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Boss X Highlights ADF Reservists' Value to Employers

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Thirteen civilian employers of Australian Defence Force (ADF) reservists took part in a Boss X immersion experience during Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025, held from July 13 to August 4. The program allowed employers to observe their reservist employees performing military duties across Queensland, the Northern Territory, and Papua New Guinea.

Organized by the Australian Department of Defence, the initiative aimed to showcase how the skills and training reservists receive in the ADF benefit their civilian workplaces. This year's Exercise Talisman Sabre was the largest in its 20-year history, involving approximately 43,000 participants from 19 nations. Activities included live-fire drills and amphibious landings, demonstrating the operational readiness of participating forces.

The Boss X program is designed to bridge the understanding between civilian employers and the military by highlighting how reservists' discipline, teamwork, and problem-solving skills can be applied in professional settings outside the defence sector. Tracy Carroll, Executive Officer and Director of Nursing and Midwifery at SA Health, joined the immersion to observe her employee, Private Megan Hoile, in action. Carroll described the experience as valuable in seeing firsthand the specialized skills and professionalism demonstrated by reservists.

Private Hoile expressed pride in the opportunity to showcase her military role to her employer, noting that the skills she develops in the ADF directly contribute to her effectiveness in her civilian position.

The five-day immersion provided a close look at the scale and logistics of ADF operations. According to official figures, the exercise involved the movement of about 32 million kilograms of cargo across 5,300 kilometres.

Deputy Head Reserve and Cadet Support Division Commodore Grant O'Loughlan said the Boss X program demonstrates the mutual benefits of a shared workforce, with reservists making valuable contributions both to defence capability and to civilian organizations. Reservists currently make up around one-third of the total ADF workforce, bringing with them expertise in leadership, adaptability, and operational planning.

The event was held in conjunction with the broader activities of Talisman Sabre 2025, which served as a platform for strengthening both international defence partnerships and domestic employer engagement. The Department of Defence continues to encourage employers to support reservists by recognizing the transferability of military-acquired skills to civilian roles.

More information for employers about ADF Reserves and support programs is available on the ADF Reserves and Employer Support website.