



MEDIA RELEASE

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Any revocation decision premature

The Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) says any decision to revoke the Meritorious Unit Citation (MUC) for the Special Operations Task Group, would be premature.

RSL National President Greg Melick said considering views expressed by the Prime Minister, other leaders, ex-service organisations and respected serving and ex-service personnel, any decision should await the final outcome of any further investigations and proceedings.

“A revocation of the citation is all-encompassing and the RSL is extremely concerned at the message this would send and the impact on the personnel and veterans who are affected by this action,” Major General Melick said.

“We appreciate the difficulties faced by the Chief of the Defence Force, General Angus Campbell, in that an MUC is a commendation awarded to a unit, not individuals, reflecting the unit’s collective actions, some of which, when considering the aggregate of the matters raised in Justice Brereton’s report, may if substantiated, warrant the removal of the MUC. The current regulations do not allow the removal of an MUC from designated individuals. Perhaps consideration can be given to amending the regulations to allow most individuals to continue wearing the citation if at the end of the day it is removed from the unit?”

“As we said on November 20, all personnel suspected of alleged war crimes in Afghanistan are entitled to due process and in line with this position, any removal of decorations and citations should await the final resolution of the pending investigations.

“The RSL views the allegations as extremely serious but actions such as this impact adversely on veterans who served in Afghanistan, the vast majority of whom are in no way involved in the alleged conduct.

“Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel serve in a unique and highly challenging environment and the allegations, resulting inquiry, report, subsequent announcements and media speculation have caused considerable distress and mental health concerns,” General Melick said.

The RSL is committed to supporting all serving and ex-serving members of the ADF through the provision of wellbeing and general support to veterans and their families.

Any former or serving personnel suffering adverse impacts and distress to immediately contact their local RSL Sub-Branch for direction to access wellbeing and other support services or call Open Arms on 1800 011 046.

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