

KEY FACTS

AUDIT REPORT REVIEW INTO THE TREATMENT OF WOMEN AT ADFA

In April 2011, the Minister for Defence, the Hon. Stephen Smith, asked the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick, on behalf of the Australian Human Rights Commission, to lead a review into the treatment of women at the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) and into the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

The Terms of Reference required the Commissioner to report and make recommendations on a range of issues relevant to the treatment of women at ADFA and in the ADF, and then to audit the implementation of those recommendations 12 months after the release of any report.

On 3 November 2011, the first report - *Report on the Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force Academy* - was tabled in the Australian Parliament. It made 31 recommendations across a number of areas including ADFA's role and purpose, accommodation and supervision of undergraduates,¹ minimising risk and managing incidents.

The ADF agreed to implement the recommendations – 30 in full and one in principle.

The Audit

The Audit of the implementation of the ADFA recommendations was completed in February 2013. It found that ADFA has made significant progress in implementing the Review's recommendations. Specifically it found that:

- The senior leaders at ADFA are committed to cultural change and have worked with a view to embedding reforms.
- Further work is required in certain areas, particularly in the development and delivery of an evidence based sexual ethics program with an expert educator.
- Continued efforts are also required to separate positive concepts of equity and diversity from the negative associations with the complaints process.
- Ongoing training on and evaluation of the complaints process is required to ensure it is responsive and effective.
- The establishment of Residential Support Officers has been a positive and valuable addition to ADFA – both for staff and undergraduates.
- The development of a new Unacceptable Behaviour Survey applicable to ADFA and other recruit and training settings provides a promising benchmarking tool.

¹ The term “undergraduate” means midshipmen and officer cadets.

Key Findings

'Accommodation and Supervision'

- The new Residential Support Officers (RSO) scheme in the accommodation areas has been a success. Undergraduates and staff report that the scheme is a valuable addition.
- The 2012 Unacceptable Behaviour Survey showed around 45% of women and 20% of men experienced unacceptable behaviour in the residential areas of ADFA in the previous 12 months. Further work addressing security and safety in the residential areas is required.

'Sexual Ethics' and 'Data'

- Progress on designing and implementing a sexual ethics and healthy relationships training package has been slow and an expert program was not in place in 2012.
- The number of complaints made in 2012 and 2013 has increased, which may suggest a safer reporting environment, but there is still a stigma attached to complaining.
- The new Unacceptable Behaviour Survey was administered for the first time at ADFA and RMC Duntroon in late 2012 and will be rolled out to other Defence institutions during 2013.
- ADFA's complaints and incidents registers are much improved, and regular reports are provided to leadership.

'Equity and Diversity'

- The Commandant has worked to promote the concepts of equity and diversity as positive values however some training in equity and diversity still aligns it with unacceptable behaviour and the complaints process.
- Continued efforts are required to separate these concepts from the complaints process. Equity and diversity should be consistently taught as core values underpinning ethical leadership.

'Structure and Staffing'

- The right staff are vital in setting the tone and culture at ADFA. The Commandant now has an enhanced role in the selection of staff at ADFA but this is not yet formalised and he is still not the decision maker. The Commandant should have the right to veto staff selections, or at the very least, be able to interview staff before the posting decision is made.
- The Services have not delegated authority to the Commandant to remove underperforming staff or undergraduates.

'ADFA's Role and Purpose' and 'Young People and Future Leaders'

- There is a lack of clarity among staff and undergraduates about ADFA's role within the three Services.
- Options for a new mentoring program have been developed. ADFA has not yet implemented the new program and no timetable for implementation has been provided.
- A comprehensive approach to alcohol management and testing has been introduced to address excessive alcohol consumption.

'Advice and Referral'

- ADFA has developed posters listing emergency and support contact people and 'Useful contacts' cards.
- It is critical that ADFA widely advertise the new Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office (SeMPRO), including its 24 hour support line, and facilitate strong linkages with ADFA's Sexual Offence Support Person (SOSP) network.

'Injury, Health and Wellbeing'

- Female undergraduates continue to experience a higher injury rate than male undergraduates. ADFA has undertaken extensive work on injury management and is addressing the stigma associated with injury. Further measures could be taken to alleviate the disproportionate injury rate of females compared to males.
- ADFA has taken steps to enhance access to support services for undergraduates, by displaying posters with contact details of support services throughout training and accommodation areas and through working to develop partnerships with external service providers. ADFA should ensure that these partnerships are developed and that the services are utilised.