch in June/July 2023. This means job pages for all jobs are being refreshed, including for Chaplains. This is where we will work with digital and brand teams to ensure language and information being communicated on the Chaplain job pages include improvements. Regarding permanent residents being considered for employment where specialist skillsets are required in the ADF, this is not a DFR decision.

- c. **Para 6 d: RACS Recruiting Responsibilities document - DGCHAPs review and feedback.** DGCHAPS indicated that they are satisfied with the document in general terms and noted that it was a guidance document for RACS. All members (RACS and DG CHAPS) discussed the current recruitment pathway and career continuum.
- e. **Para 15. Faith Group ADF Information Repository** §47F [REDACTED] to discuss as general business item.
- f. **Para 16. Consecration of Colours.** DGCHAP-A to provide the draft opening statement for the Consecration of Colours Ceremony to RSM Ceremonial for comment. Ongoing.

ITEM 7 – SERVICE and ADFCC REPORTS.

- 8. DGCHAP Navy, Army and Air Force briefly discussed their respective reports which were all taken as read. (Enclosure 2-4) These reports were provided to all members ahead of the meeting.
- 9. DGCHAP Air Force talking points regarding the ADFCC Report is enclosed (Enclosure 5). Separately, DGCHAP noted that a Voluntary Assisted Dying policy had been drafted by Joint Health Command. A short discussion ensued on this topic; members noted that the topic was sensitive and warranted further discussion.
ACTION: The Secretariat is to ensure the next RACS and DG CHAPS meeting agenda includes Voluntary Assisted Dying.

ITEM 8 – GENERAL BUSINESS

- 10. **Pastoral Care Trends. RACS Members / DGs CHAPS:** Members noted that 2023 has been a busier year than 2022 however morale and mental health remains satisfactory. However, members were conscious that mental health remains important including how ‘care for carers’ can be enhanced. Other challenges were raised

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including the impacts of unrestricted service and remaining resilient during the ongoing Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. The relationship between chaplains and command was highlighted as a positive.

11. **Recruiting Update - RACS Members and DGs.** Members agreed that this agenda item was sufficiently discussed under other items, including in the context of the Service and ADFCC reports.
12. **RACS FY 23/24 Priorities.** The RACS Chair provided an overview of the process to review the existing RACS priorities and to develop the Strategic Plan for 2023/24. §47F will be facilitating a planning session tomorrow (19 May 2023) for RACS members. DG CHAPS were afforded the opportunity to provide any input or feedback as appropriate to inform RACS priorities for 2023/24.
13. **Veterans Chaplaincy Pilot Program CHAP §47F** CHAP §47F updated the meeting on the status of the Program and highlighted developments since the last report. The Veteran's Chaplaincy Pilot Program website was launched and the Minister for Veteran's Affairs, Matt Keogh MP has been actively promoting the pilot via media releases. CHAP §47F noted that CHAP §47F has been appointed as the first chaplain to the Pilot Program and will focus on Western Australia. Expansion to Queensland is also underway including recruiting the next chaplain to Brisbane. It was raised that the Department of Veterans' Affairs requires RACS' endorsement of the Program's chaplains. CHAP §47F noted that a launch event will soon occur to support the Program in Western Australia and welcomes any contacts for Perth-based religious leaders. CHAP §47F reinforced that the Pilot Program is only funded until 30 June 2024 and confirmed that his best contact is via email §47F
14. **Faith Group Repositories - §47F** . §47F explained that he had rationalised resources held in the RACS Objective folder relating to multi-faith religion and practice in the ADF. An example template product had been developed with Imam §47F and the intent is to develop one of these for each Faith Group in the near future. Content for the resource is sourced from existing RACS material, resources held by the Australian Federal Police and at the Character Mentoring Cell, Australian Defence Force Academy. The focus of the resource is to provide guidance for supervisors and commanders - not chaplains. RACS members were encouraged to review their templates, when provided. It was noted that a Christian template had not yet been developed.

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ACTION: RACS and DG CHAPS to provide feedback on the template.

15. **MAJ GEN Wade Stothart DSC, AM, CSC, Head People Capability (HPC)**

Address

- a. Thanked RACS and DG CHAPS for continuing to support Defence which remains busy with over 1000 personnel on operations.
- b. The Asia Pacific, including the Southwest Pacific is a focus in support of the Government's 'Pacific Step-up' initiatives; capacity building remains important.
- c. Across Defence there are 'two speeds' with some parts of workforce very keen for more opportunities and others heavily worked; the challenge is to balance the whole force.
- d. On recruitment and retention, the ADF is short approximately 3000 people and the Department of Defence public service is short approximately 600 officials. The ADF has low recruitment and high separation rates and therefore there is work underway on the ADF's value proposition narrative.
- e. The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide continues in Perth and is shining a light on important issues.
- f. The unclassified version of the Defence Strategic Review has been released and a 3-star position will be appointed to reform the workforce. This is important work that needs to be undertaken in a planned manner. The force is becoming more complex with five warfighting domains now established: maritime, land and air being joined by cyber and space operations.
- g. HPC rehearsed the four principles that underpin Defence chaplaincy; these are appropriate and noted that 'Chaplains are integral to defence capability.' Integrity remains important given chaplains and Maritime Spiritual Wellbeing Officers must be the most trusted in an already high trust organisation.

16. HPC and members exchanged a range of questions and views. On accountability, HPC noted that he had been given extra resources to assist the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide; he is hopeful that the Royal Commission will help Defence better manage suicide. In response to a question on how RACS can demonstrate capability, HPC noted that he is witnessing RACS capability via quarterly reporting and chaplaincy more broadly is demonstrating capability on the ground via the services. HPC encouraged RACS and chaplains to continue looking

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for opportunities and noted that it is better to seek change than to 'be changed'. Many members noted that RACS is in a consolidation phase after some years of reform and are looking forward to identifying and implementing new priorities.

17. **Women in Chaplaincy update:** CHAP s47F CHAP s47F updated members on the numbers of women in chaplaincy – both fulltime and part time. More work is required but some of the trends are positive, namely in Army. RACS and DGs were thanked for assisting in changing the culture which has improved compared to five years ago. Owing to the tight budget conditions, innovative approaches to enhancing the conversation on women in chaplaincy are being considered. This includes regional-based events to hear about the opportunities and barriers to recruiting chaplains, and women into Defence more broadly. RACS input in this is welcome with some members noting that Sydney, Melbourne and Perth have active groups that could be leveraged. DGCHAPs, and RACS Members together with CHAP s47F exchanged views on 'what does success look like' in terms of recruitment numbers. The need to improve attitudes and numbers were acknowledged as important by some participants.
18. **Annual Endorsement of Chaplains - RACS Chair.** The RACS Chair led a discussion on the categories needed to demonstrate the annual endorsement of chaplains. DG CHAPS noted that PMKeyS could be a tool to assist facilitate retrieving some information on the endorsement process such as WWVP/C. Members also noted that some of the categories will differ for faith groups and that jurisdictions also have different requirements. The Chair reiterated that it was important that RACS members were in a position to endorse their chaplains annually.
19. **Swearing in on Sacred Texts - RACS Chair.** The Chair updated attendees on the agreed list of sacred texts. The Christian text will be added, and the list provided to HPC.
ACTION: RACS Chair to write letter to HPC on Sacred texts.

ITEM 8 – AD460s PRESENTED. The Secretariat presented the latest list of AD460 nominations.

- a. s47F

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s47F



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ITEM 9 – ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

20. The next virtual RACS Members and DGs meetings is planned for 12 Sep 23.
21. 5-7 Dec 2023 was identified as the window for the next in-person meeting in Sydney
22. To assist planning, 4-6 Mar 24 was identified as the window for a 2024 in-person meeting.

s47F

**Right Reverend
Chair**

12 Sep 23

[Redacted]

**LTCOL
SO RACS Ops**

12 Sep 23

Enclosure:

1. Summary of Devotion by PRIN CHAP s47F
2. DGCHAP-N Service Report
3. DGCHAP-A Service Report
4. DGCHAP-AF Service Report
5. ADFCC Chair Talking points

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**RELIGIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SERVICES
DEFENCE PEOPLE GROUP**

R1-1-C007, Department of Defence, CANBERRA ACT 2600

RACS MEMBER AND DGs MEETING MINUTES 12 SEP 2023

1. The meeting was conducted virtually.

ITEM 1 – OPENING

2. The morning devotion was provided by Monsignor s47F .

ITEM 2 – CHAIR WELCOME

3. The Chair opened the meeting at 0900 and welcomed RACS Members and DGs.

	Present	
1.	The Right Reverend s47F	Chair (ANG)
2.	The Venerable s47F	(Buddhist)
3.	Imam s47F	(Islam)
4.	The Reverend s47F	(Pres)
5.	Monsignor s47F	(RC)
6.	Mr s47F	(Hindu)
7.	The Reverend s47F	(UCA)
8.	Rabbi s47F	(Jewry)
9.	PCHA s47F	DGCHAP-N
10.	PAC s47F	DGCHAP-AF
11.	s47F	Representing the office of DGCHAP-A
12.	CHAP s47F	Chair, Women in Chaplaincy (item 8)
13.	CDRE Jan Wiltshire	DG DFR (item 9)
14.	s47F	Secretariat, Staff Officer
15.	s47F	Secretariat, Admin
16.	s47F	Secretariat, Recruitment
	Apologies:	
	PRINCHAP s47F	DGCHAP-A
	The Reverend s47F	(APCCB)
	s47F	(Sikh)

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ITEM 3 –AGENDA AND MINUTES

4. The agenda as proposed was approved.
5. It was moved by the Chair and seconded by Reverend s47F that the 18 May 2023 Minutes of the RACS Members and DGs are true and accurate. **Carried.**

ITEM 4 - CORRESPONDENCE

6. All present noted the correspondence as tabled.

ITEM 5 – BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

7. The following business items arising from the RACS and DG meeting on 18 May 23 were raised:
 - a. **Para 7b.** Reverend s47F to provide input via Australian Defence Force Chaplains Committee regarding suggested changes to the DFR website. **Ongoing.** It was noted that DG DFR would address the meeting in agenda item 9.
 - b. **Para 7b.** Secretariat to invite the new DFR contractor to the in-person December meeting. **Completed.**
 - c. **Para 16.** DGCHAP-A to provide the draft opening statement for the Consecration of Colours Ceremony to RSM Ceremonial for comment. **Taken on notice** by s47F on behalf of DGCHAP-A.
 - d. **ACTION:** Secretariat to include this item on the December 2023 meeting agenda.
 - e. **Para 14.** RACS and DG CHAPS to provide feedback on the template faith group repository. **Completed.** It was noted that extant documents exist including Faith and Belief: A Guide to Religious Practice in the ADF to fulfil this task.
 - f. **Para 19.** RACS Chair to write letter to HMP on Sacred texts. **Completed.** The Chair conveyed that legislative changes are required given the current reference to ‘God’ does not align with some faiths that have multiple Gods such as the Hindu faith. Jewish and Muslim faiths are satisfied with the current legislation. It was noted that an affirmation can also be taken.
 - g. **Para 9:** The Secretariat is to ensure the next RACS and DG CHAPS meeting agenda includes Voluntary Assisted Dying. **Completed.**

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ITEM 6 – SERVICE and ADFCC REPORTS.

8. **Navy Report.** (Enclosure 1) DGCHAP Navy report was taken as read and some areas were highlighted. In addition to the tabled Navy report, DGCHAP-N noted that work was underway on a s47E(d) document that would be applicable to all Navy chaplains. A short discussion between members and DGCHAP-N on Professional Supervision noted there are mandatory requirements for this and efforts to ensure compliance of Navy chaplains is being led by DGCHAP-N.
9. **Army Report.** (Enclosure 2) s47F advised that DGCHAP-A had taken ill at short notice. s47F briefly summarised the Army Report and noted that the Administration Instruction for the Annual Retreats had just been promulgated.
10. **Air Force Report.** (Enclosure 3) The Air Force chaplaincy review Implementation team have implemented s47E(d) AFRCR report recommendations. GPCAPT s47F s47F has commenced as the COS of Air Force Chaplaincy Branch.
11. **ADFCC Report.** (Enclosure 4) Chair ADFCC noted the Defence Strategic Review provides important guidance for future chaplaincy capability, and separately encouraged RACS members to continue 'checking-in' with their chaplains. A CDF Decision brief has been raised to support ADF Women in Chaplaincy conference.

ITEM 7 – GENERAL BUSINESS.

12. **Women in Chaplaincy.** CHAP s47F summarised her tabled report and highlighted the focus of better understanding how to motivate and incentivise female candidates to apply for chaplaincy. CHAP s47F also noted the importance of conducting a Women in Chaplaincy Conference. Meeting participants supported funding for the Women in Chaplaincy Conference and noted that mentoring female chaplains was important.
13. **Defence Force Recruiting Presentation and questions.** CDRE Wiltshire, DGDFR delivered her enclosed presentation. CDRE Wiltshire provided contemporary insights into the strategic landscape of recruiting, including in the context of the Defence Strategic Review and broader employment challenges facing Australia. Updates were provided on the key elements of current recruiting efforts, including in remote and regional areas, an update to branding via ADF Careers (rather than single service branding) and the change of recruiting services to the new contractor Addecco

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- Australia (commenced 1 July 2023). CDRE Wiltshire highlighted efforts to reduce the recruiting timeframes and gave a snapshot of chaplain recruitment for the current and former financial year.
14. Meeting participants raised a range of recruiting matters with CDRE Wiltshire including how best to share candidate information outside of the Defence Protected Network; CDRE Wiltshire took this on notice. CDRE Wiltshire noted the high quality of the RACS' short videos and has commenced action to obtain consent from those who appear in the videos which will allow them to be made public.
ACTION: Secretariat to obtain consent forms from DFR and subsequently authorisations from RACS Members for the short videos to be used by DFR
 15. **Recruiting Priority Updates.** RACS members and DG CHAPS had a general discussion on the best way to engage on recruitment and facilitate queries. DG CHAPS confirmed their points of contact for recruitment matters. DGCHAPs noted that their individual service reports contained current information on recruitment efforts and priority locations.
ACTION: CHAP s47F [REDACTED] to promulgate DGCHAP's recruitment contacts to RACS members.
 16. **Army Chaplaincy Credentialing.** Postponed in DGCHAP-A's absence.
 17. **Expectations for Chaplaincy Candidates.** The Chair led a discussion on candidacy with input from the DGCHAPs. The In-Service Training Scheme for Defence Chaplaincy was raised, and it was noted that RACS members should be mindful of current serving members' s47E(d) [REDACTED] which are s47E(d) [REDACTED].
 18. **Faith group annual retreats.** All were in agreement concerning the importance of the Annual Retreats and DGCHAPs noted the constrained budgetary environment. The DGCHAPs confirmed that chaplains who are undertaking personal retreats must do so ahead of the end of the current financial year.
 19. **Pastoral care updates.** RACS and DGCHAPS shared their personal pastoral care observations since May 2023. Members and DGCHAPS noted that chaplains continue to be involved in a range of issues with many managing themselves well and others experiencing some challenges. The Regional Seminars provided useful insights on chaplaincy for RACS members including the impressive rate of effort sustained by chaplains. It was noted that some chaplains were 'tired' but have excelled in challenging environments including at the recent Talisman Sabre

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exercise, including involvement following the tragic helicopter accident. It was noted that a Buddhist member had their initial experience on a ship and dealt with several pastoral care matters.

20. **Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD).** RACS have provided feedback on the draft VAD policy document. A range of views were shared amongst meeting participants with many noting that VAD is a very complex issue that does not align with the beliefs of some faith group members. Training for chaplains on VAD would be beneficial. DGCHAPs acknowledged this and will consider training needs. DGCHAPs also encouraged RACS to provide DGCHAPs with any relevant VAD policies. It was noted that while chaplains may have some involvement in VAD processes this is likely to be uncommon and mechanisms like the Individual Welfare Board will continue to be a more common avenue to provide members with assistance and support.

ACTION: RACS to provide any faith group VAD policies to DGCHAPs.

ACTION: DGCHAPs to advise RACS of training to be provided to Chaplains.

