Chief Minister

WELCOME HOME FOR OUR TERRITORY HEROES

1 March 2014

Chief Minister Adam Giles has paid tribute to the service of Australian troops in Afghanistan at a welcome home reception at Parliament House in Darwin.

“This is the end of a chapter in Australia’s military history and an important opportunity for us to recognise the efforts and sacrifices of our Defence men and women,” Mr Giles said.

The more than 250 personnel are the final contingent to come home from operations in Uruzgan Province after the completion of Australia’s mission in the region. They are predominantly Army personnel who were originally deployed from Darwin.

“These soldiers, sailors and Air Force personnel have been operating in some of harshest terrain, making a big difference in a corner of the world that few Australians had heard of before they were deployed there. They have done Australia proud,” Mr Giles said.

“Darwin is a Defence town with a growing military presence and we are immensely proud of the contribution these soldiers have made to the security of the country and the region.

“They are our newest generation of veterans and we will remember them for what they have done on behalf of all Australians.

“It was heartening to see so many dignitaries, friends and family turn-out to cheer them on as they marched through the streets of Darwin.”

Personnel marching in the parade represent elements of Combined Team – Uruzgan Four and Five, the 2nd Cavalry Regiment Task Group, Force Support Unit – Seven, Force Communication Unit – Eight and Nine, the Logistics Training Advisory Team and Artillery Training and Advisory Team – Two.

“It is a huge relief to their families to have them home safe. Today was also about recognising the sacrifices husbands, wives, partners, parents and children have made while their loved ones were away,” Mr Giles said.

More than 26,500 Defence personnel have contributed to Australia’s mission in Afghanistan since 2002.

Since Operation SLIPPER began, 261 Australian Defence Force members have been wounded in action in Afghanistan and 40 Australian soldiers have been killed in action over 11 years of conflict.

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