



# Operation Fruitful Tree

STRATEGIC PLAN

2015- 2019



# Operation Fruitful Tree

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# Operation Fruitful Tree

## INTRODUCTION

1. At the Military Christian Fellowship (MCF) AGM of 2010 it was agreed to update OPERATION FRUITFUL TREE annually to reflect achievements and goals of MCF.
2. OPERATION FRUITFUL TREE was a refocussing and reorganisation of MCF in order to enable a resurgence of MCF's ministry within Defence. MCF has undergone significant change over the last five years in order to meet the vision God has for it and the needs of its members. This five year Strategic Plan Update, which builds upon the OPERATION FRUITFUL TREE STRATEGIC PLAN 2010 – 2014 is designed to lay out a direction and vision for MCF for the next five years.
3. This plan firstly re-examines the environment in which MCF operates. In particular, it re-examines the strengths of MCF and the opportunities that it faces. From this starting point, the plan outlines the vision, mission, and objectives of MCF. It also considers MCF's organisation to achieve these goals. Finally, it expresses MCF's plan for developing its membership to further enhance the Fellowship.
4. The plan has a horizon of 2019. MCF acknowledges that ministry in Defence is a marathon, not a sprint, since God's frame of reference is in millennia rather than months. MCF is primarily a volunteer organisation and therefore needs time to implement change. Therefore, most major adjustments are not attributed to deadlines.
5. Finally, this plan belongs not to MCF but to God. All successes resulting from the implementation of this plan are His and the MCF Council gives Him thanks and praise for what He is doing with and within Defence through MCF. The Council, and specifically the Chairman, are responsible for the implementation of this plan.

## MCF'S ENVIRONMENT

6. The Australian Defence Force (ADF) has 60 000 permanent members and 40 000 active and standby reserves. Of this total force, 2500 are deployed on operations around the world. The ADF is fortunate to have Chaplaincy support across all three services including in support of deployed personnel. Additionally, there are approximately 30,000 Australian Public Service (APS) personnel who work within the Defence Department. For the remainder of this plan ADF and APS personnel will be referred to as Defence. Other elements of MCF's environment are outlined below.

### The Enemy

7. MCF's enemy is not flesh and blood. Satan does not want Defence to have a strong Christian influence. He also does not want Defence Christians to strengthen their personal faith through their service to their nation. To prevent this, he will attack Defence Christians by:
  - a. direct persecution for their beliefs
  - b. isolating Chaplains and by encouraging spiritual passivity
  - c. weakening moral values within Defence
  - d. encouraging separation of the varied military Christian fellowships, thereby detracting from a unified purpose in Christ
  - e. secularising the role of Chaplains.



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## KEY ORGANISATIONS

### Supporters

8. MCF has the following supporting forces:

#### a. The Power of God

The eternal battle is won. All authority and power in heaven and on earth has been given unto Christ.

#### b. Christian Chaplaincy

Chaplains, whilst from varying denominational backgrounds, all have spiritual welfare of Christians as part of their mission. In the past some elements of Chaplaincy and MCF have not been able to work effectively together in His service through human failure on both sides. We believe God wants MCF and Chaplains to work together.

#### c. Other Defence Christian Ministries

Other Defence Christian Ministries supported by MCF are:

- i. Everyman's Welfare Services
- ii. Focus Military Ministries
- iii. Australian Navigators
- iv. Red Shield Defence Services (Salvation Army)
- v. Solid Rock Ministries (for military wives).

All the above ministries have programs designed to support and encourage Christians in Defence. These groups link through the Fellowship of Christian Military Ministries (FCMM), which is supported by Association for Christian Conferences Teaching and Service (ACCTS) and Association of Military Christian Fellowships (AMCF). These groups and MCF agree to love, pray, encourage, support, meet, communicate, coordinate, and cooperate with one another.

#### d. Non-affiliated Christians

Many Christians in Defence do not seek fellowship or support within Defence and focus their needs at community based ministries. When these Christians are posted or deployed overseas they often need to establish new support or endure without such support. Every Christian in Defence is worthy of MCF's support.

### Neutrals

9. Defence is a secular organisation with the majority of people being uninterested in MCF. In some cases they will be antipathetic towards MCF, but in most cases they will just be uninterested until two things occur:

- a. An MCF member reaches out into their life on a personal level
- b. The Spirit of God moves their heart towards Jesus and they discover MCF as a support in their workplace.



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10. There are very few 'non-Christians', there are only potential Christians. This is particularly evident on operations and in times of duress and danger when potential Christians are forced by circumstances to consider their spiritual position.

## STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MCF

11. Strengths and opportunities are outlined as follows:

- a. MCF is based on the unalterable truth of the Word of God.
- b. MCF members are usually, due to their military ethos, progressive, goal-driven, and can-do.
- c. MCF is the major lay-ministry 'brand name' in Defence and has enjoyed a high profile in the past. It has recognition within the highest appointments within Defence including the CDF, VCDF, and Service Chiefs.
- d. MCF members are relatively financially secure compared to the rest of society.
- e. MCF is accredited internationally through AMCF and has a reputation for achievement and influence.
- f. MCF enjoys the patronage of senior Defence officers and officials. Several star-ranked officers are also supporters of MCF and intentional military Christians.
- g. MCF is a national organisation, with members located throughout Australia and overseas.
- h. MCF has members who have limited direct support from a Chaplain of their denomination.
- i. MCF is accepted by all mainstream Christian denominations, and especially those represented by the Chaplaincy.
- j. MCF possesses a reasonably large, untapped, retired membership base.
- k. Staff Worker access to Defence office space and IT equipment.
- l. MCF is a registered charity with the ATO and has Deductible Gift Recipient status.
- m. The study of Ethics is receiving a high profile in Defence.
- n. During times of high Defence operational tempo, support is needed for those Christians deployed for considerable time from their usual Christian networks.
- o. MCF has established a partnership with Solid Rock Ministries to deliver Christian support ministry to wives of Defence members.
- p. MCF can support the ADF Faith Under Fire Course DVD series which the then CDF (GEN Hurley) sponsored and released in July 2011. In consultation with Chaplains, MCF members able to lead groups in studying the series.



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## MCF'S VISION

MCF envisages that by 2019 all Defence Christians will be encouraged and equipped aided by MCF to both practice their beliefs and effectively witness, in a military context, to their non-believing workmates.

## MCF'S MISSION

**To promote Christian faith in the Australian Defence Organisation**

- **Purpose.** MCF believes God desires a vibrant, lay-led Christian ministry to support Christians as they serve the nation, and to reach souls for Christ. Many examples in the Bible demonstrate how God has used military people for spiritual ends. We believe this is because military service and Christian service are similar in the ethos, values, and sacrifice required. God does not **need** MCF to work His will in Defence, but he has **chosen** to use it. Conversely, we **need** God in order to prosper as an organisation but must **choose** how to best serve Him, both as individuals and as a ministry.
- **Method.** MCF members will labour side-by-side with the Chaplaincy in ensuring the ethical and moral values of Defence are reinforced, whilst providing personal friendship and fellowship to individual Chaplains. To deliver MCF's ministry program to its members, MCF will have a paid full-time ministry worker by 2019, supported by the National Executive and part-time and volunteer ministry workers. The full-time staff worker will focus on delivering MCF's ministry objectives and creating MCF small groups on Defence bases, establishments and in *ad hoc* groups deployed overseas while the National Executive will provide the enabling functions of management and oversight. Finally MCF will design and promote Defence-specific resources for evangelism, prayer support, family support, and local leadership such as Cross Fire, Deployment Packs, study resources, Seminar DVDs, and through training such as seminars and regional events.
- **Endstate.** Christians, Chaplaincy services, and associated military Christian groups will be equipped, supported and inspired to build the Kingdom of God in the Australian Defence Organisation.

## OBJECTIVES OF MCF

12. MCF, through prayerful consideration has chosen to pursue three ministry objectives and one corporate objective:

- **Objective One:** To be an instrument through which others in Defence are led to Christ.
- **Objective Two:** To equip, support and inspire Christians in Defence, especially when deployed.
- **Objective Three:** To actively support the ministry of Defence Christian Chaplains.
- **Objective Four:** To manage MCF legally, effectively and efficiently.

### **OBJECTIVE ONE: TO BE AN INSTRUMENT THROUGH WHICH OTHERS IN DEFENCE ARE LED TO CHRIST**

13. Evangelism is a responsibility commissioned to all Christians by Jesus Himself. MCF's focus is on workplace evangelism that demonstrates personal qualities and ethos that is attractive to seekers. Due to cultural influences inherent in a defence environment, MCF believes that friendship evangelism alongside small group fellowships are more likely to result in enduring commitments to God.