ITEM 8 – ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

21. The next RACS Members and DGs meeting will take place in person in Sydney (Victoria Barracks) on 7 December 2023. Further details will be provided by the secretariat.

s47F

**Right Reverend
Chair**

07 Dec 23

**CAPT
Admin Officer**

07 Dec 23

Enclosures:

1. Navy Service Report
2. Army Service Report
3. Air Force Service Report
4. ADFCC Report

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**RELIGIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SERVICES
DEFENCE PEOPLE GROUP**

R1-1-C007, Department of Defence, CANBERRA ACT 2600

RACS MEMBER MEETING MINUTES 14 SEP 2023

1. The meeting was conducted virtually.

ITEM 1 – OPENING

2. The morning devotion was provided by Reverend s47F (Enclosure 1).

ITEM 2 – WELCOME

3. The Chair opened the meeting at 0900 and welcomed those in attendance.

Present		
1.	The Right Reverend s47F	Chair (ANG)
2.	The Venerable s47F	(Buddhist)
3.	Imam s47F	(Islam)
4.	The Reverend s47F	(Pres)
5.	Rabbi s47F	(Jewry)
6.	s47F	(Sikh)
7.	Monsignor s47F	(RC)
8.	Mr s47F	(Hindu)
9.	The Reverend s47F	(UCA)
10.	Rabbi s47F	(Jewry)
11.	LTCOL s47F	Secretariat, Staff Officer
12.	s47F	Secretariat, Admin
Apologies		
	The Reverend s47F	(APCCB)

ITEM 3 – AGENDA CONFIRMATION AND RACS MEMBER UPDATES

4. The agenda as proposed was approved.

5. RACS members shared updates on their activities since their last meeting.

ITEM 4 – CORRESPONDANCE

6. Members acknowledged correspondence as tabled.

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ITEM 5 – MINUTES CONFIRMED

7. It was moved by the Chair and seconded by Reverend §47F that the Minutes of the RACS Members meeting held on 17 and 19 May 23 are a true and accurate record.
Carried.

ITEM 6 - BUSINESS ARISING FROM RACS MINUTES (PREVIOUS)

8. The Chair led updates on the items and actions from the 17 and 19 May 23 meeting:
- a. **Para 8a.** Secretariat to provide members with the correspondence between the Chair and DGDFR regarding the RACS Member short videos. **Completed.**
 - b. **Para 8a.** Secretariat to liaise with DFR and report to members if the videos will be used, and if they will be, how they will be used. **Ongoing.** The secretariat confirmed that DFR has the videos, and that authorisation is required from any individual appearing in the production. DFR has not yet confirmed how the videos will be used.
 - c. **Para 8e.** Coordinate and obtain from RACS Members any practical actions to better embed multi-faith practices at training schools. **Ongoing.**

ACTION: Monsignor §47F to coordinate and obtain from RACS Members any practical multi-faith information that could be applied at training schools.

- d. **Para 8e.** Collate multi-faith practices information to develop a broad guidance document for use and implementation at training schools - Imam §47F . **Completed.**

Monsignor §47F advised that sound guidance *Faith and Belief: A Guide to Religious Practice in the ADF* already fulfils this requirement.

ACTION: Monsignor §47F will re-circulate documents referred to in para 8.d. above to RACS members.

- e. **Para 8f.** RACS Members to confirm with the Secretariat that the dates for the 2024 ‘events of significance’ are correct as soon as practical. **Completed.** A short discussion ensued regarding the feasibility of including key religious or faith group events in the Defence diary.

ACTION: The Secretariat is to liaise with relevant stakeholders to check the feasibility of including key religious or faith events in the Defence Diary.

- h. **Para 8j.** RACS Members whose current appointment concludes at the end of 2023 are to seek confirmation in writing through their Peak Faith Bodies that their tenure will be extended or that they are seeking a successor. The correspondence is to be

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sent to RACS Chair – Imam §47F The Venerable §47F, Mr §47F §47F (due to ill health). Faith Group letters have been received and MINSUBs are being raised. **Ongoing**. The Chair explained that he had received guidance on this matter and will communicate directly with relevant RACS members.

- g. **Para 9a. The Venerable §47F** is to review the RACS Protocols and present any suggested re-drafting to the next RACS meeting for consideration. (General Business Item 11). **Ongoing**. Considered at item 11 of this meeting.
- h. **Para 9b. Chair** to confirm with Moral Injury (MI) course coordinators when and where the MI Course will take place. **Completed**.
- i. **Para 9d. Secretariat** to provide DGCHAP-A a list of RACS Members attendance at Army Regional Seminars. **Completed**.
- j. **Para 3. §47F** will work with the Chair to prepare the 2023/24 Strategic Plan with a view to furnishing members with a draft before 30 June 2023. (General Business item 8). **Completed**.
- k. **Para 4. Reverend §47F and Reverend §47F** to draft a ‘value proposition’ paper for reflection by members at their next meeting. **Completed**. Draft to be considered at item 12 in General Business.
- l. **Para 4. Reverend §47F, Monsignor §47F and Reverend §47F** to draft a paper outlining the Value of Chaplaincy Retreats for consideration by members and DGCHAPS at the next meeting. **Completed**. Draft to be considered at item 13 of General Business.
- m. **Para 5 - Venerable §47F and Imam §47F** to prepare a short paper that defines ‘faith’, ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’ for reflection by all Members at their next meeting. **Ongoing**. Considered at item 14 of this meeting.

ITEM 7–GENERAL BUSINES

- 9. **2023/2024 RACS Strategic Plan**. Members confirmed that the Strategic Plan is ready to be formalised pending an amendment to the last sentence of the Mission Statement so that it reads: “Further, it is a leading authority for multi-faith operations...”

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ACTION: Reverend §47F to amend the Strategic Plan’s Mission statement to read: “Further, it is a leading authority for multi-faith operations...”

10. **RACS Protocol Review.** Venerable §47F led a discussion on the RACS Protocols. Members noted that it was timely to conduct a short review and welcomed and agreed Venerable §47F proposed edits to add the qualifier ‘seek to’ for protocols 2-6 inclusive. Members also agreed that further consideration was needed on a protocol addressing conflict resolution.

ACTION: Venerable §47F to bring a conflict resolution protocol proposal to the December 2023 RACS meeting.

11. **Draft RACS Value Proposition paper.** Reverend §47F presented a draft paper and facilitated a discussion amongst members. It was agreed that a value proposition should emphasise the multi-faith benefits that RACS brings to capability and RACS’ ‘independence’, be concise in nature, and conscious of the audience.

ACTION: The Value Proposition Working Group will consider feedback and will bring edits to the December 2023 meeting.

12. **Value of Chaplaincy Retreats draft paper.** Reverend §47F provided highlights of the draft paper that was circulated ahead of the meeting. Members shared their own reflections with some noting that the pandemic proved a difficult time for chaplains who could not congregate. Others noted that retreats had three core functions: they help chaplains’ mental fitness, provide spiritual reinvigoration and is an opportunity for pastoral care.

ACTION: The retreat working group will consider feedback and bring edits to the December 2023 meeting ahead of circulating to DGCHAPS.

13. **Faith, Religion and Spirituality draft paper.** Imam §47F noted that there is much existing literature on how to define faith, religion and spirituality and referenced some of the papers that he shared with members ahead of the meeting. Members agreed that there remains some value in preparing a concise document that provides perspectives on these three important discourses.

ACTION: Venerable §47F and Imam §47F will develop a short paper on faith, religion and spirituality and provide to members at their December 2023 meeting.

14. **ADF transparency on ethical failures in Afghanistan.** Rabbi §47F introduced the issue to members including the reflections that he shared in preparation for the meeting. He noted that this was a sensitive issue, remains a live topic and that RACS

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may have a role or responsibility to provide ethical views. It was agreed that there may be value in preparing a short piece on the role of RACS as it relates to providing advice or views on ethics. Some members reflected that ethics training may also be appropriate. It was noted that DGCHAPs control chaplains' training.

ACTION: Rabbi s47F is to lead the drafting of a paper for the next RACS meeting that outlines the rationale and possible role of RACS in providing views and advice on ethics; all members were encouraged to provide input.

ACTION: Reverend s47F are to contact the Chaplains College to understand if ethics training is contained within the current curriculum.

ACTION: The Chair and Imam s47F to consider next steps regarding ethics training.

15. **Tracking against the Strategic Plan Priorities.** The Chair noted that it was timely to undertake a brief audit of the RACS' priorities ahead of annual report preparations. The following status was confirmed:

a. **Priority 1: Prepare a value proposition for RACS.**

ACTION: Reverends s47F and s47F to draft value proposition.

b. **Priority 2: Contribute to KLE between ADF command and domestic and operational stakeholders.** Completed.

c. **Priority 3: Continue to develop materials for Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Sikh members enhancing community engagement and recruiting opportunities and distribute within Defence:** Overtaken by events with Faith and Belief in the ADF.

d. **Priority 4: Continue to enhance ADF culture by advocating for the celebration of multi-faith events.** Dates of significance for 2024 confirmed.

Chair has engaged with Assistant Secretary Culture and People Development who is supportive of DEFGRAMS and articles in Service Newspapers.

ACTION RACS Members to provide articles to support 2024 dates.

e. **Priority 5: Brief Senior leaders on the efficacy and impact of religious chaplaincy across the ADF.**

ACTION: Chair to brief on efficacy and impact of religious chaplaincy.

f. **Priority 6: Support DVA in providing lifetime wellbeing to Veterans through Chaplaincy.**

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ACTION: Chair to continue support DVA provide veterans via chaplaincy capabilities.

- g. **Priority 7: Develop strategy for supporting chaplains transitioning.**
- h. **ACTION:** Reverend s47F and Monsignor s47F to present a draft strategy to the Dec 2023 RACS meeting.

- i. **Priority 8: Positively contribute to character and ethics development in the ADF.**

ACTION: Chair, Rabbi s47F, Reverend s47F to progress consistent with para 15 of these minutes.

- j. **Priority 9: Identify ADF policy and doctrine that RACS could inject into in order to contribute to capability.**

ACTION: RACS Secretariat to progress.

- k. **Priority 10: Conduct an audit of current panels and committees that consider multicultural for a that relate to care, well-being and spiritual support and input into them as appropriate in order to be a trusted and valued voice to defence Committees.**

ACTION: RACS Secretariat to conduct initial research and present to the Dec RACS meeting.

- l. **Priority 11: Develop a shared understanding of the terms faith, religion, and spirituality within the context of the ADF.**

ACTION: Venerable s47F and Imam s47F will develop a short paper on faith, religion and spirituality and provide to members at their Dec 2023 meeting.

- 16. **Process to select RACS Chair.** Following a short discussion, it was agreed that the Secretariat would seek expressions of interest for the position of RACS Chair commencing Jan 2024.

ACTION: The Secretariat is to seek expressions of interest from members for the position of Chair ahead of the December 2023 RACS meeting.

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ITEM 8 – ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

17. The next RACS Members meeting will take place in person in Sydney (Victoria Barracks) on 5-6 December 2023. Further details will be provided by the secretariat.
18. Imam s47F requested that the Secretariat provide an online option for his attendance.
ACTION: The Secretariat to provide Imam s47F with an online attendance option to facilitate his attendance at the December meeting.

s47F
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Chair

05 Dec 2023

Enclosure:

1. Summary of Devotion by Reverend s47F [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

**CAPT
Admin Officer**

05 Dec 23

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**RELIGIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SERVICES
DEFENCE PEOPLE GROUP**

R1-1-C007, Department of Defence, CANBERRA ACT 2600

RACS MEMBER MEETING MINUTES 5-6 DEC 2023

1. The meeting was conducted at Victoria Barracks Sydney.

ITEM 1 – OPENING

2. RACS Chair, The Right Reverend s47F [REDACTED], opened the meeting at 1315 on 05 Dec 2023. Mr s47F [REDACTED] provided the devotion (enclosure 1).

ITEM 2 – CHAIR WELCOME

3. RACS Chair welcomed those in attendance.

Attendees		
Members		
1.	The Right Reverend s47F [REDACTED]	Chair (ANG)
2.	The Venerable s47F [REDACTED]	(Buddhist)
3.	The Reverend s47F [REDACTED]	(Pres)
4.	The Reverend s47F [REDACTED]	(APCCB)
5.	Rabbi s47F [REDACTED]	(Jewry)
6.	s47F [REDACTED] (virtual)	(Sikh)
7.	Monsignor s47F [REDACTED]	(RC)
8.	Mr s47F [REDACTED]	(Hindu)
9.	The Reverend s47F [REDACTED]	(UCA)
10.	Imam s47F [REDACTED] – (5 Dec only, virtual)	(Islam)
Guests		
11.	CHAP s47F [REDACTED] – (present for item 5 only)	Chair, Women in Chaplaincy
Secretariat support		
12.	s47F [REDACTED]	Secretariat, Staff Officer
13.	s47F [REDACTED]	Secretariat, Admin Officer
14.	Mr s47F [REDACTED]	Admin Officer, Advisory Bodies Support, Defence People Group.
Apologies		
	s47F [REDACTED]	(Sikh)

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Imam s47F – 6 Dec.	(Islam)
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ITEM 3 – AGENDA AND RACS MEMBER UPDATES

4. The agenda as proposed was approved.
5. RACS members shared individual updates on their activities since their last meeting. Several RACS Members reflected on current world events expressing their Pastoral Concern for all involved. Rev'd s47F made special note of the passing of former RACS member serving on behalf of the Uniting Church, Rev'd s47F an obituary is enclosed.

ITEM 4 – CORRESPONDANCE

6. Members acknowledged correspondence as tabled.

ITEM 5 – WOMEN IN CHAPLAINCY UPDATE

7. CHAP s47F welcomed RACS members to Victoria Barracks Sydney and took her report as read. She highlighted that female numbers were healthy but there were some gaps including at the Royal Military College and that Navy was contending with retirements. An exchange of views ensued on innovative ways to consider gender retention and recruitment attractiveness.

ITEM 6 – MINUTES CONFIRMED

8. It was moved by Monsignor s47F and seconded by Rabbi s47F that the Minutes of the RACS Members meeting held on 14 Sep 23 be confirmed. **Carried.**

ITEM 7 - BUSINESS ARISING FROM RACS MINUTES (PREVIOUS)

9. The Chair led updates on the items and actions from the 14 Sep 23 meeting:
 - a. Para. 8a - Secretariat to provide members with the correspondence between the Chair and DGDFR regarding the RACS Member short videos. The Chair explained that there were issues with the authorisation template as they were not tailored for non-ADF members. Rev'd s47F noted that the videos were now becoming dated and that issues with Defence not compressing the files to allow them to be uploaded to the Defence Protected Network was further hindering the original intent. Rev'd s47F subsequently furnished all members with a 'consent and release form' that all relevant members signed.

ACTION: The Secretariat to send the signed consent and release forms to Defence Force Recruiting in Jan 24.

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b. Para 8d. Monsignor §47F to re-circulate Faith and Belief: A Guide to Religious practice in the ADF to RACS members. **COMPLETED**. No further reporting required.

c. Para 8f. The Secretariat is to liaise with relevant stakeholders to check the feasibility of including key religious or faith events in the Defence Diary. It was noted that the diary 2024 cut-off has passed. To avoid missing the 2025 diary members are to confirm dates as soon as practical. The Chair noted that as per discussions at the Sep 23 RACS meeting, Defence is supportive of RACS members providing articles that can be used in different media such as the Service Newspapers; the secretariat will provide drafting guidance.

ACTION: Members are to send their dates for 2025 as soon as practical to the Secretariat.

ACTION: The Secretariat is to provide drafting guidance to RACS members to assist and facilitate the provision of articles for use in Defence media by Feb 24.

d. Para 8j. The Secretariat is to assist with the raising of MINSUBs for §47E(c)) and §47E(c)) of RACS Members.

COMPLETED except for Mr §47F which is being worked through.

f. Para 9. Reverend §47F is to amend the Strategic Plan's Mission statement to read: "Further, it is a leading authority for multi-faith operations..." **COMPLETED**.

10. All other action items were brought forward as general business in accordance with the agenda, including: conflict resolution protocol proposal; value of RACS; value of chaplaincy retreats; faith, religion and spirituality; ethics, including training.

