Australian Government

Australian Military Forces
Relief Trust Fund

CORPORATE PLAN
2026–2027

For the reporting period 2026–27 to 2030–31

STATEMENT OF PREPARATION

We, the Board of Trustees of the Australian Military Forces Relief Trust Fund (AMFRTF), as the Accountable Authority of the Fund, present the AMFRTF *Corporate Plan 2026–27* for the period 2026-27 to 2030-31, as required under paragraph 35(1) (b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). The Plan is prepared in accordance with section 16E of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014.*

CD Dobson, AM, CSC
Major General
Chair of Trustees
Australian Military Forces Relief Trust Fund

17 August 2026

PURPOSE

The purpose of AMFRTF is to provide benefits through loans and hardship payments that support the welfare of soldiers of the Australian Army, particularly those who have served, and the dependants of these members.

AMFRTF has established goals to achieve this purpose over the current and forward years of the Corporate Plan.

- **Loans** – Provision of loans of up to $6,000 to members of the Australian Regular Army and Army Reserve SERVOP C who require financial assistance. Eligibility includes completion of Initial Employment Training, or a minimum of 12 months continuous full-time service, and being 18 years of age or older.

- **Hardship and Special Payments** Provision of payments of up to $2,500 to former soldiers or dependants of soldiers experiencing financial hardship. Financial hardship is defined as a situation where an individual does not have sufficient personal financial resources to meet basic living requirements, including accommodation, transport, legal, and medical expenses.

- **Financial management and investment**— Application of sound financial management and investment practices to ensure sufficient capital is available to meet operational objectives and to support the ongoing sustainability and relevance of the entity in meeting the needs of Army personnel.

For more information visit https://www.armyrtf.com.au

ENVIRONMENT

The primary beneficiaries of the AMFRTF's activities are Australian Army personnel and their families. This is a diverse group and ways they live and work evolve over time in response to multiple factors including changes in structure of the Australian Defence Force, location, economic and social changes. In order to achieve its purpose, AMFRTF needs to respond to these changes, ensuring the financial relief benefit it provides remain relevant and valued by beneficiaries, whose number is also increasing over time with planned growth in Australian Army personnel.

Factors over which AMFRTF has full control:

- Decisions in relation to trust-owned financial asset including the ability to invest and expense. The Trustee Board has committed to a strategic review of its fund portfolio in accordance with its long-term strategy to maximise financial for beneficiaries.

- The approval criteria and decision making for loan applications and hardship payments.

Factors over which AMFRTF has partial control:

- Demand from Australian Army personnel for the various types of loans that the Trust provides.
- Investment returns that can be achieved through a conservative strategy using term deposit and adapt the market rate at the time.

Factors over which AMFRTF has no control:

- The structure, location and activities of the Australian Defence Force.
- Organisational changes within the Defence portfolio that impact on operations of the AMFRTF.

PERFORMANCE

Performance of the AMFRTF is assessed against four key factors: provision of low cost loans to Army personnel; provision of special hardship payments; robust financial management of funds/investments; and planning to support continued accumulation of funds under management.

LOANS

Activity 1	**Provide financial assistance to Army soldiers through the provision of low cost and affordable loans.**
Intended result	Provide benefits for soldiers of the Australian Army by providing loans in a prompt and efficient manner, with those in greatest need given priority.
Delivery strategy	Promote the availability of financial assistance through the AMFRTF website. Web form application is used for application and approval process. Annual budget guidance of $5.200 million to 5.720 million.
Measuring performance 2026–27 and out to 2030–31	Funds disbursed within the annual budget. Numbers and types of loans are in scope and reported annually. Greater than 75 per cent of loans issued to junior ranks (Lieutenant and below).

SPECIAL HARDSHIP PAYMENTS

Activity 2	**Provide financial assistance to former/current soldiers and or theirs dependants in financial and necessitous circumstances through hardship special payments.**
Intended result	Provide benefits for separated soldiers who have served in, or in association with, the Australian Army, and for the dependants of current or former soldiers, through special hardship payments for eligible persons under financial hardship or in necessitous circumstances.
Delivery strategy	Clear guidelines is available on the AMFRTF website. Special hardship payments are up to $2,500 unless extenuating circumstances require additional funding. Trustees will determine fund availability for hardship payments and by the overall financial performance of the Trust Fund. Hardship payments are not paid directly to applicant but are for goods and services or are paid towards outstanding bills.
Measuring performance 2026–27 and out to 2030–31	Trustees to approve the hardship payment and does not exceed funding availability for the budgeted year.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND INVESTING

Activity 3	**Apply prudent financial management and investment practices in accordance with the *PGPA Act, Services Trust Fund Act 1947,* other relevant legislative rules and accounting standards.**
Intended result	AMFRTF remains self-sustaining through sound financial management and investment for each financial year, while meeting governance and legislative compliance.
Delivery strategy	Trustees Board set the fund management fee. Fund maintenance fee is set at 2 per cent on all general purpose loans. Invest a minimum $1.50 million in diverse and low risk term deposits.
Measuring performance 2026–27 and out to 2030–31	Achieving a positive profit outcome at the end of financial year. Comply with corporate governance and legislative requirements for the reporting period. Bad debt annual write-off is set less than 1 per cent of the yearly debtors' control.