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## Key Tasks

14. Key tasks for Objective One are as follows:

- a. Offer a variety of evangelism tools for MCF members which are readily available for loan through the MCF office, or small groups. These include packages such as 'Faith Under Fire', 'Alpha for the Forces', as well as one-on-one workbooks.
- b. Support the 'Faith Under Fire' and 'Alpha for the Forces' program at Defence bases and establishments, as well as other Chaplaincy-approved group evangelistic programs within Defence.
- c. Partner with local Chaplaincy to seek spiritual and financial support for MCF small groups.
- d. Profile evangelism and spiritual growth tools for MCF members at MCF seminars.
- e. Develop an evangelism page and load reviews of evangelism tools on the MCF website.
- f. Develop a program to assist MCF small groups to conduct evangelism activities.
- g. Develop a duty statement for MCF-A Representatives and update statements and representatives annually on the MCF website.

## **OBJECTIVE TWO: TO EQUIP, SUPPORT AND INSPIRE CHRISTIANS IN DEFENCE, ESPECIALLY WHEN DEPLOYED**

15. Defence is often at times a challenging environment to practice the Christian faith and MCF members often express their need for support and encouragement. In addition, due to the mobile nature of the military life, Christian's opportunity for development within a community based church can be limited. During times of high operational tempo, Defence deployed members may feel isolated and MCF will concentrate resources to support Christians in these often arduous and dangerous circumstances.

## Key Tasks

16. Key tasks for Objective Two are as follows:

- a. Appoint a 'Deployment Member' who can establish a means of supporting deployed Christians by:
  - i. Identifying who is deploying, or providing the means for Christians to identify themselves.
  - ii. Developing a web contact form for deployed Christians on the Defence Restricted Network (DRN) that will allow direct support to deployed Christians.
  - iii. Developing a web page with resources to encourage and equip deployed small groups on request that includes a 'Deployment Handbook'.
  - iv. Reviewing the 'Deployment Handbook' to ensure that it provides utility to deployed Christians.
  - v. Establishing liaison with deploying Chaplains through the Chaplain at HQJOC.
  - vi. Through the MCF Staff Worker, gathering feedback on deployed experiences for production in Crossfire and MCF Studies.





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- vii. Engaging the MCF Staff Worker with Solid Rock Ministries to encourage Christian support to spouses who feel isolated by the deployment of their main Christian supporter.
- b. Continue to develop and maintain the MCF Prayer Program through a MCF 'Prayer Coordinator' that includes the following:
  - i. National Day of Prayer for Defence
  - ii. A monthly prayer calendar
  - iii. A process to respond to non-routine prayer requests
  - iv. Maintain an MCF 'Prayer Warrior' group to cover MCF with intercessory prayer.
- c. Provide encouraging and uplifting literature to members via literature such as *Crossfire* and the *MCF Newsletter*.
- d. Promulgate the MCF Code of Conduct annually as part of *Crossfire* and through contact with MCF-A Reps and Small Group leaders.
- e. Establish and maintain monthly personal communication with members by the Staff Worker in the form of emails and website information.
- f. Track, monitor, and encourage MCF financial supporters through return blessings and encouragement.
- g. Maintain a comprehensive membership list and provide contact details of MCF-A Reps online so that new personnel can contact local MCF members.
- h. Investigate the role that retired members near key Defence areas around Australia can play as mentors and stable contact points for newly arriving Christians.
- i. Encourage, inspire and equip MCF members through the Defence Christians Dinner and MCF Seminar.
- j. Engage with small group leaders at the MCF-A Representative Virtual Conference to inspire representatives and promote evangelical tools.
- k. Annually organise and promote the *National Day of Prayer for Defence*.

## **OBJECTIVE THREE: TO ACTIVELY SUPPORT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE CHRISTIAN CHAPLAINS**

17. Defence is fortunate to have the support of Chaplaincy to foster spiritual and religious ministry within Defence. Increasingly, the Chaplains minister in a pluralistic context, and not all Chaplains are of the Christian Faith. Nevertheless, MCF has a special responsibility to actively support the ministry of Christian Chaplaincy. Chaplains are a key component the Lord uses to minister to people within Defence.

18. Chaplaincy's focus is spiritual; however they also have wide-ranging secular duties to ensure the mental and spiritual welfare of Defence members. In addition, they often have pastoral responsibilities for Service Chapels. MCF members should support and encourage their local Chaplains by partnering with them to build the Kingdom of God in Defence

19. In the recent past, MCF and the Chaplaincy have increased their dialogue and understanding, and mutual benefit activities at the local level have become common.





