

Re: Submission into the Treatment of women in the  
Australian Defence Force.

1/12/11

Dear

I thank the Australian Human Rights Commission for allowing me to put forth my humble views as to how to deal and end a most horrible state of Affairs. Women have been subjected for far too long with bad behaviour mostly because our society and the authorities that run it <sup>do</sup> not consider as "valid" female viewpoints and female presence in 99% of what is considered a "man's world". This is based on pure brawn & strength. It is my view that there are all sorts of "strengths" and as it has been said "it may be a man's world but it would be nothing without a woman or girl." Most modern conflicts are decided by intelligence not physical strength & there are some women who are stronger than some men. The political world (our decision makers) and the legal profession must stop this situation i.e. - the use of emotional abuse in work places and schools, that is only fuelled by a world that largely runs on finances. Men have a pecking order and the ones that are left behind take out their aggressions on vulnerable female. Gender bias is really only another form of a Power Struggle. Humanity as a whole should seek to wipe out meanness and inequality - but until a law is established that deals with this we will only be going around in circles and feathering the nests of lawyers & politicians that are part of a system that doesn't really care about the issues, but about making money by other people's vulnerability. Imagine a world with true equality without fear.

Yours sincerely,



Ending Sexual/Gender Discrimination in the Defense Force - an outsider's view (but also one who has been subjected to this treatment at the Shrine of Remembrance Victoria & who is married to an "ex-Army" & whose father is "ex-army".

- 1) Must make public the acknowledgement that this behaviour has & is occurring & that it will not be tolerated "zero tolerance". This involves also acknowledging that most cases have been "swept under the carpet" and been subjected to further bad treatment from the general authorities (legal, police & politician) more often than not "proof" is needed & the men amongst themselves have covered things up.
- 2) Mandatory 50/50 gender balance, coupled with the latest findings into gender studies (& that being a good soldier doesn't depend on your gender) From the "grass roots" level up, policy should include a historical view of the contribution of females and the hardships they endured. The need to eradicate gender bias should be part of training, which should also be endorsed by the wider society (Unfortunately some sort of New legislation must be sheer necessary, be introduced which addresses solely this issue. Any society that allows sexual discrimination to exist does not protect its citizens and it therefore doesn't protect its children which also does nothing to protect its future. It is a violation of human rights that women are continually treated like this & until such a Law is put together anything else will be temporary & a "band-aid".) Every level of the Defense Force should be represented by a 50/50 gender balance. This would allow for fair representation and a well-rounded view on procedures & outcomes.
- 3) The government should especially train women & men who's main purpose is the meeting & dealing with "rogue" & chameleon members of the Defense Force who say they aren't bias to females but in reality are, there should be at least 2 such especially trained individuals in every unit of the Defense Force. Welfare officers who's role is to stamp out bias & bullying.
- 4) There should also be especially trained personal in the area of bullying. Often the bias & discrimination females are subjected

to is a "spill over" effect from men in highly charged & dangerous roles existing in what is viewed as a "hostile environment". In other words, the Bullying tactics are used as a way of letting off steam, of "getting their power back". There is a pecking order of bad blood & disrespect which is deemed as tradition and necessary to keep the chain of command in place. I feel that along with programs & courses & policies that want to have inclusion of females, there should also be programs that delve into the ways that men deal with each other (i.e. their competitiveness, their ego driven disputes that end up in physical violence, their view that showing emotion at even feeling it somehow means that they aren't "real men" - put these attitudes along with life or death situations & highly charged incidences along with the pressures of military traditional culture & the chain of command, then add females who are under represented & unsupported & often not given the same training and the situation usually ends up where the female is used as a scapegoat and a vessel to offload all these discontents.)

⑤ Sexual discrimination & harassment cannot exist without emotional abuse. The law doesn't acknowledge it and such systematic violence particularly towards females relies on emotional means of "breaking someone". Indeed such systems have the response of only "weak minds" are weeded out by such means & our countries laws do not say "you must treat me well". Until a law is put in place that deals with and criminalises emotional abuse, sexual discrimination and harassment will continue.

⑥ We have had a Human Rights Commissioner for sometime and the incidences of such treatment towards females has only increased. I suggest that maybe we need a "Commissioner for the unification of the Sexes", whose sole purpose is to end gender bias & female persecution in all avenues of society the Defence Force after all is meant to operate and uphold EQUANIMITY, it is still surprising that females aren't treated better because of it.

7) ADF "Culture" is often used as an excuse for allowing the gender bias to continue. As with the Police Force, new candidates who "speak out" about bullying & power manipulations are "dealt with" and often find themselves expelled.

Stop the passing on of the bullying - zero tolerance.

A lot of support will be needed to do this. Support to deal with the pressures of the job and to ensure that resorting to bullying isn't the pay off.

I have heard that this will take at least 20 years, since the authorities are waiting for the people with these attitudes to "retire, move on or die". In other words no one is willing to deal with the issue of changing peoples attitudes, that this will be far too hard or even impossible. I think that the real reason is that the people in authority want to hang on to this attitude for as long as possible at the expense of females in the mean time. Real gender equality is like the Holy Grail, always out of sight. Why? Make the changes to bring it about. A Hotline can be established where people can call to have their complaints listened to & dealt with.

Culture is only Culture if it is passed on to the next man who takes over. Do not allow the passing over of bad behaviour.

"For without culture or holiness, which are always the gift of a very few, a man may renounce wealth or any other external thing, but he cannot renounce, hatred, envy, jealousy, revenge."

Culture is the sanctity of the intellect.

William Butler Yeats.

10/27 08/12/ML FINANCE