GROWTH ASSET PLANNING

Activity 4	**Explore options to grow the Trust's funds available to soldiers of the Australian Army.**
Intended result	Options to increase the volume of funds are identified and critically assessed. Implementation plans for any viable options are presented to the Board of Trustees for prudence consideration.
Delivery strategy	A standing agenda item on Board meetings will be used to drive work by Trustees and the Secretariat.
Measuring performance 2026–27 and out to 2030–31	**2026-27** • An appreciation process is conducted via Board meetings. • Implementations plans for agreed viable options are considered by the Board by end of the current financial year. • Execute any plans if Board agrees to expedite any options. **Possible execution phase out to 2030-31** • Execute any agreed implementation Plans. • Achieve plan milestones and performance indicators.

CAPABILITY

AMFRTF's capability to deliver its purpose is underpinned by effective governance, stewardship of resources, and efficient operational support.

The Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees comprising current Australian Army personnel with an appropriate balance of skills, experience, and diversity. The Board is responsible for the proper use and management of the Trust's resources, ensuring financial sustainability over the long term. This includes identifying and pursuing opportunities to diversify and strengthen income streams, and implementing strategies to optimise the financial support available to beneficiaries.

The Board monitors organisational capability through oversight of operational performance, workload, and resource allocation, to ensure the Trust operates efficiently and remains fit for purpose.

The Department of Defence (Army Group) provides personnel, information and communications technology (ICT), and administrative support to AMFRTF on a no-cost basis. These arrangements enable the Trust to minimise administrative overheads and maximise the proportion of available resources directed towards supporting beneficiaries.

RISK OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

Risk appetite

The Trustee Board faces a range of risks reflecting its responsibilities as the Trustee of the AMFRTF. These risks include the responsibility of being self-sustaining and performing day-to-day operational activities to achieve its purpose. The AMFRTF has a medium to high appetite for operational risk and makes resources available to mitigate risk to acceptable levels.

Management of Key Risks

Risk 1 - Unavailability of key personnel

Due to the size of its operations, AMFRTF has a small number of staff, primarily funded by the Department of Defence. The loss or unavailability of key personnel has the potential to significantly affect the management and efficiency of day-to-day operations in the short to medium term. This is because alternative personnel would need to be recruited, trained, and familiarised with the Trust's operations.

While this risk cannot be completely eliminated, it is mitigated through the following measures:

- Implementation of workplace practices, including cross-training of staff in the Trust's activities, rotation of roles, documentation of procedures, and succession planning for key positions;
- Engagement of personnel with specialist expertise on a casual or part-time basis to supplement core staff (noting this incurs additional cost); and
- Maintenance of a business continuity plan, including specific responses to the loss of key personnel.

Risk 2 - External influence to Trustee board decisions

AMFRTF operates within a complex stakeholder environment, creating a potential risk of undue influence on decision-making. AMFRTF has a primary responsibility to administer the Trusts in the best interests of beneficiaries and mitigates this risk through:

- Maintaining a diverse Trustee Board membership aligned with the interests of Australian Army personnel;
- Proactive stakeholder engagement and consultation to support a shared understanding of potentially contentious decisions; and
- Adherence to robust governance processes, including the documentation of decisions in meeting minutes to ensure transparency and accountability.

Risk 3 - Personnel fraud and conflict of interest

Preventative and contingency fraud control measures are managed by the Board and Secretariat. Mitigation actions include:

- Requiring two authorised signatories for all bank transactions;
- Maintaining appropriate insurance coverage for fraud and fidelity;
- Conducting an annual external audit by independent auditors;
- Implementing internal audit procedures overseen by the Audit Committee;
- Requiring Secretariat staff to complete mandatory Fraud and Integrity Awareness training; and
- Maintaining a Conflict of Interest Declaration register, reviewed annually.

The following outlines the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, the Audit Committee, and the Secretariat in relation to risk oversight and management of the Fund.

Board of Trustee

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Setting the strategic direction of the Fund;
- Approving the Corporate Plan;
- Approving the Risk Management Plan, Fraud Control Plan and Risk Register; and
- Ensuring appropriate risk management frameworks and processes are in place and operating effectively.

Audit Committee

- The Audit Committee is responsible for:
- Oversight of financial and performance reporting, including associated disclosure processes; and
- Conducting regular internal reviews of business operations to ensure compliance with risk management and fraud control requirements.

Secretariat

- The Secretariat is responsible for:
- Managing financial and corporate compliance reporting;
- Maintaining corporate plans, registers and policy documentation; and
- Managing day-to-day operational performance and administrative functions.

COOPERATION

AMFRTF maintains a high level of cooperation with the Department of Defence, particularly with similar entities within the Defence portfolio. This includes close collaboration with the Royal Australian Navy Relief Trust Fund and the Royal Australian Air Force Welfare Trust Fund, which are also established under the *Services Trust Funds Act 1947*.

This cooperative approach provides opportunities to benchmark best practice and enhance the delivery of low-cost loans and financial assistance to Service personnel across the Australian Defence Force. Consistent with AMFRTF, these entities share a common focus on promoting financial relief and support outcomes for Service personnel.

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