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## Key Tasks

20. Key tasks for Objective Three are as follows:

- a. Promulgate the MCF Code of Conduct annually to Principal Chaplains and Religious Advisory Committee to the Services (RACS) members to reinforce that MCF regulates groups and ensures compatibility and consistency across Defence.
- b. Establish liaison annually by the Chairman and Staff Worker with Principal Chaplains to discuss concerns and opportunities for cooperation.
- c. Encourage MCF members to develop a supportive relationship with their local Chaplain(s).
- d. Promote Chaplaincy ministry to MCF members for member support, understanding and prayer.
- e. Promote MCF to Chaplains through curriculum input to the Basic Chaplaincy Course when invited and through presentations to Chaplaincy Retreats.
- f. Provide access for Chaplains to MCF resources through the MCF website, and electronic and written literature such as the *Crossfire* magazine.
- g. Review the content of Deployment Packs and seek Principal Chaplain comment for improvement.
- h. Improve the distribution of MCF Deployment Packs to deployed Chaplains.
- i. Continue to have a Chaplain's representative on the MCF council.
- j. Establish and maintain credibility with the Chaplaincy through ongoing dialogue and invitations to be part of MCF activities.

## OBJECTIVE FOUR: TO MANAGE MCF LEGALLY, EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY

21. To meet the core ministry objectives, MCF needs to pursue enabling objectives to ensure it is managed effectively and corporately in an effective and efficient manner, meets legal requirements, and furthers MCF's influence within Defence. In all of its corporate dealings, MCF will model exemplary business ethics and adhere to the highest moral standards.

## Key Tasks

22. Key tasks for Objective Four are as follows:

- a. Elect a National Council annually and appoint ministry workers as God provides to meet ministry goals.
- b. Maintain legitimacy with senior Defence leadership and Service Chiefs.
- c. Continue transparent accounting practices and meet annual ATO self-audit requirements for Registered Charity and Deductible Gift Recipient status.
- d. Maintain a secure membership database on the DRN to ensure records are not open to public access.
- e. Report annually on the achievement of this plan to the AGM.
- f. Maintain an accredited constitution as a not-for-profit organisation.



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## NON-CORE OBJECTIVES

23. In addition, MCF acknowledges God's leading towards the following non-core objectives and tasks:

- a. To support Christianity in the wider ADO including tithing to other Defence Christian ministries.
- b. To support international MCF's, particularly:
  - i. Raise funds to support regional delegates to attend the AMCF SW Pacific Regional Conference in 2017.
  - ii. Support ACCTS Interaction visits to Australia as requested.
  - iii. Include AMCF prayer requests online and within the MCF prayer calendar.
- c. To support other military ministries active in Defence, particularly:
  - i. Chairman, and/or other representatives, to lead/attend FCMM annually.
  - ii. Include prayer requests online and within the MCF prayer calendar as requested.
  - iii. Adhere to FCMM Covenant.
- d. Support the South-West Pacific AMCF conference.
- e. To advocate on moral and ethical issues that impact upon Christian faith in Defence.

## THE ORGANISATION OF MCF

24. MCF's activities will be coordinated by a National Council, led by the Chairman, and supported by appointed volunteer staff. The routine management of MCF will be conducted by the MCF Executive. The MCF Staff Worker is employed to deliver MCF's three ministry objectives, as well as creating and maintaining MCF small groups within Defence workplace/bases and deployed forces. The MCF Patron will continue to provide advice to the Council and advocate to senior Defence leadership as required. The MCF Communications Plan is presented at Annex A.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF MCF MEMBERSHIP

25. MCF values all Defence personnel who have a heart for building the Kingdom of God in Defence. To assist MCF in understanding the target audience and to ensure that we provide the appropriate level of support and encouragement, MCF has defined three levels of target audience. In no way does this reflect upon a person's Christian maturity or level of spirituality, it simply informs MCF as to the nature of the target audience so that resources can be targeted appropriately to provide the most effective utility for all Defence Christians. The three levels of target audiences are as follows:

- a. **Christian community.** Interested in receiving MCF resources, communications and news. They may attend a MCF group if readily available and convenient to their location and timetable. They may be heavily involved in their community church activities. The majority of MCF members are in this category.
- b. **Supporters.** This audience may regularly attend a MCF group and would seek out a MCF group when posted to a new location. They would attend MCF events in their area. They may give financially and are interested in organisational details such as Annual General Meetings (AGMs).



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- c. **Workers.** Christians who have a particular passion for Defence and have taken their involvement to a deeper, personal level. They feel led by the Lord to lead MCF groups and events and offer themselves for National and Regional-level appointments. They give regularly to MCF and take a keen interest in the corporate management of MCF and the appointment of key personnel.

The MCF Application Form is presented at Annex B.