ITEM 8: GENERAL BUSINESS

11. **RACS Chair Election.** After some discussions, the Chair agreed to stand for another year if that was desired by the Committee. RACS unanimously agreed that the current Chair would continue for another twelve months. Both Rev'd §47F and Imam §47F are willing to be the Chair in 2025 and the Chair will mentor them and involve them more in Chair activities.

12. **Faith, religion and spirituality paper.** Venerable §47F paraphrased her paper, noting that §47F tried to reflect a diversity of views. Members expressed a range of supportive commentary on the paper including that it was a good source of inspiration, was a 'stimulating read', the characterisation of spiritually was expressed well and the different perspectives presented were welcomed.

ACTION: The Secretariat to include in RACS Document Repository (see para 17).

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13. **RACS Protocols.** Venerable s47F presented and explained s4 proposal on conflict resolution. Following discussion amongst members it was agreed to amend protocol four to read as follows: *‘We seek to respect the feelings and opinions of others if we disagree. We strive not to take offence’*. It was also agreed to amend the accompanying explanation to protocol four to read: *‘Feeling offended is typically an emotional response of annoyance resulting from a perceived insult. If we feel offended, it is because we perceive an insult. There are at least two possibilities in such a case, one, the speaker may or may not have consciously intended an insult, or two, the receiver may or may not be accurate in their perception of it. Right, wrong is surely not the issue, human behaviour is like this. If offence is taken, we will engage in constructive dialogue when tempers have calmed and feelings of woundedness are not so acute’*. Beyond discussions on conflict resolution, it was proposed and agreed to add the word ‘political’ to protocol one and three; and reference in protocol six to the fact that RACS operates under Chatham House Rules. All these amendments were agreed and adopted.

ACTION: The Secretariat to amend the Protocols and include in RACS Document Repository (see para 17).

14. The **RACS Value Proposition Paper** was presented by Rev’d s47F and Rev’d s47F. Members noted that the paper was a succinct encapsulation of RACS’ value. A version consistent with Defence writing standards and a ‘one a page’ version are enclosed to these minutes.

15. The draft **Value of Retreats Paper** was presented by the working group. Members observed the need to conduct them at locations that support safe and protected spiritual reflection. Defence bases are not appropriate owing to distractions and their uncondusive atmosphere. Members noted that there would be minimal actual savings achieved by moving from dedicated spirituality retreat centres given defence bases still invoice for their services. The paper is enclosed to these minutes.

16. The draft **Chaplain Transition Paper** was presented to members. Members provided positive feedback and a short discussion ensued on the importance of mentoring new chaplains, the difference between ‘advancement’ and ‘promotion’, and how ‘moral failings’ could be a catalyst for being unendorsed.

ACTION: Rev’d s47F and Monsignor s47F are to update and provide a revised Chaplain Transition paper to RACS at the next meeting.

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17. **RACS Document Repository.** Members noted several documents have now been developed and, as Defence's *Objective* system was not accessible to all members, that a password protected Google Drive directory would be established for filing RACS generated foundational documents.

ACTION: Rev'd s47F to curate the RACS Google Drive with finalised RACS generated foundational documents and distribute links to members by 1 March 2024. **COMPLETED.**

18. **Ethics.** Rabbi s47F provided a short reflection on the role of RACS in raising and addressing moral issues, the mechanisms to do so, and the implications of being ignored. He noted that as a religious advisory body, RACS has a responsibility to provide ethical advice and views from a moral perspective for both the military hierarchy and chaplains.

19. **Ethics training.** Following Rabbi s47F's introductory comments, Rev'd s47F provided feedback on his conversations with the Chaplains College regarding the current curriculum and ethics training. He noted that Just War Theory is a focus of training and that ethics training in general is at entry level. Rev'd s47F concluded that responding and dealing with complex ethical issues is an area that RACS could seek to contribute to. For example, a lawyer is professionally concerned with asking 'is this legal' whereas chaplains should be professionally asking: 'is this right or ethical'? It was noted that as Defence expands its cyber and space commands, ethics will remain acutely important. All members agreed that ethics is an important discourse to the ADF and RACS could make a contribution to capability in this space by providing advice to command.

20. **RACS' submission to the Royal Commission.** The Chair provided background to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Royal Commission's proposal to establish a new entity to promote the wellbeing of Defence members and veterans and tabled a draft submission. The Chair highlighted a notable deficiency in the proposed model is the lack of involvement of the Commonwealth Department of Health. Members agreed that RACS should make a submission based on the draft.

ACTION: Chair to make a submission to the Royal Commission by the 20 December deadline for submissions.

21. **RACS injects into ADF panels and committees.** The Chair provided an overview of Defence's strategic 'Enterprise Committees' and that there may be value in RACS being given the opportunity to provide input noting that RACS is an advisory body.

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ACTION: The Chair to raise with HMP and CDF the feasibility of RACS accessing the agenda of the Defence People Committee and the Culture and Diversity Steering Committee with a view that RACS can provide advice to items when relevant.

22. **RACS' 2023/2024 Strategic Plan.** The Chair sought any final amendments to the Strategic Plan before it was formally adopted. Rev'd s47F, on behalf of one of the members of his sub-committee (APCCB), conveyed that there was no statement in the plan as to the importance of religious ministry as noted in the RACS-Commonwealth MoA. It was generally agreed that the vision and mission statements cover this issue and therefore there is no further action required. The RACS' Strategic Plan was adopted. Following the adoption, the Chair checked the progress of the eleven priorities and noted that all were either completed or in progress.

23. **RACS Annual Report.** The Chair tabled the draft report and members thanked the Chair for the thorough report and made suggested minor amendments. It was agreed that a modified version of the report be sent to all Chaplains by their RACS member.

ACTION: Chair to make minor amendments and submit to CDF. Rev'd s47F and Chair to draft a modified version for Chaplains and send it to RACS members by 31 Jan 24.

24. **Other business - DFR.** Venerable s47F informed members of a s47F s47F

s47F Other issues were also raised including the inaccurate or missing information on DFR websites. Rev'd s47F was appointed as the RACS point of contact to DFR to liaise on specific issues of concern; this is to complement – not duplicate the RACS Secretariat recruitment staff officer.

ACTION: The Secretariat is to draft a letter for the Chair to send to DFR noting that Rev'd s47F is the RACS point of contact for specific chaplaincy recruitment issues by 1 Mar 23.

ITEM 9 – ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2024 MEETINGS

25. **04-06 Mar 24** (inclusive) was identified as the next meeting dates for Canberra; Imam s47F has scheduled a mosque visit on the evening of Mon 4 Mar.

26. **04-06 Jun 24** was identified as an in-person meeting in Canberra. This meeting will be used to elect the new Chair for 2025 so as to facilitate extended mentoring and handover. CDF will be invited to this meeting.

27. A virtual meeting is scheduled for **10-12 Sep 24**.

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28. **12 - 14 Nov 24** was identified as the final meeting for calendar year; consideration was given to having an end of year event and welcoming and farewelling members.

s47F

**Right Reverend
Chair**

04 Mar 24

[REDACTED]

**CAPT
Secretary**

04 Mar 24

Enclosures:

- A. Devotion - Mr s47F [REDACTED]
- B. Obituary, Rev'd s47F [REDACTED]
- C. RACS Value Proposition Paper
- D. RACS paper: value of Defence spiritual retreats

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**RELIGIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SERVICES
DEFENCE PEOPLE GROUP**

R1-1-C007, Department of Defence, CANBERRA ACT 2600

RACS MEMBER AND DGs MEETING MINUTES 7 DEC 2023

1. The meeting was conducted at Victoria Barracks Sydney.

ITEM 1 – OPENING

2. The morning devotion was provided by Reverend s47F (Enclosure 1).

Attendees		
<i>RACS Members</i>		
1.	The Right Reverend s47F	Chair (ANG)
2.	The Venerable s47F	(Buddhist)
3.	The Reverend s47F	(Pres)
4.	Monsignor s47F	(RC)
5.	Mr s47F	(Hindu)
6.	The Reverend s47F	(APCCB)
7.	The Reverend s47F	(UCA)
8.	Rabbi s47F	(Jewry)
9.	s47F	(Sikh)
<i>DG CHAPS and alternates</i>		
10.	CHAP s47F	SCHA, representing DGCHAP-N
11.	PAC s47F	DGCHAP-AF
<i>Guests</i>		
12.	Ms Alison Frame (Present for items 6, 7 and 8 only)	Secretary, Dept of Veterans' Affairs
13.	PRINCHAP s47F (Present for items 6, 7 and 8 only)	Lead, Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Program, Dept of Veterans' Affairs,
14.	MAJGEN Susan Coyle, AM, CSC, DSM (Present for item 9 only)	Commander, Forces Command
<i>Secretariat support</i>		
15.	s47F	Secretariat, Staff Officer
16.	s47F	Secretariat, Admin

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17.	Mr s47F	Admin Officer, Advisory Bodies Support, Defence People Group.
Apologies:		
	PRINCHAP s47F	DGCHAP-A
	s47F	(Sikh)
	Imam s47F	(Islam)

ITEM 2 – CHAIR WELCOME

3. RACS Chair, The Right Reverend s47F, opened the meeting at 0830 and welcomed all participants.

ITEM 3 –AGENDA AND MINUTES

4. The agenda as proposed was approved; the Chair thanked attendees for their flexibility in the conduct of the meeting due to the availability of guest speakers.

5. It was moved by the Chair and seconded by Rabbi s47F that the draft 12 Sep 23 Minutes of the RACS Members and DGs are true and accurate. Carried.

ITEM 4 - CORRESPONDENCE

6. All present noted the correspondence as tabled.

ITEM 5 – BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

7. The Chair led updates on the items and actions from the 12 Sep 23 meeting.

a. Para 7a. Reverend s47F to provide input via Australian Defence Force Chaplains Committee regarding suggested changes to the DFR website. Members noted that issues continued with the DFR website; DG CHAP Air Force acknowledged that there has been teething problems, that issues are being worked through and that Air Force material is being finalised for up-loading. The Chair noted RACS will soon write to DFR. **ONGOING.**

b. Para 7c. DGCHAP-A to provide the draft opening statement for the Consecration of Colours Ceremony to RSM Ceremonial for comment. In the unavoidable short notice absence of DGCHAP-A, this item will be carried forward to the next meeting. **ONGOING.**

c. Para 15. CHAP s47F to promulgate DGCHAP’s recruitment contacts to RACS members. **COMPLETED.**

d. Para 20. Actions relating to Voluntary Assisted Dying have been **COMPLETED.**

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ITEM 6 – RACS CHAIR OVERVIEW FOR SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS’ AFFAIRS.

8. The Chair welcomed the Department of Veterans (DVA) Secretary, Ms Alison Frame who joined the meeting virtually. The Chair spoke to a RACS PowerPoint presentation for Ms Frame that detailed the broadened multifaith membership of RACS, the Memorandum of Arrangements (MoA) between the Commonwealth and RACS members on behalf of their Faith Groups, an overview of RACS’ tasks outlined in the MoA, the priorities for 2023-204 as set out in the RACS Strategic Plan, and the RACS’ value proposition. He concluded by outlining some possible collaboration opportunities between RACS and DVA and highlighted that RACS can support DVA with the implementation of relevant measures and initiatives.

ITEM 7 – SECRETARY DVA ADDRESS

10. Secretary Frame expressed her thanks to the Chair and noted that she was keen to engage with and keep building a relationship between DVA and RACS. Secretary Frame highlighted the following:

- a. She advised that there is a review into the Veterans’ Chaplaincy Pilot Program that is being conducted independently by Flinders University.
- b. DVA is very focused on better understanding and responding to the transition needs of veterans. Spirituality and wellbeing are an important part of transition, as is building a better understanding of the role of ‘meaning’ in veterans’ post service life. She noted that many of the transition challenges are less about the physical needs and more about spirituality, mental health and giving purpose or ‘meaning’ to veterans after they leave the ADF. Physical needs such as housing are easier to address via programs. DVA is trying to think more laterally about the non-physical issues.
- c. Secretary Frame noted the central importance of RACS in assisting Government improve their understanding of ‘spirituality and meaning’, particularly as it relates to transition. She said it will be important to demonstrate to the Royal Commission that collectively we are aware that veterans have deeper struggles than material needs, as important as they are.
- d. Government is a significant stakeholder in transition pathways, she said, but solutions are not always government led. Partnering with on-ground community groups is important. Transition planning should start while people are still serving, and conversations have already occurred with the CDF on this.

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e. Secretary Frame noted that often veterans will not reach out to government in times of need. She noted that there are many touch points that veterans can draw on when feeling vulnerable and she wants to build confidence that faith and community groups can be an important option and thereby extend the support measures that Government funds. RACS members noted numerous avenues of work being undertaken by faith groups such as in the education sector, the welfare sector, grief counselling, men's sheds, moral injury and so forth.

f. Secretary Frame closed by thanking RACS for their valuable work and encouraged the Chair to share insights with her and then to engage Dep Sec Pope. The Chair affirmed that RACS is keen to support. Secretary Frame left the meeting.

ITEM 8 – DVA CHAPLAINCY UPDATE

11. PRINCHAP s47F provided a more detailed update on the Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Program including that Townsville has now been added to the Program. The Pilot Program is approved until 30 June 2024 and Government will decide on next steps based on the evaluation of the program which will be complete prior to this.

12. PRINCHAP s47F noted that the Secretary's recent visit to the UK with the Minister for Defence Personnel and Veteran Affairs had confirmed the value of chaplaincy.

13. PRINCHAP s47F requested members to provide him with faith-based community groups as upskilling local communities remains a priority. He noted that RACS determines the endorsement criteria for DVA Chaplains. A broader discussion between members and PRINCHAP s47F continued including on the nexus between RACS and the Pilot Program. The Chair reaffirmed that he will write to Secretary DVA on how RACS can make a meaningful contribution.

ACTION: Chair to write to Secretary DVA on possible RACS contributions to DVA Chaplaincy.

ITEM 9 – MAJGEN COYLE PRESENTATION AND Q&A SESSION

14. The Chair thanked MAJGEN Coyle for hosting RACS and DGCHAPs at Victoria Barracks Sydney. Following introductions, the Chair presented MAJGEN Coyle the role, responsibilities and value that RACS brings to Defence capability. He shared RACS' Value Proposition and noted that RACS stands ready to support Defence's training continuum including as it relates to 'character and ethics'.

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15. MAJGEN Coyle acknowledged the importance of ethical leadership and the adherence to cultural standards. She noted that RACS' existence is a testament to the importance Defence places on having a diversity of views and advice. MAJGEN Coyle affirmed the importance of pastoral support functions of chaplains and was very conscious that chaplains also needed support and noted the important role RACS plays in providing such support.

ITEM 10 - SERVICE and ADFCC REPORTS.

16. **Navy Report.** (Enclosure 2) In DGCHAP-N's absence, his report was taken as read.

17. **Army Report.** (Enclosure 3) Taken as read in the absence of DGCHAP-A.

18. **Air Force Report.** (Enclosure 4) DGCHAP-AF focused his update on the Air Force Chaplaincy Review (AFCR) which has officially concluded. The challenge is now to bring recommendations into business-as-usual operations, but this needs further work as s47E(c)



s47E(c) He noted that a Personal Development Directive has been written and he is quietly optimistic this will prove beneficial.

19. **ADFCC report.** (Enclosure 5). DGCHAP-AF gave a short summary of the report highlighting that funding for the Women in Chaplaincy Conference had been secured. The report was otherwise taken as read.

20. Members noted there was some uncertainty of the level of support for 2024 and beyond for retreats. They noted that spiritual nourishment away from military bases was very important for chaplains and to the capabilities they bring to Defence. Indeed, some RACS feel so strongly about this that they are raising their own separate funding streams to facilitate retreats. Conversely, other members noted that they do not have alternate financial support and the onus must be on Defence to fund all retreats to ensure a level playing field amongst denominations. Members furnished DGCHAP-AF with a copy of the RACS Retreat paper (enclosed) who indicated that he will read and pass to DGCHAP-A who is leading consideration of retreats. He assured RACS members that retreats are not under threat but how they are supported remains under consideration.

