



Stephen Smith MP
Minister for Defence

The Hon Philip Ruddock MP
Shadow Cabinet Secretary
Member for Berowra
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

28 NOV 2011

Dear Mr Ruddock

Thank you for your letter of 17 October 2011 on behalf of Mr John Howells, Honorary Secretary of the Royal New South Wales Lancers' Association, concerning the decision by Army to withdraw Army support to Regimental Bands.

Army decided that the costs associated with the repair or replacement of Regimental Band musical instruments, uniforms and other equipment, should be the responsibility of the Regiment or association concerned rather than Army. This is based on the outcomes of a Review into the Army Band force structure as part of an Army-wide rebalance of its force.

The review considered Army's entire musical capability. Existing hollowness in Army's musical structure and efficiencies through a reorganisation provided a platform to reduce the number of full-time and part-time musicians without a reduction in capability.

Army's decision reflects its desire to prioritise its limited resources and secure the long-term sustainability of the Australian Army Band Corps (AABC). The AABC consists of five full-time bands (Australian Regular Army) and six part-time bands (Australian Reserve).

Regimental Bands will retain their current stock holdings of musical instruments and uniforms. There will be no withdrawal or repossession of any current stock.

I hope this information will be of assistance to you and Mr Howells in understanding Army's rationale for its decision.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Smith