26. **Staff Worker.** To resource our ministry objectives we employ a Staff Worker. One of the key activities of the Staff Worker is to encourage members to move into greater levels of involvement. In order to give members opportunities to provide greater support, MCF will continue the 'MCF Centurion Program'.

27. **The Centurion program.** The Centurion program invites members to commit financially and prayerfully. Signature items such as pins, mugs, and books, will aid Centurions to advertise MCF and to create opportunities to encourage other Christians to take advantage of MCF's resources. By 2019, MCF seeks to have more than 100 Centurions who are actively supportive of the ministry.



## CONCLUSION

28. Christian lay-ministry is a big job in Defence; that is why God has given this task to us and our fellow military Christian ministries. He has called us and He will equip us. MCF must now, as Joshua did, stop thinking about it, stand up, and cross the Jordan River in faith.

### Annexes:

- A. Communications Plan
- B. Application for Membership of MCF



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# Operation Fruitful Tree

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## ANNEX A

### COMMUNICATION PLAN

1. MCF's goal is to develop a comprehensive communications plan to support OPERATION FRUITFUL TREE. In the interim, this annex provides a summary of the communication tasks by objective.

2. The MCF website has the following URL: <http://www.mcf-a.org.au/>

3. A replica MCF website is planned to be established on the DRN to meet the needs of deployed Christians and other serving members across Defence.

4. MCF has established a presence on a couple of social media sites, namely, Face Book and Twitter. The Media and Outreach Officer and MCF Staff Worker are the principal managers of these social media sites.

5. Members of MCF assent to the following Statement of Belief based on the Nicene Creed:

*I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.*

*For us men (meaning all) and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sin. I look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.*

*I believe that the Holy Scripture is inspired by God and is the authority in all matters of faith, teaching, activities and personal conduct concerning MCF*

6. Communication tasks by objective are as follows:

a. **To be an instrument through which others in Defence are led to Christ.**

- Load reviews of evangelism tools on the MCF website
- Develop a program to assist MCF small groups to conduct evangelism activities.

b. **To equip, support and inspire Christians in Defence, especially when deployed.**

- Develop a web contact form for deployed Christians on the Defence Restricted Network (DRN) that will allow direct support to deployed Christians
- Develop a web page with resources to encourage and equip deployed small groups on request that includes a 'Deployment Pack'.



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- c. **To actively support the ministry of Defence Christian Chaplains.**
  - Provide access for Chaplains to MCF resources through the MCF website, and electronic and written literature such as the Crossfire magazine.
- d. **To manage MCF legally, effectively and efficiently.**
  - Maintain a secure membership database on the DRN to ensure records are not open to public access.



# Operation Fruitful Tree

ANNEX B



## Application for Membership of MCF-A

To ensure that members of MCF agree to the basics of Christian doctrine, applicants must, in accordance with the MCF Constitution, sign the following Statement of Belief. This Statement is based on the 381 AD Nicene Creed; the most commonly used statement of Christian faith in the history of the church:

*I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit He was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. I believe in one holy catholic (meaning universal) and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sin. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. I believe that Holy Scripture is inspired by God and is the authority in all matters of faith, teaching, activities and personal conduct concerning MCF.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (write 'I agree' if electronic copy)  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Employee No: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rank or Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_  
Defence Site: \_\_\_\_\_ Building, Floor, Room Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street: \_\_\_\_\_ Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: work (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_ home (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Email work: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email home: \_\_\_\_\_

I apply for **Ordinary Membership**: (tick one)

- I am a member of the ADF: Army
- I am a member of the ADF: Navy
- I am a member of the ADF: Air Force
- I am a member of the APS
- I am the spouse of a member of the ADF: Air Force, Army, Navy, or APS (circle one)
- I am the spouse of an ex member of the ADF: Air Force, Army, Navy, or APS (circle one)
- I am an accredited representative of an ADF philanthropic organisation:  
(which one?) \_\_\_\_\_
- I am a civilian who currently works alongside ADF personnel at:  
(Location) \_\_\_\_\_
- I am a civilian who has previously worked alongside ADF personnel for at least one year at:  
(Location) \_\_\_\_\_
- I am currently residing in Australia and am a member/ex member of the Armed Forces of  
(name of country) \_\_\_\_\_

I am none of the above and apply for **Associate Membership**; therefore, I cannot vote at the AGM.

**Return to:** [mcf.office@defence.gov.au](mailto:mcf.office@defence.gov.au) or:  
Dept. of Defence, Military Christian Fellowship-Australia,  
Campbell Park Offices CP3-1-160,  
Northcott Drive,  
CAMPBELL ACT 2612