

## **Air Vice-Marshal Mike Kitcher, AM, DSM Royal Australian Air Force**

### **Deputy Chief of Joint Operations**



#### **Current Assignment**

Air Vice-Marshal Mike Kitcher is the Deputy Chief of Joint Operations based at Headquarters Joint Operations Command in Bungendore NSW.

#### **Background**

AVM Kitcher joined the RAAF Academy in January 1984 and graduated from the Australian Defence Force Academy in 1986 with a degree in Bachelor of Science. After graduating from No. 145 Pilot's Course in 1988, he flew F/A-18 aircraft. He graduated from No. 23 Fighter Combat Instructor Course in 1994, served in instructional roles at 2OCU until 1997 and was Executive Officer at 75SQN until 2000.

In mid-2001, AVM Kitcher completed RAF Advanced Command and Staff College at Watchfield, UK, graduating with a Masters Degree from Kings College London. He was then posted to Executive Officer No 81 Wing and in mid-2002 moved to US CENTCOM and CENTAF as the primary planner for potential RAAF contributions to US led operations in Iraq. In 2003 he was Deputy Commander for Operation Falconer, the ADF's contribution to the US led Operation Iraqi Freedom, and managed all RAAF F/A-18 and C-130 operations. He was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service during the operation. He assumed command of No. 3 Squadron in mid-2003.

AVM Kitcher was posted to Headquarters Air Command as the Director of Operations in 2006, also serving as the inaugural RAAF Air Operations Centre Director. He worked in Defence industry from 2007-10, rejoined the permanent Air Force in 2011 and worked as Chief of Staff at Air Combat Group until Dec 2012. In 2013, he became Director of the Australian Defence Force Airworthiness Coordination and Policy Agency.

AVM Kitcher commenced duties as Director General Capability Planning – Air Force in Nov 2013. In this position he was responsible for introducing all new capabilities for the RAAF, such as F-35, E/A-18G Growler, P-8, Triton, the PC-21 aircraft and pilot training system and major E-7 Wedgetail upgrades. In the first half of 2017, he served in Operation Okra as Commander of the Australian Air Task Group in the Middle East overseeing Australian Hornet, Wedgetail and Tanker operations. He was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia in June 2017, for exceptional service in air combat sustainment, aviation safety development, and major capability planning and introduction. In June 2018, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for his leadership during Operation Okra.

For 2 years from mid-2019, AVM Kitcher served as the Vice J3 at US Central Command at Macdill Air Force Base, Tampa, Florida. He was responsible for managing US military operations across the CENTCOM AOR, focusing on Iraq/Syria and Afghanistan.

AVM Kitcher commenced duties as Deputy Chief of Joint Operations in August 2021.

AVM Kitcher has over 3500 hours in military aircraft and 3000 hours in F/A-18 A/B/F/G Hornets. He lives in Canberra with his wife Robyn, they have three adult sons. His interests are Rugby, touch football, boating, skiing, paddle-boarding and surf lifesaving.