



Gay & Lesbian Rights Lobby Inc

For immediate release

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Government must recognise same-sex relationships in the ADF

Following its decision to allow women to serve on the frontline of the Australian armed forces, the NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby has called on the Federal Government and the Department of Defence to further enact equal treatment within the ADF by recognising same sex couples.

Despite Lesbians and Gay men being able to openly serve in the forces since 1992, the Department of Defence does not recognise same-sex relationships for the purposes of spousal and family entitlements. This means that same sex couples are denied access to entitlements such as death and bereavement benefits, partner assistance in the event of relocation, and separation allowance.

The NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby has written to the Minister for Defence, Sen. Robert Hill, and Minister for Veteran Affairs and Assisting the Minister for Defence, De-Anne Kelly, calling on them to recognise same-sex relationships within the ADF.

Julie McConnell, co-convenor, said: "A significant proportion of women who will join the frontline will be in same-sex relationships and families. The Government must ensure that they have the same access to entitlements as heterosexual partners, including the provision of family-friendly employment conditions such as education assistance and spousal support."

She added: "Lesbians and gay men who serve in the defence forces, work for the benefit of our country. It is time that the Government ceases to discriminate them on the basis of their sexuality, and gives them the entitlements and benefits afforded to all other defence force personnel".

For further comment, please contact either Julie McConnell.