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ITEM 11 – GENERAL BUSINESS

21. **Recruiting priorities.** It was noted that the Service and ADFCC reports provided updates on recruiting priorities.

22. **AD460 Review.** Members reflected on the list as distributed and noted all nominees. It was requested that Pastor s47F details be updated to ensure his denomination is corrected to ACC; actioned (enclosure 6 refers). No further updates.

23. **Pastoral Care.** Meeting participants exchanged views on pastoral care trends across Defence chaplaincy. The following observations were shared:

- a. s47E(c) [REDACTED].
- b. Deployments to the s47E(c) [REDACTED] and to support of the s47E(c) [REDACTED] also put a strain on Chaplain resources. The s47E(c) [REDACTED]. This created existential questions and soldiers came to seek support from Chaplains.
- c. It was noted that Reservists provide an important capability but managing ‘reserve days’ is administratively burdensome.
- d. s47E(c) [REDACTED].
- d. An observation was made that post deployment well-being care had diminished, likely owing to COVID. There was general agreement that this was a topic to maintain visibility on with a view to have a deeper discussion during a future meeting.
- e. DGCHAP-AF asked RACS members to convey to their respective chaplains that they are valued.

ITEM 12 – ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2024 MEETINGS

24. 04-06 Mar 24 (inclusive) was identified as the next meeting dates for Canberra; Imam s47F has scheduled a mosque visit on the evening of Mon 4 Mar.

25. 04-06 Jun 24 was identified as an in-person meeting in Canberra with CDF to be invited.

26. A virtual meeting is scheduled for 10-12 Sep 24.

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27. 12 - 14 Nov 24 was identified as the final meeting for calendar year; consideration was given to having an end of year event and welcoming and farewelling members.

s47F

**Right Reverend
Chair**

06 Mar 24

**CAPT
Admin Officer**

06 Mar 24

Enclosures:

1. Devotion – Reverend s47F
2. Navy Service Report
3. Army Service Report
4. Air Force Service Report
5. ADFCC Report
6. AD460s

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**ENCLOSURE TO
RACS AND DG MINUTES
06 MAR 2024**

**List of AD460s that have been registered for the RACS and DG CHAP meeting of
Thu 7 Dec 2023.**

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.
- g.
- h.
- i.
- j.
- k.
- l.
- m.
- n.
- o.
- p.
- q.
- r.
- s.
- t.
- u.
- v.
- w.
- x.
- y.
- z.



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**RELIGIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SERVICES
DEFENCE PEOPLE GROUP**

R1-1-C007, Department of Defence, CANBERRA ACT 2600

RACS MEMBER MEETING MINUTES 4-5 MAR 2024

1. The meeting was conducted at Russell Offices, Canberra.

ITEM 1 – OPENING

2. RACS Chair, The Right Rev'd s47F, opened the meeting at 1300 on 04 Mar 2024. Imam s47F provided the devotion (enclosure 1).

ITEM 2 – CHAIR WELCOME

3. RACS Chair welcomed those in attendance including s47F to his first meeting.

Attendees		
<i>Members</i>		
1.	The Right Reverend s47F	Chair (ANG)
2.	The Venerable s47F	(Buddhist)
3.	The Reverend s47F	(Pres)
4.	The Reverend s47F	(APCCB)
5.	Rabbi s47F	(Jewry)
6.	s47F	(Sikh)
7.	Monsignor s47F	(RC)
8.	Mr s47F	(Hindu)
9.	The Reverend s47F	(UCA)
10.	Imam s47F	(Islam)
<i>Guests</i>		
11.	BRIG Garth Gould AM – (present for afternoon tea, 4 March only)	Acting Deputy Chief of Army
12.	s47F (present for agenda item 3.4, 5 March only)	Diversity & Inclusion, Defence People Group. Ministerial and Executive, Coordination and Communications (MECC).
14.	Air Marshal Robert Chipman, AO, CSC (attended 1200-1230h, 5 March only)	Chief of Air Force

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	<i>Secretariat support</i>	
15.	s47F [REDACTED]	Secretariat, Staff Officer
16.	s47F [REDACTED]	Secretariat, Recruitment
17.	s47F [REDACTED]	Secretariat, Admin Officer
18.	s47F [REDACTED]	Admin Officer, Advisory Bodies Support, Defence People Group.

ITEM 3 – AGENDA AND RACS MEMBER UPDATES

4. The agenda as proposed was approved.
5. RACS members shared individual updates on their activities since their last meeting. Several members reflected on their domestic and international travel over the summer period, and noted family milestones and developments.

ITEM 4–CORRESPONDENCE

6. Members acknowledged correspondence as tabled.

ITEM 5 – MINUTES CONFIRMED

7. It was moved by Rev’d s47F [REDACTED] and seconded by Rabbi s47F [REDACTED] that the minutes of the RACS Member meeting held on 05-06 Dec 23 be confirmed. **CARRIED.**

ITEM 6 - BUSINESS ARISING FROM RACS PREVIOUS MINUTES

8. The Chair led updates on the items and actions from the 05-06 Dec 24 meeting.
 - a. Para 9a. The Secretariat is to send the signed consent and release forms to Defence Force Recruiting (DFR) by 31 Jan 24. **COMPLETED.**
 - b. Para 9c– RACS Members are to send key religious dates for 2025 to RACS Secretariat. **COMPLETED.**
 - c. Para 9c– Secretariat to provide drafting guidance to RACS members for provision of articles for Defence Media by end Feb 24. It was noted that members will receive further information on this matter during the current meeting (para 17 of these minutes refer).
 - d. Para 9j - The Secretariat is to draft MINSUBs for Buddhist and Hindu RACS Members for s47E(c) [REDACTED]. **COMPLETED.** Members were encouraged to plan well in advance for changes to appointments to allow time for briefs to be prepared and considered.
 - e. Para 12 – The Secretariat is to include the Faith, Religion and Spirituality paper in the RACS Document repository. **COMPLETED.**

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f. Para 13 – The Secretariat is to amend the RACS Protocols and place into the RACS document repository. **COMPLETED**

g. Para 16 – Rev'd §47F and Monsignor §47F are to update and provide a revised Chaplain transition paper to the Mar 24 RACS Members meeting. **ONGOING**. Paragraphs 10 and 16.g of these minutes refer.

h. Para 17 – The Secretariat to curate the RACS google drive with finalised RACS generated foundational documents and distribute links to RACS members by 1 Mar 24. **COMPLETED**. Rev'd §47F has facilitated this task.

i. Para 20 – Chair to make a submission to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide by 20 Dec 2023. **COMPLETED**.

j. Para 21 - The Chair to raise with MAJGEN Stothart the feasibility of RACS accessing the agenda of the Defence People Committee and the Culture and Diversity Steering Committee with a view that RACS can provide advice to items when relevant. **COMPLETED**.

k. Para 23 – The Chair to make minor amendments to the RACS Chair Annual report and submit to CDF. **COMPLETED**

l. Para 23 – The Chair and Rev'd §47F to draft a modified version of RACS Chair Annual report and distribute to Chaplains by 31 Jan 24. **COMPLETED**

m. Para 24 – The Secretariat is to draft a letter for the Chair to send to DFR noting that Rev'd §47F is the point of contact for specific chaplaincy recruitment issues by 1 Mar 24. It was noted that this item will be covered under general business (para 22 of these minutes refer).

MORNING TEA ADDRESS

9. BRIG Gould addressed members regarding several matters of relevance to Army and Defence chaplaincy. The Chief of Army has commenced posturing to allow for a pragmatic response to the *Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide* which is scheduled to report later in 2024; early consideration has been given on how best to position health and welfare services at the point of need. BRIG Gould recognised the support that chaplains are providing ADF members. BRIG Gould also highlighted the need for closer cooperation with regional faith leaders. He noted that existing strategies to form closer ties existed but that these now needed to be operationalised.

ITEM 7: GENERAL BUSINESS

10. The draft **Chaplain Transition Paper** was presented by Rev'd §47F and

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Monsignor s47F and advised that a covering summary would be produced. Members provided general feedback to ensure the paper used inclusive language.

ACTION: Rev'd s47F and Monsignor s47F will update the draft Chaplain Transition Paper with feedback received and will provide the Secretariat with the final draft version for distribution to members.

ACTION: The Secretariat will edit the final draft Chaplain Transition Paper to conform with Defence writing standards and share a version with the ADFCC for any feedback prior to the paper's endorsement at the June RACS meeting.

11. **RACS Foundational document review.** Rev'd s47F explained that a repository has been established for key RACS source documents. He would curate the repository that will be located outside of the Defence Protected Network to allow for greater usability and accessibility. Members also discussed what other documents could be included in the repository such as the 'mentoring guide' and criteria for faith groups to be recognised for ADF Chaplaincy in Australia. Separately, Imam s47F volunteered to be a mentor for s47F, with Venerables s47F as an alternate mentor.

12. **RACS Member days for FY 2023/2024 and member appointments.** The Chair noted that RACS members are tracking well against their allocated days and explained the process for briefing HMP on RACS resources and securing more days if required. Separately, Members were encouraged to consider their faith group representation on the Committee in the context of their reappointment or replacement well in advance noting the time required to process and have appointments considered and approved.

13. **RACS Member travel.** To ensure the RACS budget continues to be managed prudently, members should liaise with the Secretariat for any travel updates, including attendance at Army Regional Seminars. Members were encouraged to use their travel to complete multiple activities; for example, if attending an Army Regional Seminar, members should also undertake pastoral care or recruitment activities in the same location. Members confirmed that their attendance at the Seminars is primarily to field questions and communicate the multifaith role of RACS. It was noted that the current RACS presentation could be refreshed, including embedding a short video from the Chair. On travel more broadly, s47F reminded members that they are to organise a security pre-brief with him prior to undertaking any international travel. The draft table on RACS Member attendance at the regional seminars was also discussed.

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ACTION: Members are to advise s47F of domestic and international travel intentions up to 30 June 2024.

ACTION: The Chair and Rev'd s47F to refresh the current RACS presentation, including embedding a short Chair's video.

ACTION: The RACS Member attendance list for regional seminars is to be cleared by the RACS Chair and then provided to DGCHAP-A office by end Apr 24.

14. **Key religious dates for 2025.** Members were requested to undertake a final confirmation of their respective dates of significance as presented. These dates will be published in the 2025 defence diary.

15. Review of the 2021 **Faith & Belief** publication. Members were requested to review their respective faith group language to ensure accuracy in the next published version.

ACTION: Members are to review their faith group specific information to ensure it is appropriate and up to date. Members are to inform s47F of any changes by 1 April 24.

16. Review of the priorities of the **RACS Strategic Plan 2023-2024**. The Chair led members through each of the eleven priorities to evaluate status:

a. Priority 1. Completed.

b. Priority 2. CJOPS has been provided with a copy of the KLE protocol however implementation is a work in progress. Members exchanged views on how to take this forward including how the Army Regional Seminars provides an avenue to communicate the importance of KLE.

ACTION: The Secretariat is to contact CHAP s47F, Command Chaplain Joint Operations Command to discuss a process to operationalise the KLE protocol, including reporting back to RACS on progress.

c. Priority 3. Progress is being made as evidenced with the production and publication of the RACS Values videos via the ADF Careers website.

d. Priority 4. Progress is being made via the publication of key multifaith celebrations and milestones, and through the work that will soon commence to develop communication plans to facilitate further outreach. It was also noted that the Faith and Belief publication continues to be an important source document.

e. Priority 5. Completed with meaningful engagement with the senior leadership

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ongoing.

f. Priority 6. Complete and ongoing. This priority could be given more consideration in the context of any future review of the RACS – Commonwealth Memorandum of Arrangements (MOA). The Chair conveyed that the MOA may need to be reviewed to ensure the document is contemporary. Members exchanged views on the process to review, amend and endorse the MOA and noted that Defence’s organisational restructure provides a timely opportunity to test with the CDF if a review of the MOA is undertaken. The Chair will raise this matter with the CDF.

g. Priority 7. Complete but members agreed to amend the text of the priority to avoid any ambiguities of the term ‘transitioning’. Members also exchanged views that the transition pathway needed to consider the ‘spiritual elements’ of a chaplain’s needs when navigating important life and career changes.

ACTION: Rev’d §47F will edit the current draft of the Chaplain Transition Paper to capture the broader spiritual support needs of chaplains when transitioning; language will be inclusive from a multifaith perspective.

ACTION: Rev’d §47F will propose a new title for the Chaplain Transition Paper to capture the document’s ‘navigating change’ intent.

h. Priority 8. Ongoing. Members exchanged views on how to reinvigorate character and ethics within the chaplains’ training continuum and separately noted that it is timely to review the existing Defence character policy document.

ACTION: §47F will distribute a copy of Defence’s character policy document to members.

ACTION: The Chair, Rabbi §47F, and Venerable §47F are to form a working group to review and make suggested changes to the character policy document.

ACTION: Rev’d §47F to contact the Chaplain’s College to discuss how RACS can support ethics and character training.

i. Priority 9. Ongoing.

j. Priority 10. Progress is being made as evidenced by the agreement to have access to the agendas of the Defence People Committee and the Culture and Diversity Steering Committee. Next steps will be to seek agendas and determine what items may benefit from RACS’ advice.

k. Priority 11. Ongoing. The paper on faith, religion and spirituality prepared by

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Venerable s47F has been well received by members. It was agreed a short covering paper should now be prepared that provides a definition of faith, religion and spirituality.

ACTION: Venerable s47F to prepare a short executive summary confirming the definitions: faith, religion and spirituality.

17. **Articles for key religious dates.** Ms s47F provided members with a presentation on Defence's approach to diversity and culture governance; she also shared insights of her directorate's priorities, including the data used to inform lines of effort. Ms s47F noted the mutually supportive nature of her diversity and culture work with that of the Defence Communications team. Ms s47F summarised how the Ministerial and Executive, Coordination and Communications team can support RACS in preparing articles and other forms of communication. The importance of planning early was highlighted to ensure key messages, objectives, stakeholder identification and any sensitivities were considered. Communication plans also require senior approval. To assist with planning, some examples of previous endorsed communication plans and the template to guide the preparation of communication plans will be provided to RACS. Members shared several ideas of the type of outreach that they are considering, thanked Ms s47F and Ms s47F for their assistance and noted how the work of RACS aligns with that of People and Culture Branch, for example a shared approach to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) audiences.

ACTION: A RACS Communication subgroup will be formed; members include Imam s47F, Rev'd s47F and Rev'd s47F

ACTION: The Secretariat will send Defence's communication planning template to members of the RACS Communication subgroup to facilitate their communication planning.

18. **Chief of Air Force address.** Air Marshal Robert Chipman affirmed his support for RACS and wanted to ensure that Defence was a 'home' for faith groups as taking care of ADF member's spiritual well-being is just as important as physical and psychological health given its critical role in supporting capability. Air Marshal Chipman recognised the approach to ADF chaplaincy will evolve consistent with the changing face of a diverse Australian community.

19. Members expressed thanks to CAF, including his support for the annual chaplain retreats, and highlighted the recently published RACS videos as a display of how ADF chaplaincy is supporting faith and capability. Some members also raised the work in progress

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to provide multifaith places of worship across ADF establishments; RAAF base Amberley was cited as a good outcome in this context.

20. CAF has reopened the AFCR steering group to drive the implementation of the recommendations. CAF has reminded chaplains that they need to reconcile their personal values with those of Defence. He is also looking to strengthen command and control arrangements across Air Force chaplaincy to ensure capability.

21. **CPE Level One Requirement.** After CAF departed the meeting, members shared views on the new recruitment requirement for Air Force chaplains to hold CPE level one qualifications before enlisting. A range of issues and concerns were raised with this new requirement. These included the ambiguity of any evidence-based rationale or if a job analysis was undertaken to inform the change, how equivalency of skills and knowledge could be recognised, the financial cost to prospective candidates, how the policy can be retrospectively influenced, the Christian-based approach to CPE not aligning to a multifaith environment, a lack of consistency across services, and whether a bespoke Defence CPE course is more relevant for capability and can be undertaken after chaplains are appointed. It was agreed that these issues would be raised with DG CHAP-AF at the RACS and DGCHAP meeting, 6 March.

