



## PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

9 JANUARY 1991

Her Majesty The Queen has approved Letters Patent and Regulations establishing nine new Defence Force awards for use in operational situations. They are the Victoria Cross for Australia, the Star of Gallantry, the Medal for Gallantry, the Commendation for Gallantry, the Distinguished Service Cross, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Commendation for Distinguished Service, the Unit Citation for Gallantry, and the Meritorious Unit Citation.

This brings to fifteen the number of new awards for the Australian Defence Force that have now been approved by The Queen on the recommendation of my Government. These awards have all been established in pursuit of our commitment to develop a comprehensive and indigenous system of Australian honours and awards.

The Queen approved in 1988 the Australian Active Service Medal, the Australian Service Medal, and the Champion Shots Medal. In 1989, Her Majesty approved the Nursing Service Cross, the Conspicuous Service cross and the Conspicuous Service Medal. The Queen has now approved the following awards:

The Victoria Cross will be the highest Australian decoration. Like its Imperial counterpart, it will accord recognition to persons who perform acts of the most conspicuous gallantry, acts of valour or self-sacrifice or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy. Persons awarded the Victoria Cross will be entitled to use the post-nominal "VC".

The Gallantry Decorations will be awarded to members of the Australian Defence Force and certain other persons in recognition of gallantry in action. Three levels of the award are proposed: the Star of Gallantry, the Medal for Gallantry, and the Commendation for Gallantry. Persons awarded the Star and Medal will be entitled to use the post-nominals "SG" and "MG" respectively.

The Australian Distinguished Service Decorations will accord recognition to members of the Defence Force and certain other persons for distinguished command and leadership in action or distinguished performance of duties in warlike operations. Three levels of the award are proposed: the Distinguished Service Cross; the Distinguished Service Medal; and the Commendation for

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Distinguished Service. Persons awarded the Cross and Medal will be entitled to use the post-nominals "DSC" and "DSM" respectively.

The Unit Citations will recognise gallantry in action or outstanding service in warlike operations by units of the Defence Force and the defence forces of other countries. Two decorations are provided for: the Unit Citation for Gallantry; and the Meritorious Unit Citation.

The approval of these awards by Her Majesty now completes the Government's program to have in place a comprehensive, indigenous system of military awards and decorations within an indigenous Australian honours system. The placement of the new awards in the Australian Order of precedence of Honours and Awards, as approved by Her Majesty, will be published in the Commonwealth Gazette.

I would like to congratulate the Ministers for Administrative Services and Defence Science and Personnel, and their predecessors, for the efforts in developing and putting in place a comprehensive system of Australian Defence Force awards. Their efforts will enable a proper recognition of the valuable contribution made by Australian service men and women, and other associated persons, in both operational circumstances and in times of peace, for many generations to come.