

**Transcript of addresses, Change of Command ceremony
Friday 1 July, Canberra
Check against delivery**

**Outgoing Chief of Air Force, and incoming Vice Chief of the Defence Force
Air Marshal Mark Binksin AO**

As I hand over the Air Force 'reigns' to AIRMSHL Geoff Brown, I want to take the opportunity to thank everyone in Air Force – PAF, Reserve and APS - for your great support over the last three years. Through your great work we have continued to deliver airpower whenever - and wherever - we have been asked to and continue to build on the great global reputation of the RAAF.

During the last three years, every FEG has been represented on the continuing high tempo of operations around the world. While the majority of our operations have been in the MEAO, we have also conducted successful operations in many other countries including Haiti, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Indonesia, Pakistan, New Zealand, Japan and even over Antarctica. Just as importantly, closer to home we have been involved in assistance operations associated with the Victorian bushfire and flood emergencies, the Queensland floods – including helping our own people in Amberley and Ipswich, the unprecedented rapid evacuation of patients from hospitals in Cairns during Cyclone Yasi and the clean-up after both Cyclone Yasi and Carlos.

While operations are key to what we do as an Air Force, I know that on the domestic front, people have not been sitting idle either – regardless of what part of Air Force or the broader Defence Organisation you are in. I appreciate that Unit initiated and broader Defence SRP initiatives, combined with retiring the F-111 and Caribou and introducing into service the Super Hornets (in record time), Wedgetail AEW&C, King Airs, Heron RPAs, Vigilante, the KC-30 MRTT and now the additional C-17, have put many of you under additional pressure. However, I can tell you that your efforts and the positive way you have approached these tasks has been noticed by many in the broader Defence organisation, Government and overseas air forces.

We have also made many improvements to the way we look after Air Force personnel including a number of initiatives to better manage and educate our workforce and to improve opportunities for women and indigenous Australians. You are the essence of what makes us 'tick' and while I acknowledge that there is more that we can do in this area, I believe that Air Force has an excellent overall culture of looking after its people.

During the last three years we have also been able to remember and build on our tremendous heritage as the second oldest independent air force in the world. We have reformed 4SQN in ACG, 30 and 31SQNs in CSG, 452 and 453SQNs in SRG and 460SQN in AOSG. In addition, we have also seen the increased prominence of 13SQN and the 'twenty series' squadrons within CSG. All these units have a proud and distinguished history and I think it is fantastic that we are able to keep that history alive for future generations of Air Force women and men.

I have been, and remain, tremendously proud of what we have achieved over the last three years and feel extremely privileged to have been Chief of Air Force during that time. I would like to join with my wife Gitte and personally thank everyone within Air Force and your families for your dedication and support during the period and wish all of you the very best for your future careers. I will continue to watch Air Force grow and deliver airpower globally with great interest!

Incoming Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Geoff Brown, AM

Thank you for turning out in such large numbers to mark this transition of Command of the Royal Australian Air Force. July is not the best time to be outdoors in Canberra, so I will keep my comments to only the most important.

Firstly, Mark, on behalf of the entire Air Force, let me just say thank you for your stewardship these last three years. During this time, I have been constantly struck by the passion that you have for our service. That passion has been exemplified in your concern for our people and in your determination to achieve the best possible outcomes for Air Force. When combined with your professionalism, that passion has resulted in you being an outstanding example for the rest of Air Force to follow. It has been a privilege

these last three years to watch you lead the Air Force with such skill and finesse. I, along with the rest of the Air Force wish you, Gitte, Scott and Nick all the very best for the future and in particular, in your next appointment as VCDF.

As you may well imagine, today is a profoundly significant day for me. I have always felt incredibly fortunate to be part of the Air Force. Throughout my entire working life, I have been shaped and influenced by this organisation. Its traditions and its values are part of who I am and what I believe in. To be charged with the care and future development of the Air Force is a great privilege. To be entrusted with the wellbeing and the command of the men and women of the Air Force is a very special honour and an even greater responsibility. I feel it is important then, that I share with you what has been my perception of the Air Force and how I view our future.

We should all be proud of what this Air Force has achieved over the last decade or so. For the last ninety years each generation of RAAF members have contributed to the Air Force story, and this current generation has added yet another chapter to an already illustrious history. The success of our Air Force has been achieved through the hard work, innovation and dedication of its men and women. Air Force has made it its business to develop good people and then trust them to make their contribution to the RAAF mission—be it on operations or in supporting the capability needed to deliver air power. In all of our endeavours, here at home, and across the globe, the RAAF has built a reputation for dependability, professionalism and, most importantly, for getting in and getting the job done, and done well.

This has been my experience of the Air Force I have served in these past 31 years. It is my intent to ensure the people of the Air Force continue to have the means and the support necessary to meet the requirements of Government and the needs of Australia. Shaping and positioning the Air Force for future success is something I see as an imperative for all of us.

Right now Air Force is well down the road of a major evolution. We are in the process of enhancing our capability to project and sustain air power in current and future contingencies. We are also developing our ability to operate in the space and cyber domains. Our education system is also changing in line with the new skills we need, and in order to ensure we all understand our part in developing and delivering air power. Furthermore, this evolution is taking place against a backdrop of intense operational tempo. We are becoming a very different air force to that of the last century, and we will continue to evolve into the force envisaged for the year 2030.

We need to ensure that the new capabilities are affordable. The Air Force Improvement program is a very important part of ensuring Force 2030 becomes a reality. It is about enhancing how we do business, and it is my intent that Air Force continues to innovate and evolve in this regard.

However, we are not the only arm of the ADF that is evolving or tasked with the responsibility of maintaining Australia's security. Air Force is part of a much larger Defence community made up of our fellow Services, civilian partners and commercial contractors. As complex as our working environment is, we have built and sustained productive partnerships through trust, communication and respect. Maintaining and enhancing partnerships within the Defence community is an important part of our future.

Our position centre stage both within the Defence community and with our allies overseas is testament to the quality of our people. They are out there everyday ensuring Australia's air power is being carefully and creatively applied. While our success is ultimately measured at the operational end of the spectrum, it is not achieved in isolation. I often say that at its heart, an air force and its partners are a complex engineering, logistic and support organisation—quite simply, the quality of the support determines the quality of the Air force. Therefore, protecting and nurturing the whole team will remain central to my focus as Air Force continues on its successful path. To this end, I emphasise my commitment to Air Force safety, because we have a duty of care to all of our members, just as we have the ultimate duty to safeguard the security and safety of all Australians.

Much of what I have said today has been about change, however it will be the enduring qualities of the Air Force, which remain a constant, and at the heart of the RAAF. Our Air Force has always prided itself on its professionalism, flexibility, willingness to innovate, and determination to rise to any challenge. No matter what changes occur in the future, it is these inherent qualities that will be core to the ongoing effectiveness of Australia's Air Force.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Air Force is a great team, of which we should all be proud. Over the next three years I look forward, as I hope you do, to being part of the next chapter in the Air Force story as we continue to serve Australia as one of the best Air Forces in the world.