22. **Recruiting opportunities and priorities.** Rev'd s47F had a positive meeting with DGDfR, CDRE Jan Wiltshire CSC on chaplain recruitment. CDRE Wiltshire acknowledged the inconsistencies and misinformation on the DFR website can have a negative on impact recruitment efforts. The RACS videos were uploaded soon after Rev'd s47F's meeting.

23. s47E(c)

s47E(c)

s47E(c) CDRE Wiltshire acknowledged these issues and shared that recruitment is under significant and sustained pressure and that the matters raised by Rev'd s47F should not be interpreted as DFR 'singling-out' chaplains as there are systematic problems.

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24. s47E(c)

s47E(c)

s47E(c) s. CMDR

Wiltshire also agreed to look at the website and informed that a complete refresh was scheduled for April 2024.

ACTION: Rev'd s47F is to continue regular checks of the DFR website to ensure chaplain recruitment content is accurate and to seek amendments when needed.

25. **RACS Strategic plan 2024/2025 brainstorming session.** Members reflected on the approach to their next strategic plan. There was consensus that the current vision, mission and objective 1 and objective 2 remain fit for purpose. Objective 3 also remained valid, but consideration should be given to broadening beyond character and ethics development. The following preliminary ideas were aired as possible new priority ideas: review chaplaincy training (with the Chaplain's College), undertake a refresh of the MoA (consistent with para 16.f of these minutes), foster improved relationships with DFR, explore indigenous spirituality, and continuing to champion the capability that retreats brings to Defence including via their conduct at dedicated facilities.

26. A short stocktake was taken on the existing 2023/24 priorities. Priority 1 has been finalised (retire), priority 2 should be kept but the language re-examined, priorities 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8 should continue. Priority 7 and 10 should continue but with a focus on implementation. Priority 11 has finalised and can be retired.

ACTION: The preliminary RACS Strategic Plan for 24/25 to be drafted and presented to the Jun 24 RACS Members meeting.

27. **Vera, travel card and CMS.** Following the formal elements of the meeting, CHAP s47F assisted members with the setting up these administrative systems.

s47F

**Right Reverend
Chair**

04 Jun 2024

s47F

**CAPT
Secretary**

04 Jun 2024

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**RELIGIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SERVICES
DEFENCE PEOPLE GROUP**

R1-1-C007, Department of Defence, CANBERRA ACT 2600

RACS MEMBER AND DGs MEETING MINUTES 6 MAR 2024

1. The meeting was conducted at Russell Offices, Canberra.

ITEM 1 – OPENING

2. The morning devotion was provided by §47F (enclosure 1).

Attendees		
<i>RACS Members</i>		
1.	The Right Reverend §47F	Chair (ANG)
2.	The Venerable §47F	(Buddhist)
3.	The Reverend §47F	(Pres)
4.	Monsignor §47F	(RC)
5.	Mr §47F	(Hindu)
6.	The Reverend §47F	(APCCB)
7.	The Reverend §47F	(UCA)
8.	Rabbi §47F	(Jewry)
9.	§47F	(Sikh)
10	Imam §47F	(Islam)
<i>DG CHAPS</i>		
11.	PCHA §47F	DGCHAP-N
12.	PAC §47F	DGCHAP-AF
13.	PRINCHAP §47F	DGCHAP-A, Chair ADFCC
<i>Guests</i>		
12.	MAJGEN Wade Stohart DSC AM CSC (Present for agenda item 3 only)	Head of Military Personnel
13.	PRINCHAP §47F (Present for agenda item 11 only via phone)	Lead, Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Program, Dept of Veterans' Affairs.
14.	CHAP §47F (Present for item 15 only)	Chair, Women in Chaplaincy
<i>Secretariat support</i>		

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15.	s47F [REDACTED]	Secretariat, Staff Officer
16.	s47F [REDACTED]	Secretariat, Admin
17.	s47F [REDACTED]	Admin Officer, Advisory Bodies Support, Defence People Group.

ITEM 2 – CHAIR WELCOME

3. RACS Chair, The Right Rev'd s47F [REDACTED] opened the meeting at 0830 and welcomed all participants.

ITEM 3 - HMP ADDRESS

4. MAJGEN Stothart provided members with an overview of some of the challenges facing Defence and initiatives being implemented to address them. The workplace remains under pressure with significant vacancies to be filled; these are in areas where Government has committed to grow new capabilities and are inherently hard to recruit for. Additional Commonwealth resources are being applied to assist the recruitment contractor and monthly status updates being provided to the CDF. Several new initiatives are helping with recruitment and retention including: the ADF continuation bonus, relaxing the ADF study scheme to allow broader areas of discipline, increases to the family health benefits and broadening the criteria for home ownership support.

5. Members shared their experiences with DFR including some of the challenges relating to health checks. Members also engaged HMP on the connectedness of health and wellbeing with the military justice and administrative systems. Some members noted that restorative justice can be appropriate; HMP acknowledged its place, in particular for ex-serving members, where apologies can be powerful and can 'clear the air'.

6. On the Royal Commission, HMP reflected that royal commissions are purposefully inquisitorial and not adversarial. He noted that it has brought to light some areas where Defence can improve and he believes Defence has a determination to make any improvements it can.

7. In conclusion, HMP reaffirmed his respect for the work of RACS and that he will continue to take an interest after reporting and oversight transfers from HMP to Head Joint Support Services (HJSS).

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ITEM 4 –AGENDA AND MINUTES

8. The agenda as proposed was approved. It was moved by the Rev'd §47F and seconded by Monsignor §47F that the draft 7 Dec 23 Minutes of the RACS Members and DGs are true and accurate. **Carried.**

ITEM 5 - CORRESPONDENCE

9. All present noted the correspondence as tabled.

ITEM 6 - BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS RACS and DGs MINUTES

10. Business arising from the RACS Members and DGs meeting on 07 Dec 23.

a. Para 7a. Reverend §47F to provide input via Australian Defence Force Chaplains Committee regarding suggested changes to the DFR website. Air Force material is being finalised for uploading. **Ongoing.** Rev'd §47F noted that he met with DG DFR regarding website inconsistencies. DG DFR indicated that the relationship between RACS and the specialist recruiter will be improved. Rev'd §47F will have an ongoing liaison role to check progress, including DFR website updates which is scheduled for a refresh in April.

b. Para 7c. DGCHAP-A to provide the draft opening statement for the Consecration of Colours Ceremony to RSM Ceremonial for comment. DGCHAP-A reported that minor suggested edits have been received.

ACTION: DG CHAP Army will email edits on the Consecration of Colours Ceremony to RACS via the Secretariat.

c. Para 14, DFR Update on video consent forms, RACS Secretariat. **Completed.**

d. **Post deployment health and welfare** was raised by Rev'd §47F as an outstanding matter (item 23.e, RACS-DG meeting minutes, 7 Dec 23 refers). DG CHAP Army provided a short history, and how COVID interrupted the process of post deployment debriefs and capturing health and welfare issues.

ACTION: Chair ADFCC will contact the Spiritual Health and Wellbeing Chaplain to seek information on the current plan for post deployment spiritual health and wellbeing debrief processes and convey information to the RACS Secretariat.

ITEM 7 - SERVICE AND ADFCC REPORTS

11. **Navy report** (enclosure 2). DGCHAP-N provided a brief overview of his report which was taken as read and reinforced earlier comments regarding recruitment issues (11.a

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above refers), including with the specialist recruiter for ADF chaplaincy. There have been issues with short notice changes to course panels that caused inconvenience to members and required DCN to grant waivers. s47E(c)

. Other issues included that next year's budget was yet to be confirmed, and that the review of the MSWO capability determined that they can provide a good level of support, but cannot undertake KLE or provide religious support and some have no pastoral care experience.

12. **Army report** (enclosure 3). DGCHAP-A summarised his report that was taken as read. He noted that the Veterans' Pilot Project is likely to be extended, that DCA has requested further information ahead of considering the brief on insignia changes, and welcomed RACS ongoing involvement in the Army Chaplain Regional Seminars. A short conversation ensued on retreats where DGCHAP-A requested that chaplains prioritise group retreats over individual retreats, that chaplains seek attendance exemptions from DG CHAPS as well as RACS members; and he stated that justifications for individual retreats included operational reasons or significant family circumstances.

13. DGCHAP-A will write to RACS regarding in-service candidates. RACS will be invited to provide letters of support to candidates and guidance is being developed on what candidates should demonstrate in their applications. DGCHAP-A explained that Army has a Credentialling Team that undertakes robust assessments on candidate applications. DGCHAP-A welcomes engagement from RACS if they have issues or require further information on the determinations of the Credentialling Team.

14. **Air Force report** (enclosure 3). DGCHAP-AF noted that staffing levels are positive, and Air Force will remain full for the foreseeable future; in this environment Air force can afford to take the best candidates. There was a s47E(c) at the senior s47E(c) and s47E(c) level and that consideration is turning to how to 'grow the next DG'.

15. DGCHAP-AF invited RACS to support the modernised and updated Air Force Chaplain Employment Profile (EP) that was approved in December 2023. He noted that the EP had not been reviewed for 30 years, that he is committed to delivering on best practice capability consistent with Chaplaincy Policy and being able to credential against standards which will bring a level of professionalism to Air Force chaplaincy. DGCHAP-AF acknowledged that the EP takes a different approach to Navy and Army by requiring CPE

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Level one for entry. DGCHAP-N and DGCHAP-A stated that they are not bringing in CPE Level 1 as an entry requirement. DGCHAP-AF stated that in his view the changes have been well researched. He noted that a verbal business case, including a rewrite of job profiles for RAAF Chaplains, was used to gain approval for the EP.

16. DGCHAP-AF acknowledged that there was no command, staff or broad Chaplaincy input via an objective survey undertaken which is the standard procedure for a job analysis. No written training needs analysis or environmental scan of like organisations was undertaken, rather based on limited research in the hospital and aged care context and some anecdotal evidence, he had formed the view that CPE Level 1 was the best practice and should be adopted.

17. All the members of RACS and both DGCHAP-N and DGCHAP-A indicated that, while they supported best practice, §47E(c)

. The following were outlined:

a. Imam §47F and Venerable §47F stated that CPE was Christian centric and needed significant amendment for their faith groups.

b. Several voiced the setting for C (Clinical) P (Pastoral) E (Experience) was clinical (in hospitals and aged care facilities) which bore little resemblance to the military context of RAAF Chaplaincy.

c. Members voiced that this would significantly reduce the potential candidate pool for recruitment to RAAF chaplaincy. Some groups would be unable to recruit from 90% of their faith group and others between 60% and 80% of their faith group would be ineligible.

DGCHAP-AF indicated that for the right capability, such as a to increase diversity in the Branch, he would consider providing funding for candidates to complete the CPE after entry. The candidate may have to pay for CPE themselves, but work time would be provided for it. Members indicated that paying for CPE would still be a significant barrier.

18. When asked about what was included in equivalence, DGCHAP-AF was open to exploring flexible options but stated that empirical research indicated that some form of qualification is required rather than an experience equivalence. He noted that some candidates join Air Force with CPE and therefore it is not an unachievable expectation.

19. RACS members suggested some alternatives for DGCHAP-AF to consider:

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a. As DGCHAP-AF had stated that supervised reflective practice was the core skill he was requiring, Members suggested that the wording of the EP be amended to reflect that by stating supervised reflective practice is mandatory for entry and CPE was one way to achieve that along with several others.

b. Another suggestion was to consider developing a Defence specific CPE course that is conducted/overseen by the DFCC whereby continued employment is conditional on completing that CPE course in the first 12-24 months after joining. That model could also be used for the current CPE course if no Defence specific course is developed.

20. DG CHAP-AF acknowledged and will reflect on members' feedback, stating he will consider reassessing requirements in a favourable way but may still require some reference to CPE.

ACTION: DG CHAP-AF to consider reassessing the entry requirements by incorporating wording of Supervised Reflective Practice into the EP.

21. **ADFCC Report** (enclosure 4). PRINCHAP §47F, incoming Chair ADFCC summarised his report. He highlighted the Pacific Partnership initiative that is to occur later this year in Auckland where Pacific countries with significant Defence Forces will be invited to send representatives. New Zealand will co-host the gathering with Australia.

ACTION: The Secretariat to ascertain from RACS members the names of key leader contacts in the Pacific and to provide PRINCHAP §47F with details by 30 April 24.

ITEM 8 – GENERAL BUSINESS

22. **DVA Veterans' Pilot Project update.** PRINCHAP §47F reported that the Pilot is now operating in Townsville, Brisbane, and Perth. Each are operating slightly differently which will allow the evaluation team to obtain good information. The Pilot is scheduled to conclude on 30 June 2024, but may be extended as opposed to being finalised to allow for the evaluation and the Royal Commission to be considered. PRINCHAP §47F sought interest from RACS if they wanted to be considered for interview by the Flinders University evaluation team, and if they had details for faith groups in Townsville, Brisbane (northside) and Perth. Members were supportive of both requests. Separately members requested that a status report on the Pilot be prepared in advance of RACS' meetings.

ACTION: RACS to provide any names and contact details of faith group leaders in Townsville, Perth, and northside of Brisbane by 18 March 2024 to §47F via §47F

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ACTION: The Chair is to notify PRINCHAP s47F that he will be the RACS point of contact for the evaluation.

23. **Women in chaplaincy.** CHAP s47F took her report as read and highlighted the upcoming Women in Chaplaincy Conference (Glenbrook, NSW, 20-23 May) as an important event to enhance the capability of women in chaplaincy. She thanked RACS for their scheduled participation and noted the seniority and high calibre of guest speakers; this afforded a great opportunity for networking between junior and senior women.

24. **Recruiting Priorities Update.** DG CHAP Navy noted that he is tracking well on recruitment but can always go beyond caps for good candidates; Adelaide was singled out as a location that would benefit with a full-time chaplain. On reservists, these targets are set nationally and if RACS have candidates, they can liaise with CHAP s47F. DG CHAP AF noted that despite what is indicated on the DFR website, he is keen to place reservists in Canberra and Darwin where shortfalls exist; women and those of non-Christian denominations are a priority.

25. **Pastoral care.** Attendees exchanged views on their observations of pastoral care-related issues across the services. In Navy and Army, it was noted that some specific areas that are doing the 'heavy lifting' where other areas have a reduced tempo. Further, as recruitment surges, maintaining standards was causing stress on training establishments. DGCHAP-A highlighted the importance of ensuring serving personnel have access to chaplains as evidenced during the two recent air disasters. DGCHAPS have also written to Islamic and Jewish chaplains thanking them for their support and service in the context of the instability in the Middle East.

26. **RACS Strategic Plan update.** The Chair advised DG CHAPS that members spent time yesterday brainstorming ideas for the next RACS Strategic Plan and will keep them updated on planning. In the context of chaplaincy training, DG CHAP-A offered that he could arrange for the Chaplains College to address a meeting of RACS. The Chair invited the DGs to provide any input they would like as to what strategic issues they felt RACS should tackle.

ACTION: DGCHAPs to provide any input to inform the development of the 2024/25 RACS strategic plan by 30 April 24.

27. **Faith and Belief in the ADF publication.** DG CHAPS were advised that RACS members were reviewing their respective faith group language in the current version of the

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Faith and Belief publication and will provide suggested amendments by April 2024. The Chair will review broader elements of the publication with CHAP s47F .

28. **AD460 Review.** Attendees noted the four AD460s received since the last meeting; these are recorded at enclosure 5.

DG CHAPS departed the meeting following the review of AD460s

ITEM 8 - OTHER BUSINESS

29. The Chair and Rev'd s47F reported that they had been approached by the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches of Australia and by the Christian and Missionary Alliance respectively requesting that they be their RACS members. Members exchanged views on due diligence processes, how these organisations are accredited, and how risk is managed. There was consensus that this will be further considered in the context of the prospective MoA review and in the interim, these minutes serve as a formal record and that a list will be compiled of faith groups and the allocated RACS member.

ACTION: Rev'd s47F to compile and present a list of approved faith groups and the respective RACS member by 30 April 24.

ITEM 10 – NEXT MEETING.

30. Members confirmed that the next meeting will occur at Russell Offices, Canberra. RACS will meet on 4-5 June; RACS and DGs will meet on 6 June. It was decided that RACS would share a meal as opposed to facilitating a faith-based evening event.

s47F

Chair

04 Jun 2024

Admin Officer

04 Jun 2024

Enclosures:

1. Devotion – s47F
2. Navy Service Report
3. Army Service Report
4. Air Force Service Report
5. ADFCC Report
6. AD460s

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**RELIGIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SERVICES
DEFENCE PEOPLE GROUP**

RACS MEMBER MEETING MINUTES 4-5 JUN 2024

1. The meeting was conducted at Russell Offices, Canberra.

Attendees		
<i>Members</i>		
1.	The Right Reverend s47F	Chair (ANG)
2.	Mr s47F	(Substitute for Buddhist Member)
3.	The Reverend s47F	(Pres)
4.	The Reverend s47F	s47F
5.	Rabbi s47F	(Jewry)
6.	Sardar s47F	(Sikh)
7.	Monsignor s47F	(RC)
8.	Mr s47F	(Hindu)
9.	The s47F	(UCA)
10.	Imam s47F	(Islam)
<i>Guests</i>		
11.	General Angus Campbell, AO, DSC for Item 1	Chief of the Defence Force
12.	Air Vice Marshal Lara Gunn for Item 2	Head Joint Services Support Division
<i>Secretariat support</i>		
15.	s47F	Secretariat, Staff Officer
16.	s47F	Secretariat, Recruitment
17.	s47F	Secretariat, Admin Officer
18.	Mr s47F	HQ JSSD Support, Defence People Group.

ITEM 1 – CDF VISIT AND PRESENTATION

2. The Chair thanked the General Angus Campbell AO DSC, Chief of the Defence Force for his leadership during a challenging period of service and for his support of RACS

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during his tenure. RACS presented the CDF with a painting by former Corporal Russell Sanderson, Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps.

3. CDF conveyed his sincere appreciation for the painting. He noted that it was the people he interacted with that assisted him work through challenges. The CDF reflected on the importance and profound positive impact of RACS' work against the backdrop of a modern society that is grappling with foundational issues such as values and spirituality. RACS' focus on the wellbeing of ADF personnel and their families will remain highly relevant given the challenging environment facing the nation. Further, the guiding wisdom that RACS provides ADF chaplains is commended. He encouraged RACS to continue engaging at the staff level but also to directly engage with the most senior level leadership in the ADF, the CDF, Service Chiefs and CJOPS. In conclusion, the CDF wished RACS well and thanked them for their service.

ITEM 2 – HJSSD

4. Air Vice Marshal Lara Gunn, Head Joint Support Services Division (HJSSD) thanked members for the opportunity to meet and shared highlights from her career which covered appointments as a health professional, command positions and strategic leadership. AVM Gunn framed her address around the National Defence Strategy (NDS) which focusses on the organisation's collective posture, being more integrated and instilling deterrence in the capability. She noted that RACS' functions of supporting recruitment, retention and relationships connects well with the NDS. RACS was encouraged to stay focused on delivering capability consistent with the NDS including over the longer term given the complex geostrategic environment. It remains important to stay connected with all chaplains in a consistent manner including in person visits on at least an annual basis. RACS were asked to consider their role during a crisis or national mobilisation event, and how to support the Defence community as the ADF postures itself in the north of Australia. Chaplains offer a unique 'safe place' for serving members to raise religious and well-being issues and are therefore important to retention.

5. RACS engaged AVM Gunn on how they can support the NDS including the connectiveness of chaplains in their communities, the need to increase engagement with reserve chaplains, the importance of maintaining a sound budget to facilitate RACS' engagement, and the need to strengthen the existing sound communication with DG CHAPs on pastoral issues.

ITEM 3 – DEVOTION

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6. Rabbi §47F provided the devotion (enclosure 1).

ITEM 4 – CHAIR WELCOME

7. Following the preceding addresses and devotion, the RACS Chair, The Right Rev'd §47F, formally opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance including Mr §47F who represented the Buddhist faith group.

ITEM 5 – AGENDA AND RACS MEMBER UPDATES

8. The agenda as proposed was approved.

9. RACS members shared individual updates on their activities since their last meeting.

ITEM 6 – CORRESPONDENCE

10. Members acknowledged correspondence as tabled.

ITEM 7 – MINUTES CONFIRMED

11. It was moved by Rev'd §47F and seconded by Rev'd §47F that the minutes of the RACS Member meeting held on 04-05 Mar 24 be confirmed. **CARRIED.**

ITEM 8 - BUSINESS ARISING FROM RACS PREVIOUS MINUTES

12. The Chair led updates on the items and actions from the 04-05 Mar 24 meeting.

a. Para 9a. Rev'd Ronalds and Monsignor §47F will update the draft Chaplain Transition Paper with feedback received and will provide the Secretariat with the final draft version for distribution to members. **COMPLETED.**

b. Para 9b. The Secretariat will edit the final draft Chaplain Transition Paper to conform with Defence writing standards and share a version with the ADFCC for any feedback prior to the paper's endorsement at the June RACS meeting.

ACTION: The Secretariat is to apply Defence writing standards to the current version of the Chaplain Transition Paper and provide DG CHAPs a copy ASAP.

c. Para 9c. Members are to advise §47F of domestic and international travel intentions up to 30 June 2024. **COMPLETED.**

d. Para 9d. The Chair and Rev'd §47F to refresh the current RACS presentation, including embedding a short Chair's video. **COMPLETED.** Filed in the RACS repository.

e. Para 9e. The RACS Member attendance list for regional seminars is to be cleared by the RACS Chair and then provided to DGCHAP-A office by end Apr 24.

COMPLETED.

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- f. Para 9f. Members are to review their faith group specific information to ensure it is appropriate and up to date. Members are to inform s47F of any changes by 1 April 24. **COMPLETED.**
- g. Para 9g. The Secretariat is to contact CHAP s47F, Command Chaplain Joint Operations Command to discuss a process to operationalise the KLE protocol, including reporting back to RACS on progress. **COMPLETED.**
- ACTION:** s47F to contact CHAP s47F, Command Chaplain Joint Operations Command, to establish reporting [commencing July 2024] to the RACS Chair on progress to operationalise the KLE protocol.
- h. Para 9h. Rev'd s47F will edit the current draft of the Chaplain Transition Paper to capture the broader spiritual support needs of chaplains when transitioning; language will be inclusive from a multifaith perspective. **COMPLETED.**
- i. Para 9i. Rev'd s47F will propose a new title for the Chaplain Transition Paper to capture the document's 'navigating change' intent. **COMPLETED.**
- j. Para 9j. s47F will distribute a copy of Defence's character policy document to members. **COMPLETED.**
- k. Para 9k. The Chair, Rabbi s47F, and Venerable s47F are to form a working group to review and make suggested changes to the character policy document. The first meeting of the working group has met. Character policy will be progressed in conversation with the ADFCC. **ONGOING.**
- l. Para 9l. Rev'd s47F to contact the Chaplain's College to discuss how RACS can support ethics and character training. **COMPLETED.** CHAP s47F CI, ADFCC will present to the RACS and DG CHAP meeting on 6 June 24.
- m. Para 9m. Venerable s47F to prepare a short executive summary confirming the definitions: faith, religion and spirituality. **COMPLETED.**
- n. Para 9n. A RACS Communication subgroup will be formed; members include Imam s47F, Rev'd s47F and Rev'd s47F. **CARRIED FORWARD.**
- o. Para 9o. The Secretariat will send Defence's communication planning template to members of the RACS Communication subgroup to facilitate their communication planning. **COMPLETED.**
- p. Para 9p. Rev'd s47F is to continue regular checks of the DFR website to ensure chaplain recruitment content is accurate and to seek amendments when needed.

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COMPLETED. Rev'd s47F highlighted that several inconsistencies have been identified and will be raised with DG CHAPS.

- q. Para 9q. The preliminary RACS Strategic Plan for 24/25 to be drafted by the Secretariat and presented to the Jun 24 RACS Members meeting. **COMPLETED** consistent with this agenda.

ITEM 9: GENERAL BUSINESS

13. s47F and s47F presented the following mandatory training topics to all RACS members recorded as present in these minutes: Annual Security Awareness, Workplace Behaviours, Fraud and Integrity and Workplace Health and Safety.

ACTION: s47F to provide guidance to RACS Members ahead of the next meeting on the reporting procedures of unacceptable behaviour.

Day 1 concluded at 1630.

Day 2 commenced at 0830.

14. The Chair commenced day 2 with a short back brief on his meeting with The Hon. Matt Keogh MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel from the previous evening. The Minister was provided a verbal brief on the roles and responsibilities of RACS and indicated that he is keen to remain engaged with the Committee's work. The Minister was also interested in the religious and spiritual affiliations of ADF personnel. Members exchanged views on religious affiliation of ADF personnel and issues relating to the collection of accurate data.

ACTION: RACS Working Group comprising the Chair, Rev'd s47F and Rev'd s47F is to draft survey questions for consideration by AVM Gunn to assist shape how Defence seeks and collects data on the religious and spiritual affiliation of ADF personnel.

15. **Memorandum of Arrangements (MOA) way forward.** The Chair explained that the sub-group had met and drafted minor changes to the MOA for consideration by CDF. He advised that subsequently, AVM Gunn has indicated that a formal review of RACS will take place, the draft changes of the MOA will form part of the review and the current MOA remains in force.

16. **RACS Member days for FY 24/25.** s47F has advised RACS member of their draft allocation of days for FY24/25. The Chair will meet with AVM Gunn on 17 June 2024 to confirm the allocation and management of resources throughout the year.

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17. **RACS Member Ministerial Appointments.** The Chair reaffirmed that it takes several months to secure approvals to extend or appoint new RACS members and therefore early consideration of any changes is needed.

18. **RACS Member travel for FY 24/25.** Members confirmed travel arrangements and advised the secretariat of amendments for the remainder of calendar year 2024. Guidance on how to prepare travel justifications was conveyed. Members requested information on the locations of chaplains to assist plan their forward travel plans.

ACTION: The Secretariat to request posting locations of Chaplains be added as an additional serial to the ADF Chaplains MARS report.

19. **Chaplain endorsement and compliance checks.** The Chair led a discussion to outline the compliance activities required of chaplains and the due diligence process ahead of RACS endorsement. Members exchanged views on the implications of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, professional supervision, the idiosyncrasies of requirements from faith group to faith group and separately the compliance activities required of reserve chaplains.

ACTION: RACS members are to advise the secretariat of their annual endorsement of chaplains by 21 June 2024. Once received, the Secretariat will provide the annual endorsements to the DG CHAPS by 30 Jun 24.

20. **RAAF** s47E(d) Chair met with DG CHAP-AF to discuss s47E(d) following the last RACS and DG CHAPs meeting. The Chair conveyed to DG CHAP-AF that ‘equivalency’ needed to be built into the s47E(d) process for Airforce chaplaincy which was received positively. Members noted that more clarity is needed to determine equivalency and that a mapping exercise could be useful. A suggestion was made to grandfather existing chaplains for Airforce s47E(d) and s47E(d) equivalency requirements.

21. **RACS Strategic Plan 23/24 update.**

- a. Priority 1 – Prepare a value proposition for RACS. **COMPLETED.**
- b. Priority 2 – Contribute to KLE between ADF command and domestic and operational stakeholders. **ONGOING.** Implementation now needs to occur.
- c. Priority 3 – Continue to develop materials for Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Sikh members enhancing community engagement and recruiting opportunities and distribute within Defence. **ONGOING.** This priority was re-scoped given the existence of Defence’s Faith and Belief publication. RACS has reviewed this

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publication, recommended amendments and will provide suggestions to DG CHAPS for their review.

- d. Priority 4 – Continue to enhance ADF culture by advocating for the celebration of multifaith events. **ONGOING**. Working group has been formed to take this priority forward.
- e. Priority 5 – Brief Senior Leaders on the efficacy and impact of Religious Chaplaincy across the ADF. **ONGOING**. This priority is being embedded as a ‘business as usual function’ of RACS. Members recognised that the CDF valued this information from RACS.
- f. Priority 6 – Support DVA in providing lifetime wellbeing to Veterans through chaplaincy. **ONGOING**.
- g. Priority 7 – Develop a strategy for supporting chaplains transitioning. **COMPLETED**.
- h. Priority 8 – Positively contribute to character and ethics development in the ADF. **ONGOING**
- i. Priority 9 – Identify ADF policy and doctrine that RACS could inject into in order to contribute to capability. **ONGOING**.
- j. Priority 10 – Conduct and audit of current panels and committees that consider multicultural fora that relate to care, well-being and spiritual support and input into them as appropriate in order to become a trusted and valued voice to Defence Committees. **COMPLETED**. Chair noted that the Defence People Committee and the Culture and Diversity Steering Committee have been identified.
- k. Priority 11 – Develop a shared understanding of the terms faith, religion and spirituality within the context of the ADF. **COMPLETED**.

22. **RACS Strategic Plan 2024-2025**. There was broad discussion of the draft strategic plan and HJSSD’s guidance around the National Defence Strategy, including on recruitment, retention, and relationships. The Plan is at enclosure 2 and DGCHAPs will be asked for input prior to AVM Gunn being asked for her input.

23. **Multi faith chaplains’ kits**. Some Members had provided responses on the kits as outlined in the meeting documentation.

ACTION: Members are to provide written amendments to the kits as outlined in the meeting documents to the Secretariat by 6 June 2024.

24. **Middle East conflict – ADF implications**. Rabbi s47F noted the rise of domestic

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antisemitism but has not received reports that this is occurring inside Defence. He encouraged the community to build social cohesion and expressed his desire for peace. Imam s47F echoed the need for social cohesion and peace, and noted that Islamophobia is also occurring in Australia. The Chair thanked RACS members for their civil and respectful engagement on this topic.

25. **2025 RACS Chair election.** Rev'd s47F and Imam s47F nominated s47F s47F

with remaining RACS members which they Rev'd s47F and Imam s47F did not take part in. Rev'd s47F was elected Chair.

ACTION: The incumbent Chair will inform AVM Gunn that Rev'd s47F was elected as the incoming Chair commencing Jan 2025.

26. **Conflict of interest forms.** Members completed their forms.

ITEM 10 - REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS AND CLOSE

27. Members confirmed that the next meeting will be via virtual means and take place on Tuesday 10 and Thursday 12 September, 0900-1230. The RACS and DGCHAP meeting will take place virtually on Wednesday 11 September, 0900-1230.

s47F

**Right Reverend
Chair**

12 Sep 24

**CAPT
Secretary**

12 Sep 24

Enclosures:

1. Devotion - Rabbi s47F
2. RACS Strategic Plan 2024-2025

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RELIGIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SERVICES
DEFENCE PEOPLE GROUP

RACS MEMBER AND DGs MEETING MINUTES 6 JUN 2024

1. The meeting was conducted at Russell Offices, Canberra.

Attendees		
<i>RACS Members</i>		
1.	The Right Reverend s47F	Chair (ANG)
2.	Mr s47F	(Substitute for Buddhist Member)
3.	The Reverend s47F	(Pres)
4.	Monsignor s47F	(RC)
5.	Mr s47F	(Hindu)
6.	The Reverend s47F	(APCCB)
7.	The Reverend s47F	(UCA)
8.	Rabbi s47F	(Jewry)
9.	Sardar s47F	(Sikh)
10.	Imam s47F	(Islam)
<i>DG CHAPS</i>		
11.	PCHA s47F	DGCHAP-N
12.	PAC s47F	DGCHAP-AF
13.	PRINCHAP s47F	DGCHAP-A, Chair ADFCC
<i>Guests</i>		
12.	CHAP s47F (Present for agenda item 7.11 only)	Chief Instructor/Admin CO Defence Force Chaplains College
13.	PRINCHAP s47F (Present for agenda item 7.9 only via phone)	Lead, Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Program, Dept of Veterans' Affairs.
14.	CHAP s47F (Present for item 7.14 only via phone)	Chair, Women in Chaplaincy
<i>Secretariat support</i>		
15.	s47F	Secretariat, Staff Officer
16.	s47F	Secretariat, Admin

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17.	Mr s47F	Admin Officer, HQ JSSD, Defence People Group.
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ITEM 1 – OPENING

2. The morning devotion was provided by PRINCHAP s47F

ITEM 2 – CHAIR WELCOME

3. RACS Chair, The Right Rev'd s47F opened the meeting at 0830, welcomed all participants, and informed DG CHAPS that Rev'd s47F was elected as RACS Chair commencing Jan 2025.

