

Ms Elizabeth Broderick
Sex Discrimination Commissioner
Australian Human Rights Commission
GPO Box 5218
SYDNEY NSW 2001

**RE - Submission for phase two:
Review into Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force**

Dear Ms Broderick,

I write to congratulate the Review Panel on completion of 'Phase 1 Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force' and the publication of your *Report on the Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force Academy*.

The treatment of women in the Australian Defence Force is a crucial matter at this time, requiring strong leadership and expertise to identify pathways for improvement. I commend the approach of the Review Panel in conducting research and formulating recommendations for the Australian Defence Force. The Phase 1 Report highlights the significant improvements that have been achieved over the last two decades as well as the need for further structural and cultural change across the Defence Force.

In regards to 'Phase 2: Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force' and the development of cultural change strategies in particular, I would like to draw your attention to some recent VicHealth research and development activity that has consolidated the evidence-base for developing safe, respectful and inclusive environments for women and girls. This work is of particular relevance for the Terms of Reference specified in Phase Two:

- *The effectiveness of the cultural change strategies recommended by the Chief of the Defence Force Women's Reference Group in the Women's Action Plan including the implementation of these strategies across the Australian Defence Force;*
- *Measures and initiatives required to improve the pathways for increased representation of women into the senior ranks and leadership of the Australian Defence Force; and*
- *Any other matters incidental to the terms of reference such as sexual harassment, sexual abuse and unacceptable behaviour.*

VicHealth utilises a public health framework to promote health with a particular focus on mental health and wellbeing. Our work is focussed on the social determinants of health which are best addressed in mainstream settings such as workplaces, organisations, corporate and community services. Our research and development activity provides a comprehensive evidence-base regarding the most effective methodology for organisational development and cultural change, as well as the priority settings and population groups for this work.

(continued overleaf)

Patrons

Sir James Gobbo
Dr Nigel Gray AO
Professor Emeritus,
Sir Gustav Nossal AC CBE

Preventing Violence Against Women is a priority area for VicHealth with \$2 million per annum dedicated to research, program activity and workforce development in this arena. Recent program development in workplaces, local government and other organisations has highlighted the significant potential for cultural change and gender equality. I have enclosed the following publications as relevant to the Review:

1. *Preventing Violence Before It Occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria* (2007)
2. *National Survey of Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women* (2010)
3. *Preventing violence against women in the workplace. An evidence review – Summary and full reports* (in-press, confidential)

Reducing harm from alcohol and reducing workplace stress are also priority areas for VicHealth and I have enclosed the following documents in relation to these areas of work:

4. VicHealth Alcohol Strategy
5. *Reducing alcohol-related harm in the workplace. An evidence review. – Summary and full reports* (in-press, confidential)
6. *Reducing stress in the workplace. An evidence review. – Summary and full reports* (in-press, confidential)

VicHealth welcomes further opportunities for dialogue to support the development of cultural change and health promotion strategies in the Australian Defence Force.

With regards,

~~Ms~~ Jerril Rechter

Chief Executive Officer

VicHealth (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation)