



Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld, AO, DSC
Chief of Air Force



Dear Colleagues,

Commander's Intent - Realising the Integrated Air Force

On the eve of our centenary, the Royal Australian Air Force is embracing a period of unprecedented change. We are close to completing the most significant update to our platforms since WWII. In doing so, we are transitioning from a bespoke force of standalone capabilities to a networked force capable of delivering air and space power effects for the integrated force. At the same time, the global rules-based order is under pressure, and we find ourselves in an increasingly competitive and less predictable geopolitical environment.

To succeed in this new reality, Air Force needs to continue to evolve.

Culturally, we need to understand that Air Force does not generate air and space power for itself. We provide air and space power options as a component of military power, realised by the Joint Force in support of Government objectives.

More broadly, we must acknowledge that in some areas we shape strategy while in others we act on strategic direction. To *shape* strategy, we must continue our evolution into an **intelligent and skilled workforce** that develops our people and places them in positions to achieve the greatest strategic effect. In essence, we must develop and post our people for effect – not simply to fill liabilities. To effectively *act* on strategic direction we will build a force of air and space power professionals capable of conceptualising strategic intention and empowered to apportion resources to the Joint force consistent with my priorities.

Air Force can no longer operate in independent silos of excellence as technical experts in our own specialised fields without leveraging the capacity and benefit of every part of our organisation. We exist to **deliver air and space power as a component of the joint force**, and to do so we must be integrated and connected both as an Air Force and with the Joint Force. We must understand the difference between Air Force and air power as this nuance will ensure that we avoid prioritising tactical excellence over strategic effect and platforms over systems. We will reward behaviours that fit this more joint and integrated model.

Air Force must become a force of networked military professionals, we must **deepen relationships and strengthen our engagement**. I expect Air Force to build, nurture and use networks effectively and for purpose. These soft and hard networks will cover the operational, enterprise and human domains. I will demand this change of my commanders and they will reward those of you who embrace this change.

We need to commit resources to building **agile and coherent governance**. From me, you can expect clear strategic guidance and priorities. I will provide clear focus for what Air Force is to achieve, and I expect commanders at all levels to enact my priorities. It is my job to ensure that our resources – people, money, capabilities and time – are specifically utilised to provide enduring value for Government across the spectrum of conflict, and to meet emergent challenges.

We will not succeed just by treating risk, we must also drive success by seizing opportunity. To that end, I am reviewing our governance structures, battle rhythm and strategic guidance to ensure leaders at all levels are provided with the direction and resources to achieve their missions, both enduring and immediate. These mechanisms will be used to inform the progress of these changes, so that we can make adjustments and prioritise where required. This will serve to empower our commanders to succeed, and in doing so will drive better decision making at all levels of the organisation. Through this intent, I have highlighted the five key lines of effort through which we will measure our success:

- **Delivering air and space power as a component of the joint force**
- **Developing an intelligent and skilled workforce**
- **Deepening relationships and strengthening our engagement**
- **Evolving our culture**
- **Building agile and coherent governance**

We are half way to realising an integrated Air Force – we have the tools. Our task now is to ensure we have the culture and behaviours to harness them effectively across the spectrum of conflict. I will ensure Air Force has the direction and agility it needs to realise this task, however I require every member to embrace this paradigm shift in order to provide the highest level of air and space power to the Joint Force in support of Government objectives.

Regards,

Mel