ITEM 3–AGENDA AND MINUTES

4. The agenda as proposed was approved. It was moved by Monsignor s47F and seconded by Rev'd s47F that the minutes of the RACS and DG CHAP meeting held on 06 Mar 24 be confirmed. **CARRIED.**

ITEM 4 - CORRESPONDENCE

5. All present noted the correspondence as tabled.

ITEM 5 - BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS RACS and DGs MINUTES

6. Business arising from the RACS Members and DGs meeting on 06 Mar 24:
- a. Para 10.b – DGCHAP-A will email edits on the Consecration of Colours Ceremony to RACS via the Secretariat. **COMPLETED.** Further discussed at Item 7.12 of these minutes.
 - b. Para 10.d – Chair ADFCC will contact the Spiritual Health and Wellbeing Chaplain to seek information on the current plan for post deployment spiritual health and wellbeing debrief processes and convey information to the RACS Secretariat. **COMPLETED.** DGCHAP-A informed members that the funding for post deployment spiritual health and wellbeing is under consideration by Joint Operations Command.
 - c. Para 20 – DGCHAP-AF to consider reassessing the entry requirements by incorporating wording of Supervised Reflective Practice into the EP. **COMPLETED.** Item 7 of these minutes refer.
 - d. Para 21 - The Secretariat to ascertain from RACS members the names of key leader contacts in the Pacific and to provide PRINCHAP s47F with details by 30 April 24. **COMPLETED.**
 - e. Para 22 – RACS to provide any names and contact details of faith group leaders in

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Townsville, Perth, and northside of Brisbane by 18 March 2024 to s47F
via s47F **COMPLETED.**

- f. Para 26 - DGCHAPs to provide any input to inform the development of the 2024/25 RACS strategic plan by 30 April 24. Discussion during general business of these minutes refer.
- g. Para 29 – Rev'd s47F to compile and present a list of approved faith groups and the respective RACS member by 30 Apr 24. **COMPLETED.**

ITEM 7 - SERVICE AND ADFCC REPORTS

11. **Navy report** (enclosure 1). DGCHAP-N provided a brief overview of his report which was taken as read. s47E(c)

s47E(c)

DGCHAP-N updated members on the In-Service Scheme and separately on the next financial year budget. Navy will fund 2024 spiritual retreats however supplementary funding is required to support 2025 spiritual retreats.

12. **Army report** (enclosure 2). DGCHAP-A summarised his report that was taken as read. s47E(d)

s47E(d)

He encouraged RACS to be mindful of this potential growth and that opportunities may exist for part time chaplains to transition to meet full-time needs. DGCHAP-A updated members on the Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Project, proposals to update the Army Chaplaincy Corps Emblem, regional seminars, and the upcoming 10-14 June 2024 Pacific Defence Faith Network Forum to occur in New Zealand alongside the South Pacific Defence Ministers Meeting. DGCHAP-A and members discussed the proposed changes to the Dedication of Colours language. The draft language is included in the enclosed DGCHAP-A report. A short discussion ensued on how to better reflect the Judeo-Christian tradition in the dedication.

ACTION: DGCHAP-A will review and redraft the final sentence of the draft Dedication of Colours language consistent with RACS reflections on historical Judeo-Christian traditions.

14. **Air Force report** (enclosure 3). DGCHAP-AF took his report as read and noted that s47E(c)

s47E(c)

The Air Force Chaplain Branch Symposium, 30 April – 2 May 2024 was a successful activity covering a wide range of contemporary spiritual and broader Defence matters including CAF outlining the regional

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context, and his commitment to the important role of chaplains to underpin the well-being of Australian aviators. The Airforce Chaplaincy Review (AFCR) Steering Group has been re-invigorated, and DGCHAP-AF reaffirmed that the minutes of the Steering Group will be shared with RACS. On the Employment Profile (EP), it was recognised that a constructive meeting had occurred with the RACS Chair and amendments have been drafted for the new EP (Serial 14) to broaden the range of Supervised Reflective Practice programs that are equivalent to the current CPE requirement. Members engaged DGCHAP-AF on the operation of the AFCR Steering Group, how Airforce chaplains are adapting to the National Defence Strategy (NDS), and on CPE equivalency mapping and the concept of ‘grandfathering’ to allow for chaplaincy progression. DGCHAP-AF indicated that he encourages chaplains to contact him directly with queries on CPE requirements and equivalency. A broad discussion ensued on how ADF chaplaincy is posturing to implement the NDS, including the legislative frameworks that underpin reserve and fulltime service.

ACTION: DGCHAP-AF to release the CPE equivalency mapping document to RACS.

ACTION – RACS and DGCHAPs will consider at a future meeting authoritative information regarding rendering operational service, including the legislative and legal basis to call out reservists in a time of conflict. The Secretariat to liaise with Defence legal to facilitate the preparation of material.

15. **ADFCC Report** (enclosure 4). PRINCHAPs47F, Chair ADFCC summarised his report including the proposed funding arrangements for 2024 spiritual retreat funding. Participants were updated on changes to the responsibility of Joint Chaplaincy policy from Head Military Personnel to Head Joint Support Service Division, the Confidentiality Enabling Support Product, and the planned changes to specific Army and Navy Div 3 positions.

ITEM 8 – GENERAL BUSINESS

16. **RACS Strategic Plan update.** The Chair updated DG CHAPS on the new RACS Strategic Plan, including the objectives and priorities for FY 2024-2025. DGCHAPS were supportive of the Plan and were invited to provide any final reflections ahead of the Chair’s meeting with AVM Gunn (17 June 2024) where he will present the Plan.

17. **DVA Veterans’ Chaplaincy Pilot Project (VCPP) update.** CHAP s47F outlined his report as per enclosure 5 and highlighted that the Government has extended funding for the VCPP until 30 June 2025. Two Veterans’ Chaplaincy Faith Community Forums have now occurred which is a major achievement since the last RACS and

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DGCHAPS meeting. CHAP s47F welcomed RACS ongoing support to upskill faith communities and separately reported that between February and May 2024, VCPP has facilitated more than 700 interactions with more than 120 individuals. On the VCPP evaluation, a report is due to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs in August 2024. Ongoing workforce capability was raised as a challenge and planning had commenced to address this issue. The Chair confirmed that RACS continues to support VCPP efforts and has incorporated it as a line of effort in the 24/25 RACS Strategic Plan.

18. **RAAF CPE Level One.** Participants noted that this agenda item was addressed under Item 6, DGCHAP-AF report.

19. **DFCC Courses on ethics and issues.** CHAP s47F took his brief as read and affirmed that the role of the College is about contextualising existing skills of students into ADF service. Meeting participants engaged CHAP s47F on how ethics and character training is delivered given the different baseline standards of students. It was recognised as prudent to encourage prospective ADF chaplains to obtain some understanding of ethics theory ahead of joining the ADF given the ADFCC curriculum does not provide extensive coverage. CHAP s47F reminded participants that chaplains are not responsible for the ethical behaviour of ADF personnel but are rather a sounding board given commanders are accountable. CHAP s47F noted that faith groups should be providing chaplain candidates to Defence that are already grounded in their unique views. RACS were invited to assist by screening candidates for pre-existing exposure to ethics or philosophical training and guide those with deficiencies to formalised training, specific reading continuums or other appropriate development activities.

ACTION: To establish a reading continuum relevant to ethics and character development, Rev'd s47F is to provide participants with a copy of the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency's *Religious and Spiritual Diversity Guide for Operational Policy* and Monsignor s47F with another foundational publication.

20. **Recruiting Priorities Update.** DGCHAPs reports contain their recruiting priorities. They informed RACS members of the accelerated recruitment pathways including medical requirements in the context of the need to grow the ADF. DGCHAP-AF reaffirmed that he continues to attract solid numbers of prospective chaplains but does have vacancies in Darwin and welcomes women and other faith group candidates more broadly. There was discussion around the requirement for Chaplains to be ordained. It was stated that some years ago the

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Chief of Services Committee (COSC) had directed that non-ordained people could become chaplains.

ACTION – The Secretariat is to acquire a copy of the COSC Direction regarding the appointment of non-ordained chaplains. The Secretariat is to inform RACS Members and DGCHAPs of its direction.

19. **Pastoral care.** Attendees exchanged views on their observations of pastoral care-related issues across the services. DGCHAP-A noted that some training centres are under stress from a support staff perspective and that they may require more pastoral care. Owing to the geographic impacts of NDS reforms, some locations are experiencing transitional stress. DGCHAP-N noted that the s47E(c) [REDACTED]

s47E(c) [REDACTED] DGCHAP-AF reflected on the pressures of senior leaders of increased workloads and how prioritising effort was important. He also noted some anecdotal evidence of cost-of-living pressures with the increase in RAAF Welfare Trust Fund loans, and some possible uptick in domestic violence. Any streamlining of training may also come at a longer-term cost to morale and capability. Some RACS members noted that some chaplains are feeling weary considering the growing and changing workloads and that these impacts may flow through to families. It was also observed that some of these pressures are not unique to the ADF. The Chair noted that it is important for RACS members and DGCHAPs to communicate these pressures to the senior leadership group so that they are aware and mitigation strategies can be considered.

20. **Women in chaplaincy.** CHAP s47F [REDACTED] took her report as read and thanked those who participated in the successful Women in Chaplaincy Conference (Glenbrook, NSW, 20-23 May 24). CHAP s47F [REDACTED] noted the Conference was well received and was undertaken with a very positive spirit. Significant feedback was provided and a formal report, with recommendations from the Conference will be prepared by mid-July. CHAP s47F [REDACTED] highlighted that recruitment and retention of women is an ongoing effort given the retirement pipeline. RACS members and DGCHAPs thanked CHAP s47F [REDACTED] for the invite to participate in the Conference which was a rich experience. The Chair made CHAP s47F [REDACTED] aware of AVM Gunn's feedback from the RACS Metrics Report where AVM Gunn noted that she is interested in commissioning research regarding the value of women chaplaincy and what risks and barriers exist for women in Defence chaplaincy.

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27. **Faith and Belief in the ADF publication.** Participants viewed the amended draft paragraph on religious affiliation in the ADF. It was noted that some members do not disclose their affiliation for various reasons, for example fear of discrimination, stigma, safety etc. It was also noted that when ADF servicemen and women engage with chaplains, the issues raised may have some grounding in spirituality whether or known or not.

ACTION: The Secretariat will work with the Chair to draft another version of the relevant Faith and Belief paragraph to incorporate feedback received, notably issues relating to spiritual construct and rationale underpinning the reluctance of some to indicate their affiliations.

28. **Multi-faith Chaplaincy kits.** The Chair updated DGCHAPS on RACS' consideration of multi-faith chaplaincy kits. DGCHAPS noted that some service-level kits already exist with the Chair acknowledging that these kits were about supplementing existing resources.

ACTION: RACS' feedback on multi-faith chaplain kits will be sent to DGCHAPS.

29. **AD460 Review.** Attendees noted the ten AD460s received since the last meeting; these are recorded at enclosure 6.

30. DGCHAP-N notified that s47F [REDACTED] have been selected to the First Nations Reference Group and to the LGBTQI+ Reference Groups.

31. **DFR Website.** Rev'd s47F [REDACTED] presented the outcomes of his review of the DFR website to DGCHAPS and noted several gaps and inconsistencies.

ACTION: DGCHAPS are to liaise with DFR to facilitate amendments to the website.

ITEM 10 - CONFIRM ACTION ITEMS – NEXT MEETING DETAILS

31. Members confirmed that the next meeting will be via virtual means and take place on Wednesday 11 September, 0900-1230.

s47F [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Right Reverend
Chair
12 Sep 24

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
CAPT
Admin Officer
12 Sep 24

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Enclosures:

1. Navy Service Report
2. Army Service Report
3. Air Force Service Report
4. ADFCC Report
5. RACS Strategic Plan 2024/2025
6. VCPP Report
7. AD460s

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**ENCLOSURE TO
RACS AND DG MINUTES
06 JUN 2024**

AD460s registered for the RACS and DG CHAP meeting of 6 Jun 2024.

- a. Pastor s47F [REDACTED] – ACC – RAN FT
- b. Rev'd s47F [REDACTED] – Anglican – Army PT
- c. Chaplain s47F [REDACTED] – Baptist – Transfer RAN FT to RAAF FT
- d. Rev s47F [REDACTED] – Baptist – Army PT
- e. Rev s47F [REDACTED] – Baptist – Army PT/FT
- f. Rev'd s47F [REDACTED] – FIEC – Army PT
- g. OCDT s47F [REDACTED] – Hindu – Army (Transfer)
- h. PTE s47F [REDACTED] – Hindu – Army (Transfer)
- i. Fr s47F [REDACTED] – Roman Catholic – RAAF FT
- j. Pastor s47F [REDACTED] – Seventh Day Adventist – Army PT/FT

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**RELIGIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SERVICES
DEFENCE PEOPLE GROUP**

RACS MEMBER MEETING MINUTES Tue 10 and Thu 12 Sep 2024

1. The meeting was conducted virtually.

Attendees		
<i>Members</i>		
1.	The Right Reverend §47F	Chair (ANG)
2.	The Venerable §47F	(Buddhist)
3.	The Reverend §47F	(Pres)
4.	The Reverend §47F	(APCCB)
5.	Rabbi §47F	(Jewry)
6.	Sardar §47F	(Sikh)
7.	Monsignor §47F	(RC)
8.	Mr §47F	(Hindu)
9.	The Reverend §47F	(UCA)
10.	Imam §47F	(Islam)
<i>Guests</i>		
11	Air Vice Marshal Lara Gunn (0900-0930, Thu 12 Sep only)	Head Joint Services Support Division (JSSD)
<i>Secretariat support</i>		
12.	§47F	Secretariat, Staff Officer
13.	§47F	Secretariat, Admin Officer
14.	Mr §47F	HQ JSSD Support, Defence People Group.

ITEM 1 – OPENING

2. The Chair opened the meeting at 0900, confirmed attendance and the agenda.

Rev'd §47F delivered a devotion. The Chair noted the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Final Report had been published and separately advised that Chaplain §47F had concluded his tenure with the Department of Veterans' Affairs Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Program (VCP).

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ITEM 2 – RACS MEMBER UPDATE

3. RACS members shared individual updates since their last meeting.

ITEM 3 – CORRESPONDENCE

4. Members acknowledged correspondence as tabled.

ITEM 4 – MINUTES CONFIRMED

5. It was moved by Rev'd s47F and seconded by Imam s47F that the minutes of the RACS Member meeting held on 04-05 Jun 24 be confirmed. **CARRIED.**

ITEM 5 - BUSINESS ARISING FROM RACS PREVIOUS MINUTES

6. The Chair led updates on the items and actions from the 04-05 Jun 24 meeting.
- a. Para 12b. The Secretariat is to apply Defence writing standards to the current version of the Chaplain Transition Paper and provide DG CHAPs a copy ASAP. **Completed**
- b. Para 12.g s47F to contact CHAP s47F, Command Chaplain Joint Operations Command, to establish reporting to the RACS Chair on progress to operationalise the KLE protocol. **Completed.** CHAP s47F advised s47F that Joint Operations Command has commenced consideration on how to integrate religious effects into their planning – both chaplaincy services to ADF personnel and religious KLE. The scope of religious KLE will make provision for both chaplain and RACS contributions. CHAP s47F advised that this remains a work in progress.
- c. Para 12.k. The Chair, Rabbi s47F, and Venerable s47F are to form a working group to review and make suggested changes to the character policy document. The first meeting of the working group has met. Character policy will be progressed in conversation with the ADFCC. Ongoing. The lead to now be taken by Rev'd s47F and Rabbi s47F as per Priority 9 of the Strategic Plan (see below).
- d. Para 12.n. A RACS Communication subgroup will be formed; members include Imam s47F, Rev'd s47F and Rev'd s47F. **Ongoing**
- e. Para 13. s47F to provide guidance to RACS Members ahead of the next meeting on the reporting procedures for the reporting of unacceptable behaviour. **Completed**

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- f. Para 14. The RACS Working Group including RACS Chair, Reverend §47F and Reverend §47F are to draft survey questions for consideration by AVM Gunn to assist shape how Defence seeks and collects data on the religious and spiritual affiliation of ADF personnel. **Completed.** Members discussed the rationale and methodology of the survey and provided feedback on the draft questions including the nomenclature. Ideas were exchanged on the feasibility of including introductory language and ‘road-testing’ the questions.

