



## DGCADETS-AF UPDATES

Director General Cadets - Air Force  
Air Commodore Craig Heap AM, CSC

This year, on the same weekend as the Air Force Cadets National Award Night, we held the National Headquarters Conference.

The National Headquarters team, including WG OC's gathered for two days of updates and team discussions.

All were certainly warmed by the news that we had great start to the year in reaching the milestone of over 10,000 Cadets. We not only explored how the AAFC can deliver a great program this year, but also started on the process of building a long term

## RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE WITHIN THE AAFC

The Air Force Cadets National Awards Night, was held on May 4, at the Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra. Over 165 guests from around Australia enjoyed the dining-in night formalities and festivities. The highlight of the night were the awards.

Every year, each Wing around Australia selects their respective Cadet and Instructors of the Year. These are members who have displayed the values of the AAFC and demonstrated an exceptional contribution to their Squadron, Wing and community. A national level selection board then selects the National Award winners. All of these awards are presented at the National Awards Dinner, held this year in Canberra.

This year the awards night commenced with the presentation of the National Field Craft award to 4 Wing.

Cadet Warrant Officer **Claudia Pollard**, also from 4 Wing, was named the National Cadet of the Year. Her engagement in cadet activities last year earned her the prestigious 4 Wing Esprit De Corps Award and is a true testament to her positive influence on those around her. Her outstanding leadership was also recognised with the 2022 Green Eagle Award at the National Fieldcraft competition. Claudia – you make us proud in the finest tradition of the AAFC.

Rounding out the hat-trick for No.4 Wing, **Corporal (AAFC) Kyle Charles** was selected as the National Instructor of the Year. Kyle has been a staff member since late December 2021 after transitioning from Cadet Warrant Officer, and is currently Executive Officer of 401 Squadron. Kyle's measured, articulate approach and respect for his teammates and their contributions make him a highly valued leader. The judges noted that his journey from distinguished cadet to respected staff member, reflects his unwavering dedication and the embodiment of the AAFC and ADF values – well done Kyle!

Special thanks to Chief of the Royal Australian Air Force Air Marshal Robert Chipman, Chair of the AAFC Foundation Air Vice Marshall Kym Osley, Director General Cadets - Air Commodore Craig Heap, Commander of the AAFC, Group Captain (AAFC) Stephen Johns, and AAFC Foundation Member Brigadier Fern Thompson, for your ongoing support.



National Cadet of the Year Winner, Cadet Warrant Officer Claudia Pollard



National Instructor of the Year Winner, Corporal (AAFC) Kyle Charles

vision out to 2030 with the ongoing development of the new AAFC Strategic Plan.

The Cadet and Adult programs are progressing well with both programs to be complete and in place by the beginning of 2025. Officers Commanding from across the country presented their news showing growth in numbers but also the challenges posed as we grow as an organisation. These challenges included attracting more Adults in leadership roles and ensuring that our facilities are fit for purpose.

I am excited to see flying operations resuming at Glider Training School in Warwick, QLD and was lucky to visit recently and witness first-hand, cadets getting back into the air at Warwick.

I also thank outgoing Officers Commanding (OC) 3 and 4 WG, Wing Commander (AAFC) Merridy Thompson and Kylie Walker, while congratulating and welcoming the new OC's, Wing Commander (AAFC) Chris Gibson and Troy Ashton. Leading at

any rank in the AAFC is indeed a privilege and an honour, but the responsibility of leading a Wing is extremely challenging.

I thank WGCDR Walker and WGCDR Thompson for their dedication during their tenures during a period of significant change, which included managing their WGs through COVID. All the best to these two great AAFC Officers of Cadets in their future endeavours, within, and outside the AAFC.

### OUR FAMILY

  
Cadets  
10,093

  
Instructors  
1,409

  
DAH  
454

### LET'S CONNECT

