

## **Defence appoints imam to religious advisory panel**

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Defence has appointed a Muslim cleric to its religious advisory panel, even though there are under 100 Muslims in the defence force.

Assistant Defence Minister Stuart Robert said Imam Mohamadu Nawaz Saleem would join the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services which provides a link between the Australian Defence Force and the governing bodies of faith groups.

It now consists of five members from the Christian faith, one Jewish member and one Muslim member. He will work with the Muslim community and other members of the RACS in providing advice on the religious and spiritual wellbeing of all members of the ADF.

Mr Robert said Imam Saleem was nominated by the Australian National Imams Council and was a highly experienced Muslim cleric with formal qualifications in law and academia. He is also an Associate Chaplain with the Victoria Police.

Mr Robert said defence needed to widen its recruitment pool and tap into a culturally and linguistically diverse workforce.

“Increasing the breadth of the RACS to include the Muslim faith also reflects the ADF’s pastoral care responsibilities for all its members and is entirely consistent with Defence’s commitment to cultural reform,” he said in a statement.

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