ACTION: The RACS Survey Working Group will update the draft survey questions based on feedback provided on 10 September 2024 and the Chair will discuss with AVM Gunn.

- g. Para 18. The Secretariat to request posting locations of Chaplains be added as an additional serial to the ADF Chaplains MARS report. **Completed**
- h. Para 19. RACS members are to advise the secretariat of their annual endorsement of chaplains by 15 June 2024. Once received, the Secretariat will provide the annual endorsements to the DG CHAPS by 30 Jun 24. **Completed**
- i. Para 23. RACS Members are to provide written amendments to the kits as outlined in the meeting documents to the Secretariat by 6 June 2024. **Completed**

ITEM 6: GENERAL BUSINESS

7. The Chair led a discussion on the **RACS Strategic plan 24/25** update and leads were allocated as follows:

Priority 1: Lead: **all RACS members.** Actively seek to recruit additional high-quality chaplains from diverse backgrounds, particularly women.

Priority 2: Lead: **all RACS members.** Targeted geographical and strategic engagements for recruiting and community relationships.

Priority 3: Lead: **Rev’d §47F** Strengthen mechanisms for annual positive endorsement of ADF chaplains.

Priority 4: Lead: **Imam §47F** . Enhance ADF culture by advocating for the celebration of multi-faith events.

Priority 5: Lead: **Rabbi §47F** . Improve the consistency of pastoral and spiritual care to chaplains and their families.

Priority 6: Lead: **Right Rev’d §47F** . Support DVA in providing lifetime well-being to Veterans.

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Priority 7: Leads: **Rev'd** §47F and **Monsignor** §47F . Implement strategies to support chaplains transitioning to civilian life.

Priority 8: Lead: **Rev'd** §47F . Contribute to KLE between ADF command and domestic and operational stakeholders.

Priority 9: Leads: **Rev'd** §47F and **Rabbi** §47F . Contribute to character and ethics development, particularly to ADFCC.

Priority 10: Lead: **Rev'd** §47F . Contribute, when asked, to Defence committees that relate to care, well-being and spiritual support.

Priority 11: Lead: **Rev'd** §47F . Upskill RACS members on implications and opportunities around the National Defence Strategy (NDS).

Priority 12: Leads: **Rev'd** §47F and **Monsignor** §47F . Develop and implement strategies for supporting the NDS in faith communities in garrison towns nationally.

Following the release of the Final Report of Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, it was agreed to include the additional priority in the Strategic Plan:

Priority 13: Leads: **Rev'd** §47F and **Rev'd** §47F . Provide appropriate RACS response to the ongoing implications of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

8. **DGCHAP-AF CPE equivalency mapping document.** Rev'd §47F introduced his analysis of the Airforce Chaplaincy EP-EBC Directive. It was agreed that RACS will continue to work cooperatively with Air Force on the EP and CPE and will raise RACS' observations and questions on the Directive with DGCHAP-AF at the RACS-DG CHAPS meeting on 11 Sep 24.

Day 1 concluded at 16:30

Day 2 (Thursday 12 Sep) commenced at 0900.

ITEM 10 – HJSSD Address

9. Air Vice Marshal (AVM) Lara Gunn, Head Joint Support Services Division (HJSSD) thanked members for the opportunity to meet and discuss the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. It was conveyed to members that as the Final Report had only recently been released, Defence will need to digest the report and provide appropriate advice to the Government who were ultimately responsible to respond to the 122 recommendations. RACS were encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Report, primarily the Executive Summary. AVM Gunn noted that the Commissioners had been very considered when arriving at their conclusions and that the recommendations were clear allowing for Defence to focus efforts consistent with how the Government intends to respond. Defence had commenced early consideration of the governance arrangements required to ensure the organisation is postured to implement recommendations including their sub-elements; Defence is responsible for approximately 70 recommendations.

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10. The Chair noted that chaplaincy was not significantly referenced in the Final Report and that RACS will write to all chaplains thanking them for their important work. In response, AVM Gunn concurred, thanked RACS for their efforts acknowledging that RACS and chaplains engaged in difficult and uncomfortable work. RACS exchanged views with AVM Gunn on how the Committee may assist Defence and Government addressing the Royal Commission's findings. Some members noted that RACS and chaplains have skills and experience responding to sexual misconduct, moral injury, suicide prevention and suicide postvention; and separately that RACS had excellent connections into the community which could be leveraged. AVM acknowledged and thanked the Committee for these insights which were not self-evident but nonetheless very important. Further, it was recognised that chaplains can inform behaviours, support systems and incident policies. The Chair indicated that having the RACS Faith Group member write to their national faith group with information on the Royal Commission and the types of support services that are available, such as the Defence Member and Family Helpline, would be beneficial. The faith groups would then be able to provide members, veterans and their families who seek their support with appropriate information.

11. AVM Gunn supported this noting the importance of families and 'off-base' community groups. She undertook to keep the RACS Chair abreast of developments with regard to the Government's response to the Royal Commission. In conclusion AVM Gunn noted that Royal Commission was profoundly important and Defence personnel and veterans should expect and deserve positive changes.

GENERAL BUSINESS

12. **Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans Suicide report.** After AVM Gunn departed there was general discussion on the broad details of the place and work of chaplaincy in the Report.

ACTION: RACS members are to provide the Chair with any views on relevant Royal Commission recommendations for raising with AVM Gunn.

ACTION: The Chair to test with AVM Gunn if it would be of assistance to Defence in considering the Royal Commission that RACS prepare an information paper on how faith groups approach moral injury, suicide prevention and suicide postvention.

14. **RACS Member travel.** The travel budget for 24/25 was discussed and members were encouraged to review travel plans and furnish Secretariat with any updates. RACS were also advised of the plan to host a RACS meeting in Townsville in 2025; members were encouraged to leverage that meeting for outreach to chaplains.

ACTION: RACS members to review their planned travel schedules and provide any updates to Mr s47F by 15 Oct. They are to include Jan – Jun 25 travel.

15. **Faith Group retreats.** Members acknowledged that the Administrative Instruction for the 2024 Spiritual Retreats had been promulgated.

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16. **RACS MINSUBs for reappointments.** s47F [redacted] advised that all relevant appointment briefs have been submitted for ministerial endorsement.

17. **RACS emblem.** The Chair explained the rationale for RACS needing their own logo and drew the Committee's attention to the design options. It was agreed that the version without any symbol be adopted.

ACTION: The Secretariat is to facilitate graphic design work on the agreed RACS symbol and share with the Committee for appropriate use.

ITEM 10 - REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS AND CLOSE

18. Members confirmed that the next meeting will be in Canberra on 12-14 November 2024. The first meeting in 2025 is scheduled to occur on 25-27 February.

s47F
[redacted]

**Right Reverend
Chair**

12 Nov 24

s47F
[redacted]

**CAPT
Secretary**

12 Nov 24

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**RELIGIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SERVICES
DEFENCE PEOPLE GROUP**

RACS MEMBER AND DGs MEETING MINUTES 11 SEP 2024

1. The meeting was conducted virtually.

ITEM 1 – OPENING

2. The morning devotion was provided by DGCHAP-AF s47F .

Attendees		
<i>RACS Members</i>		
1.	The Right Reverend s47F	Chair (ANG)
2.	The Venerable s47F	(Buddhist)
3.	The Reverend s47F	(Pres)
4.	Monsignor s47F	(RC)
5.	Mr s47F	(Hindu)
6.	The s47F	(APCCB)
7.	The Reverend s47F	(UCA)
8.	Rabbi s47F	(Jewry)
9.	s47F	(Sikh)
10.	Imam s47F	(Islam)
<i>DG CHAPS</i>		
11.	PCHA s47F	DGCHAP-N
12.	PRINCHAP s47F	DGCHAP-A, Chair ADFCC
13.	PAC s47F	DGCHAP-AF
<i>Guests</i>		
<i>Secretariat support</i>		
15.	s47F	Secretariat, Staff Officer
17.	s47F	Secretariat, Admin

ITEM 2 – CHAIR WELCOME

3. RACS Chair, The Right Rev'd s47F opened the meeting at 0900 and conveyed appreciation to all participants for attending during a busy period as Defence started to digest the final report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

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ITEM 3–AGENDA AND MINUTES

4. The agenda as proposed was approved. It was explained that CHAP s47F indicated that she did not wish to provide a women in chaplaincy report at this meeting, and PRINCHAP s47F had concluded his role with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) managing the Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Program and will not provide an update. It was moved by Imam s47F and seconded by Rev'd s47F that the minutes of the RACS and DG CHAP meeting held on 06 Jun 24 were a true and accurate record. **CARRIED.**

ITEM 4 - CORRESPONDENCE

5. All present noted the correspondence as tabled.

ITEM 5 - BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS RACS and DGs MINUTES

6. Business arising from the RACS Members and DGs meeting on 06 Jun 24:
- a. **Para 13.** DGCHAP-A will review and redraft the final sentence of the draft Dedication of Colours language consistent with RACS reflections on the historical Judeo-Christian connection to colours. **Completed.**
 - b. **Para 14.** DGCHAP-AF to release the CPE equivalency mapping document to RACS. **Completed**
 - c. **Para 14.** RACS and DGCHAPs will consider at a future meeting authoritative information regarding rendering operational service, including the legislative and legal basis to call out reservists in a time of conflict. **Completed.** Meeting participants were provided with a summary of advice from Director Military Administrative and Discipline Law (enclosure 1).
 - d. **Para 19.** To establish a reading continuum relevant to ethics and character development, Rev'd s47F is to provide participants with a copy of the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency's Religious and Spiritual Diversity Guide for Operational Policy and Monsignor s47F with another foundational publication. **In progress**
 - e. **Para 20.** The Secretariat is to acquire a copy of the COSC Direction regarding the appointment of non-ordained chaplains. The Secretariat is to inform RACS Members and DGCHAPs of its direction. **Completed.** s47F gave an oral update from the Directive, notably that COSC agreed to enable and sustain chaplaincy through broadening the chaplaincy recruitment base, improving the quality of chaplain and removing potential inhibitors to chaplaincy engagement.

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- f. **Para 22.** DGCHAPs are to liaise with DFR to facilitate amendments to the website. It was noted that some inconsistencies remained and that work is **ongoing**.
- g. **Para 27.** The Secretariat will work with the Chair to draft another version of the relevant Faith and Belief paragraph to incorporate feedback received, notably issues relating to spiritual construct and rationale underpinning the reluctance of some to indicate their affiliations. **Completed.**
- h. **Para 28.** RACS' feedback on multi-faith chaplain kits will be sent to DGCHAPs. **Completed.**

ITEM 7 - SERVICE AND ADFCC REPORTS

11. **Navy Report** (enclosure 2). DGCHAP-N provided a brief overview of his report which was taken as read. He noted that s47E(c) [REDACTED], including in the s47E(c) [REDACTED]. DGCHAP-N discussed the In-Service Scheme, resourcing implications for supporting reserve chaplain candidates from remote areas, SERCAT transfers, 2025 postings, deployments and budget pressures. Spiritual Care Australia (SCA) membership has been extended to the whole of Navy Chaplaincy Branch; more policy work is needed to consider SCA accreditation suitability. RACS shared views with DGCHAPs on the SCA and professional supervision, including for MSWO and reservists.

ACTION: DGCHAP-N will share information on SCA to RACS members.

12. **Army Report** (enclosure 3). DGCHAP-A summarised his report that was taken as read. s47E(c) [REDACTED] On the Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Project, participants discussed the Project following PRINCHAP s47F [REDACTED]. DGCHAP-A provided a summary of matters including Army Chaplaincy Corps Emblem, career management, Regional Seminars, and the Pacific Defence Faith Network. On the latter, RACS will be invited to engage with the Network.

14. **Air Force Report** (enclosure 4). s47E(c) [REDACTED] s47E(c) [REDACTED] s47E(c) [REDACTED]. The reinvigorated AFCR Steering Group was progressing well; it was noted that some of the recommendations are being reviewed to ensure that they are fit for purpose. DGCHAP-AF noted that he will be focusing on preparedness over the next 12 months. He also shared that the DGCHAP-AF Strategic Intent had been refreshed and he will

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provide RACS with a copy. A Well-being Action Plan will be established by the end of the year which is aimed to further improve morale and develop expertise on well-being amongst chaplains.

15. Rev'd s47F led a discussion regarding RACS' review of the Air Force Chaplaincy EP-EBC Directive and undertook to provide DGCHAP-AF with written feedback for consideration. DGCHAP-AF acknowledged and signalled his desire to be on the same page as RACS. In that context, DGCHAP-AF would welcome the opportunity to further brief RACS on the Air Force Credentialling Process.

16. There was a discussion on the comprehensiveness of the Air Force Suitability Assessment Form. DGCHAP-AF indicated it is an internal document which serves Air Force well.

ACTION: DGCHAP-AF will provide his Strategic Intent to RACS.

ACTION: RACS (via Rev'd s47F) will provide DGCHAP-AF with RACS' reflections and feedback on the EP-EBC Directive.

ACTION: DGCHAP-AF will share the Air Force Suitability Assessment Form with RACS and the other DG-CHAPS, noting that it is not for wider dissemination.

ACTION: The RACS Secretariat is to organise a time with DGCHAP-AF to facilitate an Air Force chaplaincy credentialing briefing session with RACS.

17. **ADFCC Report** (enclosure 5). PRINCHAP s47F, Chair ADFCC summarised his report which was taken as read.

ITEM 7 – GENERAL BUSINESS

18. **Recruiting Priorities Update.** As noted in the DGCHAPs Reports, with DGCHAP-AF adding that Canberra and Darwin remain priority regions for reserve chaplains for Air Force. The Chair acknowledged and undertook that RACS will track candidate opportunities.

19. **Pastoral Care.** Meeting participants exchanged views on options for sabbaticals, and separately on the impacts on morale of being 'on call' and how chaplains (full time and reservists) can be remunerated. DGCHAP-N and DGCHAP-A provided an overview of their respective processes.

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20. **Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Final Report.** DGCHAPS indicated that they were still digesting the report and made some broad comments about the Report highlighting issues with moral injury and the complaint handling processes which will require further reflection. Participants noted that the Report did not have significant references to ADF chaplaincy but nonetheless it was important that chaplains' contribution to capability and the work they undertake is valued and recognised. A free-flowing conversation ensued culminating in the following actions:

ACTION: RACS will send a letter of support to ADF Chaplains in the context of the Royal Commission.

ACTION: RACS to send a letter of thanks to PRINCHAP s47F regarding his service progressing the Veterans' Pilot Chaplaincy Program.

21. **Draft Defence chaplaincy survey questions.** The Chair explained that a RACS subcommittee was formed to develop survey questions to improve data on religion, spirituality, and support systems in the ADF noting the last survey was undertaken in 2021. The Chair indicated that draft questions that were provided to meeting participants had been further refined following reflection by RACS on Tue 10 Sep. The Chair will provide AVM Gunn the survey questions for consideration.

ITEM 8 - CONFIRM ACTION ITEMS – NEXT MEETING DETAILS

22. Members confirmed that the next RACS and DGs meeting will be in Canberra on 14 November 2024. The first RACS and DGs meeting in 2025 is scheduled to occur on 27 February 2025 following the RACS Members meeting 25-26 February 2025.

s47F

Right Reverend
Chair

14 Nov 24

s47F

CAPT
Admin Officer

14 Nov 24

Enclosures:

1. Summary of advice from Director Military Administrative and Discipline Law.
2. Navy Service Report
3. Army Service Report
4. Air Force Service Report
5. ADFCC Report